Arboreal Toponyms:
tree place-names in early medieval England

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This thesis is dedicated to Felicite Barnes, who loved trees and always encouraged me to strive for what makes me happy.

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Abbreviations

acc.	accusative
adj.	adjective
AN	Anglo-Norman
ASC	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
B	Birch, W. 1893.
Bd	Bedfordshire
Bk	Buckinghamshire
BosworthToller	Bosworth, J. 2014.
Brk	Berkshire
C	Cambridgeshire
c.	century
Ch	Cheshire
Co	Cornwall
Cu	Cumberland
CUP	Cambridge University Press
D	Devon
dat.	dative
Db	Derbyshire
DB	Domesday Book
Do	Dorset
DOE	Cameron, A., et al. (eds). 2018
Du	Durham
e.	early
EAFTS	San-Miguel-Ayanz, J. et al. 2016.
EDD	Wright, J. 1898–1905.
EPNE	Smith, A. 1956.
EPNS	English Place-Name Society
eSawyer	Sawyer, P. 1968 (2010–).
Ess	Essex
fem.	feminine
gen.	genitive
Ha	Hampshire
He	Herefordshire
Hrt	Hertfordshire
HTE	*Historical Thesaurus of English*
Hu	Huntingdonshire
Gl	Gloucestershire
K	Kent
La	Lancashire
Lat.	Latin
Le	Leicestershire
LG	Lower German
Li	Lincolnshire
LPN	Gelling, M. and A. Cole. 2000.
masc.	masculine
ME	Middle English
MED	Lewis, R., et al. (ed.). 1952–2001.
Merc.	Mercian
MLG	Middle Low German
ModE	Modern English
Mx	Middlesex
Nb	Northumberland
neut.	neuter
Nf	Norfolk
nom.	nominative
Nt	Nottinghamshire
Nth	Northamptonshire
O	Oxfordshire

OE	Old English
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OFr	Old French
OHG	Old High German
ON	Old Norse
ONP	Sigurðardóttir, A. et al.
OS	Ordnance Survey
OUP	Oxford University Press
PASE	Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England
pers.n.	personal name
pl.	plural
PNBd&Hu 1926.	Mawer, A. and F. Stenton.
PNBk 1925.	Mawer, A. and F. Stenton.
PNBrk	Gelling, M. 1973–76.
PNC	Reaney, P. 1943.
PNCh	Dodgson, J. 1970–97.
PNCu	Armstrong, A., et al. 1950–2.
PND	Gover, J., et al. 1931–2.
PNDb	Cameron, K. 1959.
PNDo	Mills, A. 1977–2010.
PNDu	Watts, V. 2007.
PNEss	Reaney, P. 1935.
PNHrt	Gover, J., et al. 1938.
PNGl	Smith, A. 1964–5.
PNLe	Cox, B. 1998–2016.
PNLi	Cameron, K. et al. 1985–2010.
PNMx	Gover, J., et al. 1942.
PNNf	Sandred, K. 1989–2002.
PNNt	Gover, J., et al. 1940.
PNNth	Gover, J. and F. Stenton. 1933.
PNO	Gelling, M. 1953–4.
PNRu	Cox, B. 1994.
PNSa	(i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi) Gelling, M. et al. 1990–2012; (vii) Baker, J. 2018; (viii) Baker, J. and J. Carroll. 2020; (ix) Cavill, P. 2020.
PNSr	Gover, J., et al. 1934.
PNSt	Oakden, J. 1984.
PNSx	Mawer, A., et al. 1929–30.
PNW	Gover, J., et al. 1939.
PNWa	Gover, J., et al. 1936.
PNWe	Smith, A. 1967.
PNWo	Gover, J., et al. 1927.
PNYE	Smith, A. 1937.
PNYN	Smith, A. 1928.
PNYW	Smith, A. 1961–3.
RR	Roman Road (Margary no.)
Ru	Rutland
S	Sawyer Charter number
Sa	Shropshire
SEPN	Survey of English Place-Names
Sf	Suffolk
sg.	singular
So	Somerset
Sr	Surrey
St	Staffordshire
Sx	Sussex
TOE	*A Thesaurus of Old English*
VEPN	(i) Parsons, D., et al. 1997, (ii) 2000; (iii) Parsons, D. 2004
W	Wiltshire
Wa	Warwickshire

We	Westmorland	YE	Yorkshire East Riding
WMids	West Midlands	YN	Yorkshire North Riding
Wo	Worcestershire	YW	Yorkshire West Riding
WSax	West Saxon	*	hypothetical form
Wt	Isle of Wight		

1. Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Aims of thesis and research questions

Place-names with a tree-species element are common in the early medieval toponymicon, comprising approximately 5.90% of all town and village names in England.[1] This reflects the intrinsic value of trees to early medieval people: as resources, providing both timber and food, and as landmarks that helped them to make sense of the physical and mental landscape. As yet, there has been no complete examination of tree toponyms that considers not only the development of these names, but also how the settlements so-named functioned within the surrounding landscape and what this can tell us about the perception of trees in the early medieval cultural mindset.

Through engagement with previous literature on tree toponyms and the arboreal landscape in early medieval England (see 1.2 Research Context), three principal research questions have arisen as the inspiration for this thesis. The first simply asks which tree-species are referred to in English place-names. This then leads to consideration of how this might throw light on our understanding of the early medieval perception of trees and how tree-species were differentiated. And finally, what we can learn from toponymic compounding practices about the distribution of tree-species in the medieval landscape and how these trees were thought to be useful.

In addressing these questions, the broad aim of this thesis is to complete a comprehensive survey of arboreal toponyms and to provide an in-depth and interdisciplinary account of tree-species place-names. To accomplish this, two approaches have been taken. The first has been to produce a corpus of tree-names that considers the identification and phonological development of tree-species elements; the compounding practices that can tell us something of how these trees were perceived and used; the distribution of these names and how it can contribute to our understanding of the arboreal landscape; and what tree-names can tell us about woodland management in different parts of the country. An interdisciplinary approach has been adopted that takes into account the ecological preferences of tree species, with consideration of geology and climate, the archaeological record (where relevant), and the

[1] This figure was calculated by performing a search on HALOGEN for Old English and Old Norse derived place-names in England (13,229 results for town and village names) and working out what proportion are represented by the tree-species major names collected for this thesis (780 names: *Fig.1*).

traditions of historical woodland management. The corpus analysis draws on scholarship in the fields of onomastics, landscape history, historical ecology, and archaeology in an attempt to categorize and investigate the toponymic material. There is some reanalysis of individual names where this is relevant and where an interdisciplinary approach can better inform our understanding of the etymology. Although efforts have been made, it should be noted that the wider, interdisciplinary examination of landscape and social context for this study is not exhaustive, but it is hoped that it lays down a foundation for future work.

The second approach to analysing tree toponyms has been to look in greater depth at particular tree-name elements in three case-studies, which can give insight into the perceived value of individual tree-species as resources in early medieval England. The first case-study focuses on recurrent compounds – consisting of a tree-name as the specific and Old English (OE) *tūn* or Old Norse (ON) *bȳ* as the generic element – that suggest a system of arboriculture was employed to produce a tree-derived resource, in this case either timber or coppice wood. The significance of these compounds has not been explored in-depth before and this case-study builds upon tentative suggestions made in onomastic scholarship (see 1.2.3.1) by examining these names within a wider interdisciplinary context. The second case-study takes a similar approach, but looks at 'orchard' names, primarily fruit-tree toponyms with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic element. The significance of these so-named settlements is evaluated by drawing upon the expertise of scholarship from a variety of disciplines and building a nuanced understanding of their function and societal context (see 1.2.3.2). The third case-study examines OE *hnutu* names and other elements referring to types of nut-trees, the previous treatment of which has been limited (see 1.2.3.3). As a result, this study attempts to draw together material from other fields and comparative cultural contexts that can help us to better understand the use of this element in English place-names.

1.2 Research Context

This section examines scholarship that has contributed to the research background of this thesis. To best represent the interdisciplinary nature of the current study these texts have been divided thematically into two sections: those that provide toponymic and linguistic context (1.2.1) and those that consider the ecology and the history of the arboreal landscape (1.2.2). There is then a third section that is sub-divided to discuss the works that were most notable in the formation of the three case-studies: 'The toponymy of timber' (1.2.3.1), ''Orchard' place-names' (1.2.3.2), and 'OE *hnutu* and nut-tree place-names' (1.2.3.3). It should be noted that

some of the texts discussed are also interdisciplinary in their approach (e.g., 1.2.1: Coates 1999, Hooke 2010; 1.2.2: Rackham 2003) and that the below categorisation reflects the areas of this thesis on which these studies have been most influential.

1.2.1 Toponymic and linguistic scholarship

1.2.1.1 The Survey of English Place-Names

The second chapter of this thesis is an analysis of major names in England with a tree-species element. This corpus of names and those that form the sub-corpora of the case-studies (Chapters 3–5) were gathered from a variety of sources (see 1.3.4 for details of this process). The most extensive of these is the *Survey of the English Place-names* (SEPN), which is an ongoing project of the English Place-Name Society (EPNS) that aims to explain the origin of English place-names on a county-by-county basis. Since its introductory volume (1924), the Survey has become increasingly intensive: earlier editors tended to provide one volume per county that focused chiefly on the analysis of major names, while more recent work has produced multiple volumes per county with greater attention paid to microtoponymy. For the collection of major name material (medieval attestations and etymological discussion) these Survey volumes were invaluable but were sometimes a limited source when collecting minor names for the case-study corpora. Differences in the presentation of evidence between the earlier and later county volumes is also notable, with earlier surveys tending to provide fewer attestations of names from fewer sources (Watts 2004, xi). The main difficulty of country-wide data collection, however, is that the Survey is incomplete. To date, 24 counties have been fully surveyed, six offer partial coverage (Cornwall, Durham, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Shropshire, and Staffordshire), and for the remainder work is ongoing.[2] Navigation of the addenda and corrigenda of the Survey was facilitated by Hough's (1995) *The English Place-Name Survey: A Finding-List to Addenda and Corrigenda*.

1.2.1.2 Place-name dictionaries

County and country-wide place-name dictionaries provided material for counties that are only partially surveyed by or are absent from the EPNS Survey. These tend to deal primarily with major names, although parameters for the collection of material varied as did the level of detail included in etymological discussion. Some county dictionaries are part of the EPNS 'popular' series, which began in 1998 with Lincolnshire (see below) and pending a full

[2] For further information on Survey aims and coverage see https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/about

toponymic survey are intended to precede the publication of county volumes. These dictionaries (both county and country-wide) have sometimes been valuable in drawing together past differences in the interpretation of names: adding new medieval attestations; updating previously proposed ideas about etymologies; and perhaps most importantly, comparing names of similar etymological origin from different parts of the country. The aims and scope of these texts do not always complement those of this thesis, for example the definition of a major name often differs on a dictionary-by-dictionary basis; however, using such a large body of source material has hopefully accounted for most discrepancies.

Mawer's *The Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham* (1920) aimed to survey 'all names found in documents dating from before 1500, which can be identified on the modern map' (viii). Mawer includes some limited topographical discussion, draws parallels with names from other counties, and gives attention to later spellings to provide insight into local pronunciation. Place-name discussion of names in Durham has since been furthered by Watts' *A Dictionary of County Durham Place-Names* (2002), which comprises names recorded by the 1:50,000 OS for which historical evidence exists, including ancient parishes, townships, villages, hamlets, farms, roads, and field-names. Emphasis here is placed on the inclusion and interpretation of the earliest attestations of names.

In 1922, Ekwall produced *The Place-Names of Lancashire*, which includes discussion of parishes and townships and names found in early sources that offer 'sufficient interest' (3). This study aims to provide a phonetic explanation of names and an accurate etymology. Like Mawer (1920), Ekwall states that topographical information is often given to support etymological determination. This is the most recent dictionary that is dedicated entirely to Lancashire place-names and formed the basis of data collection for this county, although country-wide dictionaries have furthered the discussion of many Lancashire names throughout this thesis.

In the 1930s, Wallenberg published two complementary volumes that examine the place-names of Kent. *Kentish Place-Names* (1931) suggests the interpretation of names in Kentish charters and aims to identify these names with their modern forms or with names still preserved after the OE period (vi). *The Place-Names of Kent* (1934) deals with the etymologies of all hundred and parish names in the county, as well as minor names with historical forms (iii). Where names are already addressed in his 1931 book, Wallenberg provides a reference to this previous work. With no EPNS coverage for the county, these

texts provided early forms and interpretations of names; information that has been built upon with the aid of country-wide dictionaries and Cullen's (1997) doctoral thesis that addresses names in east Kent.

A Popular Dictionary of Cornish Place-Names (1988) by Padel is a general guide to Cornish toponymy. This includes around 1000 names taken from the 1:250,000 OS map (1982 ed.) and a selection of other names relevant to the discussion of this initial selection (1–2). Few Cornish names are addressed in this thesis as they do not tend to fit the etymological or temporal criteria for inclusion (see 1.3.4), but where they are discussed Padel's work has been a significant influence.

Coates' *The Place-Names of Hampshire* (1989) has toponymic material that covers the mainland county of Hampshire – including places that are now in Berkshire, Dorset, and Sussex – but not the Isle of Wight. This dictionary focuses on major names, which Coates takes to include 'all the manors of DB … places mentioned in the fourteenth-century *Nomina villarum*, in the Lay Sibsidy of 1586, on Moule's country map' and the 1:50 000 1984 OS. He acknowledges the contribution of Gover's list of early spellings for Hampshire names, which were gathered in the 1950s, but uses more contemporary scholarship for semantic interpretation. The place-names of the Isle of Wight were treated by Kökeritz (1940), but this has been superseded by Mills' *The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight* (1996), which although owing a debt to this previous work, benefitted from a further fifty years of toponymic scholarship. It includes all settlement names on the latest 1:50,000 OS map and many topographical features both natural and artificial that appear on other maps (7).

Cameron (1998) published *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names* when only five of the Lincolnshire SEPN volumes had been released. Since then, two more have been added to their number (2001, 2010) but the Survey is not yet complete. This dictionary represents place-names recorded by the 1:50 000 OS: comprising parishes, joint-parishes and 'less important names recorded from the 12th to 15th centuries' including lost village names where they appear on the map (xv). This dictionary was invaluable for collecting major name material for areas not covered by the Survey.

The only current SEPN volume for Staffordshire was produced by Oaken (1984) and solely examines Cuttlestone Hundred (PNSt i). Horovitz's *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (2005) therefore provides only the second county-wide survey of Staffordshire names in over one

hundred years.[3] The collection of names was largely based on the availability of reliable early spellings (ii), including some early attestations of names in Totmonslow Hundred that were taken from Oakden's unpublished typescript. Name types include principal place-names, hill-names, and river-names, and obsolete or unlocated names, some of which may not be in the county (ii–iii). Some of the more detailed topographical and historical discussion in this work was particularly useful for the analysis of major names in the Corpus Analysis (see 2.61.1.1 Perton in Tettenhall parish).

Herefordshire Place-Names (Coplestone-Crow 2009) formed the basis of data collection for this county. It was intended to provide an account of the major names of Herefordshire in the absence of a full EPNS survey: including major settlements, district names, hamlets, and farms. Coplestone-Crow acknowledges that the collection of early spellings was incidental rather than the result of a deliberate toponymic survey and that the place-name material is 'heavily weighted' towards pre-1350 sources (ix). This possible bias is unlikely to have affected the collection of names for the Corpus Analysis (see 1.3.4) but may have had some bearing on the inclusion of names for the case-studies, as the criterion for these extends to 1499 (see 1.3.6).

As there are no published EPNS survey volumes for Suffolk, *A Dictionary of Suffolk Place-Names* (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016) aims to provide 'concise explanations of the origin, meaning, and development' of names represented by the 1:50,000 OS map: including hundreds, parishes, towns, villages, and hamlets (xi), but also to highlight a selection of minor and topographical names 'to illustrate the wealth of historical information preserved in names in the landscape' (xxxix). This text has been a valuable source of information for the county, as it draws upon a wide range of previous research and offers some new attestations and interpretations of names.

Supplementary to SEPN and the county dictionaries are dictionaries that deal with the toponymy of the whole country. As a result of their scope, the semantic and topographical discussion is often less detailed for individual names than SEPN and the county dictionaries;

[3] The first being Duignan 1902.

however, they do provide early forms of names, which is especially useful for parts of the country that have little to no coverage otherwise, like Somerset and some parts of Norfolk.[4]

Ekwall's *The Concise Dictionary of English Place-names* (1960) encompasses county names and divisions (excluding hundreds and wapentakes), parishes, villages, estates, hamlets, and farms 'where the names are old', and some topographical names that Ekwall considered 'etymologically interesting' (ix). This sometimes includes names that are mentioned in DB that are now lost or are not considered to be major names by other authors, thus providing early forms of names that are not discussed elsewhere (see 2.7: Appleton Nf; 2.43: Haswell near Goathurst So; 2.58: Maperton So). Unfortunately, it has occasionally omitted names when no early forms were available, when their appearance in the written record was relatively late, or when the modern spelling was considered self-explanatory. Watts (2004, vii) has noted that this latter assumption allows for a biased account, as modern forms are not reliable guides to etymology.

A Dictionary of British Place Names (Mills 2011) presents a selection of 17,000 major names from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. This includes names that appear in the popular OS touring atlases with maps on a scale of three to four miles per inch: encompassing counties, districts (old and new), cities, towns, some villages and hamlets, city suburbs, and many rivers and coastal features (xii). Names are discussed in a concise manner 'based on the evidence and information so far available' (xii) but Mills acknowledges that 'better evidence may yet come to light' (xiii), particularly for those counties where SEPN coverage is limited. As this book was intended for a popular audience, it does not include primary sources beyond DB and like Ekwall (1960) there are no secondary sources listed, although both dictionaries provide a select bibliography of consulted works.

The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names (Watts 2004) includes names that appear in the 1983 *Ordnance Survey Road Atlas of Great Britain*, which encompasses settlements, districts, towns, villages, antiquities, rivers, and other topographical and man-made features that were in use at the time of the OS survey. The focus on names used in the present day

[4] There are three SEPN volumes for Norfolk: the first examines the toponymy of Norwich (1989); the second deals with the hundreds of East and West Flegg, Happing and Tunstead (1996); and the third looks at the hundreds of North and South Erpingham and Holt (2002).

excludes some names of antiquity that have fallen out of use and lost settlement names are only included as a point of comparison to make sense of modern equivalents (viii). The dictionary draws together and often summarises previous scholarship, allowing for cross-referencing with published SEPN volumes and county dictionaries.[5] It is acknowledged that the quality of data provided by SEPN sources varies between earlier and later publications and that as this dictionary relies upon these texts 'the quantity of evidential forms [of names] … varies considerably' (xii). For some names relevant charter forms have been provided, which use the Sawyer referencing system (see 1.2.1.3) and occasionally early forms of names have been included from unpublished material held by the EPNS (xii). It is stated that where there is limited county coverage from SEPN and county dictionaries, Ekwall (1960) has been consulted (xii) and references are made to Smith (1956: see 1.2.1.3) to allow for expansion upon the meaning of individual lexemes (xiv) and on occasion to the first volume of VEPN (Hough 2004, 133). This work aligns with the goals of this thesis perhaps most notably where it comments upon the possible historical, administrative, commercial, or economic significance of names, which sometimes affects the interpretation of their etymology (x); for example, a brief outline of the potential significance of the name-types Acton (see 1.2.3.1; 3.5) and Stanton is offered, as places where oak wood and stone were worked or obtained (ix–x).

The county and nationwide dictionaries are chiefly concerned with extant names that are still visible on modern maps, which means the names of early medieval meeting-places and hundredal divisions are often excluded. Although SEPN does include hundred and wapentake names as the largest division of a county, where there is no Survey coverage it was often necessary to consult Anderson's three volumes on English hundred names. The first of these (1934) addresses 'material relating to the old Anglian counties' (i), by which is meant Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Herefordshire, Huntingdonshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Yorkshire. The second (1939) deals with Berkshire, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Somerset, and Wiltshire; while the third (1939) covers Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Surrey, and Sussex, with an excursus on Cornwall and a list

[5] Hough (2004, 139) notes that there are inconsistencies in the way names with the same elements are glossed throughout the text, with some giving literal translations of the elements and others offering a paraphrased explanation of its possible application, which do not necessarily align with previous scholarship.

surveying the elements found in hundred names country-wide; this latter being particularly useful for cross-referencing tree-related hundred names by element. Where Anderson has provided insights into the locations of meeting-places it has been possible to assess the geological conditions of an area and thus whether these sites were ecologically suited to the tree-species referred to by the name. In some cases, this has helped to reinforce the probability that certain locations were indeed the site of a meeting-place (see 2.8.1: Appletree Hundred Db; 2.63.2: Plomesgate Hundred Sf; 2.80.2: Witheridge Hundred D).

The three-volume series produced by Fellows Jensen on Scandinavian settlement names in the Danelaw area was sometimes used to supplement the interpretation of names gathered from the above discussed texts. *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire* (1972) surveys the Scandinavian and Scandinavianised place-names of this county, to better understand settlement patterns and naming practices. The names included are limited to those recorded in DB, which it can be assumed were 'settlements with a tax-paying population in 1065, if not in 1086' (3). This is not strictly speaking a dictionary as names are arranged and discussed under the headings of common habitative generics; however, these include sections where the relevant names are grouped alphabetically using their present-day spellings, which allows them to be easily searched. There are also parts of the discussion that highlight names with qualifiers that denote vegetation or woodland elements that have been particularly useful for the purposes of this thesis. The publications that followed expanded the survey and built upon the work Fellows Jensen began with Yorkshire: these are *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands* (1978), which covers the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland; and *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West* (1985) that addresses Cheshire, Cumberland, Lancashire, Westmorland, and Dumfriesshire in Scotland.

1.2.1.3 Place-name element dictionaries

Two works have been instrumental for research into tree-name elements in place-names: these are Smith's *English Place-Name Elements* (EPNE) (1956), published as part of the EPNS Survey, and *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names* (VEPN) series (1997–2004), which was also intended to complement SEPN.

EPNE explores the meanings of place-name elements and the frequency with which they appear in English toponyms. It was produced as a companion to SEPN and drew on material from 23 volumes covering 19 counties (VEPN i, vii). Elements are listed alphabetically and

their interpretation draws on previous scholarship, following 'various methods of lexicography': including the use of Old English glossaries and translations from Latin; contextual references from Old and Middle English literary texts; methods of comparative philology with consideration of cognates in other Germanic languages; use of local dialect material; observation of local topographical information; and how elements combine in compounds to give a more exact interpretation of their meaning (EPNE i xxv–xxvii). Lists of names containing the said element appear after the main discussion. These were principally taken from published and unpublished SEPN volumes and allow for cross-referencing with these texts. Smith acknowledges the limits to the scope of this work, noting that it is restricted to the study of elements that appear in major names attested by the late fifteenth century and does not consider names yet to be surveyed by SEPN (ibid xvii).

VEPN was intended as a revision of Smith's work, in light of forty more years of place-name scholarship. It uses a similar alphabetised system of organisation as EPNE but includes all words that are attested by 1750, drawing on both major names and minor names, including field-names and names recorded in medieval charters (VEPN i, vii). Although the inclusion of names is extensive, it is acknowledged that treatment still varies by county depending on the coverage of SEPN and the county and country-wide dictionaries, and that for entries for common elements early examples have generally been chosen over later ones (ibid viii). The Corpus Analysis section of this thesis has largely been modelled upon the structure of element entries in VEPN: with Anglian and standard ON headforms; discussion of the linguistic development of a word; organisation by compound type; and a concluding summary of all names that could contain the element in question, with references to where early attestations of these can be found (see 1.3.5 for explanation of corpus layout).

VEPN's importance for this thesis derives from the more up-to-date research on which it draws; the systematic thoroughness with which it treats each entry; and the extensive cross-referencing system it provides not only to place-name dictionaries and SEPN but also to online sources like the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). Currently, however, VEPN comprises only three volumes with elements up to the word *cock-pit*, beyond which EPNE is the relied upon authority. The Corpus Analysis section of this thesis (Chapter 2) builds upon the treatment of tree elements by both EPNE and VEPN and the contributions of this chapter to our understanding of tree elements beyond **ceagge* are particularly significant, as these have not been explored systematically since EPNE in the 1950s.

As the selection of elements addressed by the present research is much smaller in scale – 82 of some 5,000 elements collected in advance of the VEPN project (VEPN i, vii) – this has allowed for greater depth of analysis. EPNE and VEPN tend to give only brief accounts of the distribution of individual elements where it is particularly noteworthy, as the large scope of these texts did not allow for more detailed exploration. This thesis provides a series of maps organised by species that display the distribution of tree elements and accompany discussion about differences in language use across the country. It considers in greater depth the tree elements that are treated by EPNE and VEPN by considering the ecology of the tree-species in question. This has contributed to possible identification of some more obscure elements (see 2.48 **hlyn*; 2.63 *plūme*) and has sometimes led to the reanalysis of individual names.

1.2.1.4 Key texts that discuss tree-species in place-names

An important work on the arboreal landscape of the early medieval period is Della Hooke's *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England* (2010). This expansive text is divided into three sections: part one looks at the cultural and religious significance of trees to medieval people; part two provides an overview of the arboreal landscape with a focus on natural and managed distributions and trees as landmarks; and part three has chapters that examine tree-types by habitat (e.g. 'Trees of Wood-Pasture and "Ancient Countryside"'), within which are sections that discuss trees by species (e.g. 'The oak and the ash: trees of wood-pasture regions'). Hooke uses place-name and charter evidence throughout to explore the characteristics of tree-species, but some sections make more particular use of toponyms. Chapter Six: 'The Use of Anglo-Saxon Woodland: Place-Name and Charter Evidence' (138–64), considers what charters and place-names can tell us about how trees were used as resources. It discusses charter evidence for woodland use in the south-east (143–8), how this extended to other parts of the country (148–56), and how place-names and charters can provide evidence of woodland management techniques (156–60). Chapter Seven: 'Trees in the Landscape' (165–185), looks at trees as landmarks for early medieval assembly sites as they appear in the hundred and wapentake names treated by Anderson (1934–9) (Table 2: 170) and presents a section on trees as boundary markers in charters (174–84).

Hooke details the religious importance of tree-species, which has provided a helpful cultural context for some of the individual names discussed in the second chapter of this thesis (see 2.1.2 'holy oaks'; 2.28 *ellern*; 2.53 *īw*). Also, of particular use have been the sections that

explore charter evidence for trees as boundary markers and sources of timber, the latter having had some bearing on research into timber-related place-names (see 1.2.3.1). However, the exceptional value of this work lies in the discussion of charter material, which is extensive and demonstrates how rich a source of information this can be for understanding how early medieval people interacted with the arboreal environment. Although Hooke uses place-names as a source of evidence, this does not claim to be a place-name study. It tends to deal with toponymic evidence as it is presented by secondary sources, rather than offering a reappraisal of the primary material. Tree-species in place-names are discussed in section three as a supplementary type of evidence, alongside folklore, religion, ecology, and charter material. These sections give some information about how tree-species compound in place-names and where these names are situated but does not give an account of early forms, phonological development, or discussion surrounding possible alternative etymologies. There are useful maps showing the distributions of tree-species names in charters and place-names, but these generally only display the counties of the south-west where charter material is most abundant. Hooke has modelled the advantages and difficulties of taking an interdisciplinary approach towards the study of trees in the early medieval landscape. This book was an inspiration at the conception of this thesis as it helped to reveal that there would be value in producing an in-depth critical evaluation of toponymic material that considers comparative distributions of tree-species words and compounding practices.

Gelling and Cole's *The Landscape of Place-Names* (2000) provides a detailed overview of topographical place-name elements explored through a series of chapters that categorise, summarise, and compare these elements in relation to the landscape. Their work on topographical woodland place-names (Chapter Six: 220–61) provides a framework through which to understand the compounding practices associated with woodland-related names, many of which compound a tree-name specific and a woodland-related generic. This thesis has allowed for wider exploration of several suggestions made by Gelling and Cole, including their interpretation of OE *holt* as meaning a 'single-species woodland' (see 2.1.4 *āc-holt*), their proposal that OE *lundr* indicated woodland with economic value (see 2.43.4: Hasland Db; 2.63.2: Plumbland Cu), and their discussion of *lēah* as a pseudo-habitative element denoting various forms of agriculture (see 5.4.1: *hnutu-lēah* compounds).

Several papers have been influential on the present work as they take a similarly detailed approach to the examination of individual plant-name elements and serve to demonstrate the wide-ranging potential of these kinds of studies. For example, Cox (1988) examines minor

'gorse' names in Rutland. These names are mapped by element and their distributions are used to assess the linguistic incursion of ON into the county of Rutland. Cole (2003) assesses the significance of 'nettle' names in the landscape of early medieval England. She examines the distribution of some 22 names with a *netel* element in relation to known routeways, particularly Roman roads. A significant proportion of these names are situated close to sites of Roman habitation and stopping places on routeways, which suggests a correlation between nettle names and phosphate-rich soils that may have resulted from animal husbandry and human settlement. Cole (2004) applies the same framework to ON *nata* 'nettle' names and further bolsters her conclusions.

Coates' (1999) provides an exemplary model of an interdisciplinary tree-name study, which has shaped discussion of the OE elements *box* and **byxe* in Chapter Two of this thesis (see 2.22; 2.25). He focuses on the phonological development of *box* and **byxe* and systematically examines all individual examples of place-names with these elements. These are evaluated within their ecological context, and it is assessed whether the natural growth of box was likely at these sites. The historical context of these names is also considered, such as monastic accounts for the use of box and the possible influence Roman cultivation may have had upon its distribution. This comprehensive study was inspiration for the analysis of tree-name material: looking at names both individually and collectively to assess potential patterns in linguistic and environmental distribution. The present research extends strategies employed by Coates to other tree-species elements apparent in English major names.

1.2.1.5 Early medieval charter material and Domesday Book

Early medieval charters provide some of the earliest attestations of place-names and present a wealth of comparative material for early spellings of tree-names. Charters also give information on the wider environmental context within which these trees once stood. They paint a picture of where certain species existed within the landscape, what they looked like, and how they might have been used. It should be noted that charter coverage has a strong southerly bias – particularly Kent, Worcestershire, and the south-west (excluding Cornwall) (Kitson 1995, 50–1) – and that counties outside these areas are not as well represented by charter evidence.

Electronic Sawyer (eSawyer) showcases the research of the British Academy-Royal Historical Society Joint Committee on Anglo-Saxon Charters, known as 'Revised Sawyer', which is an updated version of Sawyer (1968). Sawyer numbers have been used throughout

this thesis to reference charter material and eSawyer has been particularly useful as a source of information concerning the dating of these texts. The entry for each charter lists sources that discuss its authenticity, giving some indication of whether it is a genuine early medieval text or whether it is suspected to be a later forgery. This is important as it ensures that charter material used for comparison with early place-name forms is a contemporary source of information and that the spellings of tree-names are not better representative of the later-medieval or early-modern periods.

The online database LangScape (2008) has also been helpful for research into tree-names in charter bounds. Occasionally it was used as a source of discussion on the translation of texts, as individual entries often provide notes on translation and a list of Variant Readings to explore past scholarship. Principally, however, it was a tool to search for tree-names within charters. The LangScape project has broken down each charter text by word and given those words a standardized headform. These headforms can then be searched to produce a list of all the attestations of this word within the corpus. The number of charters that are glossed and made searchable by headword is extensive, but some archives have yet to be included,[6] which means the list of attestations is not exhaustive. It should therefore be noted that statistics from LangScape used in this thesis are based on an incomplete dataset.

Where Domesday Book entries are discussed within the text beyond the inclusion of place-name spellings, several sources have been consulted: the two most influential being The Hull Domesday Project and Open Domesday. The Hull Domesday project (2007) was completed by Professor Palmer and an AHRC-funded team of researchers. It gives a standardized electronic translation of Domesday Book, with databases of personal names, place-names, and ownership statistics for all people and places. This was assisted by the Phillimore & Co. English translations of Domesday, which are published by county. The Hull Project not only provides extensive commentary on various places and people but also lengthy contextual discussion of the purpose, structure, and terminology of the Domesday survey, which has provided some of the background knowledge for analysis of Domesday entries in this thesis. Open Domesday is an open-access database created by Anna Powell-Smith (2011) using data from the Hull Domesday Project. Open Domesday allows users to search for Domesday entries by place-name and was a source of information about ownership and taxation,

[6] The archives of Crowland, Glastonbury, Winchester Old Minster, Worcester (ex Pershore), and others of uncertain provenance (https://langscape.org.uk/about/archives.html)

especially during case-study research into the size and tax-value of settlements with place-names suggestive of a timber or fruit-producing economy.

1.2.1.6 Other sources for etymological discussion

Discussion of each tree-name in the Corpus Analysis section of this thesis begins by considering the etymological origin and development of these words. The online *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) was used as a starting point for information on etymologies, cognate words, and early attestations. The *Dictionary of Old English: A to I* (DOE) was also useful for providing information on variant OE forms and examples of where these words appear outside of place-names: most notably how they are glossed in early medieval Latin glossaries, which can in situations of ambiguity provide information about the species OE tree-names referred to.[7] Similarly, the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (ONP) gives a contextual understanding of tree-names within the corpus of Old Norse literature: providing information on how trees were perceived within a Scandinavian cultural context and how they were glossed in relation to Latin tree-names. It was also important to consider the development of tree-names into Middle English (ME), especially those names that do not arise in English until after the introduction of Norman French. For this, the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) was consulted, which provides information on tree-names in the ME lexicon from the period of 1100 to 1500.

1.2.2 Historical ecology and landscape history

Texts on ecology and landscape history are treated together here because the history of trees in the landscape cannot be divorced from tree-species habitats. Rackham (2003 xi) calls this 'historical ecology' and describes this field as seeking 'to interpret the natural and artificial factors that have influenced the development of an area of vegetation to its present state'. With very few exceptions, trees from early medieval England are no longer extant in the landscape; however, understanding the historical ecology of an area can give some indication of the species that may once have existed at a site and can provide evidence to support or cast doubt upon whether place-names could contain a particular tree element. Analysing tree-names therefore contributes not only to our understanding of the development of language throughout England, but also helps to map the distribution of tree-species during the early

[7] This project currently extends only to OE words beginning with I, which excludes a large proportion of the tree-name headwords in this thesis.

medieval period and adds to our knowledge of the ecological characteristics of the landscape at this time. For example, this thesis potentially challenges the traditional view that the distribution of beech was purely southerly until early-modern planting extended its limit northwards (see 2.21 *bōc*) and supports the suggestion that sweet chestnut is a species that may have been introduced during the early medieval period (see 5.4).

It is necessary again to mention the contributions of Della Hooke. In particular, her 2010 book and paper on 'The Woodland Landscape of Early Medieval England' (2011) make valuable contributions to the study of the early medieval arboreal landscape. The latter focuses on the use of woodlands as a resource: primarily as wood pasture, sources of timber and fuel, and as a location for hunting. However, this thesis has largely made use of Hooke's work where she discusses charter bounds and toponymic material, and her book has therefore been discussed in the requisite section above (see 1.2.1.4).

The extensive body of research on the treed landscape of Britain by Oliver Rackham has been essential to the development of present research. Rackham was concerned with both the biology of woods and the ways in which humans interacted with them: that is to say both the science of ecology and landscape history. The most influential of these works in understanding the ecology of early medieval England has been *Ancient Woodland* (2003), which mainly focuses on ancient woodland (over 500 years old) with a 'substantial natural element' (xi). This is a seminal work that considers why ancient English woods are of so many different kinds and how we can categorise and understand each type. Rackham uses many examples from further afield, but this work is mainly based on his studies of woodland in Eastern England (xiii). He breaks down the discussion into chapters that introduce the history of woodland and the sources that are useful for understanding this topic; he looks at soil types, woodland flora, and the relationships between tree-species; he examines the economic and social history of woodland and how people have interacted with these environments; and he considers how trees were used as resources in material culture. The chapters about different types of woodland are particularly useful for the study of tree-names, as they give an idea of the environments tree-names might have referred to, such as the distribution and ecological characteristics of western oakwoods that are likely reflected in *āc-tūn* names (see 3.5) and the ubiquity of eastern elmwoods that appear to be paralleled in the elm names of East Anglia (see 2.29.1).

Rackham's *Trees and woodland in the British landscape* (1990) provides an important backdrop for understanding the development of woodland in England, most notably the section on Domesday Book (48–54), which gives an estimation of woodland as a percentage of land area by county. This is explored at greater length in a chapter of *Ancient Woodland* (2003, 111–27), where some thought is given to the distribution of place-names that indicate woodland, in particular those with the elements *lēah*, *hyrst*, and *þveit* (128–30). For the purposes of this thesis, this contributed to a general understanding of the arboreal environment in the eleventh century and in particular influenced discussion of the distribution of thorn names in relation to woodland coverage (see 2.72 *þorn*).

Rackham's *Woodlands* (2010) explores the ecological properties of trees and woodlands. He stresses the importance of considering trees as part of a wider ecosystem contingent on environmental pressures and human influences but continues to uphold the importance of individual woodland case-studies. This attitude lends itself well to studying tree-names where large-scale patterns of species distribution can be observed, but for which there is still merit in detailed examination of particular name types and the areas these names proliferate. An example is the industrial woodland surrounding Droitwich, which is evident not only in the historical record but also in the woodland-related toponyms of the surrounding area (see 3.6). Rackham's book mainly discusses trees in Britain but provides comparative examples on a global scale, as it is 'instructive to compare the interactions of broadly similar human cultures with much the same trees' (11). Again, this is an approach taken within this thesis, in particular within the case-studies on orchards (see 4.2) and nut-trees (see 5.4.1), where parallels are drawn between the early medieval landscapes of England, France, and Italy (see 1.2.3.4).[8]

Peterken's *Woodland Conservation and Management* (1993) is aimed at conservationists and ecologists and provides an in-depth exploration of different types of British woodland and their landscape contexts. Peterken explores among other topics the ecological characteristics of ancient woodlands and traditional techniques used to manage them. For the purposes of present research, the chapter on 'Types of ancient semi-natural woodland' (117–74) has been

[8] Much uncited knowledge throughout this thesis concerning woodland ecology and traditional woodland management techniques was gained on the Field Studies Council *Ancient Woodlands of Britain* course in May of 2019. This five-day course was originally conceived and led by Oliver Rackham but since 2015 has been run by Gary Battell, Simon Leatherdale, and Johnathan Spencer. Many of the photographs used throughout this thesis were taken on course excursions.

the most illustrative. It follows a similar approach to Rackham's (2003) break-down of woodland types by species – with a wide variety of real-life examples – but provides a more complex system of categorisation with specific distributions and details concerning secondary species and suitable soil-types. This chapter has been cited regularly as it contributes a more nuanced understanding of arboreal environments that may have given rise to some of the place-names discussed herein.

Tom Williamson and Gerry Barnes have co-written several books on ancient woodland landscapes, the most relevant here being *Rethinking Ancient Woodland* (2015) and *Trees in England: management and disease since 1600* (2017), which have provided some of the background knowledge on historical ecology and landscape history necessary for the execution of this thesis. Another important work is *The Orchards of Eastern England* (2021), which has been influential for the case-study on orchard place-names (see 1.2.3.2).

Throughout this thesis references are made to the *Collins Tree Guide* (Johnson and More 2004) and to the *European Atlas of Forest Tree Species* (EAFTS), which discuss among other things the characteristics of tree-species, the environments they are typically found in, and in some cases how they have traditionally been used by humans. EAFTS is the more detailed of the two and presents a series of useful maps for each entry that display the modern natural European distribution of the species in question. Rackham's *The Ash Tree* (2014) is small but densely packed with information on *Fraxinus excelsior*, the common or European ash, which is the second most frequently referenced tree in English major names attested by 1200 (see *Tab.1*; 2.10 *æsc*). It has helped particularly in the formation of conclusions concerning ash-trees as a source of timber (see 3.7). Similarly, Aljos Farjon's *Ancient oaks in the English landscape* (2017) serves to illustrate the endurance of oak-trees and their resulting importance in the formation of the countryside we are familiar with today, which has helped in developing a general understanding of oak environments: their use, characteristics, and longevity.

1.2.3 Case-studies: research context

Some place-names appear to identify a single tree or group of trees as a landmark with distinct characteristics, as is the case for many tree-names with an *āc* generic and a qualifying specific (see 2.1.2). However, some of the most recurrent tree-name compounds in the English toponymicon communicate no special characteristics and refer to species that were likely ubiquitous throughout England, which raises the question of why they are so recurrent.

Hough proposes that common place-name compounds can often be explained not by their uniqueness but because they were 'prototypical' and the '"best examples", of their kind' in the area (Hough 2007, 105–7). OE *brōm* regularly compounds with the generic OE *feld* (see 2.23.4), giving the sense 'open land growing with broom'. Broom is a common species of open land and is found throughout England, so the name cannot have arisen due to its rarity but instead because that particular *feld* had more broom than the land surrounding it.

Hough (2007, 107; 120)[9] further suggests that some recurrent compounds should perhaps be considered to have been 'ready-made' place-names that identified a commonly found feature or settlement-type with potential economic, political, or social connotations. These case-studies look at recurrent compounds that likely named locations where particular arboricultural practices took place. These would have been consistent not only with favourable environmental conditions but also the social and economic preoccupations of the people who existed in that area. For example, the compound *hnutu-lēah* (see 1.2.3.1; 5.4.1) has implications for understanding how nut-producing tree-species were exploited and why these sites may have been valued above other places where nuts could be had.

When examining recurrent tree-name compounds it is necessary to look at the body of work that deals with 'functional' *tūn* names. This is an expression that refers to a group of settlements with the generic element OE *tūn* 'farmstead, settlement', that have 'an asset or responsibility beyond the usual farming activities' (Cole 2012, 243). It is a foundational concept in much of the work of Margaret Gelling and Anne Cole and has been adopted and developed by other onomasts and scholars in related fields (see Blair 2007, 193–201). Gelling (1984) writes about the possibility of *wudu-tūn*, 'wood farm', names having indicated places with 'a special function in relation to the wood and its products' (227), a view later explored further by Gelling and Cole (2000, 258). Cole has investigated several compounds that are potentially illustrative of the 'functional *tūn*' type, including *netel-tūn* names (see 1.2.1.4) and *ēa-tūn* names (also treated by Gelling in PNSa i 114–15), which she suggests functioned as places that provided a ferry service or kept the waterway open for navigation (2007, 80). In '*Tūns* by the wayside' (2012), she considers *tūn* names that 'are closely connected with major routeways and that appear to have a function connected with the needs of road users' (243). This paper discusses *āc-tūn* names as a comparative name-type to *strǣt-tūn*, 'street farm, settlement', and states that 'there is a high probability that the distribution of the *āc-tūn*s

[9] On the strength of discussion put forth by Nicolaison (1982, 95–115) and with other accompanying examples.

(Acton) with respect to routes is random', in contrast with *strǣt-tūn*s that correlate closely with roads (ibid 244). This statement is examined in the timber-names case-study and an explanation is offered as to how these sites could have been an active part of the woodland economy despite their relative distance from major known routeways (see 3.6).

Coates (2012) builds upon the ideas of Gelling and Cole and explores whether there was a 'coherent understanding of *tūn* as a superordinate category' of settlement (211). He focuses on '"agricultural compounds"', which are names with a first element 'of direct agricultural significance' to try and understand the range of meanings these may have possessed (213). This includes *tūn* compounds with a tree-name specific, separated into 'Crop-trees': *æppel*, *pirige*, *peru*, *plūme*, *āc*, *hæsel*; and 'Wood-trees (i.e., trees grown for their timber or their branches or withes or perhaps bast)': *wudu*, *grāf*, *bæst*, *āc*, *alor*, *æsc*, *beorc*, *birce*, *bōc*, *elm*, *hæsel*, *īw*, *lind*, *mapul*, *sealg*, *þorn*, *welig*/*wilig*(*n*), *wiðig*(*n*). Coates notes the 'marked regionality' of four of these compound types, including the *āc-tūn* and *þorn-tūn* distributions mentioned by Gelling (PNSa i 3: see 1.2.3.1); the 'strikingly northern' pattern for *wiðig*(*n*)-*tūn*; and the correlation of Boughton (*bōc-tūn*) names with Kent (220): each of which is explored and challenged throughout this thesis. He concludes this discussion by suggesting that 'no special pattern correlating these groups with the use of *tūn* is discernible' (221), meaning that compounds may have had a different significance dependent on species and those denoting more useful trees are more likely to have been 'functional' names. Coates emphasises the importance of considering the ecology and evaluating the functionality of *tūn* names with a flora-related specific, i.e., whether there may have been a 'formalized network of economic exchange and responsibilities' that precluded 'more basic, i.e., subsistence-oriented, agriculture at the place so named' (227). These suggestions have been particularly useful when considering the possible 'functionality' of *tūn* names with a tree-species specific that could indicate timber (see 1.2.3.1; 3.7) or fruit production (see 1.2.3.2; 4.4), as well as other recurrent compounds like *āc-lēah* (see 2.1.4.1) and *hnutu-lēah* (see 1.2.3.3; 5.4). The present work supports and develops some of the previously suggested explanations for these types of compounds and has the potential to further our understanding of 'functional *tūn*' names in general.

1.2.3.1 The toponymy of timber: research context

Chapter three looks at how place-names can provide information about the use of trees as a source of timber and coppice wood in early medieval England. The place-name compound

OE *āc-tūn* ‘oak farm, settlement’ is of particular note in this case-study and has several times been a point of discussion in the area of toponymic scholarship concerned with ‘functional *tūn*’ names. In *The Place-Names of Shropshire*, Gelling presents a short and ‘most tentative’ discourse on the recurrent Shropshire compound *āc-tūn* (PNSa i 4). In this she notes the limited distribution of *āc-tūn* names in the north-west and *þorn-tūn* names in the East Midlands and north-east and suggests that something about the so-named settlements was particular to these regions (3). Her explanation for *āc-tūn* is that these were settlements with ‘special functions in the processing or distribution of timber’ and that they were probably ‘component parts of large multiple estates’ (3). She later expands upon this to explain how five of the eight Shropshire examples were smaller settlements within large parishes and that in DB the three Acton parish names were modest in size and probably resulted from the earlier division of larger estates (Gelling 1992, 124). Watts (2004, 2–3) clearly draws upon Gelling’s suggestion and for Acton place-names gives the etymology, ‘farm, estate where oak is worked’; he develops this by mentioning some of the particular qualities of oak that would have made it a desirable resource worthy of management: including the properties of its wood for construction, its acorns as a source of pannage, and its bark as a means of tanning leather. Regarding Gelling’s proposition concerning the functionality of *āc-tūn*s in Shropshire, Coates (2012, 220) states that this cluster ‘might well be taken to suggest a function within a well-understood pattern of at least local import’. These propositions are explored at length in the sections of this case-study that investigate *āc-tūn* names (see 3.5; 3.6): considering whether these settlements were ecologically viable; their distribution as it relates to regional geology and climate; how they may have looked; and how they functioned within the larger economic environment.

The research background necessary for understanding early medieval building practices is varied and texts from a range of disciplines were consulted. Archaeological reports often provide information about the species of trees used in the construction of excavated sites and on rare occasions extant medieval buildings; while historical documents sometimes preserve information about the value of timber species, usually in the context of trade or taxation. The texts discussed below were arguably the most influential in the development of this case-study, but it should be acknowledged that a good many more have contributed information and are cited throughout.

Hooke’s 2010 and 2011 publications must again be noted as an influence where they discuss woodland used for timber and principally where she has employed charter evidence to

discuss woodland management and laws relating to woodland ownership. Rackham's (2003, 457–66) chapter on 'Trees and Ancient Buildings' contains a wealth of information concerning the use of different species of tree for timber and coppice wood; he elaborates on past preferences for certain species as sources of timber and underwood and explores how extensively these feature in extant medieval buildings.

Trees, Timber and Woodland in the Anglo-Saxon World (Bintley and Shapland, eds, 2013) was a major influence on thinking about the how early medieval people perceived trees and the importance of wood as a resource in the early medieval period. The editors divided the book thematically: the first part deals with 'Timber in Anglo-Saxon building practice' (21–106); the second looks at 'Perceptions of Wood and Wooden Objects (107–176); and the third at 'Trees and Woodland in Anglo-Saxon Belief' (177–250). Part One has been the most influential as its papers discuss the material landscape: chiefly evidence for the use of timber and timber place-names in buildings and structures (see 3.3; 3.4).

Waterways and Canal-Building in Medieval England (Blair (ed.) 2007) has several papers that have contributed to discussion of the built environment of early medieval England. Some address later-medieval evidence and were useful for comparative purposes and consideration of technological developments over time; however, more valuable were those studies that focus on historical and archaeological evidence for timber and wood in the infrastructure of early medieval waterways. This case-study consulted several papers on topics ranging from the reinforcement of canals using wooden revetments (Bond 2007, Hollinrake 2007); the species of tree that were used in construction of bridges, weirs, and fishtraps (Hooke 2007); and how wood was likely transported along rivers and was perhaps the means by which other goods were transported as well (Blair 2007).

Blair's *Building Anglo-Saxon England* (2018) is a crucial text that explores the built environment of the early medieval period. Part one begins by considering the landscape and how it might have featured in the consciousness of its people. Parts two through four then take a chronological approach towards a range of related topics, most notably: how building techniques for the construction of dwellings changed over time and by region; how settlement patterns developed alongside changes in industry and commerce; and what the infrastructure of centralised administration looked like, both ecclesiastical and secular. Blair builds upon preceding scholarship on these subjects and draws together many topics from different disciplines, including archaeology, landscape history, and toponymy. This book has acted as

a general guide to understanding early medieval building techniques and has helped to develop specific points of discussion within this case-study; for example, Blair addresses 'functional *tūn*' names (193–201), which serves to demonstrate how a toponymic theory can be applied to support a broader interdisciplinary discussion of settlement patterns.

1.2.3.2 'Orchard' place-names: research context

Excepting a few key texts, discussion of the significance of fruit-tree 'orchard' compounds that have the generic *tūn* and *bȳ* has been limited. More has been written on medieval orchards and fruit-tree cultivation in other fields of study, but these generally do not consider the significant role place-names can play in our understanding of the horticultural landscape. Chapter four takes an interdisciplinary approach towards the examination of 'orchard' names and builds upon the research discussed below to explore the potential of place-names as evidence for horticultural production of fruit in early medieval England. Much of the discussion above about 'functional' *tūn* names has had bearing upon the development of this case-study (see 1.2.3.1). Coates (2012, 219–21) in particular explores the possible meanings of tree-names that compound with *tūn* and how for some species these settlements may have had a specialized economic significance. He cites Cullen (1997, 588) in supporting this view where it concerns *æppel-tūn* names and suggests that the recurrent compound *pirige-tūn* was probably a lexical word like *æppel-tūn*, that meant 'pear orchard' (see 4.4.1).

Another publication that deals with the compound *æppel-tūn* is Banham's '*Lectun* and *orceard*' article (2014). In this, she examines gardens and orchards in early medieval England using a range of historical sources to describe how they might have looked and the horticultural purposes some sites may have had. Of particular use was the discussion of the various meanings of 'orchard' words – most notably *orceard* and *æppel-tūn* – as presented by monastic texts like the *Liber Eliensis*, Old English *Pastoral Care*, early medieval glossaries, and the treatise *Gerefa* (40–2). Another section concerns lay versus ecclesiastical gardens (43–7), where Banham stresses that most knowledge of gardens of the era comes from ecclesiastical sources and it is unclear whether these views can be applied to the wider system of horticulture in early medieval England. Chapter four builds upon Banham's suggestions of horticultural production by expanding the discussion to encompass the rich source of information provided by toponymic evidence.

Hooke (2010) has a section that summarises the significance of fruit-trees in the early medieval period. It begins with a brief discussion of the historical evidence for orchards and

lists some examples of the word *orceard* 'orchard' that appear in charter bounds and place-names (245–6). She considers the prominence of apple as the 'commonest fruit-bearing tree' that is mentioned in medieval sources: looking at its use in Christian symbolism and as an ingredient in early medieval medicine (247–9); she then gives a short account of how it typically appears in charter bounds and place-names (249–50) before moving on to consider charter and place-name evidence for pear-trees (251–2) and plum-trees (252). This is a useful overview of the types of evidence that can be used to assess fruit-tree cultivation in early medieval England. It was impactful on the present research as it inspired early thoughts on the topic, which then formed a basis for further investigation.

Other works have been important in the formation of this case-study but do not necessarily deal directly with the place-name compounds central to the discussion. They instead explore the history, archaeology, and ecology of domesticated fruit-tree cultivation in England, which provides background context for the consideration of fruit-tree names. These include 'New Plant Foods in Roman Britain' (van der Veen et al. 2008) and *Domestication of Plants in the Old World* (Zohary et al. 2012), both of which provide information about the Roman introduction of domesticated species to Britain and the legacy of cultivation that likely persisted into the early medieval period. Knowledge on the use of fruit as a source of food in early medieval England was principally taken from Hagen's *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Food* (1998) and Banham's *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England* (2004). Barnes and Williamson's *The Orchards of Eastern England* (2021) provides useful discourse on the probable evolution of orchard sites, although it is principally concerned with the post-medieval period. Interestingly, the area of focus for this study – chiefly the counties of East Anglia – is a region with few examples of early medieval 'orchard' names, which is possibly a result of both regional differences in naming practices and changes in land use over time.

1.2.3.3 OE *hnutu* and nut-tree place-names: research context

The field of toponymy has not previously produced a comprehensive survey of early-medieval nut-tree place-names. OE *hnutu* is simply glossed as 'nut' in early toponymic sources (PNSx i 231, ii 350; PND ii 601; PNEss 293; PNHrt 183–4; PNNt 149; EPNE i 254; Ekwall 1960, 345) and in more recent scholarship is generally either defined as 'nut-tree' (Mills 1996, 74; Watts 2004 445–6; Mills 2011, 350; Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 103), or is suggested to have implied hazel-tree(s) (Coates 1989, 125; LPN 240, 247, 253; Hooke 2010, 254). PNSr (302) is the only early exception that proposed a possible species designation

from hazel (see 5.2). This case-study attempts to identify whether hazel is indeed the species that was meant by *hnutu* in the majority of examples, and if this was the case why OE *hæsel* was not used instead. To do this an interdisciplinary approach was necessary that considered other comparative forms of evidence.

This case-study proposes that some *hnutu* names could have been sites with sweet chestnut trees. The antiquarian view is that sweet chestnut originated with Roman settlement; however, more recent scholarship has called this into question. Research by Jarman et al (2017, 2019a, 2019b) reassesses the Roman evidence for sweet chestnut from archaeological contexts and suggests all examples of chestnuts or sweet chestnut wood are likely to have been imported. It states this species is perhaps an early medieval introduction that is not conclusively recorded until the twelfth century and that many sweet chestnut woods in England have close ties to western European genepools (see 5.2: sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*); also 5.3). This case-study tentatively supports the theory of an early-medieval introduction of sweet chestnut, by exploring the possibility that this species was represented by some *hnutu* place-names earlier than it appears in the historical record.

Woodland-related generic elements are the most common type to compound with *hnutu* and of these OE *lēah* is the most recurrent (see 5.4.1.1). This fact necessitated an examination of the various ways *lēah* can be interpreted, as it is a widely discussed element in toponymic scholarship. The most cogent arguments are summarised and developed by Wager (2017, 118) who states that the connotations of the element *lēah* may have changed depending on region and time period and that we need not attempt to reconcile the seemingly opposing suggestions of 'clearing' and 'woodland'. A *lēah* should instead be thought of as 'a light area amidst or surrounded by woodland', which allows for the inclusion of both natural woodland and manmade clearings with a variety of functions (118). While considering these possible functions, other publications were also important. Faith (2012) builds upon Hooke's (2008) suggestions of a wood-pasture connection and the probable agricultural flexibility and economic diversity of *lēah* sites in contrast with more formalised *tūn*-named settlements. Faith and Banham (2014, 214) have a chapter dedicated to the discussion of woodland settlements that develops suggestions of contrast between more regulated and specifically functional *tūn*-named farms and *lēah*s, which may originally have 'signified an area, not a specific place in the way that a *tūn* did'.

Squatriti's *Landscape and Change in Early Medieval Italy: Chestnuts, Economy, and Culture* (2013) details the impact of sweet chestnut cultivation on the economy of early medieval Italy and has great comparative merit when considering how *hnutu-lēah* names could have indicated wood-pasture or subsistence agriculture. Medieval preoccupation with this species helped to transform the post-Roman landscape and Squatriti provides a wealth of information on the system of horticulture this engendered. Through textual analysis and a series of case-studies, he paints a detailed picture of grove-like agriculturally-diverse regions of woodland that were, among other outputs, geared towards the production of sweet chestnuts. This has been taken as a possible comparative model for the type of site a *hnutu-lēah* name may have represented (see 5.4.1), which potentially has greater implications for the study of *lēah* names in general.

1.3 Methodological approaches and structure of thesis

1.3.1 Chapter Two: Corpus analysis methodology and structure

When assembling the corpus of tree place-names, the first, and arguably the more important, concern was the semantic categorisation of tree words in early medieval England and which elements should be included in the corpus of tree place-names (see 1.3.2). The second was how to set appropriate parameters to ensure that the material was sufficiently comprehensive but manageable, and clearly representative of early medieval naming (see 1.3.4).

1.3.2 What was a tree in early medieval England?

The question of how early medieval people perceived trees does not have a straightforward answer. It can perhaps be assumed, much like the common modern understanding, that trees were thought to be tall perennial plants, with bark-covered trunks and branches that bear leaves of different shapes and sizes. Modern perceptions, however, have likely been peripherally influenced by the development of the scientific method, which has resulted in a system of taxonomic classification of organisms that allows for grouping by genetic similarity. Although it is evident that in early medieval England trees were recognised as having unique characteristics and as such, were called by different names, it is not clear whether this recognition followed any system of classification; in fact, it seems unlikely. This project follows the system of classification outlined in *A Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE), which highlights the difficulty that exists in categorizing OE words using a modern approach: it states that '[as] far as possible, we tried to be guided by what we knew of the Anglo-Saxon world-view rather than by modern taxonomies', for example, 'Animal might not impress a

modern zoologist, but seems to us to indicate the priorities reflected in the vocabulary' (TOE: Classification: Classifying the meanings).

A similar strategy was taken towards classification of animals and plants by the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE), where a 'modified folk taxonomy' was established, in which 'the naïve view may be combined with one that is more informed' (HTE: Classification: Principles and Practices). Taylor (1995) describes folk taxonomies as being 'grounded in the way people normally perceive and interact with their environment'. This is emphasised by O'Hare (2004, 181–4) who addresses the complications that arose when developing the HTE and attempting to follow a system of folk classification. She stresses the importance of considering the cultural importance of plants, not so much how they appeared but how they were used: meaning that the status of a plant was fluid and if its use changed so too could the perception of it. In *Folk Taxonomies in Early English*, Anderson (2003) observes that three characteristics consistently contribute to the universal understanding of what a tree is thought to be: size, woodiness, and utility. He notes that in 'two-thirds of the languages that lexicalize "tree", the term for "tree" also means "wood"', which emphasises the importance not only of the composition of the plant but also its utility; a feature that is borne out in OE with the words *bēam* and *trēow* (Anderson 2003, 357).

Using the above observations as a guiding principle, several approaches have been taken to establish the criteria for what a tree was thought to be in early medieval England. The first and simplest of these is to include species that are attested in OE literature in compound with the elements *bēam* (DOE: bēam, n.1.1.; OED: beam, n.1.) and *trēow* (OED: tree, n.1), both meaning 'tree'. This includes species that are taxonomically categorised as trees today, but also some species of shrub and vine. Today a shrub is defined as a perennial woody plant, often smaller than a tree, that has several main stems from its root base rather than a single trunk (Allaby 2019: shrub); however, Rackham (1990, 4) observes that this distinction is often not straightforward even in the modern day, especially when trees like ash and oak have been grown in a multi-stem form.

The word shrub derives from OE *scrybb*, *scrybbe*. The OED (shrub, n.1: etymology) glosses this word as having meant 'shrubbery or underwood' in early English, while Bosworth Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Bosworth-Toller: *scrybb*) gives the sense 'scrub, underwood, shrubbery'. It closely parallels Danish dialect *skrub* 'brushwood' and North Frisian *skrobb* 'broom, underwood, brushwood' (OED: shrub, n.1). However, although it has

an OE origin, according to *English Place-Name Elements* (EPNE ii 115) *scrybb* is only attested once in OE literature. There are also only two early-medieval charter attestations (S1165, S1486) and no definitive use in place-names of the period,[10] which altogether suggests it was perhaps not a commonly used word. This contrasts *bēam* and *trēow*, which are not only well-attested in OE literature, but have many early charter[11] and place-name attestations (*bēam*[12]: EPNE i 21; *trēow*: EPNE ii 186–7). HTE places OE *scrybb*, alongside OE *busc*, OE *feax*, and OE *þyfel* under the heading 'shrub/bush', while TOE categorises *scrybb* as 'thicket', along with a range of other words, like *bysc*, *gewrid*, *þiccet*, *þúft*, and *trēow-gewrid* 'tree thicket' (Bosworth-Toller).

The Vocabulary of English Place-Names (VEPN iii 94–5) details the development and use of OE *busc* in place-names and gives many later-medieval examples, but points out that *busc*, like *scrybb*, is only attested once in OE in the eleventh-century charter bounds for fenland at Whittlesey Mere Hu (S1463), where it is represented as *wiðibuscemære* 'withy-bush mere'. This reference to a withy-bush illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing between tree and shrub species in medieval sources. Although the withy is here called a bush, it is not clear which species this refers to and whether it would better be classified as a tree in a modern context.

According to the OED (withy, n.1.a.) a withy is 'a willow of any species, sometimes *spec.* the osier willow, *Salix viminalis*'. All willows (and sallows) are of the *Salix* genus (Allaby 2019: *Salix*), of which there are nineteen native species in the United Kingdom (Rotherham 2022, 2502), some considered to be trees and some shrubs, placing *Salix* among the most numerous species for a single genus in Britain. There are a probable 11 early medieval English words for *Salix* species (*Fig.1*), but these do not clearly correspond with modern identifications. While it could be the case that *welig* names indicated willow-named species and *sealh* is an

[10] Shrubs Hill Sr (*Sorbeshull* 1225, *Shrubs Hill* 1607) may be the same as the place called *shrubbeshedde* in the seventh-century charter bounds for Edham estate (mentioned above: S1165) (PNSr 124). Shrub names begin to appear in the English toponymicon from the thirteenth century: Bushrubs Wood Nth (*Buchscrub* c.1220), Repton Shrubs (*le Scrub* 1200–18, c.1260; *Schrybbe* 1415), Shrub End Ess (*Screb* a.1272, *Srobbe* 1272, *Shrobben* 1276), Shrub Farm and Wood in Burwash parish Sx (*voc. Srubbe*, *bosc. voc. Shrobbe* 1288; *Shrobbe* 1309), and Shrub Ho Wi (*la Schrubbe*, *la Scrobbe* 1354).

[11] According to LangScape there are 18 occurrences of *bēam* in charters and 187 occurrences of *trēow*.

[12] It should be noted that some of these may have referred to worked wood, rather than a living tree, like the modern sense of beam.

early identifier of sallow, this cannot be substantiated (see 2.67 *sealh*). Even today the distinction between sallows and willows is unclear, with the common sallow (*Salix cinerea*) also popularly known as the grey or pussy willow.

The questionable differences between tree and shrub species in medieval England is evident in how some tree words are compounded in place-names and charters. There appears to have been a difference in meaning between the elements *þorn* and *þyrne*; both mean 'thorn', but the latter is seen more often in charters with qualifying elements that suggest it was a word used primarily of thorny shrubs or bushes, in contrast with *þorn*, which appears to have indicated larger trees (see 2.73 *þyrne*). Gorse is technically a shrub (*Ulex europaeus*) but the compound *gorst-bēam*, 'gorse-tree', is attested in OE literature (DOE: gorst-bēam, n.1) and *gorst* glosses several Latin words, including *rubus* 'bramble', *sentis* 'thorn, brier', *tribulus* 'thorn, thistle', and *iuniperus* 'juniper' (DOE: gorst, n.1). This suggests the meaning of *gorst* was more diverse than a tree-name like *æsc* 'ash', which is simply glossed as Lat. *Fraxinus* (DOE: æsc, n.1.1). Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) is another difficult to define example, as it too is technically a shrub, but even today is sometimes called a hazel-tree. It is first attested in literature as a hazel-tree by the fifteenth century (MED: hazel, n.2.a; OED: hazel tree, n.) and a possible early-medieval place-name example is *Hesetre* He, OE *hæsel-trēow*. There are no parallel examples of this compound in early-medieval charter bounds, but hazel seems to have been treated as a tree, with qualifying adjectives like those used of *æppel-trēow* (see 2.43: *hæsel*).

While compounding practices are useful, other criteria can also help to suggest which species may have been thought of as trees in the early medieval period. Rackham (2003, 74; 203) suggests that when it comes to large woodland species like hazel and sallow, these can be counted as trees when they form part of the underwood rather than the shrub layer and are no less woodland-forming trees than species like ash and maple. A similar perception may have existed in early medieval England if a shrub species was commonly found in woodland and behaved in a manner similar to the trees around it. It is also possible that a species could have been classified both as a tree and a non-tree, in accordance with its appearance, usefulness, and the environment in which it existed. For example, *bremel* 'bramble, blackberry' was sometimes included in lists of tree-names in OE glossaries, but more often appears to have been thought of as a *wyrt* 'herb, plant', especially in medical texts (Anderson 2003, 377; 383). One of the limitations of using glossaries and medical texts as evidence is that they were constructed within an ecclesiastical environment, by learned people who were

attempting to rationalise the world around them through the translation and classification of knowledge, both domestic and foreign (Kesling 2020, 1–7). This attitude may not have been reflective of the vast majority of people living in the landscape and naming the features with which they interacted. It is possible that to the layman all tall woody plants were called trees if they behaved like trees, regardless of species.

In summary, the primary approach to collecting names for this corpus has been to include all major names attested by the end of the twelfth century that have an element denoting a tree-species, by which is meant a word that compounds with an OE word for tree (*bēam*, *treōw*) either in place-names or OE literature. However, further to this are elements that appear to denote a species that could reasonably be identified as a tree by merit of its woodiness (bark and sapwood), its size, its perennial nature, its presence as underwood, or its usefulness as a source of good timber or coppice wood. These criteria further support the inclusion in this corpus of a species like hazel, for which there is only one potential example (in both literature and place-names) of OE *hæsel* compounding with a tree word (see 2.43: *Hesetre* He). Most of the tree-species names included in this corpus are recurrent (see 1.3.5; *Fig.1*), although some like **mispeler* 'medlar' or *æspe* 'aspen', are rare, which potentially reflects their uncommonness, lack of notability in the landscape, or lack of usefulness as a resource.

1.3.3 Native tree-species that are not clearly apparent in major names

It is interesting to note that some native tree-species appear to be entirely absent from the corpus of early medieval major names. This could be for several reasons, some of which are explored here through the species that are particularly notable by their absence. The principal causes were likely to have been environmental, perhaps reflecting the general distribution of a species, or that the tree was in some manner unsuitable or inconvenient for human use. An example of the latter may be the relative scarcity of *gorst* 'gorse' in major names compared with *brōm* 'broom'. These species are related, both are of the *Fabaceae* family; they produce bright yellow flowers and grow in similar environments, but the lack of spines on broom make it much easier to handle and therefore potentially more useful, which is perhaps the reason it is a more common place-name element (see 2.23 *brōm*).

Although some elements identify evergreen species like yew (*īw*, *īg*), gorse (*furze*, *gorst*, **hvin*), holly (*holegn*), and box (*box*, **byxe*), there are no medieval major names that refer to large conifers like the native Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Pine wood is easy to work and was used as a structural timber in the medieval period; however, the earliest extant examples are

from the thirteenth century, and these appear always to have been imported (Rackham 2003, 463). OE *pīn* does occur in early medieval glossaries where it glosses Lat. *pinus* (OED: pine, n.2.1.a.; Bosworth-Toller: *pīn-trēow*, *pīn-bēam*), but Hooke (2010, 275) notes that this is not in an English context and that it does not appear in charter bounds of the early medieval period. The absence of pine in the early medieval toponymicon can presumably largely be attributed to its natural distribution, as the regions of England where major names proliferate, namely fertile lowland areas, were not a natural environment for this species (Johnson 2004, 122; *European Atlas of Forest Tree Species* (EAFTS) 132). The name Pantry Bridge W (*Pyntrowebrygge* 1362) is a rare medieval example. The Place-Names of Wiltshire (PNW 163) suggests this was 'a bridge made of pine-wood or (less probably) near a pine-tree'. If this was a bridge made of pine, then the inclusion of *trēow* could mean that it consisted of a single tree-trunk rather than planks of pine wood, a literal 'pine-tree bridge', but the use of *trēow* perhaps counts against a pine bridge etymology and 'bridge by the pine-tree(s)' may be more likely.

The scarcity of references to rowan (*Sorbus acuparia*), a word deriving from ON **raun* (OED: rowan, n.1.: etymology), but also known as OE *cwic-bēam* (ME *quickbeam*), may, like pine, be due to the ecological preferences of this tree for upland areas, where major names are less common. The natural distribution of rowan in locations of high altitude has led to the development of the common name 'mountain ash'. The word rowan is not attested in literature until the fifteenth century and then chiefly as a description of the tree's red berries (OED: rowan, n.1.1); regular references to the tree itself as rowan do not occur until the eighteenth century although rowan-tree is rarely attested from the fifteenth century in Scotland and northern England (OED: rowan-tree, n.1.2). Prior to this the alternative quickbeam appears to have been more common in England.[13] Very few place-names suggest an etymology derived from a word denoting rowan. It was proposed by Lindkvist (1912, 133) that the major name Rainford La (*Raineford* 1198, *Reineford* 1202) could originate from ON

[13] The *cwic-bēam* 'quickbeam' cannot be firmly identified in early sources and could relate to any of the *Sorbus* trees (rowan, wild service, and whitebeam) and to juniper. It is only distinguished as rowan from the sixteenth century (OED: quicken, n.1). Whitebeam appears also to be attested in the OE compound *hwitting-trēow* (OED: whitten, n.1) and as ME *whīt-bēm*, *witbeam* (MED: *whīt-bēm*; OED: whitebeam, n.), ModE dial. whitty tree. It is possibly the source of the specific element in Whittington place-names (Db, Gl, Sa, Wo), for which Hough (2003, 62) proposes an independently unattested OE **hwīting*.

collective *røyni* ‘a clump of rowan-trees’ and OE *ford*; however, Ekwall (1922, 110) highlights the infrequency with which ON-derived names appear in this area and Mills (1976, 124; followed by SSNNW 245) proposes instead ‘boundary ford’ from ON *rein*, pointing out that Rainford lies on the boundary between two hundreds and that there is another possible ‘boundary strip’ names in the parish (*Raydene* c.1300). Perhaps the strongest objection to a *røyni* etymology, however, is the heavy clay and peat-based soil at Rainford, as rowan is a species that does not grow on wetlands and clays (EAFTS 176). There are two minor name examples with a rowan etymology: Roundthwaite in Orton We (*Runethweyt*, *Runethwaite* 1256), from ON **raun* (gen. sg. *raunar*) and *þveit*, meaning ‘clearing of the mountain ash’ (PNWe ii 51) and Knotteranum in Clapham YW (*Rowenumcnothes* 1232–40), from dat. pl. *raunum*. The preserved dat. pl. inflection suggests *Raunum* was an earlier place-name with the addition of ON *knǫttr* ‘a rocky hill-top’, giving the meaning ‘rocks near a place called Raunum (the rowans)’ (PNYW vi 230; Hough 2003, 50).

Hornbeam (*Caprinus betulus*) is particularly notable through its absence from major names, as the natural distribution of this woodland tree largely mirrors the natural limit of the well-attested beech, found as it is most often in the south and east of England. Rackham (2003, 221) suggests that hornbeam was too common and difficult to distinguish from other species, like elm and hazel, to be a useful landmark.[14] At least in modern distributions, hornbeam appears to be almost exclusively a woodland tree, which could explain why it was not often noted as a landmark feature in charter bounds or place-names. This contrasts with a species like thorn, which is the most common landmark tree for the names of meeting-places, a status that is likely in part due to the tendency for thorn to grow in areas of open ground and cleared woodland: where gatherings took place in open landscapes such trees would have been appropriate landmarks. Rackham (ibid) also notes the general uselessness of hornbeam as a resource, stating that ‘it produces no nuts, no fibre, no fodder except for deer; it does nothing that other species will not do as well’.

From the fourteenth century hornbeam appears in minor names in south-east England: Hornbeam Lane in Essendon Hrt (*Herinbernegatestret* 1367, *Hornbemgate* 1405), Hornbeam Hill in South Mimms Mx (*Hornbemes* 1441), and Hornbeam Common in Great Mundon Hrt

[14] It is now most mistaken for beech, with which it shares similarities in bark and leaf shape; however, beech appears to have been significantly less common in early medieval England than it is in the landscape today (see 2.21 *bōc*).

(*Hernebemfeld* 1416). Hough (2003, 50) suggests that although these names represent a 'significant antedating of the [sixteenth century] literary evidence', they are perhaps not enough in themselves to justify the reconstruction of the OE form **horn-bēam*. It is worth noting, however, that *bēam* 'tree' is rare in ME and would be unusual in late-formed names (VEPN i 63). If this is an OE compound, then it can be understood to mean 'horn tree', perhaps a testament to the hardness and density of its wood. The fluted shape of the trunk has an irregular form not useful for structural timbers and the cross-grain makes it difficult to work, it is only traditionally suitable for small durable items like tool handles and wooden rivets (EAFTS 75). Coates (2012, 222) proposes that as *bēam* simply meant tree, hornbeam could be behind some simplex names like Horne Sr (*Horne* 12th, *Hornne* 1241), which he states is 'not really a candidate for *horn* in a landform sense'. The alkaline clay-loam soil at Horne could certainly have supported hornbeam, which favours deep moist and well-drained sub-acid to calcareous soils (EAFTS 74).

1.3.4 Data collection to establish a corpus

To limit the size of this corpus of names and bring it within a manageable scope for rigorous study, the Corpus Analysis section (Chapter 2) considers only major names with a tree element. Major names are here defined as the names of hundreds and wapentakes, parishes, townships, and manors or vills that are listed in Domesday Book;[15] in contrast, minor names are defined as smaller settlements, landscape features, and field-names, which had little to no administrative significance. Although more comprehensive examination could have been achieved through the inclusion of minor names and potentially also of woodland-related names that do not explicitly indicate a particular tree-species, this was not possible within the bounds of the research for this thesis. It is hoped that this study will provide a platform for further research into the topic of woodland history and tree-names that could include both minor names and other tree-related compounds.

The process of collecting English place-names and defining them as major names has been guided, where coverage is provided, by the categorization of names in the *Survey of English Place-Names* (SEPN) volumes produced by the English Place-Name Society. Where there is no EPNS coverage other sources have been used: the independent county dictionaries (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016; Cameron 1998; Coates 1989; Coplestone-Crow 2009; Ekwall 1922;

[15] These settlements may no longer exist or might have diminished in size and administrative importance since the eleventh century.

Horovitz 2005; Mawer 1920; Mills 1996; Padel 1988; Wallenberg 1931, 1934; Watts 2002), Anderson's *English Hundred-Names* volumes, *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names* (VEPN) series, and the major English place-name dictionaries for the country (Ekwall 1960; Watts 2004; Mills 2011) (see section 1.2 for further discussion). As well as reading through these resources page by page, where possible electronic searches using key words have also been conducted on EPNS volume PDFs and on the Digital Exposure of English Place-Names (DEEP) website, which hosts published EPNS material in an online format. Limiting the corpus to major names helps to mitigate discrepancies in county coverage and avoids underrepresenting counties that have not yet been fully surveyed by the EPNS or those that appear in early EPNS volumes that tend not to include as much minor name material.

As this thesis is concerned with English place-names, the collection of names for the corpus and case-studies has been limited to those historical English counties included as part of the EPNS survey of English place-names (inc. Cornwall). These geographical parameters were established to limit the corpus to only English place-names, although it should be acknowledged that historically, country boundaries tended to be linguistically permeable. As this thesis is concerned with the perception of trees in the early medieval landscape in England, only those names with OE- or ON-derived tree elements are included in the discussion. Tree-names with a Brittonic etymological origin may represent an earlier phase of naming and are not necessarily illustrative of the arboreal landscape experienced by early medieval peoples. Similarly, a cut-off date of first attestation has been imposed, which limits the corpus to tree-names that are first recorded by the end of the twelfth century (1199). Although this is a rather arbitrary end date, it has been adopted in an attempt to best survey only those names introduced in an early medieval context and not those that were coined later in ME dialects, while still allowing for the inclusion of names in regions not covered by Domesday Book. Some tree elements in place-names remained transparent throughout the medieval and modern periods, which has led to replacement with ME and Modern English (ModE) spellings in many names.[16]

These restrictions on the corpus are intended to provide a consistent distribution of tree-species names, without overrepresenting counties with earlier and more complete place-name records, and without including later medieval names that may have represented a landscape

[16] Examples include Oak- names like Oakley Sf, which has spellings that represent OE *āc* (*Acle* 1086), ME *oke* (*Occle* 1327), and ModE oak.

that was subject to different management techniques or technologies. It should be acknowledged that while effort has been made to produce a comprehensive survey of tree-species major names, it is likely that for counties that do not have complete or exhaustive EPNS coverage, or for which no early attestations have yet been published, some names have been missed.

To produce the Corpus, place-names were collected using a purpose-built Access database, which allowed for the concise categorisation of a large body of names by county, hundred, parish, and then headform. Where the tree-name is a parish-name, often the parish and the headform are the same. Information on the development and etymology of each name, as provided by previous toponymic scholarship, has then been collated under the headform, highlighting the chronology of scholarship, and noting consensuses and differences in opinion over time. These entries also include a break-down of the name by specific and generic element, which allows for easy extraction and categorisation of names by specific element, generic, or compound type.

Digimap Ordnance Survey (OS) was used to provide a grid reference for each database entry, with consideration of where the medieval settlement may once have stood. Where possible, this most often centres on the parish church, or a feature known to be associated with the medieval town. Usually, the oldest OS map available for the area was consulted, to try and minimise the influence of modern urban development on interpretation of the settlement area (e.g., 1880s OS). These settlement grid references could then be mapped using GIS software to illustrate the distributions of tree elements, species, and similar compound types, which are used to support arguments made throughout this thesis. Digimap OS maps were also used to calculate measurements of distance throughout the thesis as a whole.

Where there is discussion of the geology of an area within the text, this information was taken from a variety of online resources: most notably again the Digimap Ordnance Survey website, which was used to assess the local bedrock of a settlement site (DiGMapGB-50 Rock Type); the soil composition, permeability, and acidity (Soil Parent Material Model); and the extent of floodplains and coastal flooding (Geological Indicators of Flooding). This information was then cross-referenced against the datasets provided by the Soilscapes and UK Soil Observatory (UKSO) websites to best ensure accurate representation of geological conditions.

1.3.5 Structure and layout of corpus

The corpus comprises 780 major names that have an OE or ON generic or qualifying element with a tree-species etymology. There are 82 place-name elements that represent 22 types of tree (e.g., ash, oak, etc.), comprising a variety of native and potentially non-native tree-species (e.g., European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*); pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*)). The corpus is organised alphabetically by place-name element so not to prejudice interpretation by imposing a modern system of categorisation, for as discussed above (1.3.2), element identification by species may not be entirely accurate and the perception of trees in early medieval England did not necessarily conform to a modern taxonomic understanding. For example, there are nineteen native willow and sallow species in the United Kingdom (Rotherham 2022, 2502) and 11 OE and ON elements in place-names that could represent them (*Fig.1*). As it is not possible to directly assign a taxonomic identification to these elements, they are referred to generally in the text as *Salix* species names; although often, for individual names, there is some contextual discussion as to which species this is most likely to have been.

The following table (*Fig.1*) provides an overview of the corpus, whereby tree elements are categorized according to the modern species they could represent. Some elements appear under more than one species heading to allow for cross-referencing and to demonstrate the ambiguities that are explored in the corpus. The table is organised by the frequency with which each modern tree-species appears in major names and the percentage of the corpus that this represents. A list of possible taxonomic classifications for each species is provided (Latin binomials) and a non-exhaustive list of common names. The first example is thorn, which is the most common tree-species represented in major names; there are nine place-name elements that represent thorn species in 142 major names, which is 18.25% of the total corpus. Elements denoting thorn likely recognised sites growing with hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna; Crataegus laevigata*) or blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).

Tree type	No. of occurrences in major names	% of corpus	Tree place-name elements (with corpus section number)	Possible scientific classification (Johnson and More 2004; Sterry 2007; EAFTS 2016)	Common tree-species name(s) (Johnson and More 2004; Sterry 2007; EAFTS)
thorn	142	18.20 %	**blæc-þorn* (2.20), *haga* (2.39), *hagu-þorn* (2.40), **hagu-þyrne* (2.41), *slāh* (2.70), **slāh-þorn* (2.71), *þorn* (2.72), *þyrne* (2.73), **þyrning* (2.74)	*Crataegus monogyna*; *Crataegus laevigata*; *Prunus spinosa*	blackthorn, common hawthorn, English hawthorn, May tree, Midland hawthorn, quickthorn, sloe, whitethorn, woodland hawthorn
ash	123	15.77 %	*æsc* (2.10), *æscen* (2.11), **æscett* (2.12), *askr* (2.4), *eski* (2.34)	*Fraxinus excelsior*	common ash, European ash
Salix genus (e.g., sallow, willow, withy)	92	11.79 %	**hyper* (2.52), **persc* (2.60), *salh* (2.67), **sele* (2.68), *selja* (2.69), *víðir* (2.75), *wācor* (2.76), **wilig* (2.78), **wilign* (2.79), *wīðig* (2.80), **wīðign* (2.81)	*Salix alba*; *Salix fragilis*; *Salix caprea*; *Salix cinerea*; *Salix viminalis*; *Salix pentandra*	bay willow, common osier, common sallow, crack willow, goat willow, grey sallow, white willow
broom	76	9.74 %	*brōm* (2.23), **brōmede* (2.24), **ceagge* (2.26)	*Cytisus scoparius*,	common broom, Scotch broom

oak	75	9.62 %	*āc* (2.1), *ācen* (2.5), *ącern* (2.6), *eik* (2.27)	*Quercus robur*; *Quercus petraea*	English oak, pedunculate oak, sessile oak
apple	28	3.59 %	*apuldor* (2.3), *æppel* (2.7), *æppel-trēow* (2.8), **æppling* (2.9), *epli* (2.33)	*Malus domestica*; *Malus sylvestris*	crab apple, domestic apple, orchard apple, wild crab
alder	27	3.46 %	*alor* (2.2), *elri* (2.32)	*Alnus glutinosa*; *Frangula alnus*	alder buckthorn, black alder, common alder, European alder
elm	26	3.33 %	*elm* (2.29), **elme* (2.30), **elmen* (2.31), *wice* (2.77), **ylmen* (2.82)	*Ulmus procera*; *Ulmus minor*; *Ulmus glabra*	English elm, Scots elm, smooth-leaved elm, wych-elm
birch	24	3.08 %	*berc* (2.16), *birce* (2.17), **bircel* (2.18), **bircen* (2.19)	*Betula pendula*; *Betula pubescens*	downy birch, hairy birch, silver birch, white birch
hazel	22	2.82 %	*hasl* (2.42), *hæsel* (2.43), **hæslen* (2.44), **hæsler* (2.45), **hæsling* (2.46), *hesli* (2.47)	*Corylus avellana*	common hazel
pear	22	2.82 %	**peren* (2.59), *peru* (2.61), *pirige* (2.62)	*Pyrus communis*; *Pyrus cordata*	common pear, domestic pear, European pear; Plymouth pear

plum	18	2.31 %	*plūme* (2.63), *plūm-trēow* (2.64), *plȳme* (2.65), **prūme* (2.66)	*Prunus domestica; Prunus spinosa*; *Prunus avium*; *Prunus padus*	bird cherry, blackthorn, common plum, sloe, wild cherry
lime	17	2.17 %	*bæst* (2.14), *lind* (2.54), *linden* (2.55)	*Tilia platyphyllos*; *Tilia cordata*	large-leaved lime, linden; small-leaved lime
maple	17	2.17 %	**hlyn* (2.48), **mapel* (2.56), *mapuldor* (2.57)	*Acer campestre*	field maple
beech	15	1.92 %	*bēce* (2.15), *bōc* (2.21)	*Fagus sylvatica*	common beech
elder	11	1.41 %	*ellern* (2.28), **hyldre* (2.51)	*Sambucus nigra*	elder
box	9	1.15 %	*box* (2.22), **byxe* (2.25)	*Buxus sempervirens*	common box, European box
yew	9	1.15 %	*īw* (**īg*) (2.53)	*Taxus baccata*	common yew, English yew
gorse	9	1.15 %	*fyrs* (2.35), **fyrsen* (2.36), **gorsiht* (2.37), *gorst* (2.38), **hvin* (2.50)	*Ulex europaeus*; *Juniperus communis*	common gorse, common juniper, furze, whin
holly	9	1.15 %	*holegn* (2.49)	*Ilex aquifolium*	common holly
aspen	8	1.03 %	*æspe* (2.13)	*Populus tremula*; *Populus alba*; *Populus nigra*	black poplar, common aspen, European aspen, quaking aspen, white poplar
medlar	1	0.13 %	**mispeler* (2.58)	*Mespilus germanica*	medlar

Figure 1: Table of tree-species elements in major names attested by 1200

Within the corpus, headwords follow the conventions established by Ekwall (1960), with Anglian forms of OE unless otherwise stated, and standard (West Norse) forms of ON, followed by common dialect variations where relevant. This includes simplex words and possible lexical compounds that have an asterisked form, which indicate words that are reconstructed or are unattested outside of place-name evidence (e.g., **blæc-þorn*, **elme*). Under the headwords, names are discussed by compound type: firstly, tree elements used as simplex names or as a name formed from a lexical compound (e.g., *æppel-trēow*), then names formed with a tree-species word as the generic element, followed by habitative compounds with a tree-species specific, and finally topographical compounds with a tree-species specific. Habitative and topographical names have further subcategories for the habitative generics ON *bȳ* and OE *tūn*, and the topographical generic OE *lēah*. These are the most recurrent generic elements, so discussion of how they compound with tree elements bears emphasising, especially as these generics feature heavily in discussion of fruit-tree, timber, and nut names in the accompanying case-studies (for *tūn* and *bȳ* see sections 3.5, 3.6, 4.4; for *lēah* see 3.5, 3.7, 5.4.1). There are 90 simplex tree-names, 13 deriving from lexical compounds and 81 names with a tree-species generic; as the specific element, tree-names occur in 273 habitative place-names (151 with *tūn* (19.36% of the total corpus) and 36 with *bȳ* (4.62%)), and 323 topographical place-names (83 with *lēah* (10.64%)) (*Fig.2*).

Under each headword the section begins with an etymological discussion of the element and the outcomes of its phonological development. Where there is ambiguity concerning species designation it is discussed here, with contextual evidence provided by early medieval literature and charters, and with consideration of the ecological preferences of the species. The introductory section for some tree elements also includes discussion of names that have previously been associated with this element, but which on closer examination can be excluded. When headwords are cross-referenced in other sections they first appear in bold and are subsequently italicised. Maps are often included to illustrate the distribution of particular tree-name compounds and photographs are used for visual representation of a discussion point. Several sections reference the three case-studies that comprise the second part of this thesis where further discussion of particular compounds is relevant.

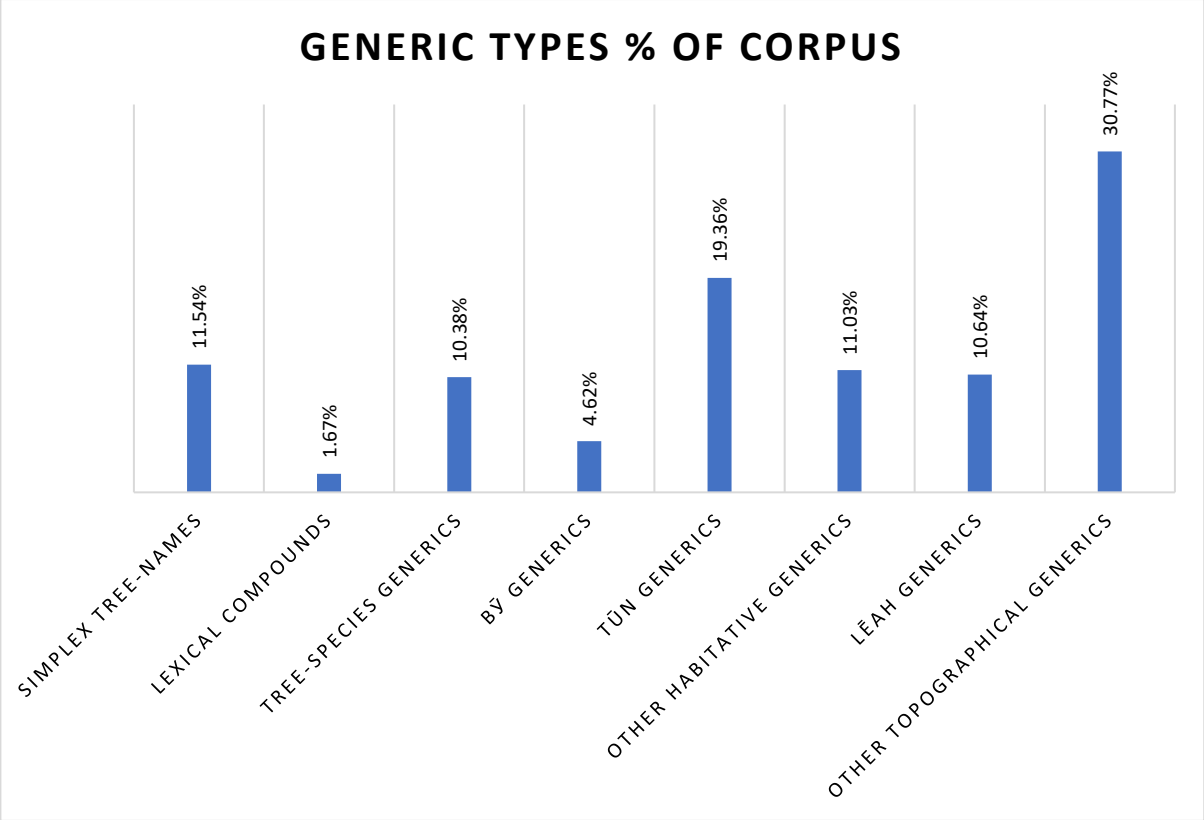


Figure 2: The percentage breakdown of tree-species major names by compound type

At the end of each tree-name section there is a summary of names that may contain that element, once again organised by name type. The names are listed alphabetically by their modern spellings (e.g., Cressage), followed by the form and date of their first attestation (*Cristesache* 1086), then a reference to the EPNS volume or place-name dictionary where further forms can be found (PNSa i 102) and finally, where necessary, other element(s) are included (Crist). Where there is uncertainty, this will be expressed within the discussion but when there is complete ambiguity the various options will be provided in the summary (e.g., *hām*/*hamm*).

1.3.6 Case-studies (chapters 3–5): overview and methodological approaches

Two of the case-studies that comprise this thesis examine recurrent place-name compounds with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic that likely indicated a site of timber or fruit production. The third case-study focuses on place-names with a *hnutu* 'nut' element and explores other elements that could have indicated nut-producing trees. In all cases these names were selected because they comprise a significant proportion of the corpus of tree-related major names in England and have often received limited attention from place-name scholars (see 1.2: Research Context). Some of the ideas

presented in previous works are supported and developed throughout these chapters, but the main purpose of these studies is to expand upon what is already known in an interdisciplinary context and to contribute to the wider understanding of how particular tree-species were perceived and used in early medieval England.

The process of building corpora of names for these case-studies followed a similar procedure to that of the corpus analysis; however, the criterion for inclusion was expanded to encompass all names attested by the end of the fifteenth century. This allows for more in-depth coverage of the compounds in question and provides a larger sample size with which to examine the significance and distribution of these names; however, it should be acknowledged that these samples are potentially limited by the uneven coverage of the source material (see 1.3.4). With a wider category for inclusion, it should also be acknowledged that some of these names could have arisen in the later medieval period and may therefore represent a later phase of naming more reflective of the perceptions of tree-species and arboreal management practices at that date. A possible example of this is 'orchard' names, many of which are not attested until after the thirteenth century and could therefore represent ME *orchard* (MED: orchard, n.) rather than OE *orceard* (see 4.3).

Chapter three, the first of the case-studies, considers the many names that could have indicated sites at which woodland was managed to produce timber or coppice wood. It begins by exploring the techniques of timber production, coppicing, and pollarding, and by examining how these processes might have been represented in the toponymicon, with particular consideration of the elements *copped* (**coppod*: VEPN ii 164), *stapol*, **stæf*, *stocc*, and *timber.* This is followed by a brief overview of which species were thought to be the most desirable sources of timber and coppice wood in the early medieval period, using evidence presented by archaeological excavations, extant medieval buildings, and historical sources. Those that appear to have been among the most favoured types of wood – oak, ash, and *Salix* species – regularly form place-name compounds with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic.

It has been tentatively suggested by onomasts, most notably Margaret Gelling in PNSa (i, 1–4) and further to this Richard Coates (2012, 220), that *āc-tūn* sites in Shropshire could have been locations where woodland was managed for timber. This case-study makes more definitive inroads on the topic, considering the distribution of

āc-tūn names in relation to the preferred geology and climate of oak-trees, with particularly significant results when it comes to the majority location of *āc-tūn* in the west of England. Some of these wood-producing sites may have been established to support a local community or industry, such as the potential charcoal-producing sites around Droitwich that were integral to the salt industry. The distribution of these settlements is also considered in relation to centres of commerce and trading routes, that may have allowed for the transport of timber and coppice species to markets, as appears to have been a common practice in the later medieval period. The same model is then applied to ash and *Salix* names with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic, to explore how tree-species were valued differently by region and may have been used to produce different types of wood product.

Chapter four begins by examining the historical and archaeological record of fruit-tree cultivation in England, which suggests the domestic apple and pear were brought over by the Romans, alongside the knowledge necessary to maintain a viable fruit crop. Evidence in OE literature for the cultivation of fruit-trees in gardens and orchards is then considered, with a focus on the two main OE 'orchard' words, *orceard* and *æppel-tūn*, and how these may have differed in use. There follows a section on *orceard* as it appears in place-names and charter bounds, with some comparative consideration of the distribution of the more northerly toponymic compounds *æppel-geard* and *æppel-garth*. The most recurrent names indicating fruit-tree cultivation, however, are those that compound a fruit specific (*æppel*, *peru*, *pirige*, *plūme*) with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic. The evidence set out in chapter four suggests that these were 'orchard' settlements that were perhaps places of horticultural production, where a surplus of fruit was cultivated for sale at local markets.

Fruit 'orchard' names have a distribution that best suits the climatic and geological preferences of the principal fruit species at these sites. Pear *tūn* names in particular proliferate in the classic orchard counties of England (Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire), which have a long history of fruit-tree cultivation (Barnes and Williamson 2021, 15). If these were horticultural sites, it should be expected that they were well connected by trade routes to centres of commerce where fruit could be sold at markets and fairs. A systematic approach is taken to examining these settlements with consideration first of their proximity to

potential markets and then of how connected they were by the network of navigable rivers and roads of the period.

Chapter five, the final case-study, looks at place-names containing nut-tree elements, particularly *hnutu* place-names, of which there are 40 locatable examples in England that are first attested by the end of the fifteenth century. OE *hnutu* is a word suggestive of the presence of nut-trees in the landscape but does not appear to have indicated one particular species. Like other tree-related elements that do not indicate a species of tree, the word *hnutu* is thus not included in the corpus analysis; however, nuts, like fruit and timber, are an arboreal resource and there are a limited number of species to which *hnutu* could refer, so it is a word that invites in-depth examination within the context of this thesis.

The case-study begins by discussing how previous scholarship has glossed the word *hnutu* in place-names and then considers which species could be represented by use of the element: chiefly hazel, sweet chestnut, and walnut. The corpus of *hnutu* names is then addressed by generic type and these names are compared with similar compounds that have the specific element OE *hæsel*. The most recurrent and intriguing 'nut' name is the compound *hnutu-lēah*, which occurs in seven names, and may have indicated areas where nut-trees were cultivated in groves. A cultural comparison can perhaps be drawn with the early medieval sweet chestnut groves of northern Italy, where a sylvo-pastural system produced a variety of complementary resources. When the geology and distribution of these names are considered, it appears that hazel was the species most likely to have been found at the majority of these sites, but at some, sweet chestnut could also have thrived. Indeed, these names could contribute to our understanding of when sweet chestnut was introduced to the English landscape, perhaps pushing back the documentary evidence of the twelfth century to include some *hnutu* names that are first attested earlier.

By taking this detailed approach, the case-studies throw light on our understanding of the socio-economic context of these fruit-, nut-, and wood-producing sites. The inclusion of minor and later-attested names has produced a comprehensive account of the compounds and elements in question, where previous treatment of these names has been limited. The observations made in these case-studies have some exciting implications for future research into the topic of early medieval arboriculture – on

which subject early medieval records are not usually forthcoming – and serve to highlight the importance of onomastics in the interdisciplinary study of the early medieval landscape in England.

2. Chapter Two: Corpus Analysis: tree elements from *āc – *ylmen*

2.1 āc OE f. 'oak'

Cognate with OHG *eih*, *eihha* and ON *eik*; the earlier etymology of this word is uncertain but may relate to Greek *aigilops* and Lat. *aesculus* 'mountain oak' (OED: oak, n.). It is attested outside of place-names in OE medical texts, charter bounds, and in glossaries, where it glosses Lat. *ilex* 'holm oak', *quercus* 'oak', and *robur* 'oak' (DOE: āc, n. 2.1). According to LangScape, OE *āc* is recorded at least once as a boundary marker in the bounds of 59 early medieval estates.[17]

Oak is the fifth most frequently attested tree-species in major names, after thorn, ash, *Salix* (willow, sallow, withy), with 75 possible occurrences (see 2.5 **æcen**, 2.6 **ækern**, 2.27 **eik**). The element *āc* appears 67 times and is the fourth most commonly attested tree-species element in major names, after OE **æsc** 'ash' (117; see 2.10), OE **þorn** 'thorn' (104; see 2.72), and OE **brōm** (73; see 2.23). The distribution of oak major names is widespread, with Akeld in Northumberland and Braddock in Cornwall representing the most northerly and southerly examples (*Fig.3*). The two species of native oak, English oak (*Quercus robur*) and sessile oak (*Quercus petrea*), are traditionally common in woodland throughout Britain and grow on a wide variety of soil types (Rackham 2003, 283), although sessile oak is now more often found in upland regions (Johnson and More 2004, 214). These ecological characteristics likely explain the widespread distribution of oak major names, but the recognition of oak in place-names was probably due to the superiority of oak timber (see 3.3 for evidence) and the longevity and distinctive appearance of this species, which make it a particularly notable landmark.

Most *āc* names have ME <oc>, <ok>, or <ock> forms that reflect the shortening and rounding of the primary vowel (Jordan 1974, 72–3; Kristensson 1987, 27). The meaning of some oak names appears to have remained transparent throughout their development; for example, those that show a change in spelling that reflects the vowel shift of OE to ME, like Oakley Bd (*Accleya* 1060, *Okele* 1390–2) or Oakford D (*Acford*(*e*) 1166,

[17] It should be noted that this resource does not yet cover the entire corpus of early medieval charters (July 2023).

Okeford 1249). However, others with modern Oak- or Ok- forms, have an etymology that is not oak related, like Oakham Ru (*Ocheham* 1086), Oakington C (*Hochinton*(*e*) 1086), and Okehampton D ((*æt*) *ocmund tune* c.970 B1245) and many *āc* names, especially compounds, retain a primary A- vowel. This is especially true of *āc-tūn* names that show relatively little change in form, which may have something to do with the appellative sense of this name as an oak timber-producing site. The dative forms of *āc* (dat. sg. *ǣc* and dat. pl. *ācum*) have sometimes survived in toponyms and are generally still expressed with A-, although modern replacement with standard English *oak* has sometimes taken place (VEPN i 4).

2.1.1 *āc* as a simplex place-name:

There are six simplex *āc* major names attested by 1200. Oaks Sa appears to derive from *āc*, with later forms showing the addition of inorganic -*s* (*Hach* 1086, *Akes* 1199, *Okes* 1271–2), which according to PNSa (i 225–6) was 'frequently added to monosyllabic names' post-Conquest. The earliest forms of Aike YE (*Ach* 1086, *Ake* 1150) also indicate *āc*, but later medieval forms (*Ayk* 1285; *Ayke*, *Aike* 1305) and the modern spelling show the influence of ON *eik* on the Yorkshire dialect. Acomb YW has DB forms that suggest an etymology from dat. pl. *ācum* (PNYW iv 228), '(place) at the oak-trees', and retained an *a* spelling throughout the medieval period (*Acom*(*e*) 1190–1215, *Akome* 1415) as northern dialect often preserved OE *ā* as ME *a* (also *ai*, *ay*) (PNYW vii 80; Jordan 1974, 73–4; Milroy 1992, 183). In contrast, Oake So (*Acon* 11th; *Acha*, *Ache* 1086, *Oke* 1610) and Oaken St (*Ache* 1086, *Halken* c.1250, *Hoken* 1292) also have forms suggesting dat. pl. *ācum* (Watts 2004, 447; Horovitz 2005, 415), but show the substitution of ME *ōke*. Noke O (*Acam, Acham* 1086) also apparently deriving from dat. pl. *ācum*, has an interesting variety of later forms (*Acha* 1163, *Aca* c.1170–90, *Lac* 1191, *la Oke* 1264–8, *Noke* 1382) that suggest a settlement defined by a group of oaks could have come to be associated with a singular notable oak tree, perhaps a venerable remnant of an oak copse. Forms with *L*- represent the French definite article *la*, while those with *N*-, including the modern spelling, represent misdivision of ME *atten oke* (PNO i 232–3; VEPN i 4).

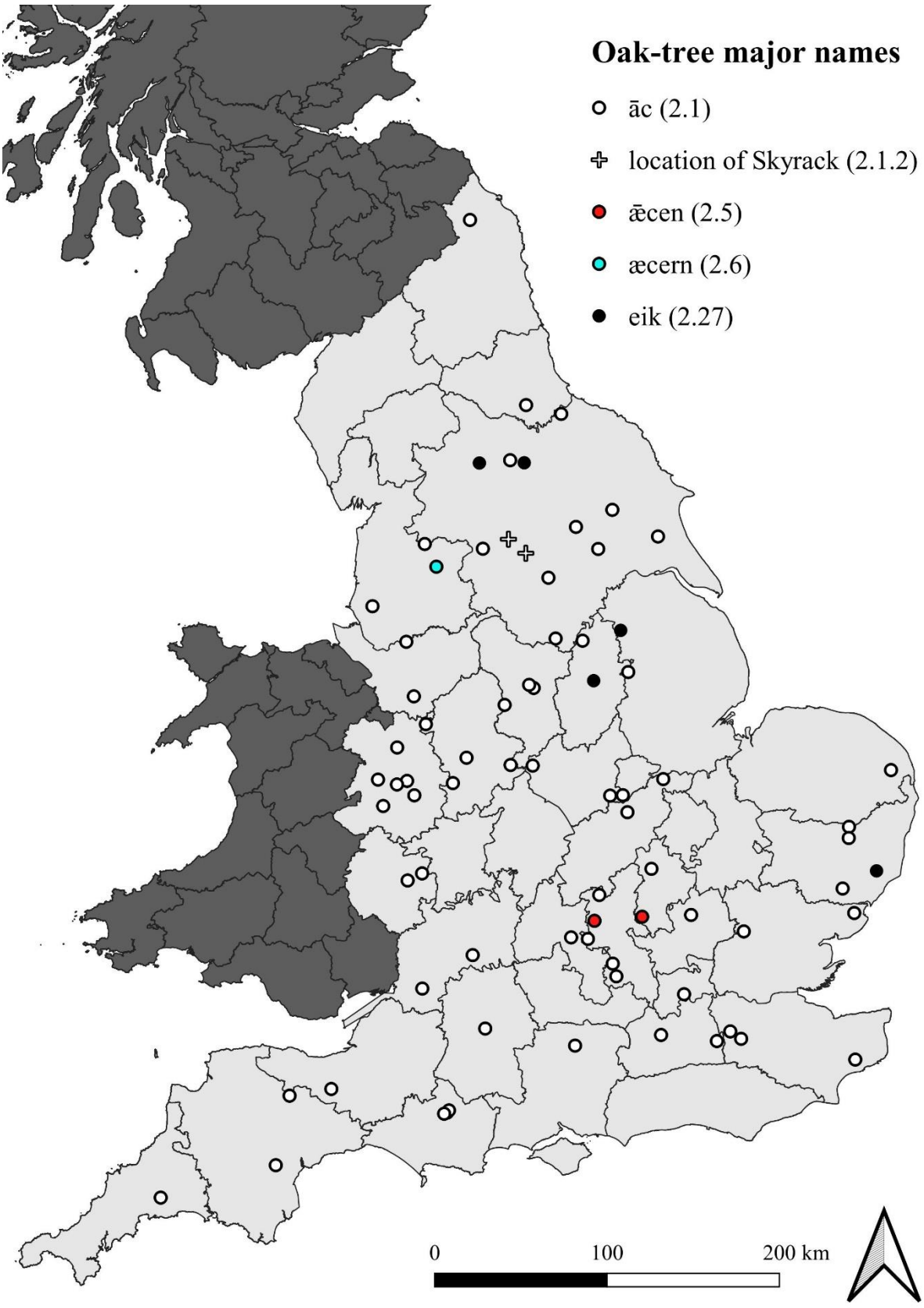


Figure 3: The distribution of oak element major names attested by 1200

2.1.2 *āc* as the generic element:

Oak is the third most common species, after thorn and ash (see 2.72.2 *þorn*; 2.73.2 **þyrne**; 2.10.2 *æsc*), to appear as the generic element in major-name compounds. There are 14 major names with the generic *āc* and one with *eik*, comprising 20.27% of the oak corpus. The appearance and monumentality of oak are features often remarked upon in place-names and charter bounds. Major names with *āc* as the generic often have a qualifying specific element that describes the characteristics of the tree, or its significance as a landmark for the local community. Kitson (1993, 38) recognises oak as the species qualified by the widest variety of adjectives and lists 30 examples of adjectives that appear in charter bounds (41: Tab.10). Oak-trees can be described in accordance with their size (see Hatfield Broadoak Ess), colour (see Radnage Bk) and number (see Sevenoaks K) and as a feature of the ecclesiastical (see Cressage Sa and Holyoaks Le) or administrative landscape, like the three boundary oaks recorded in the estates of Tardebigge Wo (S1598), Oldberrow Wa (S79), and Fovant W (S364).



Figure 4: The Major Oak at Sherwood Forest Country Park, Nottinghamshire, is perhaps the most famous example of an ancient landmark oak in Britain (J. Treacher, October 2019)

The use of oak-trees as boundary markers makes sense when the particular qualities of this species are considered. The two native varieties of oak are among the largest tree-species in Britain, achieving a diameter of 3–4 meters (EAFTS 160), with sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) growing up to 42 metres tall and pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) 38 metres (Johnson and More 2004, 214–6). Oak pollards readily through human cultivation and sometimes naturally when limbs become too heavy and break off at the trunk. This process and the natural hollowing of the heartwood over time act to prolong the life of oak-trees by many hundreds of years: oak is the longest-lived native deciduous tree-species in Britain, with some specimens estimated to be over a thousand years old (Hooke 2010, 199). Another survival feature of declining oak-trees is their ability to form a 'stag-head', which due to age or stress occurs when the tree ceases to sustain the upper reaches of its canopy (Rackham 2003, 411). The hardy and weather-resistant properties of oak wood mean that these branches are 'fossilised' at the top of the tree, creating an antlered effect, hence the term 'stag-head'. In the landscape of early medieval England, a tree with one or any combination of the above features may have made a notable landmark (*Fig.4*).

Seven of the 14 major names with *āc* as the generic element have a specific that described the appearance of the tree(s), six describe a tree that had a particular social or religious significance, and one has a pers.n. specific. This latter is Hodsock Nt (*Odesach* 1086, *Hodeshac* 1187), which appears to be the gen. sg. the OE pers.n. *Hodd* with *āc*, 'Hodd's oak'. It is situated in the north of Nottinghamshire on the same acidic infertile sand-based soil as Sherwood Forest Country Park, which is famed for its ancient oakwood and unusually large oak pollards (*Fig.4*).

Braddock Co (*Brodehoc* 1086, *Brothac* 1201) could either derive from OE *brād-āc*, 'broad oak', or OE *brād-hōc*, 'broad hook of land' (Padel 1988, 58; Watts 2004, 76). The Norman church at Braddock sits upon a broad spur of land (Historic England: 1140324), which may support a *hōc* etymology; however, it is not uncommon for veteran oak-trees to become very broad, with extant medieval specimens exceeding 8 metres in girth (Farjon 2017, 47) (*Fig.5*). There are several later-attested onomastic parallels of a *brād-āc* etymology: Bradnish Wood (*Bradenach* 1161–77, *Bradenech* 1221, *boscus de Bradnache* 1294) in the parish of Therfield Hrt and Hatfield Broad Oak Ess, which is first attested in DB simply as *Hadfelda*, *Hatfelde* 1086, but appears in the twelfth century with the affix 'broad oak' (*Hatfeld Brodehoke* 1121). Padel

(1988, 58) notes four Gloucestershire examples (*Brodoke Thurne* c.1275 PNGl 202; *Broad oak leaze* 1839 PNGl 200; *Bradan ac* 816 and Brand Oak (*Brodeoke, Brodok* 1282) PNGl iv 98) and there is a tenth-century charter for Bighton Ha that records a *bradan æc* 'broad oak' in the estate bounds (S660).



Figure 5: One of many particularly broad and squat veteran pollard oaks at Staverton Park, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2019)

Copdock Sf is not recorded until the twelfth century (*Coppedoc* 1195–1275, *Coppedac* 1254, *Coppedok* 1286-1327), with forms that suggest the OE compound *coppede-āc*, 'the copped oak' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 36), likely a reference to the process of pollarding, where the top of the tree is removed to promote new growth. OE *coppede* 'pollarded', appears in charters from the tenth century, most often in relation to thorn (see Copthorne Hundred Sr: *þorn*), but at least once in reference to oak (*þa coppedan ac* 'the copped oak' S349). Other toponymic examples

are Copdock Hill Wa (*Cobduck Hill* c.1840) and Coppleridge in Motcombe Do (*le Coppedeoc* 1301, *Copidockridge* 1609).

Hennock D (*Hainoc* 1086) derives from dat. sg. (*æt þǣre*) *hēan āc*, '(at the) high oak' (Ekwall 1960, 235; Watts 2004, 297). It is not clear from the name whether OE *hēah* refers to the height of the tree or the position of the tree on the hill at Hennock that rises to a height of 258 metres. The acidic sand-rich soil at this site and the temperate damp climate of south-west England with its high annual rainfall, could certainly have provided conditions suitable for rapid oak growth (Rackham 2010, 286), perhaps resulting in a specimen of notable height when compared with the surrounding treescape. Hazelwood (*Halswood* 1783) on the slope of the hill above the church is also indicative of a landscape suited to oak, as these species tend to proliferate in similar environments (Peterken 1993, 146–7; Rackham 2010, 291).

Radnage Bk (*Radenhech* 1162, *Radenach*(*e*) 1175, *Redenhache* 1185. *Radenage* 1440) derives from dat. sg. OE *rēadan-ǣc*, '(at the) red oak tree', with palatisation of the final consonant: the <age> forms indicating voicing of the palatal /ʧ/ to /ʤ/ (PNBk 191) (see also Stevenage Hrt and Cressage Sa). Comparable examples of a 'red oak' can be found in two tenth-century charters: the *readan acon*, 'red oaks', at Abbots Bromley St (S878) and the *hreadleafan æc*, 'red-leaved oak', at Overton Ha (S377). The Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) is native to North America and its earliest known introduction to Britain is not until 1724 (Johnson and More 2004, 234), so this cannot be the species in question. Rackham (2003, 284) suggests that the 'red-leaved oak' at Overton in Hampshire and the *Red lyved ooke* of a Somerset perambulation of 1567 could be explained as the 'rare and striking form of *Quercus robur* that produces bright scarlet lammas shoots every August'. However, the colour 'red' need not be understood in literal modern sense as the definitions of colour terms have changed within the last thousand years. Early medieval perception of colour appears to have been more preoccupied with shade and brightness rather than with hue (Barley 1974, 16–17) and OE *rēad* was used of 'many or all of the colours often referred to as "warm"' (Biggam 2010, 240). It is possible what we now class as brown, orange, or yellow – arguably more realistic colours for a tree – may have been referred to as *read* and perhaps indicated a specimen in decline, with browning or yellow leaves year-round. A comparable name is Gildenock in Cann Do (*la Gyldeneok*, *la Gildeneok*(*e*) 1280), from OE gylden-āc, 'the golden oak-tree' (PNDo iii 93).

Sevenoaks K (*Seouenaca* c.1100) derives from OE *seofon* and dat. pl. *acum*, '(at the) seven oaks (Wallenberg 1934, 64). Watts (2004, 537) notes that there is some later confusion with *æcer* 'a plot of arable land, an acre', where an abbreviation had been expanded as *er* instead of *e* (*Seuenac*(*her*) 1200, *Seuenacre* 1240). The seven oak-trees that now stand near The Vine cricket ground are the latest in a long line of replacement oaks, six of which were famously blown down during the Great Storm of 1987. Comparable examples of this name type can be seen in early medieval charter bounds: *seofen æc*, 'seven oaks', marked the bounds of Winkfield estate Brk (S482) in the tenth century and there were *þrim acon*, 'three oaks', at Eynsham O (S911) in the eleventh century.

Stevenage Hrt is attested three times in the eleventh century (*Stithenæce* c.1060, *Sticenæce* 1066, *Stigenace* 1086) with forms that indicate the compound OE *stīðe* and dat. sg. OE *æc* (PNHrt 138) '(at the) stiff oak', with signs of early palatalisation and assibilation (see also Radnage Bk and Cressage Sa). Watts (2004, 574) suggests that the interchange of fricatives /ð/ and /v/ may have led to the association of *stīðan* with the pers.n. Stephen, resulting in the modern spelling. The meaning of *stīðan* in compound with oak is not entirely clear but likely referred to some quality of strength or rigidity that was deemed worthy of note. It is possible this was a 'fossilised' specimen, like the ancient dead oaks still standing in Sherwood Forest, that survive only as a hard outer shell with their heartwood rotted away. Some Sherwood examples have been dead and standing for over a hundred years (Watkins et al. 2003, 15–6) (*Fig.6*). The Old Town of Stevenage lies on an area of acidic sand-based soil, similar to the conditions that led to the preservation of oaks at Sherwood.

The earliest attestations of Skyrack Wapentake YW (*Siraches Wapentac* 1086; *Scirhac*, *Schirac* 1189), either suggest development from the OE compound *scīr-āc*, 'shire oak', indicating the meeting-place for the shire court, or from the adj. *scīr*, 'bright oak'. EPNE (ii 111) proposes that the adj. *scīr*, when used of woodland, described a 'thinly grown, sparsely wooded' area. When describing a single tree this was perhaps analogously a tree with sparse or irregular canopy, or maybe a stag-headed oak where loss of bark on the upper branches had revealed the lighter sapwood. As this was a meeting-place name, however, 'shire oak' is perhaps the favourable etymological choice and PNYW (iv 88) states that despite a possible earlier etymology, it certainly came to be regarded as meaning 'shire oak'. Other early

attestations (*Schireikwapentacum* 1183, *Skiraik'* 1219, *Skyrec* 1219) show the influence of ON in the local dialect with /ʃ/ becoming /sk/ and the influence of ON *eik* on the generic element. The location of the meeting-place is uncertain, although PNYW (iv 88) suggests either Burley in Headingley or Burley in Wharfedale, with reference to the medieval record *wapentac de Scirakes apud Burcheleia'* and notes there is an Oaks Farm not far from the latter. Anderson (1934, 22) prefers Headingley as the location, observing the minor names *Shire Oak Road* and *Shire Oak Street*. There are two adjacent pubs in Headingley that may have taken their names from the Wapentake: Skyrack and the Original Oak, where an ancient oak stood until the 1940s, thought locally to be the eponymous 'shire oak' (Mee 1941, 179).



Figure 6: A 'fossilised' oak at Sherwood Forest Country Park, Nottinghamshire (J. Treacher, March 2018)

There are two Derbyshire major names (approx. 3 km apart) that describe the social function of a particular oak-tree. Matlock is the earlier attested, with an anomalous DB form (*Meslach* 1086), but later records (*Matlac*, *Matlak* 1198; *Matloc*, *Matlok*(*e*) 1204) suggest OE *mæðel-āc*, 'speech oak': possibly indicating the original location of the Wirksworth Hundred meeting-place. Dethick Db is not attested until the twelfth century (*Dethek*(*e*), *Detheck* 1154). It appears to derive from OE *dēaþ-āc*, 'death oak', with possible influence from ON *eik* (PNDb ii 359–60) and was likely an oak-tree where criminals were hanged. Parallel formations can be perhaps seen in the place-name Warter YE (*Warte*, *Wartre* 1086) which could derive from OE *wearg-trēow*, 'criminal tree/gallows'; a charter attestation of the same compound at Childswickham Wo (*wari troe*: S1174); and the *gealga treow*, 'gallows tree', at Kettering Nth (S592). Dethick and Old Matlock both lie east of the River Derwent – itself a Brittonic oak-related river name, 'abounding in oaks' (PNDb i 5). Ekwall (1968, 123) notes that oak grows abundantly in the valley of the Derbyshire Derwent and proposes that the river name probably referred to oak forest. There are more modern examples of oak names in the region, with Oaker (*Darley Oaker* 1688) less than 3 km upriver of Old Matlock and Oak Farm beside the Derwent, 2.4 km south-west of Dethick. Although the geology of this region is varied, it is likely oaks grew on the more acidic soils of the sandstone bedrock.

Barnack Nth is first recorded in the tenth century as *Beornican* 980(c.1200), which, if reliable, could point to the OE dat. pl. folk.n. *Beornice*, 'among the Beornice, the people of Bernicia' (Watts 2004, 36); however, other attestations (*Bernak*(*e*) 1052–65(c.1350), *Bernech*(*a*) 1053, *Bernac* 1086) more consistently suggest dat. sg. *æce* or nom. pl. *æc,* either of which could explain early forms with *-ech* or *-ek* (*Berneck* 1189, *Barneck* 1284). The specific element is probably therefore OE gen. pl. *beorna,* meaning 'warriors' oak'. It is unlikely that this name has been folk-etymologised from *beornwic*, as suggested by Ekwall (1960, 27), as forms with *āc* are attested early and *wīc* is more common than *āc* as a place-name generic (PNNth 230).

Some major names with an oak generic appear to have had religious significance. Cressage Sa (*Cristesache* 1086) compounds gen. sg. OE *Crist* and dat. sg. *æc*, 'Christ's oak'. A parallel but inverted form can be seen in the now lost *Aykcrist* 1375 (PNCu i 185), which like Aspatria Cu, 'Patric's ash' (see 2.10 **askr**), is a compound in 'Celtic word order' (Watts 2004, 23). The oak that gave Cressage its name was, by

popular tradition, a tree that St Augustine preached beneath, an apparent descendant of which, known as the Lady Oak, stands less than 1 km to the north-west (Watts 2004, 167). PNSa (i 102–3) observes that this tree holds a good position beside the road to Shrewsbury and cites Morton (1986, 50–3), who suggests the young oak that supports the old one was perhaps a model for successive replacement of the original tree since Anglo-Saxon times. This is certainly an ecological possibility; however, there are other named oaks in the parish of Cressage: Gospel Oak and Curst Oak (*Cursed Oaks* 1433), and PNSa (ii 139) suggests the latter could have developed from *Cristes-āc*. The Lady Oak may simply be part of a tradition of naming notable oak-trees in an area optimal for oak growth, (Rackham 2010, 72; see 3.5 discussion of *āc-tūn*) but might not be directly related to the development of the settlement name.

Much discussion surrounds the origin of the name Holyoaks Le (*Haliach* 1086), from OE *halig-āc*, 'holy oak', which is a township in the parish of Stockerston. PNLe (iv 250–1) suggests that this was originally a pagan Anglo-Saxon site of worship, as the oak was a tree associated with the god *Þunor* and there was a potential cult site at 'nearby' *þureslege broc* 1046 in Rutland. Cox (PNRu 174–5) glosses *þureslege broc* as 'the brook at Thursley, i.e. the grove sacred to the god Thunor'[18] and proposes that this was part of a small wooded area including Holyoaks where pagan rites survived the introduction of Christianity. He suggests that as a result, the establishment of the hermitage of Mirabel near Holyoaks (*hermitagii de Mirabel* 1232, *Le Holliock Merrybell* 1602) could have been a direct reaction to the continuing 'pre-Christian beliefs and practices among the peasantry here' (PNLe iv 250). The exact location of *þureslege broc* is unknown, but it appears to have been in Ayston parish, so it could have been no closer than 6 kms away from Holyoaks. This calls into question the claim that Holyoaks and *þureslege broc* were 'nearby' or 'in close proximity'.

While it is possible the name Holyoaks was coined in reaction to the Christianisation of a place of pagan worship, the importance of trees as holy sites was also an

[18] Gelling (1973, 99–114) accounts for 11 examples of the name *Þunor* in place-names, including Thursley Sr. To this Hough (1996, 388) supports the addition of *þureslege broc* (discussed above) and a lost *Thunreslea* Ha. It is possible some of these names, in an Anglo-Scandinavian context instead derive from the ON pers.n. *Þūr* or *Þōr*, or perhaps OE *þyrs*, 'giant, demon'. If so, this would affect the suggestion of a pagan connection with Holyoaks.

established part of Anglo-Saxon Christianity: perhaps influenced by pagan culture, but not necessarily indicative of pagan worship in itself. A tenth-century charter provides a parallel *halgan æc*, 'holy oak', at Chetwode and Hillesden Bk (S544). Hooke (2010, 51) suggests these 'holy' oaks 'may have been merely boundary oaks which carried a Christian cross or bore the sign of the cross' and notes two such oak-trees, described as *cristelmæl ac*, 'cross/crucifix oak', in the bounds of Stoke Prior and Tardebigge estates Wo (S60, S1598). Another possibility is that these and names such as Cressage and Aykcrist (see above) arose in response to the preaching that took place beneath notable oak-trees. The recurrent, later-attested name Gospel Oak possibly described locations at which the Bible was read during the beating of parish bounds.[19] Examples can be found in Wiltshire (*Gospell oke* 1553 PNW 45), Warwickshire (*the great oke standynge by the Gospel place* 1575 PNWa 94; *Gospell oake* 1608 PNWa 289), and Shropshire (*The Gospell Oake* 1636 PNSa ii 102).

2.1.3 *āc* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are six *āc* major names with a habitative generic that is not OE *tūn*. Oxted Sr (*Acstede* 1086) derives from OE *āc-stede*, possibly 'place of oak-trees' (PNSr 333), although Watts (2004, 458) suggests the topographical alternative 'the stand of oak-trees. From the mid-thirteenth century, records show ME rounding of the primary vowel (*Ocsted* 1225, *Okstede* 1255, *Okested* 1267). In DB there is mention of woodland (Lat. *silva*) for 100 swine. Oak-trees were an important source of pannage in the medieval period and were well recorded for this purpose in the south-east (Hooke 1998, 142–3). Oxted sits on a belt of highly permeable sandstone bedrock, providing suitable conditions for abundant oakwood growth. Woodland known as The Birches (1870 OS: TQ 381 514) lies 600 metres south-west of the village, suggesting this may have been an area of birch-oak woodland (Peterken 1993, 141).

According to PNBk (187), *Ackhampstead* Bk is the name of a lost parish first recorded in the eleventh century (*Hachamstede* 1052, *Hacamsteda* 1154–89, *Hachamsted* 1199), with specific *āc* and generic OE *hām-stede*, 'oak homestead'. The ruins of the church can be found on land belonging to Moor Farm in Ibstone parish (Page 1925, 68). Forms with *A-* appear from the late twelfth century (*Akamsted*(*e*)

[19] The OED (gospel-tree, n.) notes a *gospel-tree* attested in 1648 that is also called the *Holy-oke*.

1199, *Achamsted*(*e*) 1199) and it is possible the inorganic initial *h* was the result of assimilatory change owing to the *h*- of *hām-stede*. It is possible *āc-hām-stede* indicated a 'homestead constructed of oak', but as oak was the principal wood used for structural timber in early medieval buildings (see 3.3), it is unclear why this would be a feature worthy of note and 'homestead near the oak(s)' is perhaps preferable. EPNE (i 232) fittingly notes that the element *hām-stede* 'does not appear to have denoted much more than a single dwelling or farm, for many place-names containing the element have fallen into disuse' and in compounds is 'usually preceded by the name of a tree, plant'. There are five other tree-related major names (attested pre-1200) with a *hām-stede* generic (2.10.3 Ashampstead Brk; 2.29.2 Elmsted K; 2.16.1 Great Berkhamstead Hrt, Little Berkhamstead Hrt; 2.68.2 Sulhamstead Brk; 5.3 Nuthampstead Hrt).

Ockham Sr is first attested in DB with the anomalous form *Bocheham* 1086. Thirteenth century spellings (*Ocham* 1218, *Okham* 1270, *Ockham* 1314) suggest an etymology from OE *āc-hām*, 'oak homestead/village', or the pers.n. *Occa*, 'Occa's homestead/village', although OE *hamm* is also formally possible. PNSr (143) suggests the rarity of a double consonant, as can be seen with Ockham in Ewhurst Sx (*Occham* c.1205), perhaps favours an *āc* specific, although this is not very secure evidence given the dates of attestation. Watts (2004, 448) and Mills (2011, 353) favour a pers.n. etymology with short /o/. Ecologically an oak etymology is a strong possibility. Ockham Common and the twelfth-century church are situated on Bagshot sand (Malden 1911, 359), which is well-suited to oakwood. In DB the woodland at Ockham was suitable for 60 swine, suggesting it was once used for pannage. Peterken (1993, 141) notes that sweet chestnut is a common successor of oakwood and in the nineteenth century many oakwoods were turned to chestnut coppice. The names of Chestnut Cottage and Chestnut Farm near the church in Ockham could thus be indirectly significant (2022 OS: TQ 0711 5674).

Othorpe Le (*Actorp* 1086, *Octhorpe* 1199) is a deserted medieval village that was probably depopulated in the fourteenth century (Lee and McKinley 1964, 297). The chapel at Othorpe was once dependent upon Slawston parish church (Cullen et al. 2011, 40) and the medieval village, now in the grounds of Othorpe House, sits on the loam soils of the north-west of Slawston parish. Oakthorpe is a parish in Derbyshire, also first recorded in DB (*Achetorpe* 1086; *Actorp* c.1125; *Octhorp*(*e*), *Okthorp*(*e*)

1258). These names have the generic element ON *þorp* with either OE *āc* 'outlying farmstead at the oak(s)' or the ON pers.n. *Áki*, 'Áki's outlying farmstead'. Ekwall (1960, 347; 352) PNDb (iii 651), and PNLe (iv 239) support a pers.n. etymology, the latter noting that a 'large percentage of place-names in *þorp* are compounded with personal names'. Fellows Jensen (1978, 114) also prefers a pers.n. etymology, suggesting confusion with *āc* could explain the absence of forms with medial *e* in the first element of both names. However, although tree and vegetation names are less common in compound with *þorp*/*þrop* than pers.ns,[20] they do occur, and an oak etymology can therefore not be ruled out.

Oakworth YW (*Acurde* in 1086, *Ocwrde* 1246, *Okeworth* 1368) derives from OE *āc-worð*, which according to PNYW (vi 7) and Watts (2004, 448) can be understood as 'oak-tree enclosure', although it should be noted that it is unclear whether this was an enclosure associated with just one oak-tree. Oakworth is a major settlement in Keighley parish and one of several early-attested woodland-related place-names, hinting that the area was once well-wooded. These are Keighley itself (*Chichelai* 1086), Utley (*Utelai* 1086), and Exley Head (*Ecleslay* 13th), all with the generic OE *lēah* 'open woodland', and Braithwaite (*Braithwait*(*e*) 1645) and Thwaites (*Twhaytes* 1303) from ON *þveit* 'clearing'. The most favourable site for oak growth is Holden Park in the north-east of the village, which rises to Branshaw Moor; the soil here is acidic and loam-based, in contrast with the surrounding alkaline soils.

2.1.3.1 *āc-tūn*:

This section lists the corpus of *āc-tūn* major names and briefly summarises some of the suggestions made in Chapter Three: Timber Toponyms (see 3.5; 3.6), where the context and possible meaning of this compound is explored.

There are 15 major names attested by 1200 that derive from the OE compound *āc-tūn*. Acton Beauchamp Wo (transferred to He in 1897: PNWo 25) is the earliest recorded (*Aactune* 718(11th) S85, *Actune* 972(1050) S786), with the double vowel of the first

[20] Cullen et al. (2011, 46) estimate that between 207 (46%) and 273 (61%) *þorp* compounds in the Danelaw area (attested by 1300) have a pers.n. specific. This compares with just five possible examples (1%) with a tree-species specific: including Birthorpe Li 'birch' (2.17: *birce*) and Willington Li 'willow' (2.79: **wilign*).

attestation representing the long vowel of *āc*. In contrast, Acton Mx (*Acton*(*e*) 1181) and Acton Grange Ch (*Acton* 1194) are not attested until the twelfth century, with forms identical to their modern spelling. Acton Ch, Acton Burnell and Piggott Sa, Acton Scott Sa and Iron Acton Gl are all first attested as *Actune* in DB and Acton Trussel St (1002(11th) S1536), Aighton La (1086), and Aughton YE (1086) as *Actun*. Aughton YW (*Acton*, *Hactone*, *Hacstone* 1086) has various DB spellings, some with an aspirated specific. Some DB forms are spelt *Ache*-: Aughton La (*Achetun* 1086), Acton Round Sa (*Achetune* 1086), and Acton Reynald Sa (*Achetone* 1086), with DB <ch> representing /k/. The regional influence of an Anglo-Scandinavian dialect can be seen in Yorkshire, where medieval forms spelt *Ai*- and *Ay*- appear to show the influence of ON *eik*: Ackton YW (*Aiketon*, *Ayekton*(*a*) 1243) and Aughton YE (*Ayketon juxta Elreton* 1298).

The compound *āc-tūn*, which literally means 'oak farm/settlement', appears to have been a functional *tūn* name, with contextual analysis suggesting that it described a settlement where oak woodland was managed to produce timber or coppice wood. The significance of this recurrent compound has been recognised by onomasts (Watts 2004, 2–3; VEPN i 4), with Gelling's discussion of the eight Shropshire Actons thus far the most extensive treatment of this subject (PNSa i 1–3). Apart from Acton Mx, all *āc-tūn* major names attested by the twelfth century can be found in the north and west of England, conforming to the region of Palaeozoic geology noted by Rackham (2003, 2010) to produce the most prolific single-species oak or oak-dominant woodland. The wetter climate of the west is also beneficial to oak growth, producing fast growing, straight oak standards that are well suited for use as timber. This difference may be reflected in the contrasting distribution of *āc-tūn* and *āc-lēah* major names: the latter found more often in the east (*Fig.7*), which could imply that oak was valued for different purposes in different parts of the country.

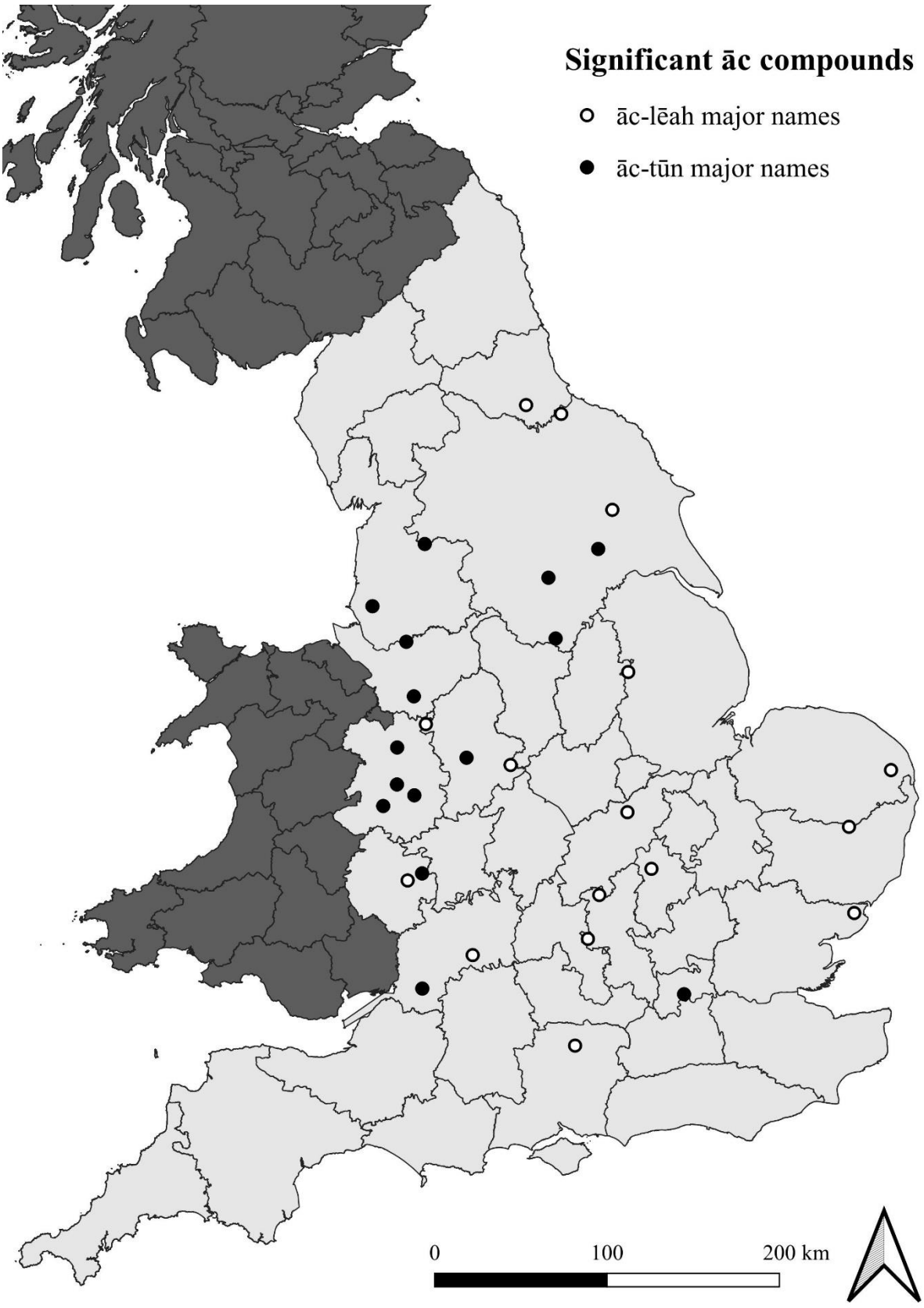


Figure 7: The distribution of major names deriving from the OE compounds *āc-tūn* and *āc-lēah*

2.1.4 *āc* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are four *āc-ford*, 'oak ford', major names that likely referred to crossing places marked by oak-trees. All are in the south-west of England, in the region Rackham (2010, 72) terms the oak-hazel province, where single-species oakwood is common on infertile, rain-leached soils. Oakford D is first attested in DB with an anomalous spelling (*Alforda* (sic) 1086) but subsequent attestations (*Acford*(*e*) 1166, *Hakford*(*e*) 1249, *Okeford* 1249) indicate an *āc-ford* etymology. Oakford parish is recorded in DB as having possession of 100 acres of woodland (Lat. *silva*) and large expanses of woodland still border Iron Mill Stream just south of the settlement and the River Exe to the east, over which crosses Oakfordbridge (1880s OS: SS 92013 21926).

There were three *āc-ford* major names in Dorset, each with a differentiating affix. Okeford Fitzpaine Do is first attested in a tenth-century charter (*Acford* 939×46(1726) S1719); the affix refers to Robert Fitz Payn who inherited the manor in 1264 (PNDo iii 178–80). The earliest attestation of Okeford Childe is in DB (*Acford* 1086). The affix appears from the thirteenth century (*Chiltaneford* 1210) and its origin is uncertain, deriving either from OE *cielde*, 'Okeford by the spring', or OE gen. pl. *cilda*, 'Okeford held by the young noblemen' (Watts 2004, 449–50). *Acford*, now known as Shillingstone, is a settlement first attested as *Alford* 1086. The affix *Eskelin* was appended from the twelfth century (*Acforde Eskelin* 1155), after Schelin and his descendants who held the manor; the modern name is a late formation with *tūn* (PNDo ii 238–9; Watts 2004, 544). It is likely these settlements were named in relation to the same oak-tree ford, as they lie within an area less than 3 km² (*Fig.8*). The location of this ford is uncertain, but it would possibly have crossed the River Stour to the east of Shillingstone, at the central point between the three sites. The soil is more acidic – and therefore most likely to support oak woodland – along this stretch of the Stour, between Hayward Bridge and an unnamed footbridge, in the vicinity of the twelfth-century church of Holy Rood in Shillingstone (Historic England: 1324658). Fords were crucial for travel in early medieval England and settlements at important river crossings were likely to have been 'disproportionally successful' (Baker and Brookes 2013a, 152), which could explain why there appear to have been three estates named in relation to one ford.

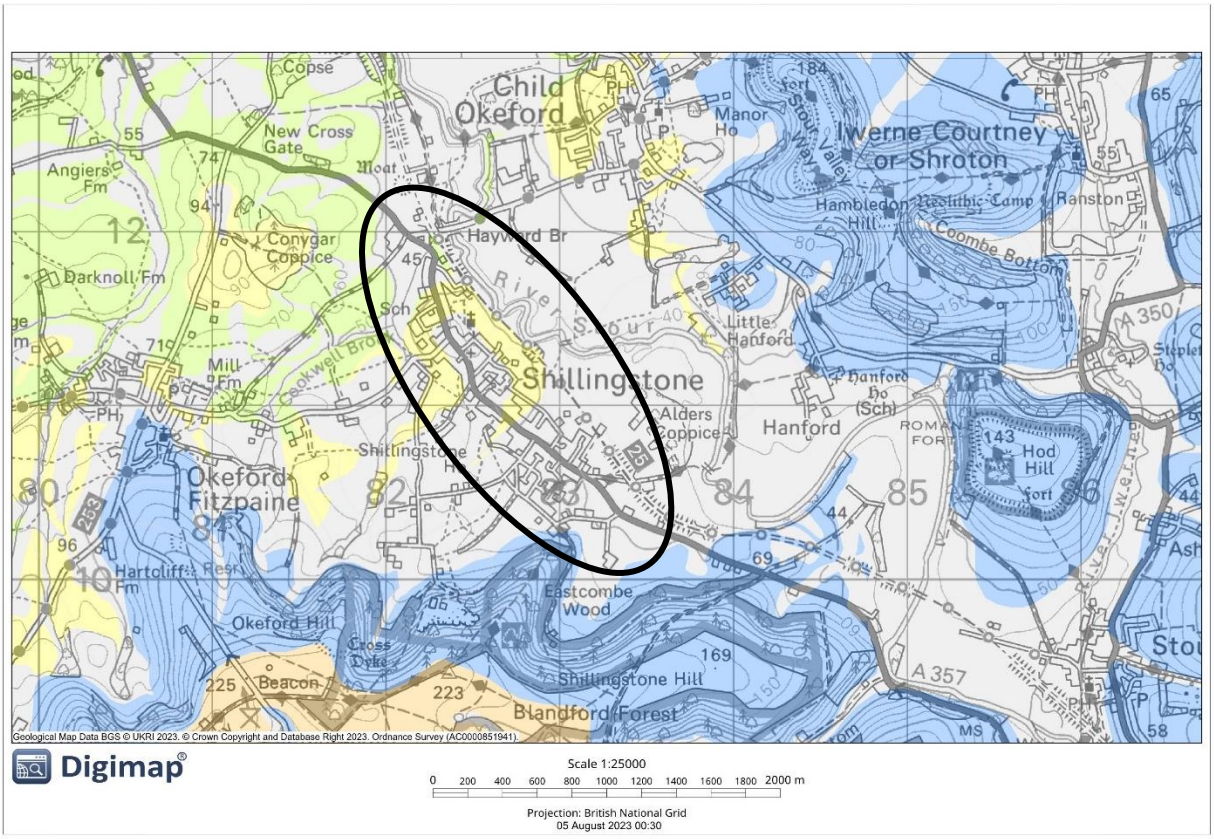


Figure 8: OS Calcium Carbonate Content (1:25 000): the probable location of the 'oak ford' in relation to Shillingstone, Okeford Fitzpaine, and Child Okeford (Dorset) – grey areas have lower CaCO3 indicating more acidic soils better suited to oak woodland

Three *āc* major names have a topographical generic that refers to a hill or site of elevated land. It is interesting to note that beyond woodland contexts and fords, oak topographical major names all refer to elevated land; this may be reflective of the propensity for single-species oakwood to grow in upland regions, where soils are less fertile due to increased throughflow and leaching of nutrients.

Aikber YN (now Akebar Farm), is first attested in the twelfth century (*Akeberga* 1160, *Aykebergh* 1279, *Aykbergh* 1342). PNYN (247) interprets this name as OE *āca-beorg*, with later Scandinavianisation from ON *eiki* 'oak, oaken'. If this was gen. pl. *āca*, or perhaps OE *æcen* 'oaken' (as suggested of Akeley (2.1.4.1): Watts 2004, 5) it would give the meaning 'hill of the oaks' or 'oaken hill', both of which suggest oakwood. The hill in question could be the one that rises directly north of the lost medieval village, where there is a large area of woodland known as Wild Wood (1850s OS: SE 183 909). Just over 1 km to the north-east is Haselton Farm (*Heselton'*

1137), an early reference to hazel that perhaps indicated an area with an oakwood type containing hazel as an underwood species (Peterken 1993, 146–7).

Akeld Nb (*Achelda* 1169, *Hakelda* 1176) looks to derive from OE *āc-helde*, 'oak slope'. The modern settlement sits at the base of Akeld Hill, where there are several prehistoric cairns and an Iron Age promontory fort known as Glead's Cleugh (Historic England: 1014930). The valley is clay-rich, but the slopes of the hill are acidic and sand-based, suggesting suitable conditions for upland oakwood (Peterken 1993, 143–5). The landscape is now treeless, like many upland areas, but this is no doubt due more to the effects of overgrazing and deforestation than reflective of the natural flora of the landscape.

For Etchilhampton W, Watts (2004, 219) defers entirely to Ekwall's (1960, 169) explanation of the early forms. The DB attestation (*Ec*(*h*)*esatingetone* 1086) and a later twelfth century spelling (*Hechesetingeton* 1206) look to derive from **Ǣc-sǣtingas*, short for **Ǣc-hyll-sǣtingas*, with dat. sg. *ǣc* and gen. pl. of *sǣtan*. Other forms (*Echehamt'*, *Ehelhampton'* 1196; *Echelham*(*p*)*ton* 1236–1332) give a slightly different etymology, still with reference to the place known as *Ǣchyll*, but compounded with *hǣma*, the gen. pl. of *hǣme*. Both versions mean something like 'the dwellers of *Ǣchyll* (oak hill)'. The oak hill in question must be the prominent Etchilhampton Hill to the west of the settlement. It is interesting to note that the bedrock here is chalk, which has resulted in highly alkaline clay and loam soils of a type that are not immediately associated with prolific oak-tree growth. Etchilhampton is included here as the original name seems to have been topographical.

Okeover St (*Acofre* 1002×1004) has developed from the OE compound *āc-ofer*, 'oak ridge'. This topographical feature has been identified by Horovitz (2005, 418), who describes the settlement as being 'south of a flat-topped headland with a convex shoulder on the west bank of the River Dove'. The ridge has sandstone bedrock with acidic sand-loam soil, meaning there would be more chance of oakwood growing on the ridge than in the surrounding landscape, where the soil is a more alkaline loam-clay.

The remaining topographical *āc* names refer to oak-trees in a wooded environment. The earliest attestations of Acrise K (*Acres* 1086, c.1100) suggest the compound *āc-hrīs* 'oak-tree brushwood' (Wallenberg 1934, 430). Cullen (1997, 162) notes of

Ekwall's (1960, 2) 'oak copse' etymology, that it is uncertain whether *hrīs* can refer specifically to a copse. It is possible that this was an area of scrub woodland with oak standards, but also that the 'brushwood' in question may itself have been oak coppice. In a discussion of Lowland oakwoods, Rackham (2003, 291) notes the significance of the name Acrise as evidence of the 'antiquity' of oak-tree underwood.

Knockholt K (*Ocholt*, *Nord Ocholte* 1197) and Occold Sf (*Acholt* 1042×66; *Acolt* 1086) derive from the OE compound *āc-holt*. The modern name Knockholt is due to misdivision of the ME phrase *atten okholt* (OE *æt þam acholte*), 'at the oak-wood', first seen in the fourteenth-century forms *Nocholt* 1353 and *le Nokelte* 1374 (Wallenberg 1934, 27; Watts 2004, 354). LPN (233) suggests that *holt* referred particularly to 'single-species woodland', so we should expect to see geological conditions at these sites suited to single-species oakwood, yet this is not the case. Lowland oakwood is an extreme woodland type with clearly defined soil preferences, found always on the most acidic and infertile soils (Rackham 2003, 291). At Occold Sf the soil is loam-based with variable levels of calcium carbonate, suggesting it is not especially acidic. The exact site of the wood is unknown but there are several tree-related place-names in the vicinity of the settlement: Elm Farm (1880s OS: TM 15353 70282), Ash Tree Farm, and Willow Tree Farm, which indicate a variety of species that do not typically grow in the same environment as Lowland oakwood. Rackham (2003, 285–291) has studied Lowland oakwoods in the east of England and notes that it 'seldom or never abuts on species of relatively fertile soils - maple, ash, or elms'.

Knockholt sits atop a chalk hilltop with variable acidity, but alkaline sand-based soil on the hillsides. Both beech and ash are mentioned in woodland names abutting the village (Knockholt Beeches 1890s OS: TQ 46943 58625; and Ash Platt 1930s OS: TQ 47264 58659). It is unlikely these conditions would have produced single-species oakwood, which is uncommon on calcareous soil, but it is possible that oak was the predominant species in mixed woodland: perhaps the sessile oak–hornbeam woodland sub-type that occupies calcareous sandy soils with chalk exposures in North Kent and grows well with ash (Peterken 1993, 167); or the pedunculate oak–ash–beechwood type that is associated with the chalk and limestone scarps of southern England, including North Kent (Peterken 1993, 159–160).

When *āc-holt* minor names are compared it is notable that none appears to neatly fit the geological criteria for single-species oakwood. LPN (233) records nine *āc-holt* names, including the above, meaning oak is the most common species to compound with *holt*, although it should be noted this study is not exhaustive. Acol (*de Hocholte* 13th) and Knockhall (*atte Nockholte* 1332), also in Kent (Walleberg 1934, 52; 595), sit on chalk bedrock with alkaline soils; Oakhall in Hawkesbury (*Hocholt* 14th cent.: PNGl iii 31), Oakhall in Almondsbury (*Okholt* 1269: PNGl iii 109), and Ockold in Upton St Leonard (*Hacholte* 1210: PNGl ii 171) are in the fertile clay-based Lowland regions of Gloucestershire. Only Oakhall Green in Grimley Wo (*Ocholt*, *Hocholt* 1240: PNWo 128) and Ockwells in Bray Brk (*Ocholt* 1260–1: PNBrk i 46) lie in areas with acidic loam and sand-based soils, although bedrock permeability at both sites is low, likely resulting in moister conditions than generally expected of single-species oakwoods. In Grimley parish there is also the early attested Birchall Green (*Bircholt* 1240, 'birch-wood'), that may suggest this was an area of birch–oak woodland, a stand type 'far more abundant than any other' in parts of the west and north of England (Peterken 1993, 141).

The compound *āc-holt* may not have indicated single-species oakwood but perhaps instead woods where oak was the tree most evident in the woodland canopy. This agrees with Hooke's (2011, 160–1) opinion of *holt* names, where in reaction to the proposed meaning 'single-species' she states, 'it is more likely that one species would have been dominant in such a wood, than it literally be single-species'. The *āc-holt* names discussed above possibly corresponding to Rackham's Type III oakwood where oak standards are common with mixed-species underwood 'distinguished from genuine oakwoods in which oak forms the underwood as well' (Rackham 2003, 283). Oak may also have been noted for its value as a resource at these sites, in contrast with the other woodland species that may have had less value, possibly as source of timber or perhaps as sites of pannage.

2.1.4.1 *āc-lēah*:

There are a possible 16 *āc-lēah*, 'oak open woodland', major place-names in England (*Fig.7*; see 3.5 for further discussion of this compound). All are attested by the eleventh century, and all are mentioned in DB, except Aycliffe in Durham, a county not included in the DB survey. The recurrence of *āc* major names that become Oak- in

their modern form could indicate that the meaning of these names remained transparent, with development to ME *ōk*(*e* and then modern *oak*: Oakley Bd (*Accleya* 1060(14th), *Okle*(*e*) 1276), Oakley Bk (*Achelei* 1086, *Okele*(*y*) 1341), Oakley Ess (*Accleiam*, *Adem* (*sic*) 1086, *Okele* 1346), Oakley Nth (*Aclea* 11th(13th), *Ockle* 1332), Oakley Sf (*Acle* 1086, *Occle* 1327), Oakley in Croxall St ((*æt*) *Acclea* 1002×1004; *Acleia*, *Okeley* 13th cent.), Oakley in Mucklestone St (*Aclei* 1086, *Ocleye* 1327), and Oakley Wood in Cirencester Gl (*Achelie* 1086; *Okley*(*e*), *Ocley*(*e*) 1343).

Church Oakley Ha (also known as West Oakley: Coates 1989, 91–2) is attested in a copy of a tenth-century charter (*Aclea* 10th(12th) S1821) and perhaps earlier as *Aclea* in the ASC as the site of a battle between King Æthelwulf and Viking invaders in the year 851 (Coates 1997, 606–10; Watts 2004, 447). Acle Nf (*Acle* 1086) has a reduced first attestation, the same as the first record of Oakley Sf (*Acle* 1086). Ocle Pychard He (*Aclea* 1017×41(17th)) and Oakley Nth (*Aclea* 11th(13th)) are identically attested in copies of the eleventh century documents, although the latter is recorded as two settlements from the twelfth century (*Little Acle* 12th; *Maiore Acle*, *Parva Acle* 1220). Oakley Ess also appears as one estate in DB, with the Latin ending (*Accleiam* 1086), but was recorded as two settlements in the later medieval period (*Magna Acle* 1256, *Parva Acle* 1330).

The modern spelling of Akeley Bk has medieval forms predominantly spelt with *A-* (*Achelei* 1086; *Akileia* 1152; *Akeleia* 1155), however, there is some interchange with *O-* spellings in the fourteenth-century (*Oclee* 1320–42; *Okele* 1347–62). PNBk (40) suggests that the early forms of Akeley with medial *-e-* and *-i-* indicate a derivation from the OE pers.n. *Aca* and are not consistent with an *āc-lēah* etymology; however, as Watts (2004, 5) points out, these forms could be gen. pl. *āca* or OE adj. *ǣcen*: giving 'open woodland with oaks' or 'oaken clearing'. If this is the case, then later medieval attestations of Oakley Bk with medial *-e-* (*Aquelie* 1106, *Akeley* 1155) perhaps indicate the same.

Aycliffe Du may be the earliest attested *āc-lēah* major name, with possible eighth- and ninth-century spellings from the ASC (*Aclea* 782 ASC; *Hacleah* 805 ASC), although it is uncertain whether these attestations do refer to Aycliffe (Watts 2002, 3). Later records also suggest an etymology from *āc-lēah* (*Aclea* c.1085, *Acleia* c.1190, *Acley* c.1220), but a fourteenth-century form (*Aycliff* 1361) demonstrates the probable

later confusion with OE *clif* (ME *clif*), which has led to the modern name. Watts (2004, 28–9) suggests this confusion may be an example of hypercorrection that was applied to the name *Acley* 'in view of the widespread development of original suffix *-clif* to *-cley* in northern names'.

Eagle Li is recorded with *A-* forms in DB (*Acley*, *Aclei*, *Akeley*, *Aycle* 1086), with later medieval attestations (*Eicla* 1135, *Eycle* 1212–1428) demonstrating the development that led to its modern form. Ekwall (1960, 155), Fellows Jensen (1978, 216), and Watts (2004, 202) suggest partial Scandinavianisation through the substitution of ON *eik* for OE *āc*, although literal substitution need not have occurred, as the influence of ON on the dialect of Lincolnshire may have influenced pronunciation over time. As suggested by Cameron (1998, 40), the development to Eagle (*Egle* 1442) is presumably the result of popular etymology.

Acklam YE (*Aclun* 1086) and Acklam YN (*Aclum*, *Achelu'*, *Aclun* 1086) could derive either from dat. pl *āc-lēagum*, 'oak open woodland' (Ekwall 1960, 2; Anderson 1934, 14), or from ON *ǫklum*, dat. pl. of ON *ǫkull* 'ankle', 'used in Norw[egian] place-names in the sense "slope"' (PNYE 147–8; PNYN 162). These arguments rely either on the double occurrence of early consonant assimilation: <nk> to <kk> for *ǫkull*, or reduction of *-lēagum* to *-lum* for *lēah* and neither is fully satisfactory. Acklam YE stands on the slope of the Acklam Wold, which is etymologically consistent with an *ǫklum* etymology, but this does not account for Acklam YN, which lies on the flatlands beside the River Tees floodplain. The geology at these sites is not diagnostic of that preferred by pure oakwood, but also would not have prevented oak growth in a mixed-woodland context.

As a simplex place-name:

> Acomb YW (*Achu'*, *Acun*, *Acum*, *Akum* 1086) PNYW iv 228; Aike YE (*Ach* 1086) PNYE 160; Noke O (*Acam*, *Acham* 1086) PNO i 232–3; Oake So ((*æt*) *Acon* 11th) Watts 2004, 447; Oaken St (*Ache* 1086; *Halken* c.1250) Horovitz 2005, 415; Oaks Sa (*Hach* 1086) PNSa i 225–6

As the generic element:

Barnack Nth ((*on*) *Beornican* c.980(c.1200)) PNNth 230 (**beorn**); Braddock Co (*Brodehoc* 1086) Padel 1988, 58 (**brād)**; Copdock Sf (*Coppedoc* 1195) Watts 2004, 156 (**coppede**); Cressage Sa (*Cristesache* 1086) PNSa i 102 (**Crist**); Dethick Db (*Dethek*(*e*), *Detheck* 1154) PNDb ii 359–60 (**dēað**); Hatfield Broadoak Ess (*Hatfield Brodehoke* 1121) PNEss 39 (**brād**); Hennock D (*Hainoc* 1086) PND ii 471 (**hēah**); Hodsock Nt (*Odesach* 1086) PNNt 82 (**pers.n.**); Holyoaks Le (*Haliach* 1086) PNLe iv 250–1 (**hālig**); Matlock Db (*Meslach* 1086) PNDb ii 388–9 (**mæðel**); Radnage Bk (*Radenhech* 1162) PNBk 191 (**rēad**); Sevenoaks K (*Seouenaca* c.1100) Watts 2004, 537 (**seofon**); Skyrack Wapentake YW (*Siraches Wapentac* 1086) PNYW iv 88 (**scīr**); Stevenage Hrt (*Stithenæce* c.1060) PNHrt 137–8 (**stīðe**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Ackhampstead Bk (*Hachamstede* 1052) PNBk 187 (**hām-stede**); Oakthorpe Db (*Achetorpe* 1086) PNDb iii 651 (**þorp**); Oakworth YW (*Acurde* 1086) PNYW vi 7 (**worð**); Ockham Sr (*Bocheham* 1086, *Ocham* 1218) PNSr 143 (**hām**); Othorpe Le (*Actorp* 1086) PNLe iv 239 (**þorp**); Oxted Sr (*Acsted*(*e*) 1086) PNSr 332 (**stede**)

With **tūn**:

Ackton YW (*Aitone* 1086) PNYW ii 85; Acton Ch (*Acatone*, *Actune* 1086) PNCh iii 126; Acton Mx (*Acton*(*e*) 1181) PNMx 81–2; Acton Beauchamp Wo (*Aactune* 727(1200)) PNWo 25; Acton Burnell and Acton Piggott Sa (*Actune*, *Æctune* 1086) PNSa i 4–5; Acton Grange Ch (*Acton* 1194) PNCh ii 146; Acton Reynald Sa (*Achetone* 1086) PNSa i 5; Acton Round Sa (*Achetune* 1086) PNSa vii 63; Acton Scott Sa (*Actune* 1086) PNSa i 6–7; Acton Trussel St (*Actun* (1002(11th)) PNSt i 26; Aighton La (*Actun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 140; Aughton La (*Achetun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 121; Aughton YE (*Actun* 1086) PNYE 237; Aughton YW (*Actone*, *Hactone*, *Hacstone* 1086) PNYW i 159; Iron Acton Gl (*Actvne* 1086) PNGl iii 1

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Acford in Shillingstone Do (*Alford* 1086) PNDo ii 238 (**ford**); Acrise K (*Acres* 1086) Watts 2004, 2 (**hrīs**); Aikber YN (*Akeberga* 1160) PNYN 247 (**beorg**); Akeld Nb (*Achelda* 1169) Watts 2004, 5 (**helde**); Child Okeford Do (*Acford* 1086) PNDo iii 59 (**ford**); Etchilhampton W (*Ec*(*h*)*esatingetone* 1086) Watts 2004, 219 (**hyll**); Knockholt K (*Ocholt*, *Nord Ocholte* 1197) Watts 2004, 354 (**holt**); Oakford D (*Alforda* 1086) PND ii 387 (**ford**); Occold Sf (*Acholt* 1042) Watts 2004, 448 (**holt**); Okeford Fitzpaine Do (*Acford* 939(1726)) PNDo iii 178 (**ford**); Okeover St (*Acofre* 1002) Horovitz 2005, 418 (**ofer**)

With **lēah**:

> Acle Nf (*Acle* 1086) Watts 2004, 2; Akeley Bk (*Achelei* 1086) PNBk 40–1; Acklam YE (*Aclun* 1086) PNYE 147–8; Acklam YN (*Aclum*, *Achelu'*, *Aclun* 1086) PNYN 162; Aycliffe Du (*Aclea* 782) Watts 2002, 3; Church Oakley Ha ((*to*) *Aclea* 10th(12th)) Watts 2004, 447; Eagle Li (*Acley*, *Aclei*, *Akeley*, *Aycle* 1086) Cameron 1998, 40; Oakley Bd (*Accleya* 1060(14th)) PNBd&Hu 24–5; Oakley Bk (*Achelei* 1086) PNBk 126; Oakley Ess (*Accleiam, Adem* (*sic*) 1086) PNEss 345; Oakley Nth (*Aclea* 11th(13th)) PNNth 170; Oakley Sf (*Acle* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 104; Oakley in Croxall St ((*æt*) *Acclea* 1002×1004) Horovitz 2005, 416; Oakley in Mucklestone St (*Aclei* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 416; Oakley Wood Gl (*Achelie* 1086) PNGl i 64–5; Ocle Pychard He (*Aclea* 1017×41) Watts 2004, 448

2.2 alor OE m. 'alder'

Cognate with OHG *elira*, *elera*, *elre* and ON **elri** (see 2.32). It has been suggested the Indo-European base for this word was originally a colour term meaning 'reddish-brown', a reference to the colour of freshly cut alder wood (OED: alder, n.1). In OE glossaries, *alor* glosses Lat. *alnus* (DOE: alor, n. 1c), corresponding with the modern binomial *Alnus glutinosa*. In major names *alor* occurs 27 times and LangScape records 24 uses of the word charter bounds. When plotted on a map these charter attestations show a westerly distribution, even when allowing for the general westerly bias of charter coverage (*Fig.9*). This is perhaps the result of higher rainfall in the

west, resulting in a wider variety of habitats suited to alder (see 2.2.4). Metathesis is common in early attestations of *alor* names. The earliest examples are charter references to an *arl scagan* 'alder shaw' in Crediton D (S255) (VEPN i 11) and two occurrences of the place-name Orleton He (*Orleton* 1291), Wo (*Orleton* 1357) (see 2.2.3).

2.2.1 *alor* as a simplex place-name:

There are two simplex *alor* major names. Aller So ((*æt*) *Alre* 878 ASC) looks to be dat. sg. *alre*, '(at the) alder'. Awre Gl (*Avre* 1086; *Aura*, *Aur*(*e*) 1150) may have a similar etymology. Forms with -*v*- and -*u*- may represent vocalisation of medial /l/ and if so the complete absence of -*l*- spellings is an early development. Ekwall (1960, 20) suggests this is due to Norman influence, but PNGl (iii 250) finds the completeness of this solution 'suspicious' and suggests the alternative etymology OE *afor-ēg*, 'sour water-meadow', but acknowledges that there are no other examples of this compound (PNGl iii 250–1). Watts (2004, 28) also proposes an *afor-ēg* origin but LPN (42–4) does not included it in the list of *ēg* names. The River Severn is prone to tidal flooding at this location and its tides result in a higher level of salinity than fresh river water. Mention in DB of a productive salt-house at Awre Manor indicates the presence of saltpans in the early medieval landscape, perhaps prevalent here because the meander decreases velocity of the river, forcing the deposition of sediment and salt. The presence of salt could explain the use of *afor* 'sour' as a descriptive quality of the land, yet the riparian topography does not discount the possibility of alder, which is tolerant of high groundwater levels, periodic flooding, and relatively high levels of salinity for a deciduous tree (Claessens 2003, 5). Alder is a nitrogen-fixing plant and a pioneer species of land-reclamation, so Awre could be the settlement 'at the alders' (see 2.2.2: Longner Sa, for collective use of dat. sg. *alre*), where the land has greater agricultural potential, through an increase in soil nitrogen, than the salt-rich flats surrounding it. Without definitive linguistic evidence to the contrary, Awre should remain under consideration as an *alor* place-name.

2.2.2 *alor* as the generic element:

Foxearle Hundred Sx has the specific element OE *fox* and a DB form suggesting generic dat. sg. *alre* (*Folsalre*, *Foxer* 1086). The post-DB forms are difficult; some have intrusive -*h*- (*Foxerehelle* 1183, *Foxherle* 1248, *Woxherl* 1279) and some appear

to show an i-mutated form of *alor*, corresponding to OHG *elira*, *erila*, MHG *erle*, although VEPN (i 12) notes the lack of supporting English evidence for this. Anderson (1939b 102–3) has suggested this could alternatively be an unattested collective OE noun **elre* equivalent to ON *elri* 'alder copse', giving the meaning 'foxes' alder copse', but again this is unsubstantiated. There is an interesting collection of later-attested minor names in Devon that also compound the generic *alor* (dat. sg. *alre*) with an animal or bird name: these are Bulealler D (*Bulalre* 1238) with the specific **bula* 'bull', Duckaller D (*Duckalre* 1277) from *dūca* 'duck', Hawkealter D (*Hauekeallere* 1275) from *hafoc* 'hawk', and Houndaller D (*Hundaler* 12th) from *hund* 'hound' (VEPN i 12). The typical riparian ecology of alder makes sense of an association with *dūca* but cannot account for the other species.

There are three major names where *alor* compounds with the definite form dative case *langan* of OE *lang* 'long, tall' (Watts 2004, 381). Longnor Hall Sa (*Languenare* 1086, *Longenhalre* c.1203) and Longnor in Bradley St (*Longenalre* 1086) are first attested in DB, while Longnor Sa is not recorded until the twelfth century (*Langanara* 1121, *Longenalra* 1155). Horovitz (2005, 370) notes another *lang-alor* name in Staffordshire, but this is unlocated and is not attested until the eighteenth century (*Longnolre by Nortune* 1798). It has been suggested that dat. sg. *alre* was intended collectively to indicate an alder copse rather than a single tree (Ekwall 1960, 303; PNSa i 182; Watts 2004, 381). This proposal is supported by the ecological character of alder, which is a species that rarely grows in isolation. Alder is not generally considered to be a notably sized tree, with older specimens not exceeding 28 metres in height (Johnson and More 2004, 190). While these *lang-alor* compounds could have indicated particularly tall alder trees, it is more likely *lang* 'long' referred to the size or shape of an alder stand. Similarly, although the *greata alres* 'great alders' at Ogley St (S1380) may have been unusually large specimens, 'great' was more likely a reference to the size of the alder wood. Alder commonly forms a fringe of woodland along riverbanks, as seeds fall into the water and are washed up and germinate downstream. It is therefore probable that the alder-woods of these names followed the banks of the River Severn at Longner Hall Sa, Town Brook at Longnor Sa, and Longnor Brook at Longnor St.

2.2.3 *alor* as the specific in a habitative compound:

OE *alor* occurs most frequently in major names as the specific element in a habitative compound. Aldridge St (*Alrewic* 1086) derives from OE *alor-wīc*, 'alder-tree farm or dwelling' (Watts 2004, 7), and is the only habitative *alor* major name that is not a compound in OE *tūn*. Horovitz (2005, 83) suggests that the compounding of *wīc* with a tree element specific is unusual and indeed in major names attested by 1200 it occurs only nine times: twice with **brōm** 'broom' (2.23.3: Castle Bromwich Wa, West Bromwich St), twice with **þorn** 'thorn' (2.72.3: Blatherwycke Nth, Withernwick YE), twice with **bæst** 'bast, lime bark' (2.14.1: Bastwick Nf, Woodbastwick Nf), once with **æppel-trēow** 'apple-tree' (2.8.2: Appletreewick YW), and once with **æsc** 'ash' (2.10.3: Ashwick So).

2.2.3.1 *alor-tūn*

The most recurrent alder major name compound is *alor-tūn*, with 11 examples attested by 1200. All are first recorded in the eleventh century and have forms suggesting dat. sg. *alre* or gen. pl. *alra*, 'farm of the alder-tree(s)'. Apart from Orelton Wo (*Ealretune* 1023), each is first attested in DB: Alderton Sf (*Al*(*r*)*etuna* 1086), Allerton La (*Alretune* 1086), Allerton Bywater (*Alretun*(*e*), *Alretona* 1086) YW, *Alretunstall* Ch (lost) (*Alretune* 1086),[21] Chapel Allerton YW (*Alretun*(*a*), *Alreton* 1086), Ellerton Abbey YN (*Elreton* 1086), Ellerton on Swale YN (*Alreton* 1086), Ellerton Priory YE (*Elreton* 1086), Ollerton Nt (*Alretun* 1086), and Orleton He (*Alretune* 1086). Ellerton Abbey YN and Ellerton Priory YW have forms with *E*- in their earliest attestations and Ellerton Swale YN had developed forms with *E*- by the twelfth century (*Ellerton* 1184), this is likely due to the influence of ON *elri* on the pronunciation of *alor* within the Danelaw area. Both Orleton He (*Alretune* 1086, *Alretun* 1242, *Olretton* 1249) and Orleton Wo (*Ealretune* 1023, *Alretune* 1086, *Alreton* 1212) have early attestations from *Alre*-, but by the thirteenth (*Orleton* 1291 He) and fourteenth centuries (*Orleton* 1357 Wo) metathesis is evident. The EDD

[21] PNCh (ii, 31) discusses the designation of the DB entry *Alretone* 1086 and concludes that, due to the description of its location, it is more likely to refer to the now lost estate *Alretunstall* in Timperley Ch than Ollerton Ch. Ollerton (*Ol*(*l*)*reton*(*e*), *Holreton*(*e*) late 13th cent.) is another *alor-tūn* name but it is unfortunately attested too late for inclusion in this study.

(aller, sb.1) notes development in the Midlands and North of England *oller* and *owler* and this is also reflected in place-names of the region.

Of tree-species elements that compound with *tūn* in English major names, *alor* is the fourth most common and *alor-tūn* compounds have a largely northern and westerly distribution (*Fig.9*). Peterken (1993, 154) observes that alderwood is common in the north-west of England due to higher rates of rainfall in this region, meaning the ground is more likely to stay moist and create a habitat suitable for prolific alder growth. He also notes that alder is uncommon on the rich clay soils of the Midlands, which could explain the comparable lack of alder major names in this area (Peterken 1993, 148). Alder coppices well, and although it burns badly, the wood is light, straight, and easy to cut (Rackham 2003, 306), which indicates it may have been of value as a small timber or coppice tree, perhaps used for wattle structures and fencing. It is not a particularly durable wood, which could explain its relative infrequency in the archaeological record when compared with a species like oak (see 3.3 for timber species in the material record), although it has been found in the construction of early medieval weirs, beside the River Trent in Colwich Nt (Hooke 2010, 49–50). As suggested of the compound *āc-tūn* (see 3.5), which is also common in the north-west of England, *alor-tūn* names may have indicated sites where alder woodland was managed, and alder coppice was harvested and worked.

2.2.4 *alor* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are nine major names with a topographical generic and a probable *alor* specific. Six of these appear to be compounds relating to the riparian landscape, which is unsurprising as it is a species that tolerates flooding and permanent root submersion better than most native trees (EAFTS 64) and tends to be found around bodies of flowing water and in areas with high groundwater. Several charter boundary references recognise the proximity of alder to rivers and valleys, and like alder major names, the distribution of these estates is largely in the west of England, in regions where rainfall is higher and alder is more likely to occur in a range of habitats (Peterken 1993, 150–2). LangScape records six river-related charter references and two references to an alder valley: *alr broc* ‘alder brook’ at Grimley Wo (S1370, S201); *alor broc* ‘alder brook’ at Salwarpe Wo (S1596, S1597); *ala burna* ‘alder stream’ at Brimpton Brk (S500); *alre wyllan* ‘alder spring’ at Withington Gl (S1556);

aler cumb ‘alder valley’ at North Stoke So (S265); and *alder dene* ‘alder valley’ at Harmondsworth Mx (S119).

Ellerbeck YN is a township in the parish of Osmotherley. It is first recorded in the eleventh century (*Alrebec* 1086, 1088; *Elrebec* 1086) with forms that suggest the OE compound *alor-bece*, ‘alder stream’, although the second DB form and subsequent attestations with *E-* likely show the influence of ON *elri*. Aubourn Li (*Aburne* 1086, *Alburne* 1160) and Albourne Sx (*Aleburn*(*e*) 1176, *Alebourne* 1327) have the generic element OE *burna* ‘stream’. The medieval forms of both show early loss of the *-r* of *alor* (PNSx i 215; Watts 2004, 6) For Aubourn, attestations with *Au-* appear from the thirteenth century (*Auburn* 1212) and are likely the result of the vocalisation of medial /l/ (Cameron 1998, 6; see Awre Gl above). Watts (2004, 24) proposes another possible etymology for Aubourn, suggesting derivation from Scandinavianised *ēl-burna*, ‘eel stream’, with influence from ON *áll* ‘eel’.

Alresford Ha is first attested in an eighth-century charter as *Alresforda* 701(13th) S242). This and the DB form (*Alresforde* 1086) suggest an etymology from gen. sg. *alres-ford*, ‘ford of the alder’. This name could have referred to a single notable alder-tree, but considering the characteristics of the species, was more likely meant collectively in reference to a group of alders. A comparable minor name is Alderford Nf (*Alraforda* 1163), which has the same generic element and a gen. pl. specific referring directly to multiple alder-trees. Coates (1989, 21) notes that the river Alre is a back-formation and was earlier known as Alresford river.

Alrewas St (*Alrewasse* 942(14th) S479) provides the earliest known use of the generic OE **wæsse* (Pears et al. 2020, 2). This element is uncommon and **alor-wæsse* is the only recurrent compound, appearing twice more in later-attested Alderwasley Db (*Al*(*l*)*rewas*(*e*)*leg*(*h*), *Al*(*l*)*rewasseleg*(*h*), *Al*(*l*)*rewas*(*e*)*ley*(*e*) 1251) (see 2.2.4.1: Alderley Gl for discussion of transparency of meaning) and Allerwash Nb (*Alrewes* 1202). LPN (63–6) suggests **wæsse* indicated ‘land by a meandering river which floods and drains quickly’. As noted above, alder is a species strongly associated with moving water, but more significantly in this context it is a good indicator of land liable to flooding, for as Rackham (2003, 305) observes, alder-trees often fringe the extent of a floodplain where seeds are dropped as the water recedes.

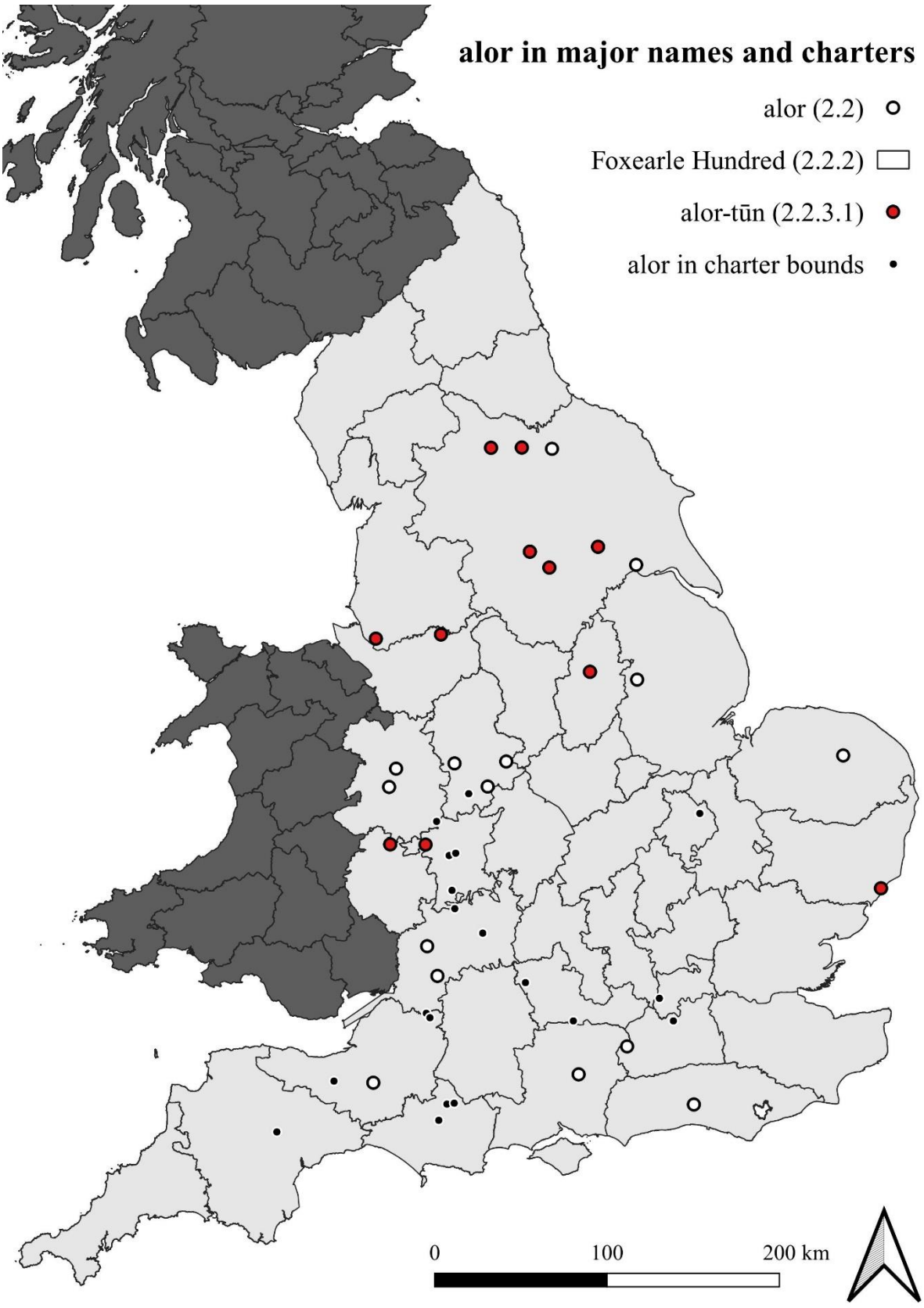


Figure 9: The distribution of *alor* major names (including *alor-tūn* compounds) and where *alor* occurs in charter bounds

Ellerker YE (*Alrecher* 1086, *Helrecher* 1195, *Ellerker* 1196) looks to be a compound either of OE *alor* or ON *elri* and the generic ON *kjarr*, meaning 'alder-tree marsh' (Watts 2004, 212). The compound *elri-kjarr* is recurrent in Swedish and Danish place-names (PNYE 222), which might suggest this was originally a name given by ON-speaking settlers, although it could also have developed in a mixed linguistic environment.

Aldershot Ha (*Halreshet* 1171) appears to derive from gen. sg. *alres* and generic OE *scēat*, 'alder corner' or 'corner at the place called *Alre* (at the alder-tree)' (Coates 1989, 20). Both Coates (1989, 20) and Watts (2004, 7) suggest that *scēat* referred to the shape of the county boundary where it protrudes into Surrey as it follows the course of the River Blackwater. Once again, the generic, although not directly water-related, identifies a feature of the riparian landscape, perhaps where alder seeds were washed ashore as the river slowed at this large meander.

2.2.4.1 *alor-lēah*

The final topographical *alor* name is Alderley Gl, the only alder major name with a woodland-related generic. It is first attested as *Alrelie* 1086, once again probably gen. pl. *alra*, meaning 'open woodland of the alders'. By the fourteenth century spellings appear with medial *-d-* (*Arldlegh* 1301, *Alderlegh*, *Alderligh*, *Alderley* 1394), a development that may have occurred under the influence of ME *alder*. Not only does this suggest transparency of meaning, probably a result of extant alder-trees, but it also suggests that ME *alder* was in vernacular use earlier than it is found in the literary record: a treatise of 1325 glosses MFr *Coupe de aune* as *holir*, a variant of *alre*, of *aller*, of *aldre*, but forms with medial *-d-* are not evident until 1385 (MED: alder, n.1). Alderwasley Db (see 2.2.4) is a comparable example, with what looks to be ME *alder*-influenced forms from the fifteenth century (*Alderwasle*(*e*), *Alderwaslegh*, *Alderwasley*(*e*) 1407).

The waterway Alderley Brook is named in relation to the settlement, first appearing as water of *Arlelegh'* 1228 (PNGl iii 23). This could suggest alders grew close to this water source; however, Alderley is backed by a ridge, where lies Alderley Wood. This name perhaps referred to a clearing or an area of sparse alder woodland, which Peterken (1993, 154–5) describes as Slope Alderwood: 'alder woodland on sloping ground which carries no streams'. This woodland type occurs mainly in the west

where there is heavier rainfall and is generally situated on medium-textured neutral soils at the middle and bottom of slopes where minerals have been washed through and settled. The geology at Alderley Wood suits the ecological criteria of Slope Alderwood (*Fig.10*).

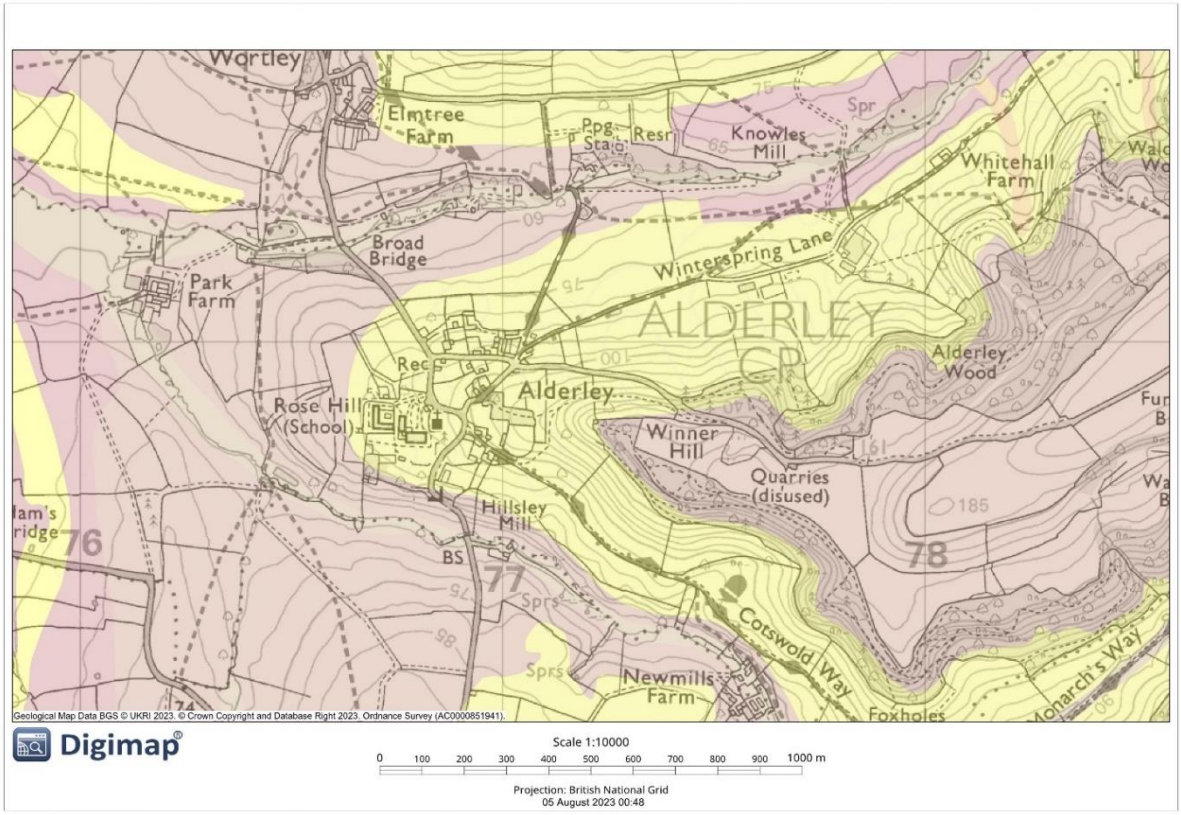


Figure 10: OS Soil Texture (1:10 000) map showing the soil types around Alderley, Gloucestershire, which lies on sandstone bedrock with fertile and well-draining loam soil (yellow)

As a simplex place-name:

> Aller So ((*æt*) *Alre* 878) Watts 2004, 6; Awre Gl (Avre *1086*) PNGl iii 250

As the generic element:

> Foxearle Hundred Sx (*Folsalre*, *Foxer* 1086) PNSx ii 477 (**fox**); Longnor Sa (*Langanara* 1121) PNSa i 182 (**lang**); Longnor St (*Longenalre* 1086) PNSt i 136 (**lang**); Longnor Hall Sa (*Languenare* 1086) PNSa i 182 (**lang**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Aldridge St (*Alrewic* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 83 (**wīc**)

With **tūn**:

Alderton Sf (*Al*(*r*)*etuna* 1086) Watts 2004, 7; Allerton La (*Alretune* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 111; Allerton Bywater YW (*Alretun*(*e*), *Alretona* 1086) PNYW iv 89; *Alretunstall* Ch (*Alretune* 1086) PNCh ii 31; Chapel Allerton YW (*Alretun*(*a*), *Alreton* 1086) PNYW iv 137; Ellerton Abbey YN (*Elreton* 1086) PNYN 270; Ellerton on Swale YN (*Alreton* 1086) PNYN 277; Ellerton Priory YE (*Elreton* 1086) PNYE 238; Ollerton Nt (*Alretun* 1086) PNNt 89; Orleton He (*Alretune* 1086) Watts 2004, 452; Orleton Wo (*Ealretune* 1023) PNWo 67

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Albourne Sx (*Aleburn*(*e*) 1176) PNSx i 215 (**burna**)**;** Alderford Nf (*Alraforda* 1163) Watts 2004, 7 (**ford**); Aldershot Ha (*Halreshet* 1171) Watts 2004, 7 (**scēat**); Alresford Ha ((*to*) *Alresforda* 701(13th)) Watts 2004, 10 (**ford**); Alrewas St (*Alrewasse* 942(14th)) Horovitz 2005, 83 (***wæsse**); Aubourn Li (*Aburne* 1086) Cameron 1998, 6 (**burna**); Ellerbeck YN (*Elrebec* 1086) PNYN 212 (**bece**); Ellerker YE (*Alrecher* 1086) PNYE 222 (**kjarr**)

With **lēah**:

Alderley Gl (*Alrelie* 1086) PNGl iii 23

2.3 apuldor OE f. ‘apple-tree’

Cognate with OHG *affoltra*, *affaltar* and ON *apaldr*. A similar construction is seen also for maple, with the affixation of OE *-dor*, *-dre*, ‘tree’, (OED: apple tree, n.; see 2.57 **mapuldor**). This is a southern equivalent of the compound *æppel-trēow*, although in some names, like Apledram Sx, Appleford Wt, and Appuldurcombe Wt (see 2.3.2), there appears to have been interchange with the standard English form (VEPN i 9). *Apuldor* is frequently found in OE texts (c. 100 times), mainly in charter bounds, but also early medieval medical texts and glossaries (DOE: apuldor, apuldre, n.).

There are only six *apuldor* major names (*Fig.11*) but LangScape records 57 occurrences of *apuldor* in OE charters in the bounds of 33 estates. These attestations often have an adjective describing the appearance of the tree, such as the *bradan apulduran*, 'broad apple-tree', at Manworthy in Milverton So (S709); the *greatan apeldre*, 'great apple-tree', at Meon Ha (S811) and the *miclan apoldre*, 'great apple-tree', at Ecchinswell Ha (S412); the *haran* 'hoar'[22] apple-trees at Pewsey W (S470), Egham Sr (S1165), and Cofton Hackett Wo (S1272); and the *ruwan apuldre*, 'rough apple-tree', at Merstham Sr (S528). The bounds of the wood of Hawling estate Gl (S179) had three apple-trees: a *wohgan apeldran*, 'crooked apple-tree', a *haran apeldran*, 'hoar apple-tree', and a *mær apeldran*, 'boundary apple-tree'. As the native wild crab-apple (*Malus sylvestri*) prefers to grow in light spaces and on woodland margins, it is unsurprising that these distinctive apple-trees appear to have existed at the edge of the wood.

2.3.1 *apuldor* as a simplex name:

Appledore in Clannaborough D is a simplex *apuldor* name that is first recorded as a DB estate (*Apledora* 1086, *Apeldure* 1242, *Appeldore* 1346); in contrast, Appledore in Burlescombe D is first attested with eleventh century forms (*Suraple* 1086; *Suraple*, *Surapple* 1173×5(1329)) that suggest the OE compound *sūr-æppel*, 'sour apple(tree)', most likely a reference to the crab-apple (PND 547), which produces fruit that is much more sour than cultivated varieties (see 4.2 for further discussion of crab-apple). By the thirteenth century the name is recorded as *sūr-apuldor* (*Sureapeldor* 1242, *Sourappledore* 1303).

Appledore K was first attested in 893 (ASC(A)) and 968 (S1215) as *Apuldre* and in the eleventh century as *Apoldre* 1032(13th) (S1465), *Apuldra* 1044×66 (S1047), and *Apeldres* 1086 (Wallenberg 1931, 298; Watts 2004, 16). These spellings conform to the general rule observed by Kitson (1990, 202; also, VEPN i 19), that the strong feminine form of *apuldor* was most often found in central and eastern counties, in this instance as dat. sg. *apuldre* '(at the) apple-tree'. Comparable examples exist in charter bounds from Bedfordshire (*to þære apuldre*: S772) and Kent (*innto apuldere*: S905).

[22] Kitson (1993, 38) notes that apple is the species that is most often called *hār* 'hoar', which was perhaps a reference to lichen that commonly grows on apple-trees.

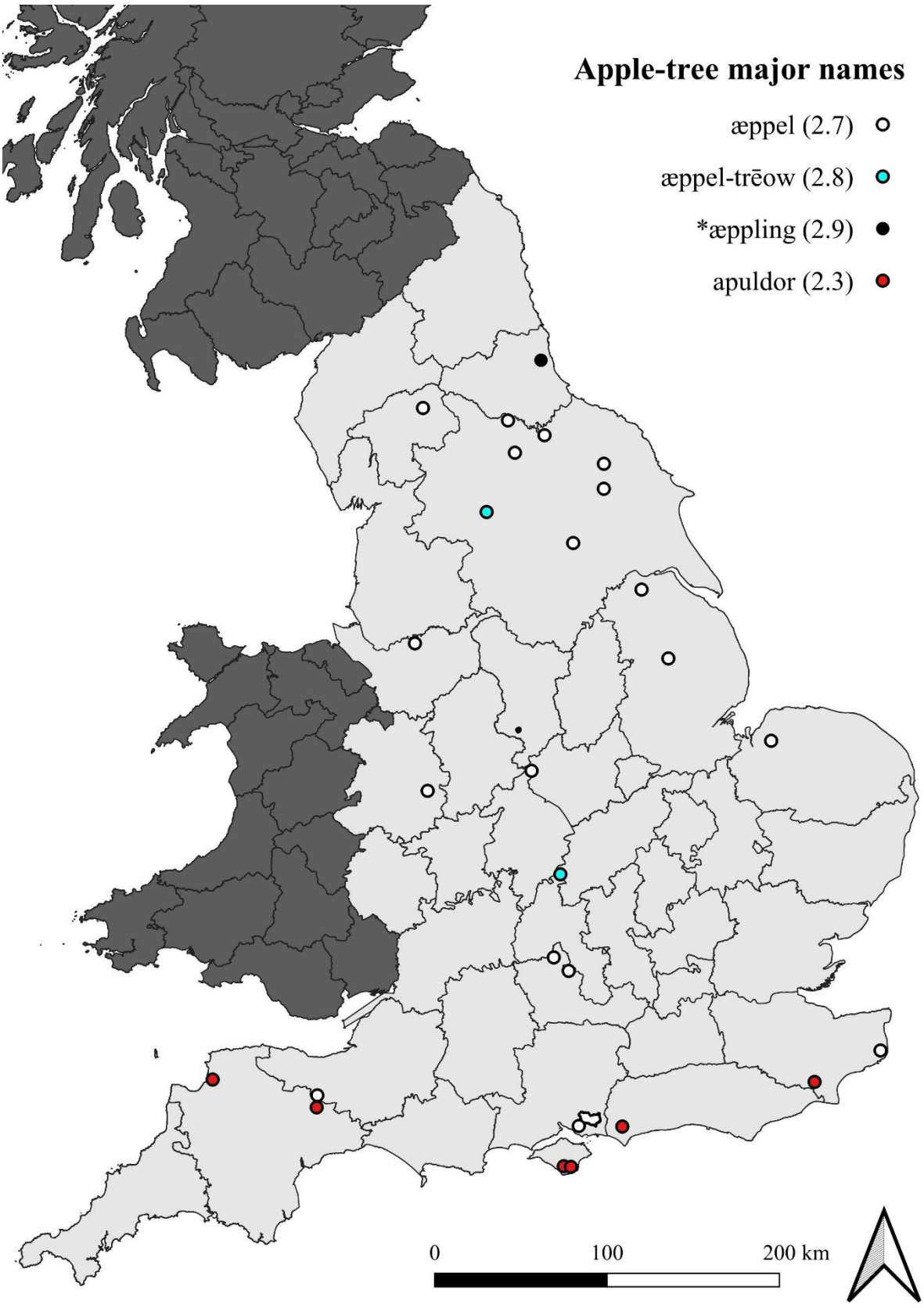


Figure 11: The distribution of apple major names attested by 1200

2.3.2 *apuldor* as the specific in a topographical compound:

The twelfth-century form of Apuldram (or Appledram) Sx (*Apeldreham* 1121) again suggests strong fem. *apuldor*, while the thirteenth-century spelling *Apeltreham* 1296, shows the influence of OE *æppel-trēow*. Dodgson (1973, 48) categorises this as a possible *hām* name on the strength of it being the name of a parish recorded from the eleventh century; however, LPN (47) notes that *hamm* is a generic predominantly found in the south and South Midlands and that in place-names and charters appears most often with the meaning 'land hemmed in by water', which could fit the location of Apuldram that lies beside the Fishbourne Channel. In late OE literature *hamm* could also mean 'cultivated enclosure' on marginal land (LPN 51) and Watts (2004, 16) suggests 'cultivated plot of marginal land' as a possible etymology in this case. Fruit-names are recurrent with generics that indicated enclosure (see 4.3: *orceard*, *æppel-garth*, and *æppel-geard*), which could support the theory that this name indicated a 'cultivated apple-tree enclosure, apple-tree orchard'. Apuldram is located immediately south of the medieval city walls of Chichester, which was a civic and ecclesiastical centre in the early medieval period (Salzman 1935, 82–3). It would therefore have been optimally located for horticultural contribution to the larger settlement (*Fig.12*). The soil here is loam-rich and the historian W. D. Peckham (cited in PNSx i 65) described it as 'admirable apple-growing land'. There is also perhaps some significance to the proximity of this site to the Roman palace of Fishbourne, as cultivated apple varieties were likely first introduced to Britain by the Romans through grafting onto native wild rootstock (see 4.2).

The compound *apuldor-ford* is recurrent in the early forms of Appleford Wt (*Apledeforde* 1086, *Westapeldereforde* 1271, *Estapeldreford* 1275), now represented by North & Upper Appleford and Great Appleford Farm in Godshill parish (Mills 1996, 22). One thirteenth-century spelling, *Appeltreford* 1287–90, appears to show alternation with standard English *æppel-trēow* (VEPN i 19). The river crossing at Appleford probably forded the River Medina, somewhere along its length between North and Upper Appleford. The same compound is attested in the minor name Appledore D, which is first recorded as *Apildorneford* 1330 (PND i 166). Appuldurcombe House Wt (*Apldecumbe* 1189–1204) is a neighbouring settlement, the name denoting a ruined Palladian mansion, built in 1710 (Mills 1996, 23).

Medieval forms again demonstrate interchange with *æppel-trēow* (*Appeltrecoumb*, *Appeldrecumbe* 1330).

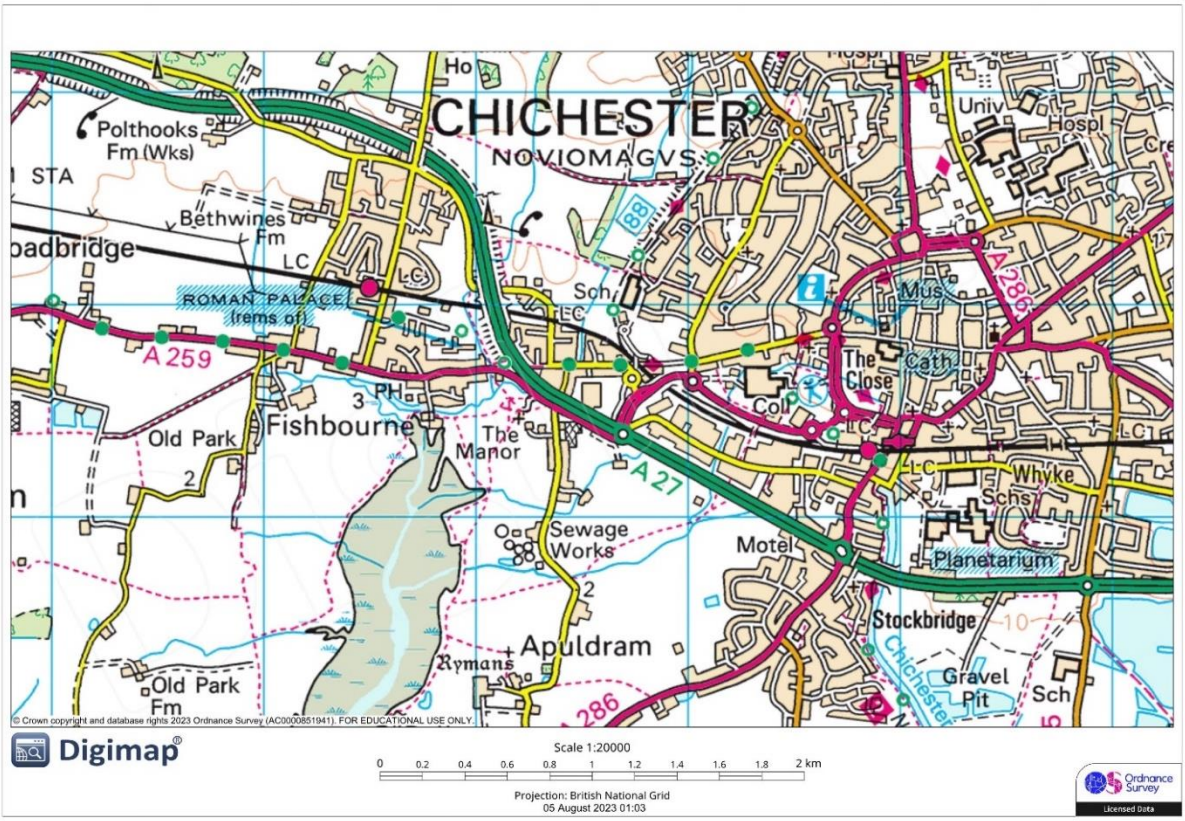


Figure 12: OS 2023 (1:50 000): Apuldram in relation to Chichester and the Roman Palace at Fishbourne and the Fishbourne Channel, Sussex

As a simplex place-name:

> Appledore D (*Apledora* 1086) PND 364; Appledore D (*Suraple* 1086, *Sureapeldor* 1242) PND 547; Appledore K (*Apuldre* 893 ASC(A)) Watts 2004, 16

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Appleford Wt (*Apledeforde*, *Apleford* 1086) Mills 1996, 22 (**ford**); Appuldurcombe House Wt (*Apldecumbe* 1189–1204) Mill 1996, 23 (**cumb**); Apuldram Sx (*Apeldreham* 1121) PNSx i 65 (**hamm**/**hām**)

2.4 askr ON m. ‘ash, ash-tree’

Cognate with OE **æsc** ‘ash-tree’ (see 2.10). In areas of ON settlement it often appears either to have replaced *æsc* in place-names or influenced the pronunciation of *æsc* in

the context of an Anglo-Scandinavian dialect (*Fig.14*). As it is difficult to distinguish between names that were formed directly from ON *askr* and those that replaced or influenced the pronunciation of OE *æsc*, the discussion of all possible *askr* names takes place under the headform *æsc*: this includes Aspatria Cu, Kippax YW, and Matlask Nf (2.10.2); Ashby Nf, Great and Little Ashby Cu, Askern YW, Askham Bryan YW, and Askham Richard YW (2.10.3); Askrigg YN, Askwith YW, and Escrick YE (2.10.4).

2.5 æcen OE adj. 'oaken, made of oak, growing with oaks'

There are two major names attested by the end of the twelfth century that have a probable etymology from the adj. *æcen* (*Fig.3*). A similar adjectival construction with *-en* occurs in other tree-names: see **æscen** 'ashen, growing with ash' (2.11); ***bircen** 'growing with birch' (2.19); ***hæslen** 'growing with hazel' (2.44); **linden** 'growing with limes' (2.55); and ***peren** 'growing with pears' (2.59).

2.5.1 *æcen* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Edgcott Bk (*Achecote* 1086, *Echecote* 1162) looks to be OE *æcen-cot*, although an alternative etymology from the pers.n **Ælcca* has also been suggested (Ekwall 1960, 160, Watts 2004, 208). VEPN (i 26) uses Itchingwood Sr (*Echenewode* 1312) as the example of an unproblematic representation of *æcen* and notes that by comparison, although Edgcott has the expected assibilated consonant it lacks forms with *-n*; however, this is not necessarily a major problem in an unstressed syllable. If this is *æcen* it is possible the *cot* was made of oak timber (PNBk 54; VEPN i 26), but as oak was the used structural timber (see 3.3) it is unclear why this was worthy of note. Perhaps this was instead a *cot* standing in an area 'growing with oaks'. The name Oak Tree Cottages in the neighbouring parish of Grendon Underwood (2.9km south-east; 2022 OS: SP 68941 20019) potentially provides a parallel example in a modern context.

2.5.2 *æcen* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Eggington Bd (*Ekendon* 1195; *Ekyndon*, *Ekindon* 1276) appears to be OE *æcen-dūn*, 'oaken hill, hill growing with oaks', although as Watts (2004, 210) suggests, an alternative etymology from the gen. sg. form of the OE pers.n. *Ecca* is formally possibile. Medieval attestations here have medial *-n-*, but no development of an

assibilated consonant (VEPN i 26). PNBd&Hu (121–2) notes that the development of <k> to <g>, as seen from the early fourteenth century (*Egynton* 1304), is fairly common.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Edgcott Bk (*Achecote* 1086) PNBk 54 (**cot**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Eggington Bd (*Ekendon* 1195) PNBd&Hu 121–2 (**dūn**)

2.6 æcern OE n. 'acorn'

The Germanic cognates (Gothic *akran, OHG ekarn)* suggest the original sense simply indicated wild fruit and later developed to refer to the fruit of all mast-bearing trees; in English, folk etymological association with the words oak, corn, and horn seem to have eventually led to its use only in relation to oak (OED: acorn, n.: etymology). OE *æcern* was used both specifically of oak mast and more generally to refer to mast and nuts of other species (DOE: æceren, n.). There are only two *æcern* names identified in VEPN (i 28): Accrington La (*Fig.3*) and Aconbury He (*Akornebir'* 1213).

2.6.1 *æcern* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Accrington La (*Akarinton* 1194; *Akery*(*g*)*nton*(*a*), *Akeryn*(*g*)*ton* 1258–1446×7) likely originated in the OE compound *æcern-tūn*. These early forms find a parallel in the name Faringdon Brk, where *Færndunæ* 971(12th) becomes ME *Farindon* 1275–6, *Faryndon'* 1327 (Ekwall 1922, 89–90). It is probable the reference here was to oak-mast, as Accrington lies in the oak-hazel province of the west where oakwood is common, while beech, the other most significant mast-bearing tree, has a natural climatic limit and it is unclear whether it grew this far north in the early medieval period (see 2.21: **bōc**). Watts (2004, 2) notes that the southern part of the chapelry 'was regarded as being in the forest where oak mast was once of great importance as food for pigs'. There are several oak-related minor names south of Accrington, most notably Broad Oak (1840 OS: SD 768 281) and Oak Hill (1840 OS: SD 764 278). These attest to the presence of oak in the landscape, as do the ancient preserved oak trees that have been dug from bogs within the township of Old and New Accrington (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 423).

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

Accrington La (*Akarinton* 1194) Ekwall 1922, 89–90

2.7 æppel OE m. ‘apple’

This word is cognate with OHG *apful*, *aphul*, *aphel*, *apfel* and ON **epli** (see 2.33), but its pre-Germanic etymology ‘is uncertain and disputed’ and it may be a borrowing from a non-Indo-European language (OED: apple, n.: etymology). OE *æppel* is frequently attested (c. 120 times) in OE place-names, charters, medical texts, and glossaries, where it generally glosses Lat. *mallum* ‘apple’, but also Lat. *pomum*, a word for apple, but also other tree-fruits such as pomegranate and quince (DOE: æppel, n.). The ON cognate *epli* is also frequently attested in ON texts predominantly as a gloss for Lat. *malum*, but also for other tree-fruits (ONP: epli *sb*. *n*.). It is probable that, as in modern English, *æppel* could be used to refer to a single tree as well as a place where apples grow, although the existence of the lexical compounds **apuldor** (see 2.3) and **æppel-trēow** (see 2.8), ‘apple-tree’, suggest that specific reference to the tree was sometimes preferred. In charters, when *æppel* was not compounded with *trēow*, it could be used to qualify both topographical or habitative features, such as the *æppel forda*, ‘apple ford’, at Culham O (S1567) or the *æppel tune*, ‘apple orchard’, at Marcham Brk (S734) (see 2.7.1.1). The 16 examples of *æppel* major names attested by 1200 follow a similar construction, with *æppel* as the specific element, never as the generic or as a simplex name.

The distribution of these *æppel* major names is diverse, but the majority are situated in north-east of England, with six in Yorkshire alone (*Fig.11*). Unlike other fruit-trees, such as pear, apple is not climatically limited in England and appears to have grown prolifically in Yorkshire and the East Midlands, where it is possible other fruit-trees were rare. Its popularity as an edible resource in this region could explain its frequency as a place-name element. Spellings with *Ep*- may show the influence of ON *epli* and VEPN (i 30) notes that beyond the Danelaw *Ep*- forms are likely the result of the Kentish or WMids dialect form *eppel*.

2.7.1 *æppel* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There is only one *æppel* name with a generic that is not *tūn* or *bȳ*, and that is the lost DB manor of *Aplestede* in Portsdown Hundred Ha (*Aplestede* 1086; *Appelstede* 1329) (Coates 1989, 24), which has the generic OE *stede*, 'apple place'. The exact location of this site is unknown, and it may now be largely submerged on the west side of Portsmouth Harbour (Sandred 1963, 269). DB records ploughlands, a mill, meadow, swine woodland, and a tax valuation that increases between 1066 and 1086, suggesting this was a relatively prosperous manor in the eleventh century. It is possible this is a southerly equivalent of the recurrent compound *æppel-tūn*, 'place where apples grow; orchard' (see 2.7.1.1), which has a predominantly north-westerly distribution. The compound *plūme-stede*, which is attested in three early major names (see 2.63.1), is a parallel construction.

2.7.1.2 *æppel-bȳ*:

There are four apple major names with the generic *bȳ*, each spelt with *A*- or *Æ* in their earliest attestations: Appleby Magna Le (*Æppebbyg* (sic), *Æppelby* 1002); Appleby Li (*Aplebi*, *Appelbiea* 1086); Appleby We (*Aplebi*, *Apleby* 1130); and Eppleby YN (*Aplebi* 1086). It is possible these derive from an equivalent ON compound, *epli-bȳ*, 'apple orchard', with later replacement by OE *æppel* (Ekwall 1960, 11; Watts 2004, 217). Alternatively, these names could be the result of Scandinavianisation of pre-existing OE *æppel-tūn* settlements (Ekwall 1960, 11; Watts 2004, 15), which may better explain the later development of *E*- forms for Appleby We (*Eppelbi*, *Eppelby* 1304) and Eppleby YN (*Eppilby* 1421). It is also possible that they arose after the adoption of *bȳ* as a place-name generic in northern dialects and may therefore derive from the compound *æppel-bȳ*, with later medieval *E*- forms reflecting regional pronunciation influenced by ON *epli* or ME *eppel*, *eappel* (MED: appel, n.). These names need not have developed the same way and may instead have arisen as the result of individual linguistic environments.

For further discussion of *æppel*(*epli*)-*bȳ* place-names see 4.4.

2.7.1.1 **æppel-tūn*:

There are nine *æppel* major names compounded with the OE generic *tūn*, literally 'apple farm/settlement', meaning 'orchard'. While it is formally possible **æppel-tūn*

was used to indicate a settlement with a single apple-tree, perhaps notable for its size, antiquity, or the palatability of its fruit, the recurrence of this compound and its use in OE literature as the equivalent of Lat. *pomerium*, supports the idea that this was a lexical compound, used to describe a place where apples (or other fruit) were grown for purpose, i.e. an orchard (see 4.2 for discussion of this compound).

The earliest attested **æppel-tūn* major name is Appleton Brk, which is mentioned in the copy of a tenth-century charter (*æppel tune* 942(1240) S734) and is one of only two *æppel* major names in the south of England (*Fig.11*). Appleton Roebuck YW is also first recorded in the tenth century simply as *Æppeltune* 972 but had a manorial affix from the fourteenth century (*Rabuk* 1379) to differentiate it from other Yorkshire Appletons. These earliest spellings demonstrate standard OE *æppel*, but in DB reduced *Apel-* and *Aple-* forms are common: Appleton Brk (*Apletune*, *Apletone* 1086); Appleton le Moor YN (*Apeltun* 1086); Appleton le Street YN (*Apletun*, *Apeltun* 1086); Appleton Manor K (*Apletone* 1086); Appleton Roebuck YW (*Apeltun*(*e*), *Apiltun*(*e*), *Apilton*(*a*) 1086); Appleton Wiske YN (*Ap*(*p*)*elton*(*a*), *Apletune* 1086); and West Appleton YN (*Apleton*, *Apelton* 1086). Appleton Nf (*Appletuna* 1086) and Appleton Thorn Ch (*Epletune* 1086) are also first attested in DB, the latter with a DB form likely demonstrating the influence of WMids *eppel* (PNCh ii 96).

For further discussion of **æppel-tūn* place-names see 4.4.

2.7.2 *æppel* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Appleford Brk is first attested in a ninth-century charter (*Æppelford*, *Appelforda* 895(1200) S355) in relation to the exchange of five hides of land, part of the Culham estate which lies beside the River Thames. The 'apple ford' was apparently once situated north of the modern village, but the crossing there no longer exists (PNBrk ii 400–1). It is not possible to discern from the name alone whether the river crossing was associated with one notable apple-tree or whether multiple trees produced apples at this site: either cultivated varieties or crab-apples. Compare Appleford Wt (see 2.3.2).

2.7.2.1 *æppel-lēah*:

There are three *æppel* major names with the OE generic *lēah*, 'apple open woodland'. Apley Li (*Apelei*, *Apeleia* 1086) and Appley So (*Ap*(*p*)*elie* 1086) are first recorded in

DB. Apley Sa is not attested until the twelfth century and initially only with *E*- forms (*Eppeleia* c.1173, *Elpele* 1200, *Eppele* 1203–4), showing the probable influence of WMids *eppel*. From the thirteenth century *A*- forms begin to appear (*Appeleg* 13th, *Appilleg* 1255), probably the effect of ME *appel*.

OE *æppel-lēah* is a recurrent compound in minor names in Bedfordshire (Appley, Chicksands Priory (*Appeleia* c.1150) PNBd 169), the Isle of Wight (Appley, Ryde (*Appeley* 1219) Mills 1996, 23), Lancashire (Appley Bridge ((*boscus de*) *Appellae*, *Appelleie*, *Appeleye* 13th cent. Ekwall 1922, 130), Nottinghamshire (Apleyhead Fm (*Apel*(*e*)*ia* 1161) PNNt 78), and Shropshire (Apley Park, Stockton (*Appeleg'* 1228) PNSa vi 56) and appears in a charter reference to an *æplea* at Micheldever Ha (S360). Its survival primarily in minor names suggests these were generally small (perhaps uninhabited) sites, in contrast with the recurrent names Appleton and Appleby that usually developed to become substantial settlements and places of administrative importance (see 4.4). The apples here may have been the wild crab-apple (*Malus sylvestris*), which tends to be found in old woodland, usually along wood margins or in clearings where there is adequate exposure to sunlight (Johnson and More 2004, 306); however, it is also possible these were sites of apple cultivation, as wild rootstock would have been required for the viable growth of cultivated varieties (see 4.2). It is also worth noting that *lēah* can be seen as a quasi-habitative element that sometimes-indicated places of agrarian settlement (LPN 237; Coates 2012, 227–8).

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> *Aplestede* Ha (*Aplestede* 1086) Coates 1989, 24 (**stede**)

With **bȳ**:

> Appleby Li (*Aplebi* 1086) PNLi vi 11; Appleby We (*Appilby*, *Appelby* 1123) PNWe ii 91; Appleby Magna Le (*Æppebbyg*, *Æppelby* 1002) PNLe iii 622; Eppleby YN (*Aplebi* 1086) PNYN 298

With **tūn**:

> Appleton Brk (*æppeltune* 942(1240) S734) PNBrk ii 401; Appleton Nf (*Appletuna* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 11; Appleton le Moor YN (*Apeltun* 1086) PNYN 59; Appleton le Street YN (*Apletun*, *Apeltun* 1086) PNYN 46; Appleton Manor K (*Apletone* 1086) Wallenberg 1934, 585;

Appleton Roebuck YW (*Æppeltune* 972) PNYW iv 219; Appleton Thorn Ch (*Epletune* 1086) PNCh ii 96; Appleton Wiske YN (*Ap*(*p*)*elton*(*a*), *Apletune* 1086) PNYN 174; West Appleton YN (*Apleton*, *Apelton* 1086) PNYN 241

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Appleford Brk (*Æppelford*, *Appelforda* 895(1200)) PNBrk ii 400 **(ford**)

With **lēah**:

Apley Li (*Apelei*, *Apeleia* 1086) Cameron 1998, 3; Apley Sa (*Eppeleia* 1173) PNSa iii 16; Appley So (*Ap*(*p*)*elie* 1086) Watts 2004, 16

2.8 æppel-trēow OE n. 'apple-tree, fruit-tree'

A compound of OE **æppel** (see 2.7) and OE *trēow* 'tree', which is attested both in place-names and OE literature where it glosses Lat. *malus* 'apple' and Lat. *granata* 'pomegranate(?)' (DOE: æppel-trēow, n.). OE charter bounds and place-name evidence suggest the compound *æppel-trēow* was originally a northern equivalent of **apuldor** (see 2.3), with a linguistic division that ran through the Midlands (Kitson 1995, 80: Map.4; VEPN i 30). Examples include the *sur æppel treo* 'sour apple-tree (i.e., crab-apple)', at Penkridge St (S879); the *appels treou* 'apple-tree' in the bounds at Upton Nt (S659); and the *haran apel treo* 'hoar apple-tree' at Wick Episcopi Wo (S142). A northerly distribution can be seen in early major names (*Fig.11*) and minor names: like Fickenappletree in the hamlet of Hampton Lovett Wo (*Thiccan apel treo* 11th, *Tichenapletreu* 1086, 'thick apple-tree'), Appletree in Waterhead Cu (*Apeltrethwayt* 1169, 'apple-tree clearing'), and Appletree in Halifax YW (*Appultreleghe* 1439, 'apple-tree open woodland'; however, an *apel treo* also once stood in the bounds at Bishop's Cleeve estate Gl (S1549) and there was an *apel treu* at Cheselbourne Do (S955). Interchange between *æppel-trēow* and *apuldor* can be seen in medieval forms of the names Appleford Wt, Appuldurcombe Wt, Apuldram Sx (see 2.3.2).

2.8.1 As the compound *æppel-trēow*:

Appletree Hundred Db is first attested in DB (*Apletreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*eltreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*iltreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*iltr*(*e*) 1086). The hundred meeting-place was presumably marked by an apple-tree and Anderson (1934, 35) suggests it may have stood at Sutton on the Hill where the hundred meeting was held in the fourteenth century. The soil at this site is a rich loam-clay and could certainly have provided good conditions for apple-tree growth, as apples are a species that tend to prefer fertile well-draining soils (see 4.4.1). Appletree Nth is not attested until the twelfth century (*Appeltre* 1175, *Apeltre* 1199). The earthworks beside Appletree farm in the modern hamlet are the site of the medieval village (2022 OS: SP 48323 49736). The neighbouring houses Bramley Cottage and Russet House continue the toponymic theme.

2.8.2 *æppel-trēow* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Appletreewick YW first appears in DB (*Apletreuuic*, *Apletrewic*, *Apletrewyc* 1086). It is a compound of *æppel-trēow* and OE *wīc*, 'apple-tree specialised farm'. The twelfth-century form *Epletrewic* 1175 probably resulted from Scandinavian influence on the local dialect through the introduction of the cognate ON **epli** 'apple' (see 2.33). It is possible the specialised function of this farm was to produce apples; however, if so, it is unclear why this was not named as an *æppel-tūn* site, which is a recurrent name in Yorkshire. The use of *æppel-trēow* perhaps instead suggests this was a farm named with reference to a striking individual tree.

As the compound *æppel-trēow*:

> Appletree Nth (*Appeltre* 1175) PNNth 32; Appletree Hundred Db (*Apletreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*eltreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*iltreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*iltr*(*e*) 1086) PNDb iii 515

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Appletreewick YW (*Apletreuuic*, *Apletrewic*, *Apeltrewyc* 1086) PNYW vi 78 (**wīc**)

2.9 *æppling OE adj. 'growing with apples'

A reconstructed adj. deriving from OE **æppel** 'apple' (see 2.7).

2.9.1 **æppling* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Eppleton Du is a place-name example that appears to have **æppling* as the specific element (*Fig.11*). It is first attested in the twelfth century with a wide range of spellings all with *-ing-* or *-ig-*: *Heppligdene* 1153–95 (Mawer 1920, 76), *Æpplingdene* c.1162×74, *Epplingdena* 1175, *Eppligdene* c.1185 (Watts 2002, 40). The recurrence of spellings with *E-* likely represents the influence of ON **epli** (see 2.33). The generic element *denu* suggests this was a 'valley growing with apples'. The precise location of the medieval settlement at Eppleton is unclear, but the lowest point of the valley is at the base of Orchard Hill (first appears on 1860s OS map), a name that indicates the continued cultivation of fruit in this area (*Fig.13*).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Eppleton Du (*Heppligdene* 1153–95; *Æpplingdene* c.1162×74) Mawer 1920, 76; Watts 2002, 40 (**denu**)



Figure 13: OS 2023 (1:25 000) map of the Eppleton area and the location of Orchard Hill in relation to Eppleton Hall Du

2.10 æsc OE m. ‘ash, ash-tree’

Cognate with OHG *ask* and ON **askr** (see 2.4) (OED: ash, n.1). This word is attested in OE medical texts, charter bounds, and glossaries, where it is glossed as Lat. *fraxinus* (DOE: æsc, n.). There are 117 major names attested by 1200 that may contain the element *æsc*, making this the most common tree-species element in major names, followed closely by OE **þorn** (see 2.72) with 104 major name attestations. It should be noted that some of the names discussed below could derive from cognate ON *askr* or collective noun ON **eski** (see 2.34), but it is not generally possible to draw firm distinctions between these elements, even in early records.

OE *æsc* is common in charter bounds, Hooke (2010, 202) notes 95 examples of an ash-related boundary feature in early medieval charters making this, with willow, the third most attested tree-species in charter bounds after thorn and oak. Ash is mentioned as a single tree in 21 charters, sometimes simply as *æsc* (S1434, S1036, S1272, S495) and sometimes with a qualifying element: like the *doddes æsc*, ‘Dodd’s ash’, at Hardenhuish W (S308); the *holan æsc*, ‘hollow ash’, at Slackstead Ha (S360); and the *ifihtan æsce* ‘ivy-covered ash’ at Winchester Ha (S1560). It appears to have been recurrent in the riparian landscape, as there were 16 estates with a water-related ash feature, such as *æsc burne*, ‘ash stream’, at Ashburton D (S1547); the *esch ford*, ‘ash ford’, at Isle Abbotts So (S740); the *æsc brygge*, ‘ash bridge’, at Heronden in Tenterden K (S1215); and the *æsc wellan*, ‘ash spring’, at Stoke Bishop Gl (S1317). River-related ash compounds are also common in early medieval major names (see 2.10.4).

Rackham (2014, 8) notes that the common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) can grow to become a very large tree, the second tallest of native species after lime (see 2.54 **lind**), which could have made it a notable landscape feature. It thrives on all but the most acidic and infertile soils and in well-drained or waterlogged conditions (Rackham 2010, 210; 213). It has no climatic limit in Britain (EAFTS 98) and no preference for the wetter west, like oak woodland (see 2.1 **āc**), or the colder drier east, like elm woodland (see 2.29 **elm**). This adaptability no doubt helps to explain the pervasiveness of ash-related place-names (*Fig.14*).

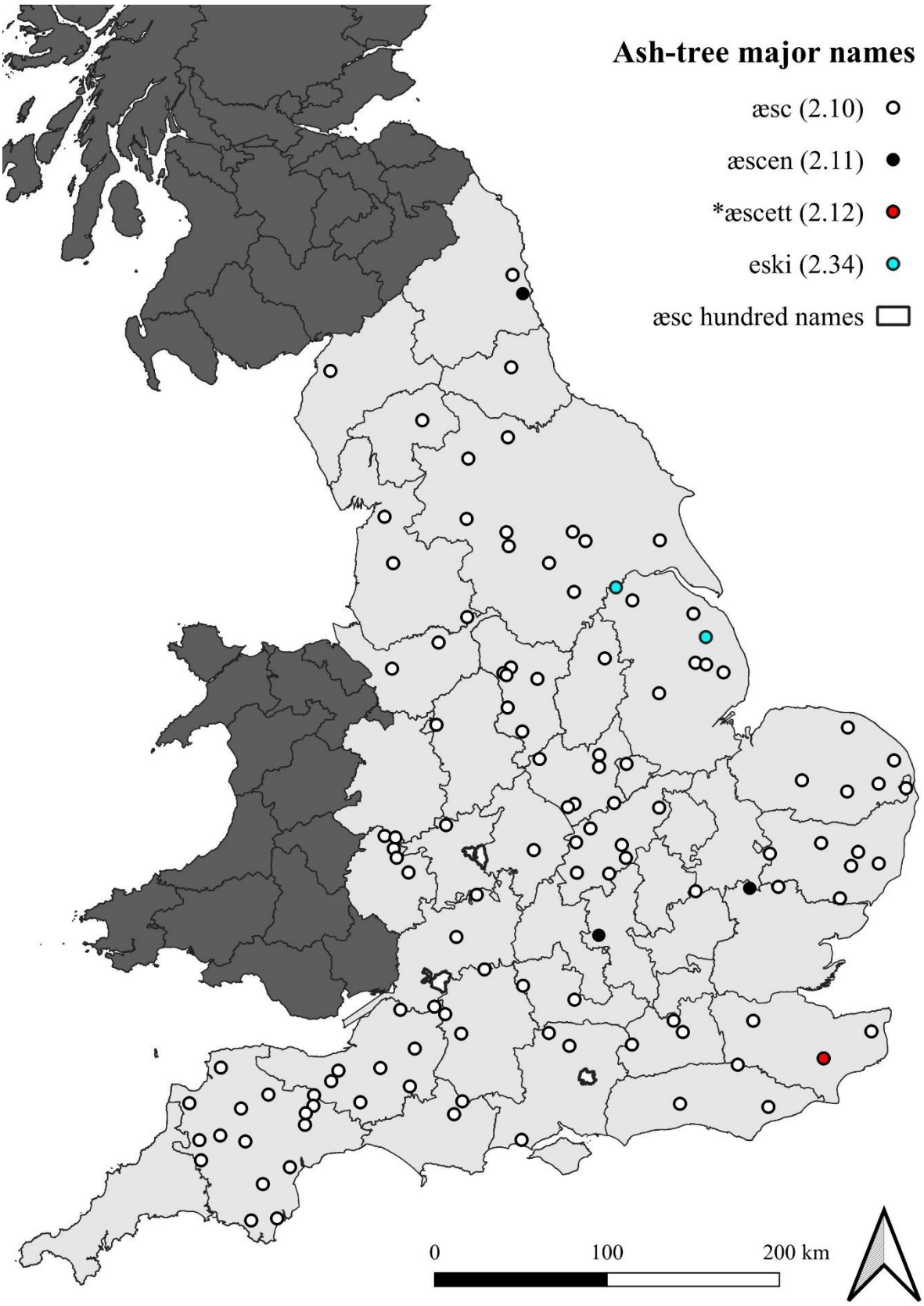


Figure 14: Ash-tree major names attested by 1200 (excluding the unlocatable *Chikenes Hundred*)

When the earliest attestations of *æsc* major names are considered, there are some observable patterns worth commenting on (*Fig.15*). Potential *æsc* names first attested with *E*- spellings are the most common and have the widest distribution, appearing everywhere except for the north-east Midlands where *A*- is the most common orthographic form, likely due to the influence of ON *askr* on the regional dialect. WSax *æsc* generally appears to have retained its phonetic value /æ/, but in Mercian (WMids) and Kentish dialects /æ/ became /ɛ/ through 'second fronting', which was expressed in written form with *e* spellings (Jordan 1974, 54). This could explain the development of several place-names in the West Midlands and in Kent, but for names with OE *E*- forms in northern counties and in Norfolk, Kristensson (1987, 40; 1995, 19) suggests there was raising of the vowel to /e/ before /ʃ/. In ME the standard development was to forms with *a*, becoming ME *assh*(*e*), *ash*, *asse* (MED: assh(e, n.1).

Some early *E*- spellings could alternatively derive from collective OE **esce* 'a clump of ash trees, an ash thicket' (see 2.10.1: Ash, Wrotham Hundred K; Campsey Ash Sf), or in the Danelaw area ON *eski* (VEPN i 32). Early spellings with *Æ*- have a largely south-westerly distribution and include some of the earliest records of *æsc* names, with 8 of 15 examples attested in ninth- and tenth-century charters. The distribution of these early spellings represents the standard WSax *æsc*, although the bias of early charter coverage may obscure earlier examples of this standard form in names elsewhere. Early spellings with *Ais*- are also predominantly found in the south-west of England and could either reflect a local dialect expression of *æsc* (Jordan 1974, 123), or a regional AN-influenced orthography (EPNE i 4-5).

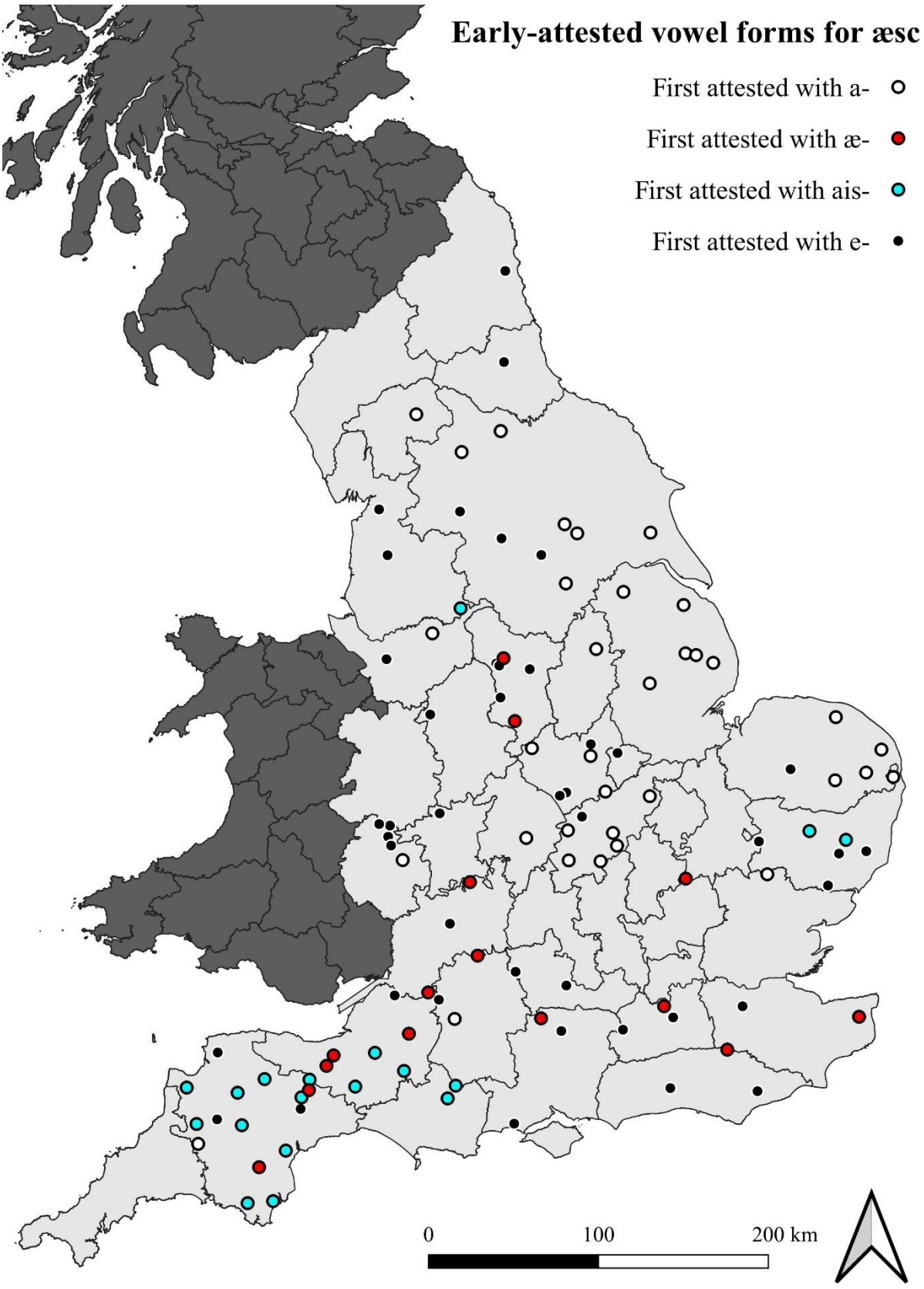


Figure 15: The distribution of earliest-attested vowel forms for *æsc* major names

It is formally possible that some of the names discussed below could derive from the OE pers.n. *Æsca* or the reconstructed strong form **Æsc*. There are some ash major names, like Ashow Wa (*Asceshot* 1086) and Ashdown Brk (*Æscesdun* c.900), that have attestations with what appears to be gen. sg. *-es*, but this cannot be taken as a definitive indication of a pers.n. PNBrk (i 3) suggests it is possible that 'genitival compositions [in the singular] do occur with tree-names' and that a gen. sg. tree specific could have been used of a single tree; additionally, tree names in gen. sg. appear to have been used in a collective sense, like the lost district name *Ashdown* Brk (*Æscesdune* c.900 ASC), for which the definition 'ash-trees' is preferable when describing a large expanse of land. Other examples like Alresford Ha (*Alresforda* 701(13th) S242), Elmsworth Wt (*Ulmesore* 1213, *Elmesore* 1220), and Maplescombe K (*Mapeldrescamp* 11th), have first elements that would not be easily confused with an established OE pers.n., suggesting these were indeed tree-species names, and the collective use of the gen. sg. is compelled by the propensity of these species to grow naturally in groups, particularly elm, which is a suckering species that is rarely found in isolation (EAFTS 168) (see 2.29.1).

The pers.n. *Æsca* is difficult to differentiate from OE *æsca* the gen. pl. form of *æsc*, although there are only two attestations of this name in two ninth-century West Saxon charters (S331, S339). Dithematic *Æsc-* names are more common, such as *Æscman* (seven independent attestations: PASE) and *Æscwulf* (11 independent attestations: PASE). This is perhaps unsurprising for names that are preserved in manuscripts, which were commissioned and witnessed by social elites who were more likely to have had dithematic names (Kitson 2002, 96), but may not be wholly representative of the personal names appearing in toponyms. *Æsca* has been suggested as the specific element in the name *Eschingham* c.1190 We, for which PNWe (i 160) suggests *Æsca* with connective *-ing-* and generic *hām*; however, there is only one early attestation of this name. It is possible the folk-name compound *Æsca-ingahām* 'settlement of the people of *Æsca* (**Æsc*)' was originally intended, but a pers.n. etymology is by no means certain and as with Eashing Sr (*Æscengum* 880–5(c.1100)), this name could instead derive from *æsc-ingas*, 'dwellers by the ash-trees' (PNSr 197), or is perhaps an example of OE *æsc* with the place-name forming suffix *-ing* (see 2.67.1: Saling Ess), which would give **Æscing* 'the ash-tree place' with the later addition of *hamm* or *hām*.

2.10.1 *æsc* as a simplex name:

Æsc is the most common tree-species element to appear as a simplex major name, with 24 examples attested by 1200, the next most frequent is *brōm* with seven examples (2.23.1) and then *āc* with six (2.1.2). The disparity here is difficult to explain. It perhaps suggests a natural distinctiveness to ash, which is a particularly tall native species but, as explored below, *æsc* may in some instances have been used collectively to describe ash-dominant woodland. Ash place-names tend to have modern spellings with *A*- through the influence of ME *assh*(*e*), *ash* or modern ash, suggesting their meaning was still intelligible throughout the medieval period. The earliest forms of most of these names, however, have spellings in *E*-, which depending on their location, could be due to differences in dialect from the standard WSax *æsc* characteristic of most OE literature.

The earliest attested of these names is Ashe Db, which has a tenth-century form spelt *Æsce* 987(14th) (S397), suggesting dat. sg. *æsce*, '(place at the) ash-tree', and later *e* spellings (*Eisse* 1086, *Ess*(*e*) c.1141, *Eyss* 1243) reflective of WMids *esc* (PNDb iii 319). Esch Hundred Wo (*Esch*, *Naisse* 1086) also has a DB form that suggests WMids *esc*. The second form with *N*- could be the result of misdivision (*atten esc*), or a misspelling of *Heisse* (*Haisse*), which is mentioned in a twelfth-century document as a manor in the hundred and is presumed to be the site of the meeting-place (PNWo 314; Anderson 1934, 143–4). The medieval form *Leisse* c.1150 is once again an AN spelling with assimilation of the definite article *le*.

Ash Sr (*Essa* 1170, *Esshe* 1174, *Asche* 13th) and Ashbocking Sf (*Assia* c.1075(1180), *Assa* 1086, *Esse* 1202, *Asch* 1346) have a variety of early forms with *e* that could be the result of the raising of *æ* to /ɛ/ before /ʃ/ (Kristensson 2001, 35; Briggs 2019, 9). The same is possible for Esh Du (*Es* 1153×95, *Esse* c.1195) or this could be collective **esce* with AN /s/ for /ʃ/. Watts (2004, 218) notes that later forms (*héés* 1180×96; *Eys* c.1204; (*H*)*eyss*(*c*)*he*, *Eissche* 14th) could instead indicate OE **hǣs* 'brushwood', although most names with this element occur in the south-east of England, with Heysham La and Hayes Wo providing rare northerly examples (EPNE i 218; Ekwall 1960, 218). Two *æsc* names in Yorkshire: Aske Hall YN (*Has*(*s*)*e* 1086, *Ask*(*e*) 1157) and Eske YN (*Asch* 1086, *Esk*(*e*) 1265, *Esk*(*e*) *in Holdernesse* 1268) (PNYE 199), appear to demonstrate the influence of ON *askr* and ON *eski* on the local dialect.

There are two simplex ash names in Kent: Ash in Wingham Hundred (*Æsce* c.1100, *Esse* 1226–91) and Ash in Wrotham Hundred (*Eisse* 1086, *Esse* 1197–1230, *Esse* 1205), that may demonstrate Kentish second fronting, dat. sg. *esce* '(place at the) ash-tree' (see 2.10 for phonological discussion); alternatively, this is may have been an OE collective noun **esce*. Briggs (2019, 8) notes that the minor name Each in Woodnesborough (Wingham Hundred) K, may be a comparative collective term from OE **ǣce*. There is a small area of sand-loam soil that encompasses Each Manor that would be well-suited to oak woodland, while the richer loam-clay soil to the north-west at Ash would be better suited to ash-dominant woodland. The possibility of multiple ash-trees at Ash in Wrotham Hundred K is perhaps supported by the thirteenth century form (*de*) *fraxnis* 1226, which is dat. pl. of Lat. *fraxinus* 'ash-trees' (Cullen 1997, 378; Watts 2004, 19).

Campsea Ash Sf appears to combine two adjacent medieval place-names that are recorded separately in DB (*Campsea* 1086, *Esce* 1086) and together by the thirteenth century (*Campesche in Ashe* in 1286). Briggs (2019, 9) suggests that *Campesia* 1086 and *Campesche* 1286 may represent the compound *camp-esce* with collective **esce*, 'ash enclosure/field', and that *Ashe* was a 'pleonastic later addition' from the same collective noun. While linguistically convincing, this does not account for contemporary attestations of simplex Ash throughout the medieval period (*Eysse* 1249, *Assh* 1308, *Ays*(*s*)*h*(*e*) 1336–1568) and although these Campsea forms could indicate ash, they could also be OE gen. sg. *campes-ēg* 'island of the enclosure' (Watts 2004, 113), as the site lies on an area of dry land between the floodplains of the rivers Ore and Deben.

Ashen Ess has forms that appear to vary between dat. sg. *æsce* (*Asce* 1086, *Asse* 1296) and dat. pl. *æscum* (*Asshen* 1344, *Es*(*c*)*hen* 1441), with the latter surviving in the modern spelling (PNEss 406). The influence of OE **æscen**, 'growing with ash-trees, ashen place', is also possible, as seen in nearby Ashdon Ess (see 2.11: *æscen*). Ashton Nth has a similar early development (*Asce* 1086, *As*(*s*)*hen* 1296, *Asshen al*. *Asheton*), but shows later influence from the more common name Ashton (PNNth 96).

There are twelve names in south-west England that are all attested in DB as simplex *æsc*. Ash in Frithelstock D (*Aissa* 1086) and Ash in Stourpaine Do (*Aisse* 1086) remain as a simplex name, but others were later differentiated by manorial affix. Ash Priors So (*Æsce* 1065, *Aissa* 1086) has a first attestation from dat. sg. *æsce* but in DB is represented similarly to Ashreigney D (*Aissa* 1086); Ash Thomas (*Aisa* 1086);

Ashwater D (*Aissa* 1086); East Ash D (*Aissa* 1086); East and West Ash (*Aissa* 1086); Rose Ash D (*Aissa* 1086); and Ashbrittle So (*Aisse* 1086). These forms with *Ai-* appear to be an AN spelling convention of the south-west (EPNE i 4–5). Each has thirteenth-century attestations spelt *Esse*, which Jordan (1974, 123) attributes to a south-westerly dialect change. Interestingly, early attestations of Ash Barton D (*Esse* 1086, *Asshe Rogus* 1372) and Ashe Ha (*Essa* 1086, *Aisse* 1167, *Esshe* 1278) have DB forms with *E-*. For the Hampshire example it could be that the DB attestation is the result of Kentish influence, as Ashe is located closer to ash simplex names in the south-east (Kristensson 2001, 34–5) but this does not explain the anomaly of Ash Barton, which perhaps provides earlier written evidence of the local dialect change.

At Ash Barton, Ash Priors, and Ashreigney there are areas of woodland that are named Ash Wood (1880s OS), which could suggest ash was still prevalent in the later landscape but considering the recurrence of ash minor names in these parishes,[23] may simply have referred to the parish name rather than the local flora. The continued use of Ash in minor names after the thirteenth-century introduction of manorial affixes suggests that affixation was necessary for external administrative differentiation of the parishes, but that these settlements were still locally referred to simply as Ash.

2.10.2 *æsc* as the generic element:

There are 15 major names attested by 1200 with *æsc* as the generic element (*Fig.19*). Seven (or eight) are compounded with a pers.n., five with a descriptive element and two (or three) with the name of an animal. Those with pers.ns presumably arose in relation to a notable ash-tree associated with an individual, perhaps as an indication of land ownership, or the location of a meeting-place named after an important member of the community.

Aspatria Cu (*Aspatric* 1160, *Espatric* 1171, *Ascpatric* 1220) appears to be an inversion-compound influenced by Celtic word order, where the generic OE *æsc* or

[23] 2020 OS: at Rose Ash there is an Ashwater, Lower Ashtown Copse, and Great Ash Moor (*Aishmore* 1609) (PND ii 392); at Ashwater an Ashwater Wood, Ashmill, and Arscott (*Ayshcote* 1330) (PND i 127); at Ashreigney a Rings Ash and East and West Arson (*Asseton* 1333 'ash farm') (PND ii 356); an Ashmore Ridge at Ashbrittle; at Ash Thomas an Ash Cross and Ash Cross Cottage; and a West Ash Farm at Ash Priors.

ON askr is followed by the Goidelic pers.n. *Patric* (with later assimilation to Lat. *patria*), giving the meaning 'Patric's ash-tree' (PNCu ii 261–2; Parsons 2011, 141).

The lost hundred of *Chikenes* is mentioned by Anderson (1934, 136 fn.) under the entry for Cotes Hundred Wa, but he does not identify it with a particular area. It is first attested in the twelfth century (*Chikeneshundredum* 1183, *Chicheneshdr'* 1189) with forms that suggest generic *æsc*, possibly with the influence of Mercian *esc*. The specific element is either the OE pers.n. **Cicca*, also in Chicksands Bd (*Chichesane* 1086), or OE *cīcen* 'chicken', the gen. sg. form of which is seen in Chicksgrove Gl (*Chichesgrave* 1154×8) and which, according to Watts (2004, 133), could have been a nickname or surname.

The DB attestation of Dodnash in Bentley Sf (*Todenes* 1086; *Dodenessa*, *Dodenes* 1188; *Dodenes* 1297×1307) has an anomalous *T*-, but subsequent forms point to the OE pers.n. *Dodda*, gen. sg. *Doddan*, 'Dodda's ash-tree' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 44). Franche in the parish of Kidderminster Wo is a settlement first attested in DB (*Frenesse* 1086; *Frenysse* 1249; *Frechene*, *Frenes* 1275; *Freynes* 1275). It can be attributed to the OE pers.n. **Frēa*, gen. sg. **Frēan*, 'Frēa's ash-tree' (PNWo 249; Watts 2004, 240), with generic *æsc* showing the influence of WMids *esc*. Hamnish Clifford He (*Hamenes*(*se*) 1086, *Hamenesca* 1190–1221) has the OE gen. sg. pers.n. *Hāman* (Ekwall 1960, 215; Copplestone-Crow 2009, 125), with a similar WMids-influenced generic, giving 'Hāma's ash-tree'.

Kippax YW (*Chipesch* 1086) looks to derive from the OE pers.n. *Cippa* or **Cyppa*, with Scandinavian influence giving *K*- (Watts 2004, 349). PNYW (iv 90) observes that ON influence can also be seen in the outcome of the generic element, with ON *eski* and ON *askr*, or Scandinavianisation from /ʃ/ to <sk> (*Kipesca* 1161 and *Kepask* 13th), with metathesis to /aks/ from the thirteenth century (*Kypax* 1246). It is also noted (ibid) that forms with *-eis* (*Kipeis*, *Kypeis* 1090; *Kyppeis*, *Kyppeys* 1136) are AN as they were recorded in the Pontefract cartulary of the Cluniac Priory of St John the Evangelist.

Prinknash Park Gl is first attested in the early twelfth century (*Prinkenesse*, *Prynkenesse* 1121). PNGl (ii 170) suggests it is a compound of *æsc* and the OE pers.n. **Princa*; in the gen. sg. form this is **Princan*, which would explain the medial *-n-*. Grumbald's Ash Gl is the name of a hundred in south Gloucestershire. It is first

recorded in DB as *Grimboldestou hd'* 1086, from *Grimbald* and OE *stōw*, 'Grimbald's place', but forms from the twelfth century (*Brimboldeshashdr'* 1169; *Grimbaldesess*(*e*) *hundr'* 1180) have generic *æsc*, 'Grimbald's ash'. Ash is not a particularly long-lived tree and when growing naturally in favourable conditions will usually disintegrate and disappear within two hundred years; however, if pollarded, an ash-tree can survive for over four hundred years (Rackham 2014, 24). While it could be the case that an ash-tree grew to prominence in the 83 years between the two earliest attestations, it is possible that a distinctive pollarded ash-tree already existed in the eleventh century and that the DB attestation was an alternative form of the name. According to Anderson (1939a 28–30) the modern hundred meeting-place was at Dodington Ash Gl. This cannot be identical to Grumbald's Ash as it was originally in the neighbouring DB hundred of *Edredestan* but does serve to demonstrate the importance of ash in this region, which is further supported by the recurrence of ash as a feature of charter bounds in Gloucestershire (S414, S664, S1317, S1551, S1556).

The five major names with an *æsc* generic and a descriptive specific are all first attested in DB. Bradninch D (*Bradenesa* 1086) looks to derive from the phrase (*æt þæm*) *bradan æsce*, '(at the) broad ash'. Watts (2004, 77) notes that some medieval forms (*Bradanech*(*e*) 1238, *Bradenage* 1310) suggest confusion with OE *æc*, the dat. sg. form of *āc* 'oak'. According to PND (ii 555–6), the second *-n-* in the modern spelling is intrusive and never pronounced. We can assume the ash-tree in question was impressively large, but perhaps not tall. When growing naturally ash is generally a tall and slender tree (Johnson and More 2004, 436), so a 'broad' ash is more likely to have been a pollarded specimen. There is an Ash Cross first marked on the 1890 OS map that sits less than 1 km north of St Disen's church at Bradnich (SS 9996 0491). It is one of four crossroads on the moorland above the town and is testament to the continued importance of ash as a notable feature in the local landscape.

In Matlask Nf (*Matelasc*, *Matelesc* 1086) the OE noun *mæðel* 'speech' is compounded with *æsc*, meaning 'speech ash', probably indicating the site of the hundred meeting place (Anderson 1939b, 160). In some early forms (*Matelask*, *Matelaske* 1198) it appears ON *askr* has either replaced *æsc* (PNNf iii 23) or influenced the pronunciation through the development of /ʃ/ to /sk/ in the local dialect. This name is comparable with Molash K (*Molesse* 1226) from OE *māl-æsc* 'speech ash' and Matlock Db from *mæðel-āc* (see 2.1.2: *āc*).

The DB attestation of Monyash Db (*Maneis* 1086) shows AN influence on the generic (see Kippax YN). Later medieval spellings (*Monyasch*(*e*), *Monyasch*(*e*) 1198, *Manias*(*s*) 1254) are perhaps a clearer example of the original compound, with the specific OE *manig* 'many'. Watts (2004, 420) notes that this adjective was probably chosen as a counterpoint to One Ash (*Aneise* 1086), from OE ān 'one', another DB manor that is now known as One Ash Grange Farm, 2 kms south-west of Monyash but still within Monyash parish (SK 16921 65235). Twelfth-century forms with *-asch* could indicate Scandinavianised /sk/, that in turn might explain the metathesis of the second recorded form *Moniax* 1101 (also for One Ash: *Anaix* 1101). Ashford in Water Db (see 2.10.4) is the neighbouring parish to the north-east, situated on the River Wye around 5.5 kms from Monyash. The proximity of these three *æsc* names suggests ash was a prominent species in the landscape. The local geology supports this suggestion as these settlements stand on an area of limestone bedrock and the soil is a permeable alkaline loam-clay. Clay-rich alkaline soils with good drainage provide optimal conditions for ash-tree growth (EAFTS 98) and Rackham (2014, 39) notes that ash is often found on limestone in more northern counties.

Whitnash Wa (*Witenas* 1086, *Witenasche* 1222, *Witenesse* 1223) is OE dat. sg. *hwītan*, from *hwīt* 'white' and dat. sg. *æsce*, '(place at) the white ash' (PNWa 190; Mills 2011, 495). All medieval attestations display early loss of the /h/ of *hwītan*, with the exception of *Wythinhash*, *Wythynhas* 1326, which may show the influence of ME *wīðī* (OE *wīðig*) 'withy, willow'. Why this tree was described as 'white' is not entirely clear, but it perhaps had something to do with the colour of the bark or leaves of this particular specimen.

Broxash Hundred He and Catsash Hundred So both compound *æsc* with a specific element that associated the tree with a wild animal. The earliest attestations of Broxash (*Brokeshashr* 1169, *Brakesessehdr* 1175, *Brokesaishundredum* 1178) suggest gen. sg. *brocces* from OE *brocc* 'badger'. Similar use of *brocc* as a specific element with genitival construction can be seen in charter bounds: *brocces slæde*, 'badger's valley', in Cutsdean Gl (S1335); *brocces broc*, 'badger's brook', at Dillington Hu (S67). Anderson (1934 166) observes that the name survives in Broxash Wood (*Brockeshes* 1186), in the south-east corner of which is marked a Hundred Bank, presumably once the meeting-place.

Catsash Hundred So has early forms showing variation between *Cattes-* (*Cattesaishdr* 1168, *Katesaisse* 1212), from *cattes* the gen. sg. form of OE *catt* 'cat' (see Catshill Wo: Watts 2004, 120), and *Caten-* (*Catenessehundredum* 1185), possibly from weak gen. sg. *cattan*, which is independently attested in the bounds of Newnham Murren O (S738). The recurrence of hundred names with a pers.n. specific and tree generic supports the suggestion that this could be a by-name, perhaps **Catt* (gen. sg. *Cattes*) or **Catta* (gen. sg. *Cattan*) (VEPN ii 149); however, animal names are not infrequently compounded with tree-species in place-names (see 2.2.2 **alor**: Bulealler D, Duckaller D, Hawkealter D, and Houndaller D) and although there are no other major-name examples of *catt* with a tree-species generic, there is a charter record of a *catt wiðig* 'cat withy, willow' in Somerset (Sawyer Pelteret11) and *catt* is recurrent with woodland-related generics in the names Catsbury Gl (*Cattesber*(*e*)*we* 1266) from OE *bearu* 'grove' (PNGl iii156); Cat Grove Gl (*Katgroue* 1540) and Catgrove Wood Gl (*Cotegrove* 1542) from OE *grāf*(*a*) 'grove' (PNGl ii 233; iii 156); Cathanger So (*Cathangre* 1086) from OE *hangra* 'sloping wood' (VEPN ii 150); *Catteshurst* 1416 Ch from OE *hyrst* 'wooded-hill' (PNCh iii 293); Catley He (*Catesley* 1242) from OE *lēah* 'open woodland' (VEPN ii 150); and Catswood Gl (*Catewode* 1459) from OE *wudu* 'wood' (PNGl i 118). Anderson (1939a 55–6) notes that a hundred court was held at an ash-tree on the road between Castle Cary and Yeovil, which may have been a successor of the original 'cat's ash'.

2.10.3 *æsc* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are 42 major names first attested by 1200 with *æsc* as the specific in a habitative compound. Of these the most common type is *æsc-bȳ* with 20 occurrences, followed by *æsc-tūn* with 13 examples and then a further seven habitative generic elements that compound with *æsc* only once or twice in major names.

There are two *æsc* major names with the generic OE *burh* 'fort'. The *burh* of Ashbury Brk appears to refer to the Iron Age hillfort, approximately 3 kms south of the modern settlement, now known as Alfred's Castle (SU 277 822), but recorded as *Ashberry Camp* on a map of 1532. PNBrk (ii 344) identifies two charters in which Ashbury is recorded: a ninth-century grant of land at *Asshedoune* also recorded as *Aysheberi* (S288) and a tenth-century grant at *Aysshedoun* also *Aysshebury* (S524); the alternative generic *dūn* is possibly a reference to the line of hills of the Berkshire

Downs (PNBrk i 3). Watts (2004, 20) suggests that the DB attestations (*Eissesberie* 1086) could be gen. sg. *æsces* compounded with dat. sg. *byrig* and that the charter and later medieval spellings (*Æsseberia* 1187, *Esseberia* 1188) are gen. pl. *æsca*. If an ash specific could be applied not only to the hillfort, but also to the Downs themselves, it is likely ash was the dominant tree in the landscape. This is supported by the geology of the region, with its chalk ridgeway, as chalk slopes too steep for cultivation often support woods of ash and hazel (Rackham 2014, 37).

The early attestations of Ashbury D (*Esseberie* 1086, *Asebiria* 1136) suggest that like Ashbury Brk this name derives from gen. pl. *æsca* and dat. sg. *byrig*. There are no visible earthworks at the site (PND i 126), but less than 3 km to the south-west is another *burh* settlement called Broadbury (*Brodebury* 1440) (2022 OS: SX 4838 9578). The earthworks at this site are generally thought to be the remains of a Roman fort, but excavations performed in the 1980s could not prove this conclusively (Maxfield 1985, 54–7). Ashbury was evaluated as part of the same archaeological survey and no evidence was found of a comparable fortification that can explain the *burh* generic. If the hillfort 3 km south of Ashbury Brk explains the name of this settlement, then the same can be said for Ashbury D, which is 3 km from the fort at Broadbury. Both Alfred's Castle and Broadbury Castle are strategically located at high points in the landscape, and both have modern names attested much later than the neighbouring Ashburys. It is therefore possible that the settlement of Ashbury D was named after the *burh* that later came to be known as Broadbury.

Askham Bryan YW and Askham Richard YW are adjacent parishes with twelfth-century churches that stand less than 2 kms apart (Historic England: 1045707; 1316686). Originally, they seem to have been one settlement, attested as *Ascha'*, *Ascam* in DB and were differentiated by manorial affixes from the thirteenth century (PNYW iv 233–5). Askham appears to derive from the OE compound *æsc-hām*, 'ash homestead/village', with probable influence from ON *askr* evident from the twelfth century (*Ask*(*h*)*am* 1175, *Askham* 1195). Askham Nt displays similar phonological development: first attested as *Ascā* in DB and showing the influence of ON /sk/ from at least the mid-thirteenth century (*Askham* 1267) (PNNt xvii; 44). The later attested minor name *Ash Holt* c.1840 (PNNt 45), which is also present in the name Ash Holt Lane (1890 OS) provides further evidence of ash as a landscape feature within the parish.

Ashampstead Brk is not attested until the twelfth century (*Essamestede* 1155, *Ayshamstede* 1168, *Æsham*(*e*)*stead* 1180) but looks to derive from the OE compound *æsc-hām-stede*, 'homestead by the ash-trees' (PNBrk 508). Ashampstead is in the Chiltern Hills, which are famous for their beech woods, but Rackham (2014, 38) observes that on the chalk slopes of this region ash mixes readily with beech and although beech is native it has also been 'encouraged by people planting it in the belief that it is the "natural" tree on chalk soils, and in the past the slopes may have had much more ash'. The lost settlement of Ashden (*Assedone* 1086) in the neighbouring parish of Compton, from OE *æsc-dūn*, also attests to the abundant growth of ash in the area. Although not as commonly used for structural timber as oak, another interpretation of this name could be 'homestead made of ash' (see 2.1.3: *Ackhampstead* Bk).

Three suggestions have been put forth as to the etymology of Askern YW, the earliest forms of which already show the influence of ON *askr* (*Askern*(*e*) 1170, *Haskerne* 1196). Ekwall (1960, 16) suggests OE *æsc-hyrne* 'corner where ash-trees grew'. If this was a *hyrne* compound then it is no longer clear what was being referenced; perhaps the shallow recess in the hill by which Askern stands, or possibly a no longer apparent spit of land on the floodplain of the River Went, which has since dried up. PNYW (ii 44) and Watts (2004, 23) propose OE *æsc-ærn*, 'ash house, house near the ash-tree(s)', although Watts also suggests an unattested alternative OE **æscern* 'group of ash-trees'. Kristensson (1970, 59) prefers an OE **æscern* etymology for Esherwode La (*Esherwode* 1332) the early forms of which have parallels with that of Askern, especially forms with medial *-r-*, that cannot be explained by the adj. *æscen* 'growing with ash-trees'. Medial *-r-* could also be explained by the compound *æsc-ærn*. If this was indeed an 'ash house' it is possible the building itself was made of ash wood. An archaeological comparison can perhaps be drawn with the excavation of a late seventh-century structure at Upper Ribblesdale in the Yorkshire Dales that was predominantly built of ash wood (see 3.7). Early medieval familiarity with the appearance and grain of different timbers may have been such that a building made from timber that was not oak was notable.

Ashcott So (*Aissecote* 1086) sits on the slopes of Polden Hill above the wetlands of the Somerset Levels, immediately west of Glastonbury and Street. The earliest attestation conforms to the expected DB spelling of *æsc* names in south-west England

(see 2.10.1: Ashbrittle So, Ash Priors So). Watts (2004, 20) suggests that if this was not 'cottage by the ash', from OE *æsc-cot*, then it may have been 'cottage by Ash' with reference to an earlier place-name. The large number of simplex ash names may lend support to this second suggestion; however, EPNE (i 109) proposes that some *cot* place-names may have indicated a 'shed for certain crafts or the manufacture or storage of materials'. It is an element that compounds regularly with words for natural resources like salt (Salcott Ess (*Salcotā* 1086)), possibly also with ME *lumber* 'lumber'[24] in Lumbercote YE (*Lumbercot*(*t*)*es* c.1150), and with *wudu* in the recurrent compound *wudu-cot* (Woodcote Ha (*La Wodecote* 1212), O (*Wdecote* 1109) Sa (*Udecote* 1086), Sr (*Wodecot* 1202), Wa (*Widecote* 1086); Woodcott Ch (*Wodecot* 1205), Ha (*Odecote* 1086)); this latter perhaps indicating a cottage in a wood (EPNE i 110; Ekwall 1960, 531; Watts 2004, 694), or perhaps a cottage where wood was worked. Ashcott could therefore have been a dwelling made of ash wood, a place in an ashwood, or perhaps a location at which ash wood was stored, worked, or traded, performing a similar function to settlements named *æsc-tūn* (see 3.7 and Ashwick So below).

Ashwick So has three eleventh-century attestations (*Æscwican*, *Æscwica* 1061(12th); *Escewiche* 1086) that suggest an etymology from *æsc-wīcum*, with dat. pl. of OE *wīc*, which Watts (2004, 23) glosses as '(at) the ash-tree farm dwellings'. EPNE (ii 258) notes that *wīc* was used to denote places of 'particular occupations and manufactures' where 'commodities were produced or prepared' and discusses the agricultural compounds that related to arable farming and livestock produce, such as *bere-wīc* 'barley farm' and *butere-wīc* 'butter farm', but also locations with natural resources that may have been exploited or managed, with specifics like OE *col* 'cole', OE *salt* and possibly OE *fisc* 'fish'. It seems possible that Ashwick was a site at which ash-trees were exploited as a resource, and perhaps like Ashcott (see above), performed a similar function to settlements with the appellative compound *æsc-tūn* (see 3.7). It is uncommon for major names to compound OE *wīc* with a tree-specific. There are only nine examples of this kind of compound and no obvious distribution pattern for their use (see also 2.2.3 *alor-wīc*; 2.8.2 *æppel-trēow-wīc*; 2.14.1 *bæst-wīc*; 2.23.3 *brōm-*

[24] *Lumber* is not independently recorded in this sense until the sixteenth century (EPNE 27). PNYE (45) suggests the alternative meaning 'useless odds and ends'; however, this too is not independently recorded until the sixteenth century (OED: lumber, n.1).

wīc; 2.72.3 *þorn-wīc*). Ashwick sits on limestone bedrock with alkaline loam-based soil that could have provided suitable conditions for abundant ash growth.

Ashtead Sr is first attested simply as *Stede* 1086, possibly due to AN scribal error, as an *æsc* specific is consistent from the early-twelfth century (*Estede* 1107–29, *Esteda* 1202, *Axsted* 1202, *Astede* 1261). DB scribes sometimes appear to have represented initial /st/ as <est>, like in the form *Estoch* 1086 for Stock Fm & Hill in Oldbury upon Severn Gl (PNGl iii 9), perhaps the opposite was also true and initial /eʃt/ could sometimes be spelt <st>. The compound *æsc-stede* meant 'ash place', or perhaps, according to Watts (2004, 22), 'the stand of ash-trees'. The medieval church (Historic England: 1028685) and village are on alkaline loam-based soil, sandwiched between chalk downs to the south and London clay to the north, and providing good conditions for ash growth.

2.10.3.1 *æsc-bȳ*:

The element *bȳ* is the only habitative ON-derived generic to appear in an ash-related major name. As *bȳ* is the most common ON place-name element this is perhaps unsurprising; however, when Ashby names are compared with similar OE compounds, such as *æsc-tūn* and *āc-tūn*, their recurrence as an onomastic compound becomes more significant. These settlements may, like *æsc-tūn* names, have indicated a site at which ash timber was produced (see 3.7). All Ashby names have been included under the *æsc* heading in this analysis as it is not possible to ascertain whether they are *æsc-tūn* names that have been partially Scandinavianised (Fellows Jensen 1978, 31–2), whether they were originally the ON compound *askr-bȳ* with later influence from ME *ash* (PNLi iv 48–9; Watts 2004, 20), or whether they were coined in an Anglo-Scandinavian dialect that made use of both OE and ON lexical elements (Fellows Jensen 1978, 31–2).

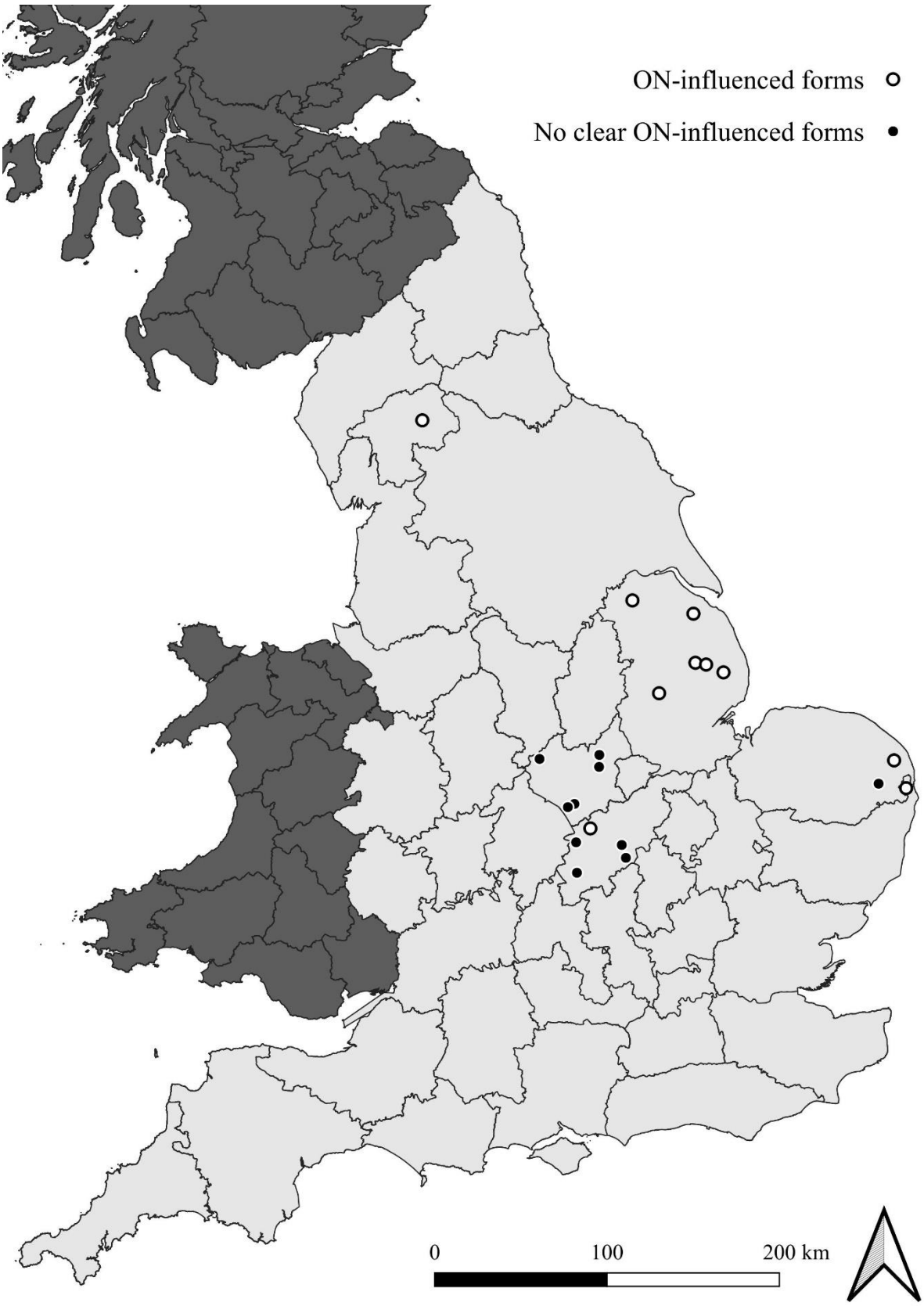


Figure 16: The distribution of *æsc-bȳ* names with twelfth- and thirteenth-century forms suggesting ON influence

Of the 20 major-name examples of this compound 12 have a first attestation in DB spelt *Ascebi* or *Aschebi* (see summary). It is uncertain how these names would have been pronounced in individual instances, but these forms could represent the /ʃ/ of OE *æsc* or an ON-influenced /sk/, which was often rendered as <sch> (von Feilitzen 1937 §125). The only Ashby attested pre-DB is Ashby Nf (*Askeby* 1044–7, *Aschebei* 1086, *Askeby* 1101); PNNf (ii 41) suggests this derives from ON *askr-bȳ*, with gen. pl. *aska*, and that later records, such as the DB form with <sch>, represent an ON pronunciation. Ashby Sf appears to have a similar phonological development (*Askebi* 1190, *Aschebi* 1198), possibly the result of the proximity of these settlements; however, this does not account for the lack of forms reflecting /sk/ in early records of Ashby St Mary Nf (*Ascebi* 1086, *Asheby* 1251), which is roughly equidistant (*Fig.20*). The earliest forms of Asby We (*Askebi*, *Askeby* 1150; *Aschaby* 1158; *Ascheby* 1190) again suggest ON gen. pl. *aska*. By the twelfth century this had become two settlements known as Great and Little Asby (*Magna Askebi* 1216, *Parvo Askebi* 1185).

There are four Ashby names with the DB spelling *Esse-*: Asfordby Le (*Esseberie* 1086), Ashby Magna Le (*Essebi*), Ashby Parva Le (*Essebi*), and Cold Ashby Nth (*Essebi*), which likely reflect a standardised form in an AN context. This may also be true of other Ashby names, where the influence of AN spelling could obscure the original pronunciation of the name, especially in the East Midlands where we may expect to find a more ON-influenced dialect. Indeed, from the twelfth century in the East Midlands forms showing the probable influence of ON *askr* include: Ashby Li (*Askebi* 1178); Ashby cum Fenby Li (*Askebi*, *Askeby* 1196–1428); Ashby de la Launde Li (*Asckebi* 1185); Ashby by Partney Li (*Askebi*, *Askeby* 1154×89); Ashby Puerorum Li (*Askebi* 1172); West Ashby Li (*Askebi Kirst* 1196) (*Fig.20*).

2.10.3.2 *æsc-tūn*:

There are 13 *æsc-tūn* major names attested by 1200. Taken literally this compound means ‘ash farm’; however, when early medieval building practices are considered and the distribution and geology of Ashton settlements is compared with other recurrent compounds such as *æsc-bȳ* and *āc-tūn*, it seems likely this was a lexical compound used to indicate settlements where ash-trees were managed to produce timber or coppice, or where ash wood was processed, stored, or traded (see 3.7).

There is a significant difference in the distribution of *æsc-bȳ* and *æsc-tūn* major names, with Ashton names predominating in the west and Ashby names in the East Midlands and East Anglia (*Fig.17*). As these generic elements appear generally to have been functionally identical, the difference seems to be purely linguistic, with *bȳ* names found where ON influence on the language was strong.

Four Ashton settlements in the south-west of England have pre-DB forms spelt with *Æ*-. Ashton Keynes Wi (*Æsctun* 873×88(11th) S1507) is an unequivocal *æsc-tūn* compound and the same can be said of Cold Ashton Gl (*Æsctun, Æsctunæ, Æsctune* 931(12th) S416) and Ashton under Hill Gl (*Æsctun* 991(11th) S1365), although the latter is also attested in an eleventh-century charter as *Æschæma gemæru* 1042(18th) (S1396), an elliptical reference to 'the boundary of the dwellers of Ash[ton]' (PNGl ii 42). Steeple Ashton W (*Æystone* 964(17th) S1396) is attested in a copy of a tenth-century charter and then as *Aistone* 1086. The DB form may result from AN influence on the spelling of *æsc* in the south-west (EPNE i 4–5) but could alternatively be a phonological development in the dialect of the region that is perhaps also represented in the earlier charter spelling with <ays> (Jordan 1974, 123; see 2.10.1: simplex ash names).

Most DB attestations of Ashton names have forms with *E*-, reflecting an AN orthography: Cold Ashton (*Esctone* 1086); Ashton iuxta Tarvin Ch (*Estone* 1086) and Ashton under Hill Gl (*Estone*, *Esstone* 1086); Ashton La and Ashton Hall La (*Estun* 1086); Ashton He, Long Ashton So, and Eshton YW (*Estune* 1086); and Ashton Keynes (*Essitone* 1086). It could be that most of these forms result from or were influenced by Mercian second fronting with *esc*, OE collective **esce*, or for those in areas of Scandinavian influence, ON *eski*. Ashton Nth is also first attested in DB, but with an *A*- spelling (*Ascetone* 1086), and Pipe Aston He (*Hesintune* 1086) and Ashton under Lyne La (*Haistune*, *Haystuna* 1160) are both spelt with inorganic initial *H*- in their earliest records, which may be an AN hypercorrection. Coplestone-Crow (2009, 34) proposes that the medial *-in-* of the earliest form of Pipe Aston supports an etymology from **Escingtun* 'estate called after the ash-tree(s)', which must have alternated with gen. sg. *æsces-tūn* (*Asciston* 1160–70, *Assiston* 1291), 'farm of the ash-trees'.

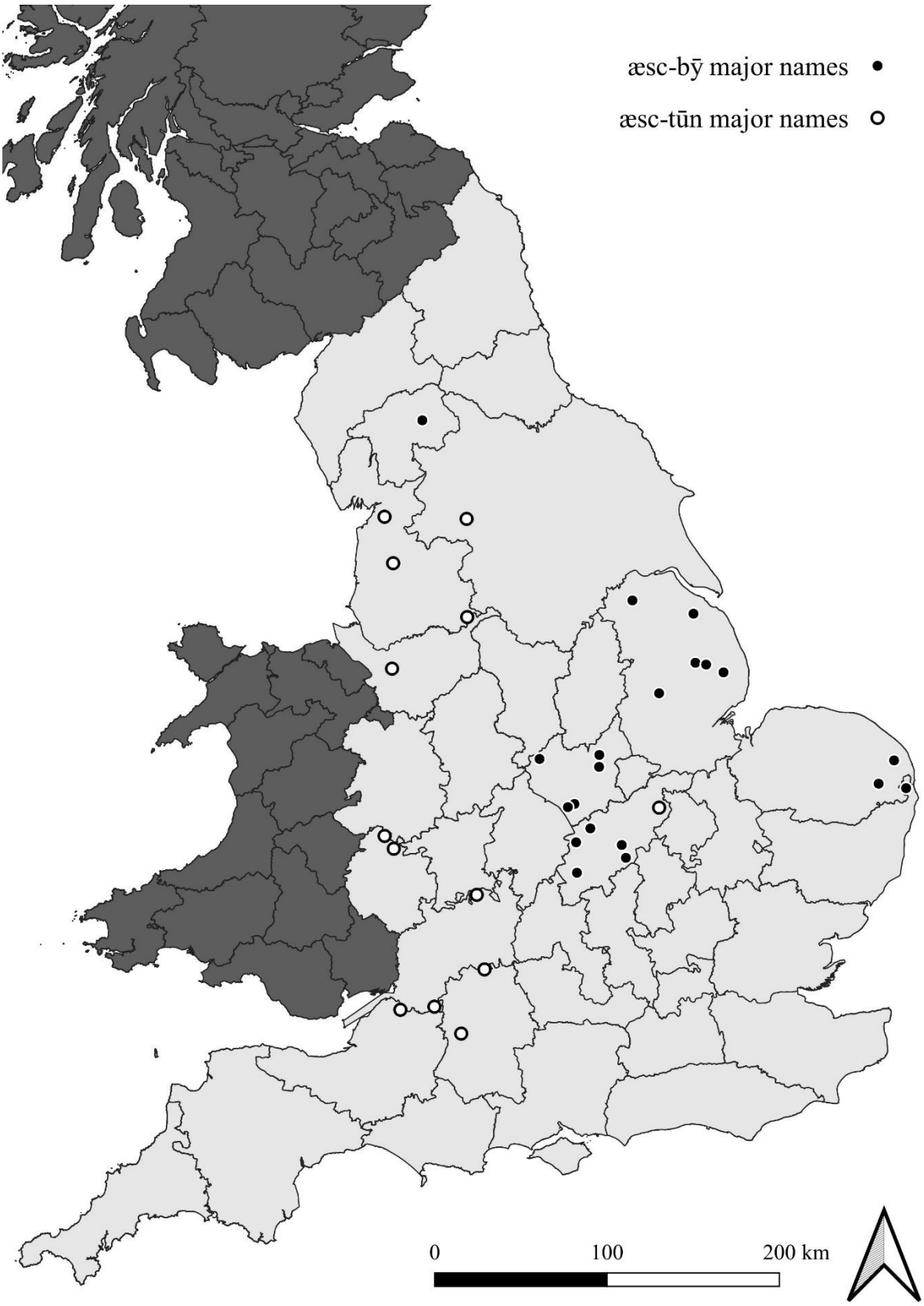


Figure 17: The distribution of *æsc-bȳ* and *æsc-tūn* major names attested by 1200

2.10.4 *æsc* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are 36 major names first attested by the twelfth century with *æsc* as the specific in a topographical compound. Of these, 12 derive from the four water-related OE generics *burna* 'stream', *ford* 'ford', *mere* 'pool', and *wella* 'well, spring, stream'.

There are three *æsc-burna*, 'ash stream', compounds. Ashbourne Db stands beside Henmore Brook, which is a later name for the stream that gave its name to the settlement of Ashbourne (PNDb ii 341). Early attestations, whilst varied, are all spelt with *E-* (*Esseburn*(*e*), *Eseburn*(*e*), *Eseburna*, *Eseborne* 1086; *Esborna*, *Esburn*(*e*) 1093), suggesting Mercian *esc* with typical ME *A-* forms recorded from the thirteenth century (*Asseburn*(*e*), *Assebourn* 1219). The settlement names Ashburton D and Ashburnham Sx also preserve an earlier river-related ash name. The Ashburn at Ashburton is now the River Yeo, a tributary of the River Dart; however, two sixteenth-century attestations still refer to the river as the *Ays*(*s*)*hebourne* 1504, 1553 (Watts 2004, 20). It is first recorded in an early eleventh-century charter of the bounds of Peadingtun, which begins *þer æscburne utscyt* 'where the Ashburn runs out' and ends *oð æscburnan* 'as far as Ashburn' (S1547). DB provides the first reference to the settlement, with the addition of the habitative generic *tūn* (*Essebretona* 1086). Ashburnham Sx is first recorded in DB simply as *Esseborne* 1086, but from the twelfth century has a probable *hamm* generic (*Esburneham* 12th, *Esseburneham* 1211). The river Ashbourne runs adjacent to the settlement, now known as Ashburnham Place, which lies on a slight rise above the floodplain. Watts (2004, 20) suggests the addition of *hamm* was indicative of a 'promontory of dry land by the Ashburn', but the soil here is clay-rich and less permeable than that which rises to surround it to the south of Ashburnham and as suggested in LPN (46), it may be more accurate to describe this *hamm* site as 'wet land hemmed in by higher ground next to the Ashburn'.

OE *ford* compounds with *æsc* in four major names attested by 1200. Ashford Mx is not included in this account as the original name of this site was *Ecelesford* 969(c.1100), *Echelesford* 1042–66 and the river-name Ash appears to be a back formation from the later form of this place-name that is not recorded until the fifteenth century (*Assheford* 1488, *Assheford otherwise Echelford* 1561) (Watts 2004, 21).

Ayshford D (*Escford*, (*to*) *æscforda* 958(12th) S653; *Ais*(*s*)*eford*(*a*) 1086; *Essheford* 1238) is first attested in a tenth-century charter with two spellings that indicate the compound OE *æsc-ford*, 'ash-tree ford' (PND ii 547). It is possible that *æsc* here referred to the type of wood used to construct a means of crossing the river, perhaps stakes driven into the river-bed to mark the way.[25] Perhaps those who constructed the river crossing opted to use ash and recognised this in the name, or if the bark was left intact, it is possible the type of wood could have been identified when fording the river; however, it seems more probable that a notable ash-tree or copse of ash was identified as a landmark for the crossing place.

Ashford D (*Aiseford* 1086) has a DB form that provides another example of south-westerly spelling with *Ais-* (see 2.10.1 simplex names and Ashcott So). Although there is no ford now apparent, PND (i 24) suggests it can only have been a crossing of the Taw estuary. Other candidates for the site of the ford are unlikely. The modern village of Ashford sits above the estuary valley, bounded on three sides by the Taw and two of its tributaries. The stream Bradiford Water is to the south-east, separating Ashford from Barnstaple. The settlement of Bradiford (*Bardeford* 1249), from OE *brād-ford*, 'broad ford', appears to have given its name to the river (PND i 55). To the north-west is Knowl Water, over which crosses Knowlwater Bridge (1880 OS), possibly the site of an earlier ford and evidence of a river crossing unrelated to Ashford. The ash-trees marking the ford at Ashford may have grown on the loam-based soil of the hill and presumably indicated the best location to cross the Taw, perhaps where the estuary narrows due to the intrusion of Penhill Point on the opposite bank (*Fig.18*).

Ashford Db is attested in a tenth-century charter (*Æscforda* 926(13th) S397) and in DB (*Aisseford* 1086). Later forms appear to show the influence of ON *askr* (*Askeford* 1229) (PNDb 27) and possibly ON *eski* (*Es*(*c*)*h*(*e*)*ford* 1242, *Escford* 1376). From the late seventeenth century, it is known by the suffix 'in the Water', due to its proximity to the meandering River Wye (Mills 2011, 20). The geology of this region of the Peak District has a limestone bedrock base, which has resulted in well-draining alkaline

[25] Perhaps a species-specific variant of the common name-type Stapleford, from OE *stapol-ford*, 'a ford marked by posts' (Watts 2004, 572).

loam-based soils that could provide good conditions for ash-tree growth (see 2.10.2: Monyash Db).



Figure 18: OS 2023 (1:50 000) map of Ashford in relation to the Taw estuary, Bradiford, and Knowl Water (Devon)

Ashford Carbonell Sa and Ashford Bowdler Sa appear in DB to have been a single estate, recorded as *Esseford* 1086. Manorial affixes were used from the thirteenth century when John Carbonel (1221–2) and Henry de Bowdlers (1242) are first mentioned in connection with these estates (Watts 2004, 21). Ashford Carbonell lies on the east bank of the River Teme and Ashford Bowdler on the west. Ashford Jones (*Ahsford Jones* 1337) (PNSa i 20) and the now lost *Ashford* (PNSa viii 155), are another two manors associated with this area known as Ashford. Ash trees may have grown beside the river and marked the ford, as ash fares well on floodplains and in wet nutrient-rich clay soils where periodic waterlogging can help to reduce ground cover competitors like dog's mercury (Rackham 2014, 37) (*Fig.19*). PNSa (i 19–20) speculates as to the location of the ford, suggesting it could once have been at the site of the bridge from Caynham to Richard's Castle. Alternatively, the crossing may have

been near the twelfth-century church of St Andrew's, which lies on the outside of the river meander between the two settlements (Historic England: 1383609).



Figure 19: An ash-tree that experiences seasonal flooding, submerged in the winter by a swollen tributary of the River Coln, Fairford, Gloucestershire (J. Treacher, February 2021)

There are three Ashwell major names, from the OE compound *æsc-wella*, 'ash well/spring/stream'. Ashwell Hrt is first recorded in the eleventh century (*Æscewelle* c.1060; *Asceuuelle*, *Esceuuelle* 1086) with forms that suggest gen. pl. *æsca*, 'spring at the ash-trees'. There are three springs in the centre of the modern settlement beside the medieval church (Historic England: 1102715), which form the source of the River Rhee (or Cam) and ash-trees are still a prominent part of the dense flora surrounding the springs. Ashwell Ru has a similar etymology, except for the anomalous DB form *Exewelle*, which perhaps shows Scandinavian influence (see 2.10.2: Monyash Db). Later medieval spellings also suggest gen. pl. *æsca* (*Essewell*(*e*) 1202, *Assewell*(*e*)

1209, *Asshewell*(*e*) c.1291). There is a well on the western edge of the village, less than 200 metres from the medieval church that was adorned with a gothic grotto in the mid-nineteenth century (Historic England: 1073241). It seems reasonable to suggest this was the location of the *wella* of Ashwell. Ashwellthorpe Nf is first attested in an eleventh-century charter as *Æscewelle* c.1066, once again deriving from gen. pl. *æsca*. It is not certain where the original *wella* was once located, although two wells are marked on the 1880 OS map in the west of the village (TM 13361 97536; TM 13638 97608).

Two major names derive from the OE compound *æsc-mere*, 'ash pool'. Ashmore Do (*Aisemare* 1096; *Essemera*, *Essemere* 1100) has early forms that follow the expected development of *æsc* names in south-west England (see 2.10.1 simplex names; Ashcott Sos). The thirteenth-century form *Essemor*(*e*) 1247 suggests there may have been confusion with OE *mōr* 'marshy ground' (LPN 58). Ekwall's (1960, 15) suggestion that this could be OE (*ge*)*mǣre* 'boundary' is also possible as the settlement lies on the Dorset-Wiltshire border, but there is a pond in the centre of the village where three roads meet (ST 91282 17801) that could support a *mere* etymology. Although not proof of direct continuity, it is worth noting that ash grows in the vicinity of this pond today.

Ashmansworth Ha is a lost settlement, first attested in a ninth-century charter as *escmeræ* 863(12th) (S336), from *æsc-mere* 'ash pool', and then with OE (WSax) *weorð*, *wyrð* 'enclosure' (*æscmæreswierðe* 909(12th) S378; *æscmæres wyrðe*, *æscmeres weorþ* 934(12th) S427). These later records preserve the gen. sg. form of *Æscmere*, meaning 'enclosure belonging to a place called Ashmere (ash pool)'. *Æscmere* parish originally included the modern sites of Vernham's Dean and Linkenholt, about 5 km to the west, and it has been suggested that Ashmansworth was a secondary settlement belonging to *Æscmere* (Coates 1989, 25; Watts 2004, 21). While there is no evidence of the *mere*, the clay-rich alkaline soil formed from the chalk bedrock in this region provides good conditions for ash-tree growth (EAFTS 98).

A further ten topographical *æsc* major names compound with eight generic elements that describe the lie of the landscape or use of the land. Ashcombe D (*Aissecoma* 1086) derives from the OE compound *æsc-cumb*, 'ash valley'. The valley of

Ashcombe, through which runs Dawlish Water, has a broad trough shape, which is characteristic of a *cumb* where other *cumb*-named valleys in Devon are not (LPN 103; 106). The more mineral-rich soils at the bottom of the slopes may have suited ash, in contrast with hilltop woodlands like Oakpark Wood (1890 OS: SX 92402 79482) to the east of Ashcombe, where it can be assumed oakwood predominated. Rackham (2014, 39) observes that in the south-west where there is high rainfall, upland areas are often leached of nutrients and suitable only for species tolerant of infertile poor-quality soils, such as oak.

Ashill So is first attested in DB (*Ais*(*s*)*elle* 1086) and is once again characteristic of a south-westerly spelling of *æsc* in early forms (see 2.10.1 simplex names; Ashcott So). The generic in this compound is OE *hyll*, 'ash hill', presumably a reference to the gentle rise on which sits the twelfth-century church (Historic England: 1057100). The geology at this site is varied, with sand-based soil lying alongside soil rich in clay. If this hill was once populated by scattered ash-trees or ash woodland, it was more likely to have colonised the nutrient-dense clay soil on the slopes of the hill, rather than the more acidic sand-based soils of the summit (see Ashurst K below).

Ashover Db (*Essov*(*e*)*r*(*e*) 1086) appears to derive from the OE compound *æsc-ofer* (PNDb 190), a reference to the flat-topped ridge immediately south-west of the settlement (SK 342 627). Ashover sits in a valley below the village of Overton, which may also refer to the *ofer*, but is perhaps more likely to derive from OE *ufera-tūn* 'higher settlement' (LPN 200). The ridge comprises a narrow patch of limestone bedrock, which as with other sites in Derbyshire (see Ashford and Monyash (2.10.2) in the Peak District) would provide conditions suitable for ash growth.

Askrigg YN is first attested in DB (*Ascric* 1086) and either has the generic OE *hrycg* 'ridge' (PNYN 261) or perhaps OE **ric* 'a narrow strip, ridge' (Watts 2004, 23). The influence of ON *askr* is once again evident from the twelfth century (*Askerik* 1198, *Askerich* 1218). The name refers to the limestone ridge that rises from Askrigg Bottoms by the River Ure to a height of around 500 metres where it levels out at Askrigg Common (SD 943 936) and like the ridge at Ashover, was probably the site of ash woodland.

Escrick YE is almost identical to Askrigg in its earliest forms (*Ascri* 1086, *Ascric* 1156) and shows similar dialect development in later attestations, as well as the

influence of ON *eski* (*Eskrik*(*e*), *Escrik*(*e*), *Eskryk*(*e*) 1169; *Escheric* 1190) (Watts 2004, 218). PNYE (267–9) is tentative in drawing definite conclusions as to what the **ric* generic could mean in this context, stating that 'at both places we have a stream as well as a narrow ridge with a ridgeway joining the two, and … we have to allow for the simple meaning "strip of land on which ash-trees grow"'. The Victoria County Histories account of Esrick (Baggs et al. 1976, 17) suggests the generic could refer either to the moraine (glacial debris) that has formed a slight ridge that was the site of the old village (*Fig.20*), or to the stream 'known as Bridge Dyke which flows along its northern flank'. Watts (2004, 218) is best convinced by the former suggestion, stating the 'reference is to a narrow ridge of land of land running from Stillingfleet to Wheldrake'. Ash-trees proliferate in a wide variety of geological conditions but in this context are more likely to have grown in abundance on the calcareous clay-rich soil of the moraine than in the surrounding sandstone landscape, which suggests **ric* indeed referred to the 'narrow strip of raised land growing with ash-trees', rather than ash growing on the river-bank.

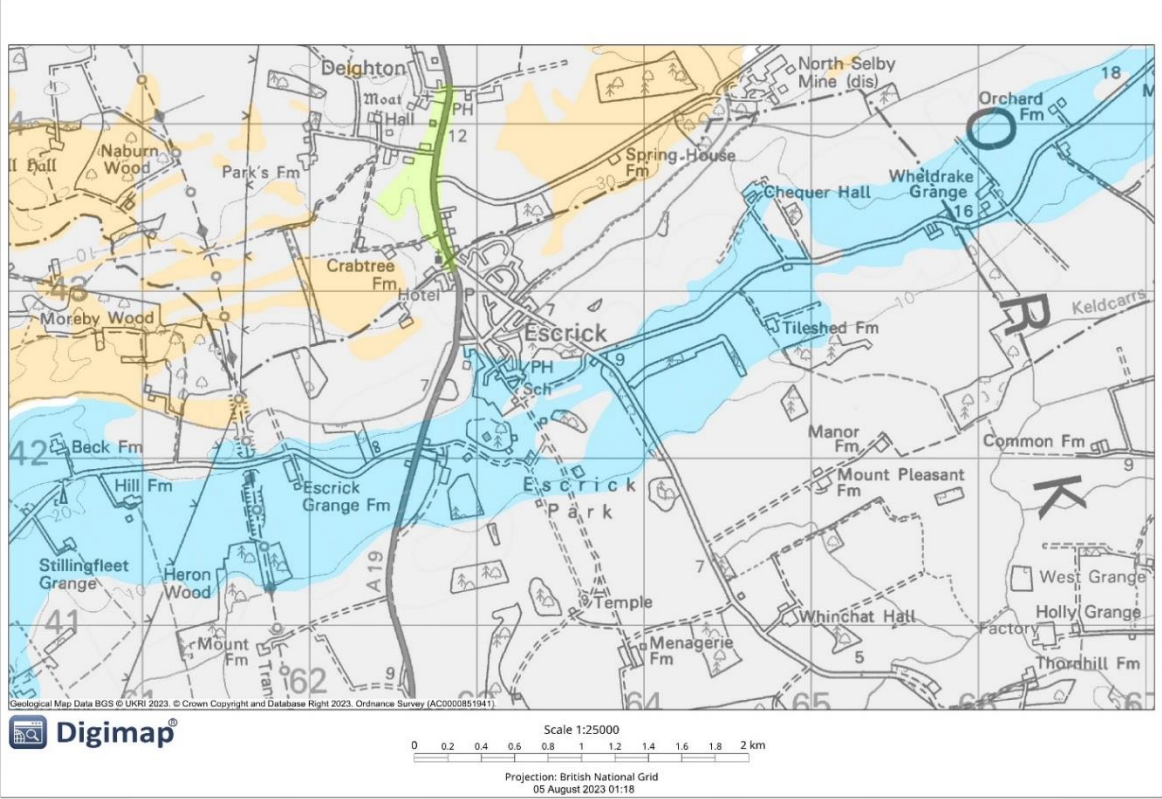


Figure 20: OS Calcium Carbonate Content (1:25 000): Escrick in relation to the moraine immediately to the south – blue indicates higher levels of CaCO3 that result in alkaline soil well suited to ash

Great Ashfield Sf and Ashfield cum Thorpe Sf derive from the OE compound *æsc-feld*, 'ash open land'. Later-medieval affixes were added to differentiate these settlements: Lat. *magna* then ModE *great* (*Aysefeld Magna* 1291) and Lat. *cum* 'with' the hamlet of Thorpe (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 4). The first attestation of Great Ashfield (*Aisfeld* 942×c.951 S1483) looks to be nom. sg. *æsc*, but the DB form (*Eascefelda* 1086) and the early attestations of Ashfield cum Thorpe (*Aisefelda* c.1075(c.1180), *Assefelda* 1086) are indicative of gen. pl. *æsca*, 'open land of the ash-trees'. LPN (271) explains that *feld* did not always mean 'arable land' in settlement-names but may have referred to 'open land previously used for pasture', possibly an area that was converted 'from rough pasture to arable in the Anglo-Saxon period'. Following this logic, it is possible these *æsc-feld* names were given to areas of ash dominated wood-pasture that perhaps became increasingly deforested throughout the period.

The earliest forms of Esher Sr (*Æscæron* 1005(12th) S911, *Esshere* 1062(13th) S1035) suggest OE *æsc-scearu*, 'ash share of land' with the first attestation showing the late weak dative form *scæron*, indicating a division of land 'distinguished by its ash trees' (PNSr 92–3). As Watts (2004, 218) states, the DB form is corrupt (*Aissela* 1086), perhaps showing AN influence with <l> for <r> (Kristensson 1987, 171). It is difficult to assess the geology of the parish as Esher has become part of the urban area of Greater London, but there are patches of London clay directly north and east of the settlement, evidenced in the name of neighbouring Claygate (PNSr 91). Ash grows best on rich soils with high clay fractions (EAFTS 98), so the share of land with ash-trees that gave Esher its name was likely to have been in one of these clay-rich regions.

Eshott Nb is first recorded from the twelfth century (*Esseta* 1186, 1187; *Es*(*sc*)*het*(*te*) 13th). Ekwall (1960, 169) suggests this is an **æsc-scēat* compound but Watts (2004, 218) is supportive of simplex **æscett* (see 2.12: **æscett*). VEPN (i 23) notes that tree names with *-et* endings appear to be a feature of the south-east, so although **æscett* is formal possibility, it is perhaps less likely. EPNE (ii 102) observes that *scēat* is recurrent in compound with vegetation names and that it may have denoted 'an angle of overgrown or cultivated land projecting into a different type of countryside', or 'a projecting angle of woodland', providing a ninth-century charter example of an

alarsceat ‘alder corner’ in Hampshire, which projects between two *bromfeldas*, ‘broom-covered open land’ (S276).

There are fourteen woodland-related major names with an *æsc* specific that compounds with one of four generic elements. Ashurst K (*Æischerste* c.1100) represents the compound *æsc-hyrst* (Kentish *herst*), ‘ash wooded hill’, although later attestations (*Eisherst’* 1220×1, *Asshehurst* 1261×2, *Asscheherst* 1310) may preserve gen. pl. *æsca*. The village of Ashurst sits beside the River Medway at the base of a hill. The medieval church of St Martin (Historic England: 1074896) lies on the hillside above an area of woodland once known as Ashurst Wood (1870 OS: TQ 5098 3910), now St Martins Wood. Rackham (2014, 37) observes that slopes too steep for cultivation are often wooded with ash and hazel. The clay soil of the slope is likely to be more nutrient-rich than the sandy hilltop, so the site was perhaps named for its ash-wooded hillside, rather than ash-wood at the summit. Ashurst Sx (*Essehurst* 1164, *Eshurst* 1296, *Aschurst* 1283) is another *æsc-hyrst* major name in the south-east but it has the spelling *Asshetehurst* 1279 that suggests OE *æscett* ‘an ash-tree copse’ (Watts 2004, 22). Other examples of an *æsc-hyrst* compound in English place-names include: Ashurst Ha (*Assh*(*e*)*hurst* 1331: Coates 1989, 26), Ashurstwood in Forest Row Sx (*foresta de Esseherst* 1164: PNSx ii 327), and High Ashurst in Headley Sr (*Ayshurst* 1249: PNSr 78).

There are two major names that appear to derive from the compound *æsc-holt* ‘ash wood’. Aisholt So is first recorded as *Æscholt* 854(12th) (S311) and then in the thirteenth century with <y> (*Aysholt* 1295) (Watts 2004, 5), which may suggest the same dialect change or scribal convention seen in the early forms of other south-westerly ash names (see 2.10.1 simplex names; Ashcott So). Like Ashurst K, Aisholt has a medieval church that sits on the slope of a hill in the vicinity of woodland that bears the name of the settlement (Historic England: 1178112). Esholt YW (*Esholth*, *Esseholt* 1172) has various later spellings with *-d* (*Essold* 1185, *Esscald* 1230, *Es*(*s*)*hold* 1311, *Esshald* 1358) that could suggest the alternative generic OE *hald*, ‘shelter by the ash-tree(s)’ or perhaps ‘shelter made of ash wood’. PNYW (iv 144–5) notes that it would be unusual for the much rarer *hald* to replace the more common *holt*, so *hald* is more likely to be the original form; however, although the recurrence of the compound *æsc-holt* increases the likelihood of modification by analogy, it is well-attested and there is no other major name evidence for *hald*

compounded with a flora specific. It is not impossible that two original place-names were later conflated and that an ‘ash shelter’ once stood in an ‘ash wood’, but this suggestion is purely speculative.

The early medieval attestations of Askwith YW are varied (*Ascvid* 1086; *askewich* 1169; *Ascwid*, *Askwid* 1180; *Askewith*(*e*), *Askewyth* 1189), but suggest the compound *askr* and ON *viðr*, ‘ash wood’. According to PNYW (v 61), the recurrent forms with -*wid* could be the result of AN influence, but perhaps alternatively suggest an earlier OE *widu* ‘wood’, as found in some Witton (*widu-tūn*) names (Gelling 1984, 227). If so, this name must have been coined early as EPNE (ii 280) suggests that by the eighth century *widu* had usually become *wudu* by back-mutation. As proposed by Watts (2004, 23), this could alternatively be an entirely Scandinavianised form of the OE compound *æsc-wudu*, where both elements have been replaced by ON cognates, or was a name coined after an Anglo-Scandinavian dialect had developed in this region and thus represents neither a purely OE nor ON etymology.

2.10.4.1 *æsc-lēah*:

There are nine *æsc-lēah* major names: seven with the modern spelling Ashley (see summary of *æsc-lēah* names below), Ashill Nf, Ashleigh D, and the lost hundred name of *Esselei* Ha. Each is first attested in DB and has a variety of medieval spellings with *A*- and *E*-. Ashley Ch (*Ascelie* 1086, *Esceleia* 1170) and Ashley Nth (*Ascele* 1086, *Estelai* 1109) are both first attested with *Asce*- in DB and may show raising before the palatal consonant in ME (VEPN i 32). Ashleigh D (*Assileia*, *Aisselie* 1086; *Esselegh* 1242) was a DB estate with (PND i 189) in the parish of Lifton D, with early attestations that once again evidence a regional convention in the spelling of *æsc* names (see 2.10.1 simplex names; Ashcott So). Those with DB *E*- forms are *Esselei* Hundred Ha (*Esselei hd’* 1086), Ashley Ha near New Milton (*Esselie*, *Esselei*), Ashley W (*Esslie* 1086), Ashley C (*Esselei*, *Esselie* 1086), Ashley St (*Eselie* 1086, *Astheleye* 1259) the latter two perhaps resulting from Mercian *esc*. Horovitz (2005, 92) has suggested that Ashley St could derive from *æscen-lēah* (see 2.11: *æscen*), although it is not apparent from the medieval forms why this might be so; there are no attestations with -*n*- and the recurrent medial -*e*- could be the result of gen. pl. *æsca* or may simply be epenthetic. Ashill Nf has DB attestations with both *E*- and *A*- (*Essalai*, *Asscelea* 1086), with medial -*e*- also present in the thirteenth

century (*Assele* 1208), again possibly gen. pl., ‘open woodland with ash-trees’. See 3.7 timber case-study for further discussion of this compound.

As a simplex place-name:

> Ash D (*Aissa* 1086) PND i 92; Ash Do (*Aissa* 1086) PNDo ii 116; Ash, East and West D (*Aissa* 1086) PND i 133; Ashe Db (*æt Æsce* 987(13th)) PNDb iii 519; Ash Sr (*Essa* 1170) PNSr 135; Ash (Wingham Hd) K (*Æsce* c.1100) Watts 2004, 19; Ash (Wrotham Hd) K (*Eisse* 1086) Watts 2004, 19; Ash Barton D (*Essa* 1086) PND 32; Ashbocking Sf (*Essa*, *Hassa*, *Ass*(*i*)*a* 1086) Watts 2004, 19; Ashbrittle So (*Aisse* 1086) Watts 2004, 20; Ashe Ha (*Esse* 1086) Coates 1989, 25; Ashen Ess (*Asce* 1086) PNEss 406; Ash Priors So (*Æsce* 1065(18th) S1042) Watts 2004, 19; Ashreigney D (*Aissa* 1086) PND ii 355; Ash Thomas D (*Aisa* 1086) PND ii 548; Ashton Nth (*Asce* 1086) PNNth 96; Ashwater D (*Aissa* 1086) PND i 127; Aske Hall YN (*Has*(*s*)*e* 1086) PNYN 286; Campsey Ash Sf (*Esce* 1086) Watts 2004, 113; East Ash D (*Aissa* 1086) PND 448; Esch Hundred Wo (*Esch*, *Naisse* 1086) PNWo 314; Esh Du (*Es* 1153×95) Watts 2002, 77; Eske YE (*Asch* 1086) PNYE 199; Rose Ash D (*Aissa* 1086) PND ii 391

As the generic element:

> Aspatria Cu (*Aspatric* 1160) PNCu ii 261–2 (**pers.n**); Bradninch D (*Bradenesa* 1086) PND ii 555 (**brād**); Broxash Hundred He (*Brokeshashr* 1169) Anderson 1934 166 (**brocc**); Catsash Hundred So (*Cattesaishdr* 1168) Anderson 1939a 55–6 (**catt**); *Chikenes Hundred* Wa (*Chikeneshundredum* 1183) Anderson 1934 136 (**pers.n./ cīcen**); Dodnash Sf (*Todenes* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 44 (**pers.n.**); Franche Wo (*Frenesse* 1086) PNWo 249 (**pers.n.**); Grumbald’s Ash Hundred Gl (*Grimboldestou hd’* 1086) PNGl iii 22 (**pers.n.**); Hamnish Clifford He (*Hamenes*(*se*) 1086) Copplestone-Crow 2009, 125 (**pers.n.**); Kippax YW (*Chipesch* 1086) PNYW iv 90 (**pers.n.**); Matlask Nf (*Matelasc*, *Matelesc*, *Matingeles* 1086) PNNf iii 23 (**mæðel**); Monyash Db (*Maneis* 1086) PNDb i 148–9 (**manig**); One Ash Db (*Aneise* 1086) PNDb i 149 (**ān**); Prinknash Park Gl

(*Prinkenesse*, *Prynkenesse* 1221) PNGl ii 170 (**pers.n.**); Whitnash Wa (*Witenas* 1086) PNWa 190 (**hwīt**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Ashampstead Brk (*Essamestede* 1155) PNBrk ii 508 (**hām-stede**); Ashbury Brk (*Eisseberie* 1086) PNBrk ii 344 (**burh**); Ashbury D (*Esseberie* 1086) PND i 126 (**burh**); Ashcott So (*Aissecote* 1086) Watts 2004, 20 (**cot**); Ashtead Sr (*Estede* c.1150) PNSr 68 (**stede**); Ashwick So ((*æt*) *Æscwican* 1061×66(12th) S1427) Watts 2004, 23 (**wīc**); Askern YW (*Askern*(*e*) 1170) PNYW ii 44 (**ærn**); Askham Nt (*Ascā* 1086) PNNt 44 (**hām**); Askham, Bryan and Richard YW (*Ascha'* 1086) PNYW iv 133 (**hām**)

With **bȳ**:

Asby, Great and Little We (*Askebi, Askeby* 1150) PNWe ii 54; Asfordby Le (*Esseberie* 1086) PNLe iii 9; Ashby Nf (*Askeby* 1044–7) PNNf ii 41; Ashby Sf (*Aschebi* 1198) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 3; Ashby Li (*Aschebi* 1086) PNLi vi 18; Ashby cum Fenby Li (*Achesbi*, *Aschebi* 1086) PNLi iv 481; Ashby de la Launde Li (*Aschebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 4; Ashby de la Zouch Le (*Ascebi* 1086) PNLe vii 7; Ashby Folville Le (*Ascebi* 1086) PNLe iii 98; Ashby Magna Le (*Essebi* 1086) PNLe v 9; Ashby by Partney Li (*Aschebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 4; Ashby Parva Le (*Essebi* 1086) PNLe v 12; Ashby Puerorum Li (*Ascebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 4; Ashby St Ledgers Nth (*Ascebi* 1086) PNNth 9; Ashby St Mary Nf (*Ascebi* 1086) Watts 2004, 20; Canons Ashby Nth (*Ascebi* 1086) PNNth 39; Castle Ashby Nth (*Asebi* 1086) PNNth 142; Cold Ashby Nth (*Essebi* 1086) PNNth 64; Mears Ashby Nth (*Asbi* 1086) PNNth ii 137; West Ashby Li (*Aschebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 4

With **tūn**:

Ashton He (*Estune* 1086) Coplestone-Crow 2009, 95; Ashton La (*Estun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 146; Ashton Nth (*Ascetone* 1086) PNNth 210; Ashton Hall La (*Estun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 174; Ashton iuxta

Tarvin Ch (*Estone* 1086) PNCh iii 268; Ashton Keynes W (*Æsctune* 873×888(11th) S1507) PNW 40; Ashton under Hill Gl (*Æsctun* 991(11th) S1365) PNGl ii 42; Ashton under Lyne La (*Haistune*, *Haystuna* 1160) Ekwall 1922, 29; Cold Ashton Gl (*Æsctun, Æsctunæ, Æsctune* 931(12th) S416) PNGl iii 62; Eshton YW (*Estune* 1086) PNYW vi 47; Long Ashton So (*Estune* 1086) Watts 2004, 22; Pipe Aston He (*Hesintune* 1086) Coplestone-Crow 2009, 34; Steeple Ashton W (*Aistone* 1086) PNW 136

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Aisholt So (*Æscholt* 854(12th) S311) Watts 2004, 5 (**holt**); Ashbourne Db (*Esseburn*(*e*)*, Eseburn*(*e*)*, Eseburna, Eseborne* 1086) PNDb ii 341 (**burna**); Ashburnham Sx (*Esseborne* 1086) PNSx ii 477 (**burna**); Ashburton D (*aescburnan* 1008 S1547; *Essebretone* 1086) Watts 2004, 20 (**burna**); Ashcombe D (*Aissecoma* 1086) Watts 2004, 20 (**cumb**); Ashfield Sf (*Aisefelda* c.1075) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 4 (**feld**); Ashford Db (*Æscforda* 926(13th) S397) PNDb i 27 (**ford**); Ashford D (*Aiseforda* 1086) PND i 24 (**ford**); Ashford Carbonell Sa (*Esseford* 1086) PNSa i 19 (**ford**); Ashill So (*Ais*(*s*)*elle* 1086) Watts 2004, 21 (**hyll**); Ashow Wa (*Asceshot* 1086) PNWa 154–5 (**hoh**); Ashurst K (*Aeischerste* c.1100) Watts 2004, 22 (**hyrst**); Ashurst Sx (*Essehurst* 1164) PNSx i 183 (**hyrst**); Ashmansworth Ha (*æscmæreswierðe* 909(12th) S378) Watts 2004, 21 (**mere**); Ashmore Do (*Aisemare* 1086) PNDo ii 201 (**mere**); Ashover Db (*Essov*(*e*)*r*(*e*)*, Essou(e)r(e)* 1086) Watts 2004, 22 (**ofer**); Ashwell Hrt (*Æscewelle* c.1060) Watts 2004, 23 (**wella**); Ashwell Ru (*Exewelle* 1086) PNRu 4 (**wella**); Ashwellthorpe Nf (*Aescewelle* c.1066) Watts 2004, 23 (**wella**); Askrigg YN (*Ascric* 1086) PNYN 261 (**ric**); Askwith YW (*Ascvid* 1086) PNYW v 61 (**viðr**); Ayshford D ((*to*) *æscforda* 958(12th) S653) PND ii 547 (**ford**); Escrick YE (*Ascri* 1086) PNYE 267 (**ric**); Esher Sr (*Æscæron* 1005)12th S911 PNSr 92 (**scearu**); Esholt YW (*Essolth*, *Esseholt* 1172) PNYW iv 144 (**holt**); Eshott Nb (*Esseta* 1186) Mawer 1920, 77 (**scēat**); Great Ashfield Sf (*Aisfeld* 942×c951 S1483) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 4 (**feld**)

With **lēah**:

> Ashill Nf (*Essalai* 1086) Watts 2004, 21; Ashleigh D (*Assileia* 1086) PND i 189; Ashley C (*Esselei*, *Esselie* 1086) PNC 124; Ashley Ch (*Ascelie* 1086) Watts 2004, 21; Ashley Ha (*Esselie*, *Esselei* 1086) Coates 1989, 25; Ashley Nth (*Ascele* 1086) PNNth 155; Ashley St (*Eselie* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 92; Ashley W (*Esslie* 1086) PNW 53; *Esselei Hundred* Ha (*Esselei hd'* 1086) Anderson 1939a 185

` OE adj. 'ashen', 'growing with ash-trees'

The OE adj. *æscen* 'ashen' is attested in early medieval literature (DOE: æscen, adj.) and is used as a substantive noun at least eight times to describe a 'vessel made of ash wood, a bucket' (DOE: æscen, n.). VEPN (i 33) suggests that in place-names *æscen* may have indicated a place 'growing with ash-trees', literally an 'ashen place', but that in some instances the meaning 'made of ash-wood' was also possible. See 2.5 **æcen** for discussion of similar adjectival construction (also 2.19 ***bircen**; 2.44 ***hæslen**; 2.55 **linden**; 2.59 ***peren**). See *Fig.14* for distribution.

2.11.1 *æscen* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Ashington Nb is not attested until the twelfth century (*Essende* 1170, *Esinden* 1199, *Essenden* 1205–5), with spellings that retain a medial *-n-*, indicating *æscen* rather than *æsc* (Ekwall 1960, 15). The *-den* forms suggest generic OE *denu*, 'valley growing with ash-trees', probably a reference to the valley of the River Wansbeck immediately south of the settlement. The minor name Hurst, from OE *hyrst* 'copse, wood', in Ashington indicates there was woodland here and the settlement of Stakeford Nb south of the river, from OE *stacca-ford* (Watts 2004, 567), implies that wooden stakes marked the place of the ford or were used as part of the river crossing; these were perhaps harvested from the local ash-trees, which is a species that coppices well.

Ashendon Bk (*Assedune*, *Assedone*, *Essedene* 1086) has the generic OE *dūn*, 'a low hill with a fairly level and fairly extensive summit' that would have provided a good site for settlement in open country (LPN 164). Although there is no medial *-n-* in the DB forms, all those that follow suggest *æscen* (*Essendon*(*e*)1195, *Essendon* c.1218, *Ayssendone* 1255). It should be noted that the ME adj. *asshen* 'of an ash-tree, made of ash wood' (MED: ashen, adj.1) could here have influenced an OE *æsc* name, although

it is perhaps more likely that the DB forms are anomalous. The parish of Ashendon appears to have been the administrative centre for the hundred of Ashendon and as Ekwall (1960, 14) notes, the prominent hill on which the settlement stands would have been an appropriate meeting-place. The hillside geology here is particularly favourable for ash growth, with loam-clay alkaline soil that could have supported ash-dominant woodland (see 2.10.4: Ashurst K). PNBk (102) suggests there were a number of old ash-trees in the area in the 1920s.

In contrast with Ashendon Bk, the earliest forms of Ashdon Ess display medial *-n-* (*Estchentune*, *Æstchendune* c.1036(12th); *Aesredune* 1043×5(14th); *Ascendunā* 1086), but from the thirteenth century it has forms without (*Essedon* 1255, *Ass*(*c*)*hedon*(*e*) 1272, *Asshidon* 1292). This could be due to association with more recurrent *æsc* (ME *assh*), or it could simply be the result of standard reduction over time.[26] Watts (2004, 20) notes that the original settlement of Ashdon was at Church End (2022 OS: TL 5817 4161). The geology here is acidic sand but the surrounding landscape (including the modern village) is a more alkaline clay-loam, which would have provided a habitat more suited to ash woodland.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Ashdon Ess (*Ascendunā* 1086) PNEss 502 (**dūn**); Ashendon Bk (*Assedune*, *Assedone*, *Essedene* 1086) PNBk 101 (**dūn**); Ashington Nb (*Essende* (sic) 1170) Watts 2004, 21 (**denu**)

2.12 *æscett OE ‘clump of ash-trees’

An OE word that is unattested outside of place-names and appears to be synonymous in meaning with the collective noun **esce* (see 2.10: **æsc**), ‘a clump or ash-trees’ from *æsc* and the ending *-et* (EPNE i 5). This was perhaps a similar type of woodland to a modern copse, which is a term that has developed from coppice to mean ‘a thicket of small trees or underwood periodically cut for economic purposes’ (OED: copse, n.).

[26] Ashingdon Ess was the probable site of the battle of *Assandun*(*e*) in 1016, which is recorded in the ASC (c.1050 ASC(C), c.1100 ASC (D, F), c.1150 ASC(E)) (Townend 1995, 27), and in some early forms demonstrates confusion with OE *æsc* (*Asshendon* 1254–1552; *Ashyndon*, *Ashingdon* 1325), but actually derives from the OE pers.n. **Assa* (gen. sg. **Assan*) with *dūn*, ‘Assa’s hill’ (PNEss 176; Watts 2004, 21).

VEPN (i 33) notes that this element cannot be distinguished from the compound *æsc-scēat* 'ash corner of land', and that only Ashford K fits the proposed south-easterly distribution of tree-names with *-et* endings, which casts doubt upon the inclusion of Eshott Nb (*Fig.14*).

2.12.1 ***æscett** as the specific in a topographical compound:

Ashford K (*Essetesforde* 1046, *Essetesford* 1086, *Æscedeford* c1090) has been suggested by Tengstrand (1940, 189) to derive from a place called **Æscscēat*, 'ash corner' referring to the river bend here, with the later addition of *ford*: an etymology supported by Ekwall (1960, 15). However, a specific from **æscett* with generic *ford* is perhaps preferable and with the gen. sg. would give 'ford of the ash copse' (Gelling 1984, 259) or 'ford by a clump of ash-trees' (Cullen 1997, 91). The location of the original ford is no longer apparent due to extensive urbanisation, but ash-trees are tolerant of periodic flooding and perhaps grew on the loam-clay soil to the south bank where they may have faced less competition from other species (see 2.10.4: *æsc-ford*).

***æscett** as the specific in a topographical compound:

Ashford K (*Essetesforde* 1046) Watts 2004, 21 (**ford**)

2.13 æspe OE f. 'aspen'

Variant forms are OE *æspæ*, *æps* (OED: asp, n.1: etymology) and *æsp* (DOE: æsp, æspe). ON influence on the development of aspen names in the Danelaw area is difficult to ascertain, as forms with *A-* do not allow for distinction from cognate ON *ǫsp*, and those beginning *E-* may show the influence of ON *espi* or WMids and Kentish *espe* depending on the region (VEPN i 34). *Æspe* occurs infrequently in early medieval charters and place-names: LangScape records only five OE charters with *æspe*. In major place-names *æspe* (*Fig.21*) is relatively uncommon in when compared with other tree-names (8 occurrences: 1.03% of corpus; see *Tab.1*) and it never occurs as a generic element or with a habitative terminal (EPNE i 5; VEPN i 34). It is attested in OE medical texts and glossaries, where it glosses Lat. *tremulus* 'trembling poplar (aspen)', Lat. *sycomorus* 'sycamore', Lat. *celsa* 'mulberry tree', and Lat. *arbutus* either 'strawberry tree' or in Medieval Latin 'crab-apple' (DOE: æsp, æspe, n.). The modern term aspen is used specifically of the poplar variety *Populus tremula*, which is the only native woodland poplar (Rackham 2003, 341). When there is a

breeze, the leaves and branches of the aspen appear to tremble, which explains its binomial name and the alternative common name quaking aspen.

The OE adj. *wæfre* 'unstable, restless, wandering' has been tentatively connected with aspen. Smith (EPNE ii 235–6) notes an arboreal connection through the combining of *wæfre* and OE *lēah* and *trēow* (in the place-names Waverley Sr and Wavertree La) and in the dialect word *waver* 'a young tree left standing by itself in a felled wood' and states these could feasibly refer to an aspen-tree. Wavertree La (*Wauretreu* 1086) is a township in Childwall parish that has been variously glossed as the 'wavering tree or aspen' (Ekwall 1922, 112), 'flickering or shaking tree' (Ekwall 1960, 502) and 'swaying tree' (Watts 2004, 657). Waverley Sr (*Waverleiacum*, *Vaverliacum* c.1140(1318)) has been glossed as 'clearing or woodland in marshy ground' (PNSr 174), with a first element that is perhaps cognate LG *waver* 'quaking bog'; however, Ekwall (1960, 502) notes a connection between continental *waver* place-names and scrub woodland and suggests it may instead have meant something like 'brushwood'. It is worth noting that the compound *æspe-lēah* is found in at least eight major and minor names and that aspen is a common underwood species (see 2.13.2.1); indeed, Gelling observes that Espley Sa lies within a heathland area (PNSa v 149), which is more supportive of the presence of brushwood than established standard woodland.

It is possible OE *æspe* was also used of other poplar varieties, such as the native black poplar (*Populus nigra*) or the white poplar (*Populus alba*), which may be a naturalised ancient introduction (Rackham 2003, 341). This is because the word poplar (ME *popelere*, *popiler*) appears to be a later medieval introduction to English: the result of AN *popler*, *popeler*, a variation of OFr *peuplier*, *poplier*, which developed from Lat. *pōpulus* (OED: poplar, n.: etymology). Poplar is not attested in place-names until the fourteenth century (*Poplar* Mx: *Popler* 1327, (*le*) *Pop*(*e*)*ler*(*e*) 14th) and there are no reliable literary attestations from the early medieval period.

Black poplar is a 'huge broad tree … of immense presence' (Johnson and More 2004, 152) that is not found in woodland, but was 'mainly a tree of damp soils, especially on alluvial plains' (Williamson et al. 2017, 117). White poplar is another large non-woodland species with distinct creamy white bark with diamond-shaped boles (Johnson and More 2004, 150). Although from a modern perspective these features differ greatly from the slender woodland-dwelling aspen, the OED does present some

examples of *asp* used to describe other poplar varieties in early modern English. In the *Name of Herbes* (1548), William Turner describes two kinds of poplar: 'whyte Popler or white Esptree' and 'an Asp tree, or a blacke popler', and Richard Surflet's translation of *Maison rustique* (Estienne, C. and J. Liébaul 1600) records that the white poplar is 'otherwise called the aspe tree' (OED: asp, n.1b).

White poplar was also, from the fourteenth century, referred to as the abele tree, a borrowing from OFr *aubel* (MED: aubĕl n.) *and* there may have been some confusion between white poplar and silver birch, which, with its pale bark, has a strong superficial similarity. This is suggested through use of *birciae* as a gloss for Lat. *populus* in the eight-century *Epinal Glossary* (see 2.16 **beorc**). In contrast, there is no direct reference to the black poplar in early medieval manuscripts, which is possibly, as Hooke proposes (2010, 276), due to it having been 'grouped with the aspen'. An eighth-century charter of the bounds of Wick Episcopi Wo refers to *þa gratan æspan* 'the great aspen' and *locum dictum greatan æspan* 'the place called great aspen' (S142). It is possible this is a very early reference to the rare giant aspen, a variety that is 'half as large again as an ordinary aspen in all its parts' and which has been observed in woodland in Suffolk and Essex (Rackham 2003, 341). Yet the charter does not suggest the area was well wooded and it is doubtful that this tree was a woodland remnant as aspen is the shortest lived of native British tree-species and tends to decline after just 50 years. It is perhaps therefore more likely to have been a reference to the imposing and free-standing black poplar.

2.13.1 *æspe* as a simplex name:

There are three possible simplex major names that derive from OE *æspe*. Apps Court Sr (*Epse* 675(13th), *Æpse* 1062(13th), *Ebsa* 1086) was an DB settlement that became part of the parish of Walton-on-Thames (PNSr 96). Similar early spellings can be seen for Apse Heath Wt, which is first attested in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (*Abla* (sic *Absa*) 1086, *Hapsa* 1100(1313) *Apse* 1100×1) (Mills 1996, 23; Watts 2004, 16). In contrast, East and West Tapps D in Oakford parish developed from a single DB manor (*Ausa* 1086, *Apse* 1285). The modern name is likely the result of misdivision of West Apse and East Apse *Westapse* 1242, *Westereapse* 1330) (PND ii 388). Metathesis is evident in the earliest forms of all three of these names, except for two thirteenth-century spellings of Apps Sr (*Aspe* 1201, 1254).

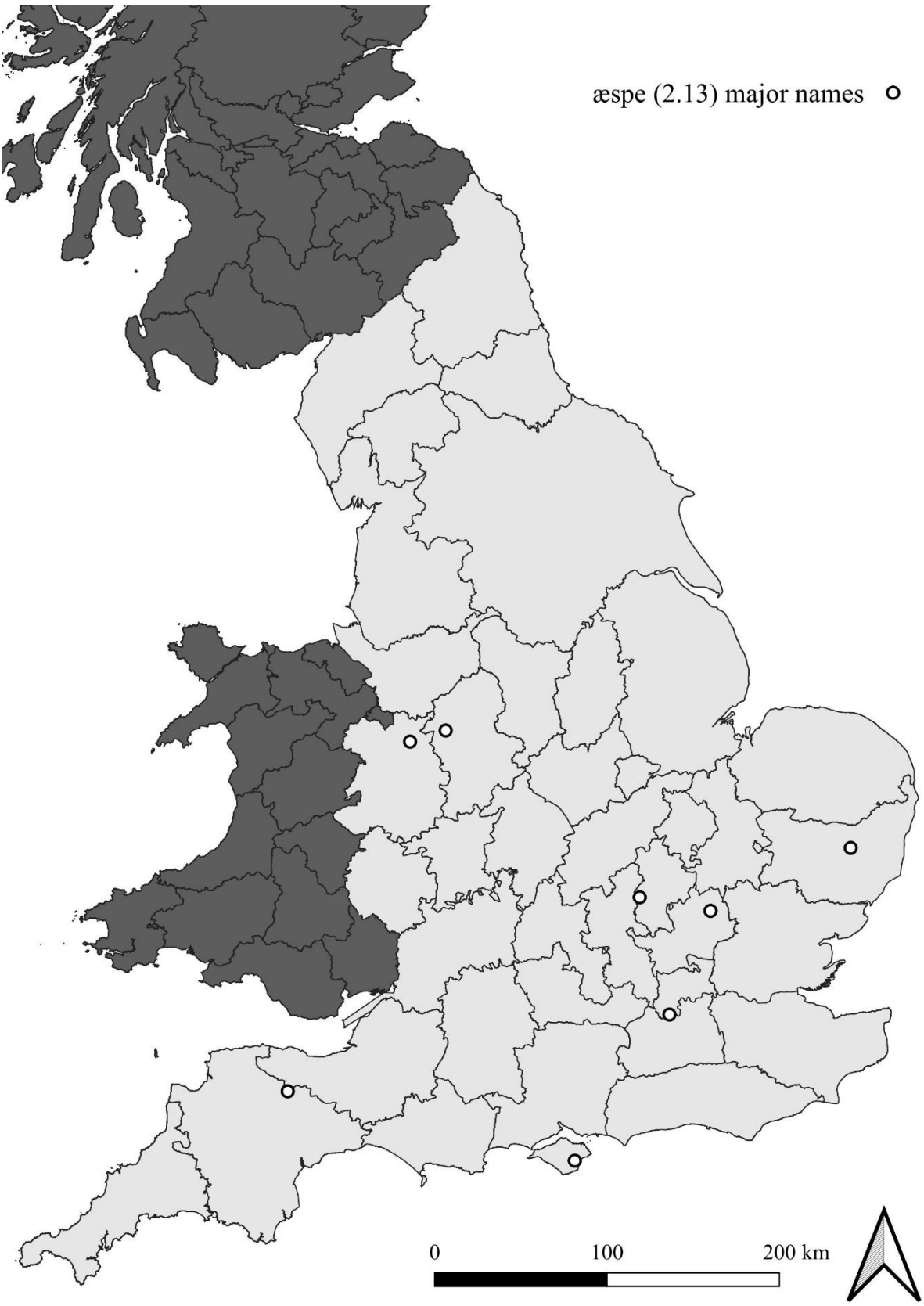


Figure 21: The distribution of *æspe* major names attested by 1200

2.13.2 *æspe* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Aspall Sf is first attested in DB (*Espala* 1086, Haspale 1291, Asphalle 1316, Aspale 1327) with generic OE *halh*, 'nook growing with aspens' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 4). Aspul La (Aspul 1212, Apshull 1246) is a comparable later-attested major name from the compound *æspe-hyll* 'aspen hill' (Ekwall 1960, 17; Watts 23). Aspenden Hrt (*Absesdene* 1086, *Absedene* 1185) has the generic OE *denu*, 'aspen valley' (Ekwall 1960, 16). The earliest forms display metathesis that is not reflected in the later medieval or modern spellings (*Aspeden*(*e*) 1222, *Aspedane* 13th). PNHrt (171) suggests that the medial *-en-* of the modern form is a later development (*Aspynden* 1506). Comparable medieval examples could be Aspenshaw Db (*Aspen*(*e*)*s*(*h*)*awe* 1285) and Aspinall La (*Aspiwallesiche* 1244, *Aspenewell* 1247), which either derive from the OE adj. **æspen*, 'of aspen, growing with aspen-trees', or display inflected forms of *æspe*, perhaps gen.pl. *æspena* (VEPN i 34).

2.13.2.1 *æspe-lēah*:

The OE compound *æspe-lēah*, 'aspen open woodland', is recurrent in three major names and in the early-attested minor names: Apsley Bk (*Aspeleia* c.1210(14th)), Aspley Wa (*Aspeleye* 1344), Aspley Hall Nt (*Aspeleia* 1108), Aspley Heath Wa (*æt Æpsleage* 963(11th) S1307), and Espley Nb (*Espeley* 1242). Aspley Guise Bd is the earliest attested *æspe* major name (*Æpslea* 969 S772), with a form that demonstrates metathesis not evident in later spellings (*Aspeleia* 1086, *Aspeleye Gyse* 1363). The manorial affix refers to Anselm de Gyse who held the estate in 1276 (PNBd 113). Espley Sa has early attestations that are likely the result of WMids *espe* (*Espoleye* 1172, *Espeleg'* c.1230–40), which also explains the modern form of the name, although subsequent thirteenth-century spellings (*Aspeleye* and *Haspeleye* 1291) suggest the influence of ME *aspe*, *haspe* (MED: aspe, n.). The opposite can be seen in the early forms of Aspley St (*Haspeleia* 1086, *Aspelega* 1227), which later demonstrates the influence of the WMids *espe* (*Espelega* 1310).

It is interesting to note that *æspe-lēah* names account for about a third of the 20 major and minor names with an *æspe* or **æspen* element that are attested in medieval

documents (up to 1500).[27] The recurrence of this compound is likely due to the properties of aspen that make it particularly suited to woodland clearings and lighter areas within a more densely wooded landscape. It is a clonal tree that is weakly competitive with other species and needs abundant sunlight to grow from suckers and from seed (*Fig.22*). It tends to be found in woods where other species are dominant (Hooke 2010, 265), in areas where the canopy cover is less dense, as it is easily shaded out by the spread of other trees and, if left to its own devices, generally lasts only 50 years before it starts to decline. As a result, coppicing is beneficial to the growth and propagation of aspen. Rackham (2003, 465) observes that sallow and aspen are among the most common types of wood found for medieval wattle, as they are fast-growing, pliable, and best suited to the short rotation cycle of medieval coppice woodland. It is unlikely that aspen was grown from seed or sapling for the purpose of coppicing; instead aspen coppice probably resulted from the exploitation of a natural resource. The popularity of aspen as a coppice species could explain the relative frequency with which the compound *æspe-lēah* appears in place-names.

As a simplex name:

> Apps Sr (*Epse* 675(13th)) PNSr 96; Apse Heath Wt (*Abla* (sic *Absa*) 1086; *Apse* 1100×1) Mills 1996, 23; East and West Tapps D (*Ausa* 1086; *Westapse* 1242) PND ii 388

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Aspall Sf (*Espala* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 4 (**halh**);
> Aspenden Hrt (*Absesdene* 1086) PNHrt 171 (**denu**)

With **lēah**:

> Aspley St (*Haspeleia* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 93–4; Aspley Guise Bd (*Æpslea* 969) PNBd&Hu 131; Espley Sa (*Espoleye* 1172) PNSa 148–9

[27] Including Asps Wa (*Espes* 1194) PNWa 259 and the field-names *le Espenefeld* Ch 1329 PNCh iv 21, *le Aspenehurste* Ch 1301–3 PNCh iii 5; *Apeshull* Do 1246, Apshill Copse W (*Apshullemed'* t.Ed2), Apsenny W (*Asphanger* c.1300), Aspers Close Ch (*Aspale* 1260), and *Espes* YW 1208–20 (Cavill 2018, 11). There is also an Aspley Wood in Wye parish in Kent that presumably also derives from OE *æspe-lēah* but has no early attestations that allow for inclusion here.



Figure 22: The felling of standard trees in Epping Forest has created a gap in the canopy and aspen suckers, as the dominant ground flora, have rapidly sprung up in this clearing. As aspen is a clonal species, these are likely to be the suckers of a single tree. (J. Treacher, September 2018)

2.14 bæst OE m. 'bast, the bark of the lime-tree, lime-tree(s)'

Bast is a word used to describe the inner fibres of plants that can be twisted to make cord but originally referred specifically to the inner bark of the lime-tree (OED: bast, n.1.1a) (*Fig.23*). The earliest account found in English is to *bæstenum rapum*, 'basten rope', in the *Old English Heptateuch* from the adjectival use of OE *bæst* (DOE: bæsten, adj.; OED: basten, adj.).[28] By the fourteenth century it appears that ME *bast* was a word used directly of rope and of other products made of bast fibres (MED: bast, n.1).

OE *bæst* and cognates such as OHG *bast* and ON *bast* may also have been used of the lime-tree itself (OED: bast, n.1.1a). In Anglo-Saxon glossaries *bæst* is glossed more

[28] Probably also in the place-name Bassenhally C (*Bastenhale* 1246) (see below: 2.14.1).

than once as Lat. *tilio* (*tilia*) (DOE: bæst, n.), seemingly a reference to either *Tilia platyphyllos* the broad-leaved lime, or *Tilia cordata*, the small-leaved lime that was once abundant in English woodland (Johnson and More 2004, 400) and is more commonly referred to in OE as **lind** (see 2.54). From the fifteenth century the compound bast-tree is recorded in English, where it again glosses Lat. *tilia* (OED: bast tree, n.). Ekwall (1960, 30) notes that LG *bast* could be used in the sense 'lime-grove'.



Figure 23: Lime bast from Chalkney Wood, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2018)

2.14.1 *bæst* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Bastwick Nf (*Bastwic* 1044–7; *Bastuwic*, *Bastuic*, *Bastwic* 1086) and Woodbastwick Nf (*Bastwik* 1044–7(13th) S1055) appear to derive from a compound of *bæst* (ON *bast*) and OE *wīc* 'dwelling, a collection of buildings for special purposes, a farm'. By the thirteenth century, Woodbastwick (*Wodbastwyk* 1253) had gained the affix 'wood' (OE *wudu*, ME *wude*). Lime woodland may have flourished at both locations, for as Rackham (2003, 244–5) states, lime-trees in Norfolk tend to grow where the soil has a

higher concentration of sand than clay and the geology at both sites is sand-based in an area generally dominated by clay wetlands: Bastwick lies immediately south of the floodplain of the River Thurne and Woodbastwick sits on land raised above the fen and marshland surrounding the River Bure.

The names taken literally could simply mean 'farm by the lime-tree(s)' (PNNf ii 69; Watts 2004, 41); however, it is possible the generic *wīc* was here intended to denote settlements that specialised in the harvest of bast (lime-tree bark). OE *wīc* is recurrent with topographical specifics that appear to have no immediate functional purpose (EPNE ii 262), some of which indicated tree-species: such as Aldridge St (see 2.2.3 **alor**); Ashwick So (see 2.10.3 **æsc**); Hazelwick Sx (*Hæslwic* 947(12th) PNSx ii 281); and Slaughterwicks Sr (*Sloghterwyk*, *Slotȝterwyk* (sic) 1332 PNSr 288); however, it also appears to have been associated with 'buildings used for particular occupations and manufactures' that when compounded with words connected with farming (OE *bere* 'barley', *butere* 'butter', *heorde* 'herd', *scēap* 'sheep') and trade (OE *col* 'cole', *fisc* 'fish', *salt* 'salt') 'may have denoted places where the various commodities were produced or prepared … [or] where the products could be bought' (EPNE ii 260). If Bastwick and Woodbastwick were *lind* names then a simple topographical argument would be more convincing; however, the dual meaning of *bæst* suggests that the functionality of these settlements could have been implicit in their names.

There are no minor name examples of the compound *bæst-wīc*, but *bæst* has been suggested as the specific element of two minor names in Cambridgeshire: Barston C (*Baston*(*e*)1319) from OE *bæst-tūn*, 'bast farm', and Bassenhally C (*Bastenhale* 1246), likely deriving from the OE adj. *bæsten* and *halh*, 'nook/corner growing with lime-trees'. These four names have a distinctly easterly distribution (*Fig.24*), suggesting there may have been some regional significance to the use of *bæst* as a naming element. VEPN (i 61–2) proposes three other possible minor name examples of *bæst* found elsewhere in the country: the street-name *Baststret* 1350 Gl and the field-names *Bast* 1379 Db and *Bastewood* 1524 We, but these may derive from ME *bast* and perhaps better reflect later naming practices.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Bastwick Nf (*Bastwic* 1044–7) PNNf ii 69 (**wīc**); Woodbastwick Nf (*Bastwik* 1044×7) Watts 2004, 694 (**wīc**)

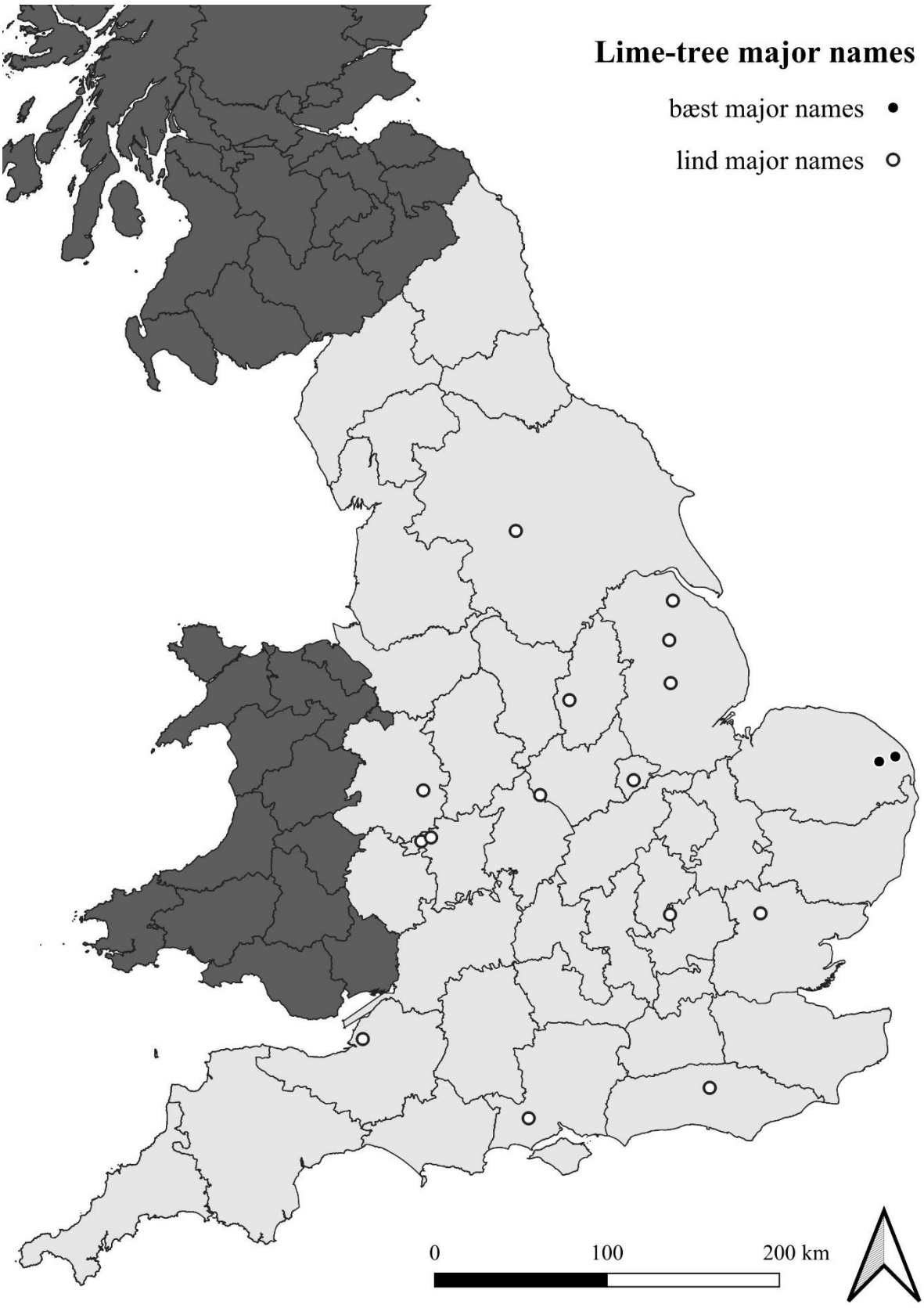


Figure 24: The distribution of lime major names attested by 1200

2.15 bēce OE f. ‘beech’

OE *bēce* is a parallel form to OE **bōc** (see 2.21), but unlike *bōc*, which is not recorded in independent use after the twelfth century, it survived into ME as *beche* and ModE beech (OED: beech, n.; MED: bȩche, n.). There is some rare interchange between these elements, most notably in the early medieval forms of Bookham Sr (*Bocham* 933(13th), *Bocheham* 1086, *Becheham* 1165) (see 2.21.1.1), but generally *bēce* and *bōc* do not alternate in place-names.

According to Hooke (2010, 202), beech (presumably both *bēce* and *bōc* elements) is mentioned 19 times in OE charter bounds. Several of these early charters refer to a single notable beech-tree, such as the *read lefan becan*, ‘red-leafed beech’, at Meon Ha (S754), the *ealden bec*, ‘old beech’, at Olveston Gl (S664), and the *mearc becean*, ‘boundary beech’, at Bexhill Sx (S108). Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) can grow up to 40 metres high and is one of Britain’s tallest broadleaf trees (Johnson and More 2004, 204). It is almost as long-lived as oak; however, unlike for oak, there are no simplex major names that appear to derive from a beech element. This is perhaps because beech is chiefly a woodland tree that does not readily colonise open land (Rackham 2003, 324), and when it does, tends to be the dominant species, shading out competitors with its dense canopy. The single beech trees mentioned in charters may have been lone remnants of woodland and were perhaps notable in shape, size, or age as the result of woodland management practices such as pollarding (*Fig.25*). Onomastic evidence for the practice of pollarding beech-trees can be found in the Sussex minor name Cowbeach (*Coppetbeche* 1261); here beech has been used as the generic element with a specific describing its appearance and probable function as a source of wood – although natural pollards can occur through weather damage or the unsupportable weight of large branches.

OE *bēce* is a less common element in early medieval major names than *bōc*. There are three possible *bēce* major names in England that are attested by the end of the twelfth century; however, as this element is difficult to distinguish from some forms of OE *bæc*, ‘back’, and *bæce*, ‘stream, stream-valley’ (VEPN i 67) possible *bēce* names have consequently been categorised as either relatively secure or ambiguous. There also appears to have been a climatically determined northerly limit to beech growth, which Rackham (2003, 319) describes as being ‘south and east of a line from Weymouth to

Swansea to King's Lynn' (*Fig.26*). Beech has been planted well beyond this supposed natural range since the advent of modern forestry and has become naturalised throughout England (Peterken 1993, 157), which makes it difficult to ascertain the extent of its distribution in the early medieval period. Rackham's limit is generally supported by archaeological finds from the Neolithic to the Roman period; however, he does acknowledge that place-name evidence, like Beckwith (*bec wudu* c.972) in north-east Yorkshire and small quantities of outlying pollen evidence, perhaps suggest an earlier expansion of beech than is traditionally thought (Rackham 2003, 319). While there are fewer place-name and charter references to beech in more northern counties, it is possible the less securely identified beech names in the West Midlands and north-west are evidence of an enclave of beech in Shropshire and Cheshire in the early medieval period (see 2.21.3.1: Boughton Ch).



Figure 25: An ancient beech pollard near the Field Studies Centre at High Beach in Epping Forest (J. Treacher, September 2018)

2.15.1 Relatively secure *bēce* place-names

2.15.1.1 *bēce* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.15.1.1.1 *bēce-tūn*:

The townships of Betton Abbots and Betton Strange in the parish of Berrington Sa, which until the eighteenth century were also known as Great and Little Betton respectively, appear to have once been a single estate in DB (*Betune*, *Bratona*, *Bratone* 1086). There is much variation in the spelling of these names throughout the medieval period but forms with <c> are recurrent from the twelfth century (*Parva Becton'* 1167–82, *Bechton'* c.1248, *Bekton' Abbatis* 1271–2). PNSa (i 45–6) suggests the original name is likely to have been the OE compound *bēce-tūn*, 'beech farm or estate', rather than *bæce-tūn*, as there are no *Bac*- spellings, which are normal for *bæce* names in Shropshire, and no well-marked valley to which this term could have referred.

Parallels can be drawn with Betton in Hales Sa (*Baitune* 1086, *Beitona* 1087–94, 1127, c.1135), which has early forms that, according to PNSa (i 46–7), 'present a serious problem' when considering the etymology; however, from the twelfth century, attestations better resemble the OE compound *bēce-tūn* (*Bectona* 1121, *Beccn' sub Lima* 1167–82, *Becton* 1236–50). Again, the objection to an etymology from *bæce* is due to the 'absence of a significant number of <a> spellings' (PNSa i 46–7). Both Betton Abbots and Strange and Betton Hales have been categorised as relatively secure rather than as diagnostic of *bēce*, as their earliest attestations are not straightforward. The location of these settlements also casts some doubt on a beech etymology, as Rackham's proposed natural limit for beech did not extend as far north as Shropshire (*Fig.26*). There may, however, have been areas where beech grew outside this limit by the early medieval period and place-names perhaps provide some evidence for this (see also 2.21.3.1: Great Boughton Ch).

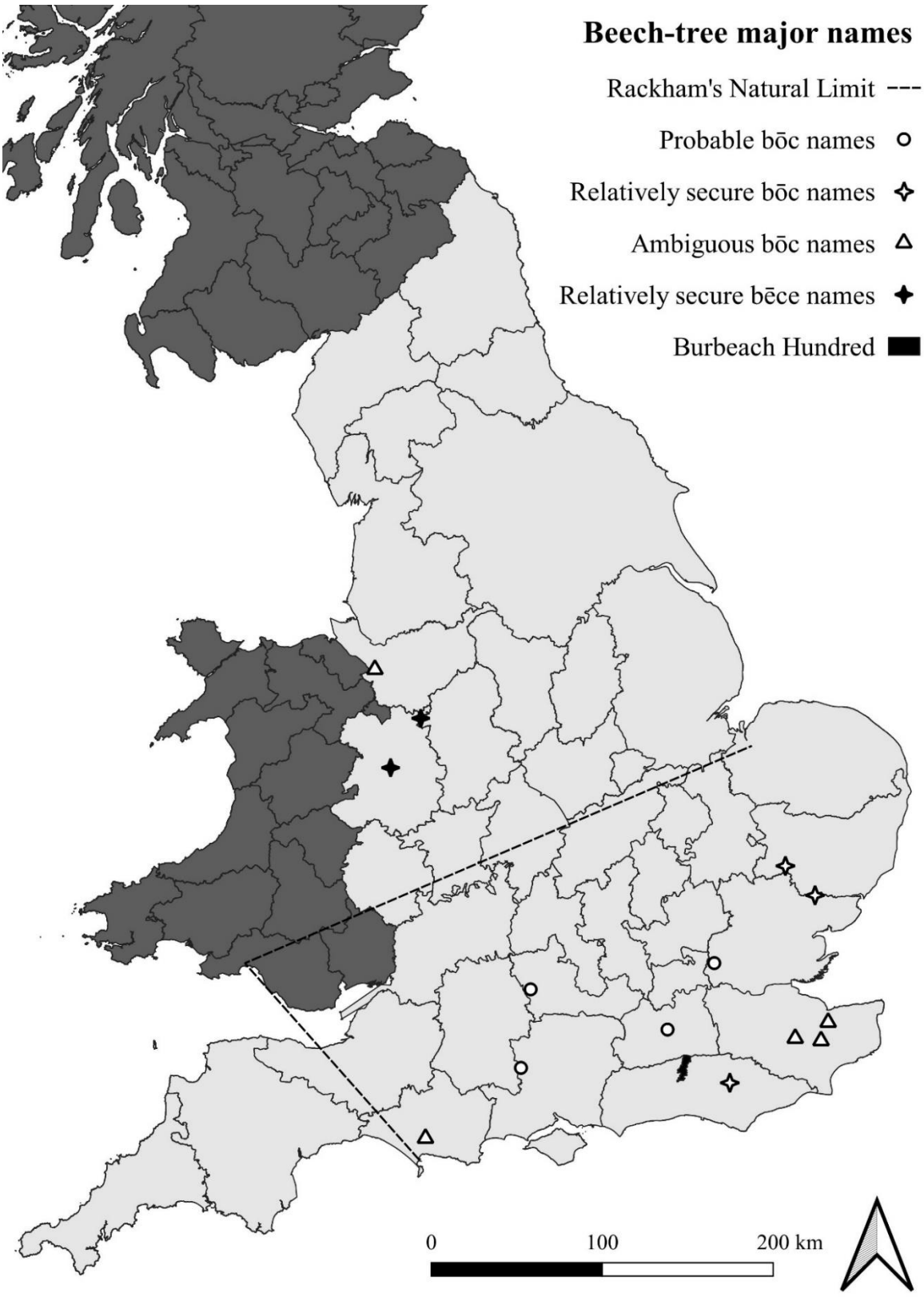


Figure 26: The distribution of *bōc* and *bēce* major names with a line showing Rackham's 'natural limit' of beech-tree growth: south-east of Weymouth, Swansea, and King's Lynn.

2.15.2 Ambiguous place-names with *bēce*

2.15.2.1 *bēce* as the generic element:

Burbeach (*Burbece hund'* 1086, *Bulebech* 1161, *Borebrigge* 1248, *Burbeche* 1255) is the name of a hundred in Sussex and the only major name with a possible beech generic. There are six other major-name examples of *burh* 'fortification' in compound with a tree-species element (see 2.10.3 **æsc**; 2.72.3 **þorn**; 2.78.1 **wice**), but none with the tree-name as the generic. PNSx (i 203) is fairly confident of a beech etymology, suggesting use of *bec*, the pl. form of *bōc*, but acknowledges the name could also be the OE compound *burh-bæce*, 'stream-valley by the fortification'. Anderson (1939a, 85–6) is better persuaded by an etymology from OE *bæc*, 'ridge by the fortification'. He suggests that a beech etymology for Burbeach is unlikely when the modern form and the thirteenth-century attestation *Burbach'* 1262 are considered; however, this does not account for the large number of medieval forms with -*bech*(*e*). Ekwall (1960, 74) considers the comparable Burbage names in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Wiltshire, which have similar early forms: Burbage on the Wye Db (*Burebeche* 1172), Burbage in Padley Db (*Burbache* 1200–30), Burbage Le (*Burbeca* 1043), and Burbage W (*Burgbeces* 961 S688). For these Ekwall is convinced of an etymology from *bæce* rather than *bēce* and it is worth noting that the earliest form of Burbage W appears to have a genitive -s, which indeed casts doubt on a beech-name etymology, as the gen. sg. form of *bēce* is *bēcan*. The OE compound *burh-welle*, 'fortification by the stream', is recurrent and perhaps provides a comparable example of a watery name with the specific *burh* (Burwell C (*Burcwell* 1060) PNC 187–8, Burwell Fm O (*Burewell* 1226) PNO ii 315, Burwell Fm Nth (*Burchwellebalke* 1403) PNNth 50). Unfortunately, the location of Burbeach Hundred meeting place is lost, so it is not possible to evaluate the topography and geology of the site and determine whether *bēce*, *bæce*, or *bæc* is etymologically more likely.

Relatively secure *bēce* place-names

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

Betton Abbots and Strange Sa (*Betune* 1086) PNSa i 45–6; Betton in Hales Sa (*Baitune* 1086) PNSa v 46–7

Ambiguous *bēce* place-names

As the generic element:

Burbeach Hundred Sx (*Burbeca* 1086) PNSx i 203 (**burh**)

2.16 berc OE (Anglian), *beorc* OE (Kentish, WSax) OE f. 'birch'

There are two OE words for 'birch' in the toponymicon of English major names; these are *berc* and the weak i-mutated form *birce* (EPNE i 36). The former can be distinguished by the retention of -e- or -a- in early forms and by the unassibilated final consonant, the spelling *berc* is the Anglian form and *beorc* is West Saxon (also i-mutated *byrc*) (VEPN i 85). It appears to derive from Germanic **berkâ* and is cognate with ON *bjǫrk* (OED: birch, n.: etymology). The DOE (byrc, byrce, beorc, n.2.) notes 35 instances of *beorc* and *birce* – mainly in OE glossaries – from as early as the eighth century.

There are two species of native birch – silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) – but the differences in distribution of birch elements appear to be linguistic (*Fig.27*), rather than indicative of a species distinction. Silver birch, with its conspicuous white bark, may be identified in compound with *birce* in the earliest forms of the minor name Birch Db (*Lihtebyrches* 1251), which includes the element OE *leoht* 'light' (VEPN i 103) and in the charter bounds of Stoke Prior estate Wa that notes a *hwitan biricean*, 'white birch', (S60) but there is no evidence of the same in major names and these examples conform to the general distribution of *birce* in charters.[29]

[29] It would be more significant if these references to silver birch appeared in areas where *berc* names predominated, as this could hint at a conscious connection between the word *birce* and the silver birch.

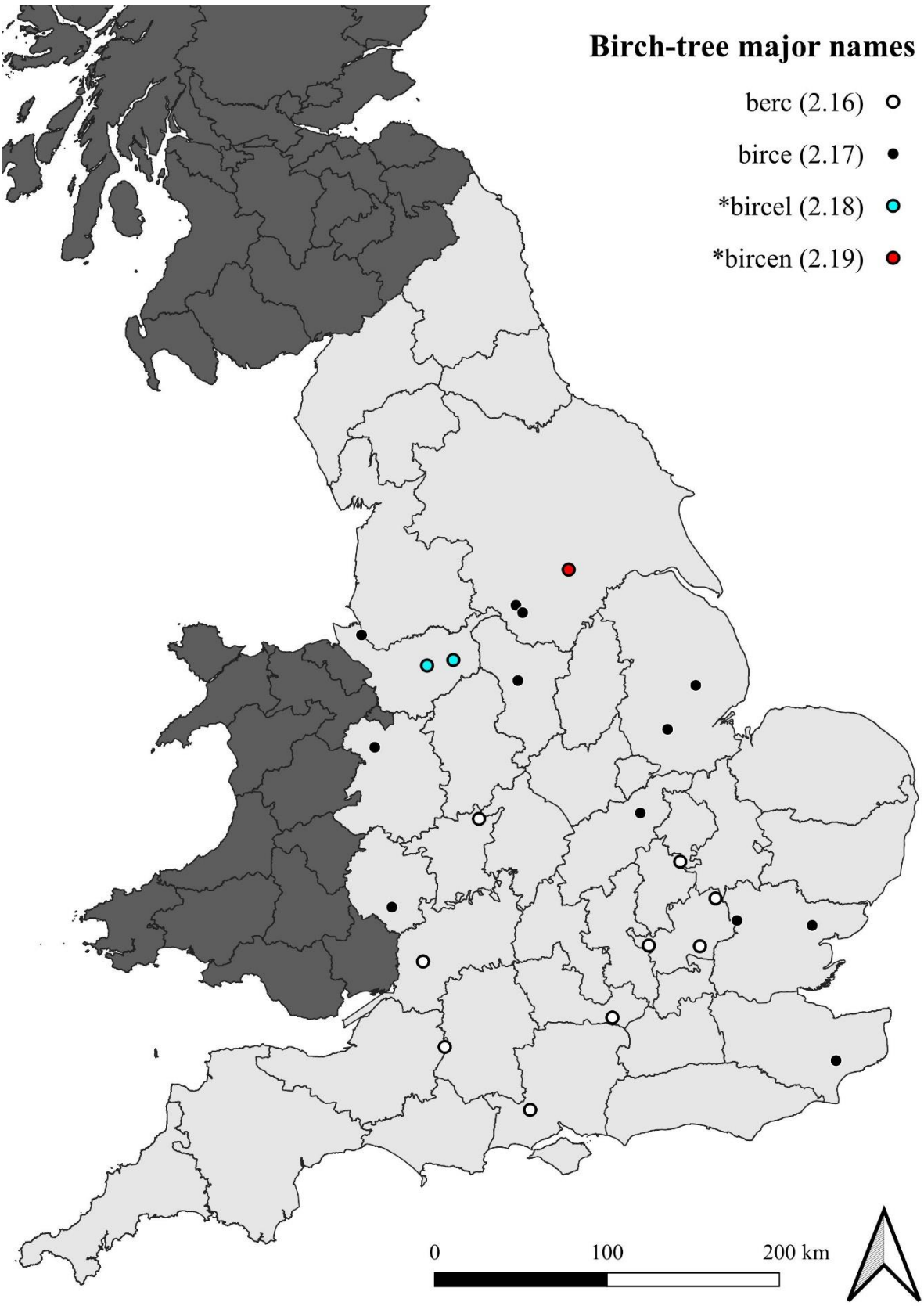


Figure 27: The distribution of birch major names attested by 1200

It is possible the words *birce* and *berc* were used not only in reference to birch but also poplar (*Populus*). The early eighth-century *Epinal Glossary* equates Lat. *betula* 'birch' with OE *beorc* and Lat. *populus* 'poplar' with OE *birce* (DOE: byrc, byrce, beorc, n.2.). The Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem verse for *beorc* also appears to allude not to birch but to poplar (Hooke 2010, 59), as the tree in question is described as a suckering species that does not bear fruit. The word poplar (ME *popelere*, *popiler*) is a French adoption into the English language and does not occur in place-names or the written record until the fourteenth century (see 2.13 **æspe**). The word *æspe* 'aspen' may have been used to refer to all poplar species, but it is also possible that birch and poplar could have been confused where the species looked superficially similar: the silver birch and white poplar (*Populus alba*) both have white bark with black diamond-shaped pits (Johnson and More 2004, 150, 182).

It was initially proposed that Barking Ess could mean 'dwellers among the birch-trees' from *beorc* and the folk-name forming suffix *-ingas* (PNEss 88–9); however, early forms with medial *-e-* and medial *-i-* ((*in*) *Berecingum* c.735(c.1000), (*in*) *monasterio Bericinensi* c.735) are perhaps more suggestive of the unattested OE pers.n. **Berica*, '(the place of) Berica's people' (Ekwall 1960, 26, Watts 2004, 35). Barking has not been included in the corpus of birch names, as a pers.n. etymology better explains the earliest attestations.

2.16.1 *berc* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Little Berkhamsted Hrt (*Berchehastede* 1096) is the only relatively secure *beorc* major name. It appears to be a compound of gen. sg. *beorce* or gen. pl. *beorca* with the generic OE *hām-stede*, meaning 'homestead of the birch-tree(s)'. The affix *Little* is used from the thirteenth century (*Little Berchamstede* 1253) to distinguish from Great Berkhamstead in the same county (PNHrt 217). Great Berkhamsted Hrt is first attested in a copy of a tenth-century charter ((*æt*) *Beorhðanstædæ* 966–84(12th) S1484); Sandred (1963, 238) and Watts (2004, 51) suggest that this first form supports an etymology from OE *beorg* and *hām-stede*, 'hill homestead'. Berkhamstead Common rises sharply to the north of the modern settlement, which lies on the River Bulbourne, and this may have been the *beorg* to which the name refers. Later attestations with *-c-* (*Berchehastede* 1086, *Berchamsted*(*e*)1086) suggest the same etymology as Little Berkhamsted; however, these forms are not consistent

(*Beorhhamstede* c.1100, *Berghamstede* 1248) and are perhaps attributable to influence from contemporary spellings of Little Berkhamsted. PNHrt (29) favours a birch etymology and notes that the abundance of birch on Berkhamsted Common 'attests to the appropriateness of the name'; however, birch is not a long-lived tree and is quick to colonize open land (Rackham 2003, 311), so it need not have existed in the area historically for it to proliferate in the modern day. Great Berkhamsted has been included in the corpus of *beorc* names, as the early forms are ambiguous, and the possibility of a birch etymology cannot be dismissed.

2.16.2 *berc* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Apart from its DB form (*Bereforde* 1086), early attestations of Little Barford Bd (*Berkeford* 1202, *Berck*(*e*)*ford* 1220, *Bercford* 1247) suggest an origin from the compound OE *beorc-ford*, with gen. pl. *beorca*, 'ford of the birch-trees'. This presumably arose in reference to a river crossing with a distinct gathering of birch-trees, perhaps the conspicuous, white-barked silver birch (*Betula pedula*). The eventual loss of /k/, evident from the sixteenth century (*Barkford al. Barford* 1549), necessitated the inclusion of the affix *Little* to distinguish from Great Barford (*Bereforde* 1086, *Berford* 1257) in the same county, which has a different etymology (PNBd&Hu 50–2). Watts (2004, 35) suggests that Little Barford has assimilated to resemble the more common type Barford, from OE *bere-ford*, 'barley ford'.

The specific element of Barkway Hrt (*Bercheuuei*(*g*), *Bercheweie* 1086) appears to be gen. sg. *beorce* or gen. pl. *beorca* (Watts 2004, 35), which is compounded with OE *weg*, 'way or path of the birch-tree(s)', probably as Ekwall (1960, 26) suggests, the 'road through the birches'. Although it is not certain which road is here referred to, it is worth noting that the main road (B1368) running north to south through Barkway is connected to Hare Street – OE *here-strǣt*, 'military road, highway' – 5 kms directly south, suggesting this was potentially a significant routeway in early medieval times.

Copies of a tenth-century charter (S559) preserve early forms of Barkham Brk (*Beorcham* 952(1240), (*æt*) *Beorchamme* 952(16th)); the latter suggests the etymology OE *beorc-hamm* (Watts 2004, 35). PNBrk (i 91) notes that several small tributaries of the River Loddon flow through the modern parish, which appears to observe the same bounds described in the charter and in DB, both of which encompassed *þreora hida* 'three hides' of land. This observation and further research by Gelling and Cole (LPN

52) suggest *hamm* may have indicated a 'birch-tree water meadow'; however, while birch is found on most soil types, it is rare on moist and base-rich soils, preferring free-draining sands or peats (Peterken 1993, 171) and would be unlikely to grow on a water meadow. The geology at Barkham is varied (*Fig.28*), the small tributaries noted in PNBrk (i 91) run through a poorly drained clay-rich landscape, while a large part of the modern settlement sits on free-draining sand-based soil. It could be, therefore, that *hamm* was here used to indicate an area that is hemmed in by water or wet ground and populated by birch-trees.

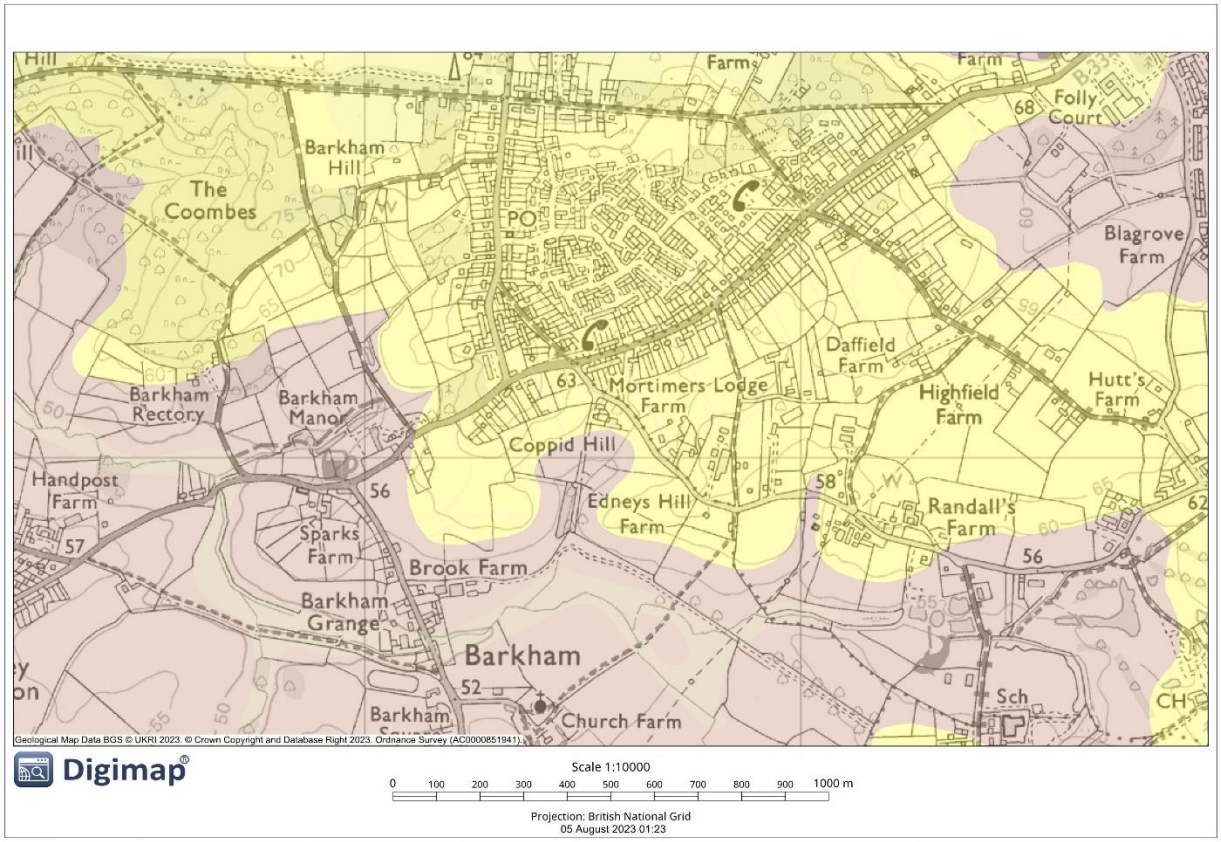


Figure 28: OS Soil Texture (1:10 000) map of Barkham, Berkshire: sand-based soil (yellow) surrounded by water-retentive loam-clay soil (brown)

2.16.2.1 *berc-lēah*:

There are four *berc-lēah*, 'birch open woodland', major names. Berkeley Hundred Gl was identical to the district dependent on Berkeley Manor in DB (Anderson 1939a 15) and is first attested in two ninth-century charters (*æt Be*(*o*)*rclea* 824(11th) (S1433), *æt Berclea* 833 (S218)), and then again in the eleventh century with forms varying on the spellings *Berkelai* 1080 and *Berchelai*(*a*) 1086, the latter suggesting the gen. sg or pl.

form of *beorc*. A further ninth-century charter attestation, *Berclinga* 804(11th), appears to be a gen. pl. form of *Beorclingas*, 'the men of Berkeley', a reference to the monks of Berkeley Monastery (PNGl ii 211–12). Berkley So is first attested in DB as *Berchelei* 1086, again perhaps a gen. sg. or pl. form of the specific. Bartley Ha (*Berchelai* 1086) and Bartley Green Wo (*Berchelai* 1086, *Bartley* 1657) have identical DB forms and show the common later confusion between *k* and *t* that is also evident in Bartlow C (*Berk*(*e*)*lawe* 1232–1485) (PNWo 348).



Figure 29: The Birklands of Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire (J. Treacher, June 2020)

Birch saplings grow quickly from seed when provided with enough light and space and it is a strong woodland pioneer species that readily colonizes cleared ground (Rackham 2003, 311). An area of open woodland or a clearing would therefore be

well suited to rapid single-species birch growth. Birklands Nt (*Birchwude* 1188, *Birchewude* 1203), a minor name deriving from OE *birce-wudu*, is an example of ancient birch-oak woodland that forms a part of Sherwood Forest (Peterken 1993, 141) (*Fig.29*). Both silver (*Betula pendula*) and downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) grow there in abundance between ancient oak pollards, usually in areas where oaks have been felled or have declined and birch is not subject to overshading. This habitat is the result of historic wood-pasture and part of the Birklands has recently been restored to this use though the introduction of a small herd of Longhorn Cattle. An area of open birch woodland such as this could give some indication of how an established birch-tree *lēah* may once have looked.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Great Berkhamsted Hrt ((*æt*) *Beorhðanstædæ* 966–84(12th)) PNHrt 29 (**hām-stede**); Little Berkhamsted Hrt (*Berchehastede* 1096) PNHrt 217 (**hām-stede**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Barkham Brk (*Beorcham* 952(1240)) PNBrk i 91 (**hamm**); Barkway Hrt (*Bercheuuei*(*g*) 1086) PNHrt 172 (**weg**); Little Barford Bd (*Bereforde* 1086) PNBd&Hu 100–1 (**ford**)

With **lēah**:

> Bartley Ha (*Berchelai* 1086) Coates 1989, 28; Bartley Green Wo (*Berchelai* 1086) PNWo 348; Berkley So (*Berchelei* 1086) Watts 2004, 51; Berkeley Hundred Gl (*Berclinga* 804(11th)) PNGl ii 211–12

2.17 birce OE f. ‘birch’

A parallel form to OE **berc**, **beorc** (see 2.16) that can usually be distinguished in place-names by the spellings with *-e-* and *-a-* and by its assibilated final consonant (VEPN i 103). Both are attested in OE glossaries and charters, although *birce* is more common with 12 major names attested by 1200 to the nine of *berc* (*Fig.27*).

In some names the specific *birce* appears to alternate with the OE adj. ***bircen** (see 2.19) ‘growing with birch-trees’ (see 2.17.3: Birchover Db and Birkenhead Ch) and although *birce* is not used in major names as a generic it does occur on three

occasions as a simplex name. This differs from *beorc*, which only appears as the specific element in major names. There is no clear evidence of the ON equivalent *bjǫrk* 'birch' in place-names, as in its unbroken form it would not be distinguishable from OE *berc* but the collective ON *birki* 'growing with birch-trees, birch wood' may have influenced place-names in the north of England (EPNE I 36). This influence can perhaps be perceived in forms with medial *-k-*, although VEPN (i 105) notes that this could sometimes have arisen in *birce* names from the influence of Anglian *berc*.

2.17.1 *birce* as a simplex name:

There are three simplex *birce* major names in England first attested by the end of the twelfth century, meaning either '(place at) the birch-tree' or intended collectively to indicate birch woodland. The manors of Much and Little Birch He were originally one estate (*Birche*(*s*) 1160×70–1535), that were later distinguished by affixes and held by different families (Watts 2004, 58). The repetition of forms with terminal *-s* (*Seyntmariebirches* 1302×3, *Byrches Sancti Thomas* 1334) could suggest the name referred to a place with multiple birch-trees (Ekwall 1960, 44), although inorganic *-s* is not an uncommon AN inflection. Watts (2004, 58) notes that in DB the manor is recorded as *Mainaure* 1086 from Old Welsh *mainaur* 'manor, multiple estate', possibly referring to an 'upland division of Archenfield centred on the hill-fort at Aconbury (SO 5033)'.

Birch Ess is probably an example of a simplex *birce* name with early r-metathesis (*Briciam*, (*Parva*) *Bric*(*ce*)*iam* 1086; *Brike* 1182; *Brich*(*e*) 1194). Due to the lack of early forms spelt *Bi-*, Ekwall (1960, 44) proposes an etymology from OE *bryce* 'land broken up for cultivation', but VEPN (ii 51) states that this is an element clearly evidenced only in the north-west of England and a *bryce* specific would be expected to give regular *Brec-* forms, which is not the case for Birch Ess. There is evidence of birch woodland in the parish with the minor name *Birchewode* 1323, from OE *birce* or ME *birche* (MED: birche, n.), which has little similarity with near contemporary medieval spellings of Birch (*Bryche* 1258, *Brith*(*e*) 1275, *Brygge* 1397), suggesting it did not derive from association with the name of the parish. The settlement sits on well-draining sand-loam soil that provides optimum conditions for birchwood growth (Peterken 1993, 141). This later evidence of birch woodland suggests *birce* was intended collectively. The same can be seen with Birch Sa (*Bircha* 1194–5, *Birch*

c.1270), which has early forms that give no indication of the plural (PNSa v 5–6); however, Birch Park also sits on an area of well-drained sand-loam soil and, as birch rarely grows as a single standing tree (Rackham 2003, 312), this name likely indicated collective use of the singular and thus a place '(at the) birch-trees'.

2.17.2 *birce* as the specific in a habitative compound:

The earliest records of Birthorpe Li (*Berchetorp* 1086), Ingbirchworth YW (*Berceuuorde* 1086), and Roughbirchworth YW (*Bercewrde*, *Berceuuorde* 1086) suggest Anglian *berc*; however, Birthorpe is later consistently attested with forms spelt *Bir-* (*Birchetorp* 1180, *Birkethorp* 1189), which with the ON *þorp* generic, may instead indicate the specific ON *birki* (Cameron 1998, 15; Cullen et al. 2011, 53), giving the meaning 'the secondary settlement where birch-trees grow'. A comparable example could be Birklands Nt (*Birchwude* 1188, later *Birkelund*(*e*) 1251), which appears to show Scandinavianisation of a pre-existing name through the replacement of OE by ON elements (VEPN i 105). Later attestations for both Ingbirchworth (*Birchewrd*, *Byrchewrd*, *Byrcheworth* 1246) and Roughbirchworth (*Birchewurth*, *Byrchewurth*, *Bircheworth*(*e*) 1246) suggest a birch specific compounded with generic OE *worð*, 'birch enclosure'. The affixes Ing- from ON *eng* 'meadow' (*Hingbirchew*(*o*)*rth* 1326) and OE adj. *rūh* 'rough' or OE *rūhet* 'piece of rough ground' (*Roygh Bircheworth* 1299, *Routh Bircheworth* 1402) were given to distinguish these settlements (PNYW i 330; 335), which lie approximately 6 km apart.

The earliest attestations of Brigstock Nth (*Bricstoc* 1086, *Brichestoch* 1095–1100) begin *Bri-* and imply an etymology from OE *brycg* and *stoc*, 'bridge settlement'; however, there are two thirteenth-century forms spelt *Bir-* (*Birckestoc'* 1226, *Berkestok'* 1245) that could suggest a *birce* etymology with early r-metathesis. This is supported by examples of <bric> spellings in other *birce* major names (see 2.17.1: Birch Ess; 2.17.3: Bircholt Hundred K). The generic OE *stocc* is also a possibility, perhaps giving the meaning 'birch stump'.

2.17.3 *birce as* the specific in a topographical generic:

There are five major names with *birce* as the specific in a topographical compound, four of which appear to refer to birch woodland. Bircholt Hunded K (*Biricholte* 993 for 996(14th) S877; *Berisovt*, *Beriscolt* 1086; *Bilesold*, *Bilissold* 1086; *Belissolt*, *Belicolt* 1086; *Briceode* 1086; *Brichholt* 1087; *Birichalt* c.1090) is the most southerly

birch major name and has a variety of spellings the earliest indicative of OE *birce-holt* 'birch wood' (Cullen 1997, 140). The many DB forms can be attributed to Norman attempts to copy the name (Anderson 1939b 138), with some form showing r-metathesis. A medieval field name in Cheshire also displays this compound: *Bircholt* 1286 (PNCh i 79).

Birchanger Ess has several spellings in DB (*Bilichangrā* 1086, *Blichangram, Becangrā* 1086), which are somewhat obscure and show 'considerable French influence' (PNEss 518). Later forms (*Birecengre* 1123, *Birich*(*e*)*angr*(*e*) c.1160, *Bireghangre* 1163) support an etymology from OE *birce-hangra*, 'birch-covered wooded slope' (Watts 2004, 59). Despite the similarities with early attestations of Barking ((*in*) *monasterio Bericinensi* c.735; (*in*) *Berecingum* c.735(1000); *Berekingum* 1198), which likely has a folk-name etymology (see 2.16: *beorc*), the woodland generic in Birchanger is more suggestive of a birch specific, for although OE *hangra* does compound with pers.ns, it is particularly recurrent in compound with tree-species elements (LPN 231–2).

Birchover Db (*Barcovere* 1086, *Birchehoure* 12th) appears to have indicated a 'birch covered slope, or ridge', deriving from the OE compound *birce-ofer*. PNDb (i 45) notes that the thirteenth century attestation *Birchenouere* 1269 displays variation with the adj. **bircen* and Watts (2004, 59) suggests the DB spelling shows an alternative form with OE *beorc*, although this could be the result of AN spelling (see 2.17.2: Bithorp Li and Ingbirchworth YW). Birchover lies at the base of Stanton Moor, an area heavily populated by silver birch in the present day, which although not diagnostic of medieval birch, does prove that this is a landscape favourable for birch-tree growth (*Fig.30*).

The twelfth century spelling of Birkwood (now Birkwood Hall) Li (*Birchewda* 12th, *Birkewude* 1210, *Birkewde* 1225) looks to be OE *birce-wudu*, 'birchwood', although later spellings may show the influence of ON *birki* (Cameron 1998, 15). Birkwood in Crofton YW (Birkewood, Byrkewood 1554) is a parallel minor-name example. Birkenhead Ch (*Bircheveth* 1190, *Birheuet* 1200, *Byrkeheveht* 1259, *Byrcheved* 1277) looks to originate from OE *birce-heafod*, 'birch headland', although spellings with medial *-n-* (*Byrchenid* 1277 *Birkenhed* 1278, *Birchened* 1325) imply alteration with the adj. **bircen* and Watts (2004, 59) observes that some forms show the influence of

the ON cognates *birki* and *hofuð*. Another example of this compound is Birchitt in Coal Aston Db (*Bircheved*, *Birchevid*, *Bircheuid* c.1200), again displaying possible ON influence in a later medieval attestation (*Byrkheued* 1330) (PNDb ii 198).



Figure 30: Silver birch on Stanton Moor, Derbyshire (J. Treacher, August 2019)

As a simplex place-name:

> Birch Ess ((*Parva*) *Bric*(*ce*)*iam* 1086) PNEss 362; Birch Sa (*Bircha* 1194–5) PNSa v 5–6; Much and Little Birch He (*Birche*(*s*) 1160×70–1535) Coplestone-Crow 2009, 42

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Birthorpe Li (*Berchetorp* 1086) Cameron 1998, 15 (**þorp**); Brigstock Nth (*Bricstoc* 1086) PNNth 158–9 (**stoc**); Ingbirchworth YW (*Berceuuorde* 1086) PNYW i 330 (**worð**); Roughbirchworth YW (*Bercewrde*, *Berceuuorde* 1086) PNYW i 335 (**worð**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Birchanger Ess (*Bilichangrā*, *Blichangram, Becangrā* 1086) PNEss 518 (**hangra**); Bircholt Hundred K (*Biricholte* 993 for 996(14th) S877) Cullen 1997, 140 (**holt**); Birchover Db (*Barcovere* 1086) PNDb i 45 (**ofer**); Birkenhead Ch (*Bircheveth* 1190) PNCh iv 313–4 (**hēafod**); Birkwood Hall Li (*Birchewda* (sic) 12th) Cameron 1998, 15 (**wudu**)

2.18 *bircel OE 'little birch-tree'

This word is unattested outside place-names, but VEPN (i 103) suggests it could be a diminutive form of OE **birce** (see 2.17) seen in some names in Cheshire and Derbyshire, including the major names Birtles Ch and Birchill Db (*Fig.27*).

2.18.1 **bircel* as a simplex name:

Birchill in Hassop Db is first attested in DB (*Berceles* 1086). This and other early forms suggest origin from **bircel* (*Birchelis*, *Byrchelis*, *Byrcheles* c.1260; *Berchelis* 1275; *Birchil*(*i*)*s*, *Byrchil*(*i*)*s* late13th), while later medieval spellings demonstrate confusion with *hyll* (ME *hīl*) (*Birchull* 1276, *Berchul* Ed1, *Byrchyll* 1550) (PNDb i 110). Similar can be seen for Birtles Ch, that Ekwall (1960, 45) glosses as OE *birce-hyll*, 'birch hill', but which has early forms that again appear more indicative of **bircel* (*Bircheles* 12th, *Birtles* 1235, *Byrchlis* 1240, *Birchel'* 1289). Birchill Farm (*le litle Brichells*, *Parva Brychells*, *le Greate Brichells* 1538; *Burch Hill* 1827: PNLi vii 54) is a minor name in Fiskerton Li that provides another example of this probable later confusion. An anomalous thirteenth-century form of Birtles (*Birchelegh* 1289) looks to be a compound of either *birce-lēah* or a false singular of *birce-lǣs* but is more likely an incorrect expansion of **bircel* (PNCh i 72). The oak-related name Acton (*Acton* 1352) in Alderley parish Ch is less than 1km north of Birtles Hall and the proximity of these names suggest the area may have supported birch-oak woodland (see 2.16.2 discussion of Birklands).

As a simplex name:

Birchill Db (*Berceles* 1086) PNDb i 110; Birtles Ch (*Bircheles* 12th) PNCh i 72

2.19 *bircen OE adj. ‘birchen, growing with birch-trees’

Derived from OE **birce** (see 2.17), this is an adjective that is unattested in the early medieval period outside of place-names and first appears in literature from the fifteenth century (MED: birchen, adj.), where it indicated a place ‘covered with birch trees’, perhaps a ‘birch copse’. It appears to alternate with *birce* in some forms of Birkenhead Ch (*Byrchenid* 1277, *Birkenhed* 1278, *Birchened* 1325) and is recurrent in minor names with topographical generics, especially those indicating woodland (VEPN i 104). See 2.5 **æcen** for discussion of similar adjectival construction (also 2.11 **æscen**; 2.44 ***hæslen**; 2.55 **linden**; 2.59 ***peren**).

2.19.1 **bircen* as a simplex name:

The only **bircen* major name attested by 1200 is simplex Birkin YW (*Fig.27*), which is first attested in the eleventh century (*Byrcene* 1030; *Berchi*(*n*)*ge*, *Berchine* 1086). VEPN (i 104) notes that this adjective appears to have been used elliptically in simplex names to indicate a ‘place growing with birch’. PNYW (iv 16–17) suggests the occasional *-ing-* forms are analogical (*Berchi*(*n*)*ge* 1086, *Byrkinga* 1160), the result of scribes interpreting this name as a more common *-ing* form; however, Watts (2004, 59) proposes alternation with a possible **bircing*, which could parallel the plant-name Clavering Ess (*Clæfring* c.1050(12th)) that PNEss (548) suggests is an *ing*-derivative of OE *clæfre*, ‘place where clover grows’. Forms with /k/ likely show the influence of ON *birki* on the regional dialect (*Birkine*, *Bikyne* 1160; *Birkin*, *Birkyn* 1175; *Birekin*’ 1210), as perhaps do some <ch> forms (*Berchi*(*n*)*ge*, *Berchine* 1086). Birkin sits above the floodplain of the River Aire, on an area of acidic sand-based soil that suits the geological preferences of birch woodland.

As a simplex name:

Birkin YW (*Byrcene* 1030) PNYW iv 16–17

2.20 *blæc-þorn OE m. ‘blackthorn, i.e., sloe’

Early medieval charter bounds provide examples of **blæc-þorn* in phrases like *þane blake þornen* ‘the black thorns’ at Cheselbourne Do (S485) and *usque Blake thorne*

'to black thorn' at Brokenborough W (S1577).[30] There is also evidence of its use in early medieval place-names (see 2.20.1); however, there is no true compound form in OE where the adj. *blæc* 'black' is not inflected (VEPN i 112). There are also forms with **þyrne** 'thorn-bush' (see 2.73) in OE charter bounds, but again these have an inflected adjective (VEPN i 113): *blacan ðyrnan* 'black thorn-bush' at Evesham Wo (S1599) and Aspley Guise Bd (S772) and the *blace þyrnan* 'black/bright thorn-bush' at Ducklington O (S678).

In OE the blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) was perhaps more commonly referred to as **slāh** 'sloe' (see 2.70), or simply as **þorn** 'thorn' (see 2.72). It is not until the fourteenth century that the fully-compounded name blackthorn appears in literature and place-names: a plant glossary of c.1325 glosses Lat. *spina nigra* as *anglice blacthorn* (OED: blackthorn, n.1) and the field-name *Blackthornemedowe* Gl is recorded in 1436. Use of *blæc* was possibly reference to the dark coloured branches of *Prunus spinosa*, which contrast its white blossom in late spring, or perhaps a recognition of the dark colour of ripe sloes (*Fig.31*). Comparable meanings can be found in post-classical Lat. *spina nigra*, AN *neire espine*, and MFr *épine noire* (OED: blackthorn, n.1).

There is only one major name with a probable **blæc-þorn* etymology, for although the parish name Blatherwycke Nth (*Blarewic*(*he*) 1086, *Blatherwyk* 12th, *Blaerwich* 1166) may be a much-reduced form of **blæc-þorn* (Ekwall 1960, 48), early attestations appear more supportive of an etymology from the OE plant-name *blǣdre* and *wīc*, 'bladder (plant) farm', (PNNth 156, Watts 2004, 64).

2.20.1 As the compound **blæc-þorn*:

Blackthorn O is first attested in the twelfth century with forms displaying medial *-e-*, likely a reflex of the OE adjectival inflection (*Blaketorn* 1190, *Blachetorn* 1192). Later attestations show possible influence from OE *þyrne* or ME *thurn* on the generic element (*Blakehurne* 1272, *Blakeburn* 1285). Blaythorn Wo (*Blakethorne* 1255) is the only other early settlement name with a potential **blæc-þorn* etymology, once again an inflected compound and VEPN (i 113) records some medieval field-names that

[30] The former appears to be a genuine OE charter (eSawyer), but the latter, while based on genuine OE material, is a reworking in Latin (LangScape: S1577) and may thus not be representative of unaltered OE spelling.

demonstrate the same grammatical structure (*Blakethorn* 13th Db, *les Blakethornes* 1333 Db).



Figure 31: A blackthorn thicket growing with sloes, Cornwall (J. Treacher, August 2018). While the tree itself is not remarkable, a crop of ripe purple sloes is certainly a notable feature.

As the compound ***blæc-þorn**:

Blackthorn O (*Blaketorn* 1190) PNO i 167

2.21 bōc OE f. 'beech'

A word that derives from Germanic **bokā*, it appears occasionally in OE glossaries with Lat. *aesculus* 'a beech or type of oak' (DOE: bōc, n.2.), but primarily as a gloss for Lat. *fagus*, cognate with Greek *fagos* 'tree with eatable fruit', a word related to the verb *fagein* 'to eat' (OED: beech, n.: etymology). The fruit of beech and oak-trees was

an invaluable resource in early medieval England, primarily for pannage. Early medieval Welsh law codes valued the compensation for beech as equal to that of oak, costing 'six score pence – more than any other ordinary tree' (Hooke 2010, 260).

Bōc is rarely attested independently after the twelfth century (VEPN i 118) and is usually only found in ME compounds, such as *bok appuls* and *bukmast* (MED: bo̧k-, n.2); however, the alternative OE form **bēce** 'beech' (see 2.15), which became ME *beche* (MED: be̯che, n.), is common outside place-names throughout the medieval period and developed to become ModE beech. Although these forms apparently evolved separately and were in contemporary use, it is rare to see them used interchangeably: early attestations of the parish name Bookham Sr provide an onomastic example (*Bocham* 933(13th) S420, *Bocheham* 1086, *Becheham* 1165).

There are 13 possible beech-tree major names attested by the end of the twelfth century that have the specific *bōc*, but as this element can be easily confused with the identically spelt OE *bōc* 'book', and in some areas with OE *box* 'box-tree', there is a degree of uncertainty in identifying these names. This uncertainty is more pronounced for beech than for any other species in this corpus, so beech names (see also 2.15: *bēce*) are primarily categorised as probable, relatively secure, and ambiguous, and then by whether they are habitative or topographical. *Figure 30* demonstrates the distribution of possible beech major names in England, with the inclusion of Rackham's (2003, 319) natural climatic limit of beech-tree growth, expressed as the area 'south and east of a line from Weymouth to Swansea to King's Lynn'. This natural limit, which Rackham acknowledges may have included some exceptions (see 2.15: *bēce*), also contributes to the process of accurately identifying beech-tree major names.

2.21.1 Probable *bōc* 'beech' names

2.21.1.1 *bōc* as the specific in a habitative compound:

The tenth- and eleventh-century forms of Bookham Sr (*Bocham* 933(13th) S420, 967(13th) S752,1062(13th) S1035; *Bocheham* 1086) suggest the OE compound *bōc-hām*, 'beech village/settlement'. The twelfth-century form *Becheham* 1165 appears to show interchange with the alternative beech element *bēce* **(**VEPN i 118). Formally, the generic could also be OE *hamm*, but the topography of the area is not immediately supportive of this. Bookham appears originally to have been one estate,

but by DB is recorded as two, both known as *Bocheham* but listed as separate manors, that became the parishes of Great Bookham (*Magna Bukham* 1255) and Little Bookham (*Parva Bokham* 1255) (Malden 1911, 335). The modern parish of Great Bookham straddles London clay lowlands to the north and the chalk escarpment of the North Downs to the south, where Peterken (1993, 156) notes that 'well-defined concentrations of beechwoods occur', suggesting that the area may long have been the natural habitat of established beechwood.

Bockhampton Fm in Lambourn parish Brk (*Bochentone* 1086, (*on*) *Bokhamtoune* c.1090, *Bochamton'* 1180) has early forms that suggest the compound OE *bōc-hām-tūn*, which PNBrk (ii 334–5) glosses as 'village by the beech-tree', with *hām-tūn* possibly intended to be understood as 'farm dependent on a great manor' in early reference to Lambourn (PNBrk iii 831). The site of the medieval village of Bockhampton is south of Lambourn (SU 33399 78191) beside the River Lambourn. The chalk-based alkaline-loam soil of this area supports the popular association of beech with calcareous soil, although beechwood is found on a wide variety of soils (Peterken 1993 156–7). On Bockhampton Down to the east of Lambourn there are minor names that potentially indicate the presence of beech in the modern landscape: these are Beechdown Farm (OS 2022: SU 34424 79830) and The Beeches (OS 1970s: SU 33919 80780).

2.21.1.2 *bōc* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Buckhurst Hill Ess is first recorded in the twelfth century ((*la*) *Bocherst*(*e*) 1135) and looks to derive from OE *bōc-hyrst*, 'beech-wooded hill'. The enduring presence of beech in this area of Epping Forest is supported by two other beech place-names: High Beach (*Highbeach-green* 1670) less than 4 kms south and Beech Hill Park (*Bochel*, *Bochelhille* 1108–18) just over 5 kms south. A legacy of beech management in this part of Epping Forest can be seen near the Field Studies Centre at High Beach, where the woodland is populated by ancient beech pollards (*Fig.25*).

Early spellings of Buckholt Ha (*Bocolt* 1086, *Bocholte* 1231) suggest the OE compound *bōc-holt*, 'beech single-species woodland'. Buckholt is 'an extinguished manor in the New Forest' (Coates 1989, 43) and the name survives in Buckholt Farm west of Broughton parish Ha. Beech tends to be the dominant species where it grows. This could be the product of management (Rackham 2010, 283), but may also be due

to its dense canopy, which creates a hostile environment for other less shade-tolerant species. This characteristic means that beech is well suited to form single-species woodland. The compound *bōc-holt* is recurrent: LPN (233) records five *bōc-holt* place-names in Gloucestershire, Hampshire, and Sussex. Hooke (2010, 261) notes that the minor name Buckholt Sx (*Boc*(*c*)*holte*, *Bokholte* 1121) was given to a wooded region to the east of the Weald, again in an area that was later identified as established forest land. An eighth-century charter (S125) grants the right at Buckholt in Blean K to *timber geweorc* 'timber work' and *uuidigunge* 'the right to cut timber in a wood' (BosworthToller: wudung).[31] Another example is Buckholt Wood Gl ((*la*) *Bocholt*(*a*) 1121–1413, (*la*) *Bokeholt*(*e*) 1148–79), which Peterken (1993, 160) includes under his beechwood sub-type: '8Cb - Moist wych elm', a variant of Calcareous pedunculate oak–ash–beechwood, which is a rare woodland type recorded only in Gloucestershire, Surrey, Oxfordshire, and Hampshire and perhaps provides a contemporary example of how the beechwood at Buckholt Ha may once have looked.

2.21.2 Relatively secure *bōc* 'beech' names

2.21.2.1 *bōc* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are three major names in the east of England that could be the product of the OE compound *bōc-stede*, 'beech place'; however, due to potential confusion in early forms and the formal possibility of origin from OE *box* 'box-tree', these cannot be identified as diagnostic beech-tree names. Buxted Sx is first attested in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with spellings that suggest the specific *box* (*Boxted'* 1199, *Boxstude* 1210), yet other medieval forms preserve medial *-c-* and *-k-* (*Bocsted*(*e*) 1230, *Buksted*(*e*), *Bucsted*(*e*) 1305). Coates (1999, 32) proposes that this is a beech-tree name, as the inconsistent forms are more favourable for beech and the sandstone and clay geology of the site is not typical of box sites, which are classically found on limestone and chalk (see 2.22 **box**).

Boxted Ess is first attested in DB (*Bocchesteda*, *Bucchesteda* 1086) and does not have forms with *-x-* until the thirteenth century (*Boxsted*(*e*) 1219). Coates (1999, 26) has some linguistic misgivings about the forms with a vowel between *c*/*k* and *s*

[31] Hooke (2011, 155 f.n.48) notes that this may be a fabricated charter, perhaps based on an earlier example granting rights in the same woodland area (S123).

(*Bucchesteda* 1086, *Bockestide* 1297), which according to Ekwall (1960, 56) could be the result of the OE compound *bōc-hamstede*, 'homestead among beeches'. The clay and sand-loam soil at this site would provide good conditions for beech-tree growth and are not indicative of typical box sites, so although a *box* specific cannot be entirely ruled out, a beech etymology is perhaps more likely.

Boxted Sf is also first attested in DB (*Boesteda* 1086), but this is probably a corrupt form; from the twelfth century it is spelt with both *-c-* and *-x-* (*Bocsted*(*e*) 1154–1280, *Boxstede*(*e*) 1190–1568, *Bocstede* c.1190(c.1265), *Bocsted'* 1221). The natural limit of beech, according to Rackham (2003, 319) does include Suffolk, although it is worth noting that Peterken (1993, 156–62) does not record any natural beechwood sites in Suffolk and only one in the north of Essex. If this was indeed a place named for its beech-trees, then perhaps beech was a relatively uncommon tree and thus worthy of note. Boxford Sf (*Boxforde* c.1190(c.1265), *Boxford'* 1204) is 17 km to the south-east (see 2.22.2: *box*) and the influence of this name could explain the medieval (and modern) forms spelt *Box-*.

2.21.3 Ambiguous *bōc* 'beech' names

2.21.3.1 *bōc* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Bockhampton Do ((*æt*) *Buchæmatune* 1002–12, *Bochehamtone* 1086) appears to have a different etymology from the above discussed Bockhamtpon Brk (see 2.21.1.1). The earliest recorded form of the name suggests the specific element derives from a previous place-name, *Bōchǣme* – from *bōc* and gen. pl. *hǣma*, 'dwellers by the beech-trees' – and generic *tūn*, 'farm of the *Bōchǣme*' (PNDo i 367; Watts 2004, 67). It is possible, however, that *Bōchǣme* was an abbreviated form of an older place-name like *Bocland*, from OE *boc-land*, 'land granted by charter' (PNDo i 367); Ekwall (1960, 50) notes that 'elliptical formations like *Bōc-hǣme* from *Bōcland* are common in OE'.

2.21.3.1.1 *bōc-tūn*:

There are four Boughton major names, which cannot be identified as beech names with certainty. They have the specific OE *bōc*, meaning either 'beech' or 'book'. VEPN (i 119) notes that the compound *bōc-land* may be a literary counterpoint for

place-names where *bōc* is combined with other words indicating an area of land, as seen in the tenth century charter for land in Kent, which mentions *boc aceras*, 'book acres' (S1629), which when compounded with *tūn* could mean 'estate held by book', i.e. by written title (Watts 2004, 72). Past scholarship is divided, with Wallenberg (1934, 300–1) and Cullen (1997, 29) preferring 'book', EPNE (i 39) and Ekwall (1960 54–5) supportive of 'beech', and Gelling (1984, 222), VEPN (i 118 – 9), Watts (2004, 72), and Mills (2011, 68) undecided. The following assessment of the geology and location of these four settlements is more suggestive of an etymology from 'book', but 'beech' is still a formal possibility and is not ecologically impossible.

The most northerly of these is Great Boughton Ch, which is first attested in the eleventh century (*Bocstone* 1086; *Bochtunestan*, *Bocthon*(*a*), *Boghtona* 1096). Great Boughton is now part of the city of Chester, which means it is difficult to assess the geology and hydrology of the site. It sits beside the River Dee on moderately permeable loam-clay soil, that while not immediately identifiable as a beechwood habitat, does not rule out the possibility of beech growth. This settlement is too far north to be within what is thought to be the natural climatic limit of beech (*Fig.26*), although this does not mean that small outlying areas of beech did not exist naturally in the early medieval period (see introductory discussion above: 2.21).

There are three Boughton major names in Kent attested by the end of the twelfth century and another, Boughton Monchelsea, that is not recorded until the thirteenth century (*Bouton'* 1226, *Bo*(*c*)*ton'* 1242×3–1273), but which looks to be an identical compound. Boughton Aluph K is the earliest recorded of these names (*Boctun* 1013×20, *Boltune* (sic) 1086, *Boctune* c.1100), with forms that suggests a straightforward *bōc-tūn* compound, but as with the earliest attestations of Boughton Malherbe K (*Boltone* 1086, *Boctun*(*e*) 1100–1199) and Boughton under Blean K (*Boltun*(*e*) (sic) 1086, *Bocton*(') 1226–78), the DB spelling appears to be corrupt. Subsequent attestations of all three names again have medial *-c-*, confirming a specific with *bōc*, although it is not formally possible to tell whether this was 'beech' or 'book'. Given the lack of parallel place-names in Kent that derive from a tree name and *tūn* it is perhaps more likely the four Kentish Boughtons referred to estates held by book (Wallenberg 1934, 301).

Beech was regularly pollarded in the medieval period, but although there are early records of beech coppice, it is generally acknowledged that beech does not coppice well, and this form of management is now uncommon (Peterken 1993, 157). Unlike oak and ash (see timber case-study: 3.5; 3.7), medieval sources rarely refer to beech as a timber tree and most records of its use are for fuel (Rackham 2003, 323). It was, however, an important wood-pasture species and provided a rich source of pannage for swine, a particularly important function of woodland in areas like the Kentish Weald (Hooke 2013, 109). Although they are not in the Weald, each of these possible *bōc-tūn* settlements appears to have had a relatively large provision of wood-pasture when valued in DB: woodland for 200 swine is recorded at Boughton Aluph, for 36 swine at Boughton Malherbe and for 45 swine at Boughton under Blean. The strongest evidence for beechwood at any of these locations is at Boughton under Blean, beside the Blean woods in north-east Kent. The Blean was once an 'acid sessile oak–beechwood' on heavy clay, but now supports almost pure chestnut coppice (*Castanea sativa*), a common naturalised successor of beech and oak woodland (Peterken 1993, 158).

Probable

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Bookham Sr (*Bocham* 933(13th)) PNSr 99 (**hām**); Bockhampton Fm Brk (*Bochentone* 1086) PNBrk ii 334–5 (**hām-tūn**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Buckholt Ha (*Bocolt* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 72 (**holt**); Buckhurst Hill Ess ((*la*) *Bocherst*(*e*) 1135) PNEss 53–4 (**hyrst**)

Relatively secure

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Boxted Ess (*Bocchesteda*, *Bucchesteda* 1086) PNEss 363 (**stede**); Boxted Sf (*Boesteda* 1086) Watts 2004, 75 (**stede**); Buxted Sx (*Boxted'* 1199) PNSx ii 389 (**stede**)

Ambiguous

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Bockhampton Do (*(æt) Buchæmatune* 1002–12) PNDo i 367 (**hǣme**, **tūn**)

With **tūn**:

Boughton Aluph K (*Boctun* 1013×20) Watts 2004, 72; Boughton Malherbe K (*Boltone* (sic) 1086) Watts 2004, 72; Boughton under Blean K (*Boltun*(*e*) (sic) 1086) Watts 2004, 72–3; Great Boughton Ch (*Bocstone* 1086) PNCh iv 123–4

2.22 box OE m. or n. 'box'

The following section on *box* (and 2.25 ***byxe**) names makes considerable use of the comprehensive paper on '*Box* in English place-names' by Richard Coates (1999). While Coates considers all names with a possible *box* or **byxe* element except those that appear to contain a word indicative of later plantation, this study, in keeping with the corpus parameters, will focus only on those major names attested by the end of the twelfth century. The aim here is to build on Coates' previous work on box-tree names and to consider them within the wider corpus of tree-species place-names.

OE *box* appears to be a borrowing from Latin *buxus*, *buxum*. There is similar, or shared, borrowing shown in other West Germanic languages (OHG *buhs*, MLG *bus*-, Middle Dutch *bus*-, *bux*-); however, unlike continental Germanic forms, the *o* of *box* could suggest later borrowing of a vulgar Latin form, with lowering of *u* to *o* (OED: box, n.1: etymology). *Box* is attested in early medieval English texts, mainly in glossaries, as Lat. *buxus*. There is a reference to *box* in the charter bounds of Ecchinswell estate Ha (S412) where there was a *wican æt þam boxe* 'farm at the box' (the location discussed by Coates (1999, 8–9)). There is also mention of a *readan bexean* 'red box' in the tenth-century bounds of Meon Ha (S283). It is strange that box (*Buxus sempervirens*) would be described as 'red' as it is an evergreen species with pale grey bark. This could instead be another reference to the *read lefan becan* 'red-leafed beech' also attested in the bounds of Meon Ha (S754) (see 2.15 **bēce**). The difficulty in distinguishing between written references to box and beech is paralleled in the Suffolk place-names Boxford (2.22.2) and Boxted (see 2.21.2.1 **bōc**).

Box is not a large or prominent tree but was likely a striking evergreen feature of the winter landscape. It was valued in medieval times for its timber, which is heavy and

even-textured, with a bone-like appearance well-suited for high-class wood carving (Johnson and More 2004, 358; Hooke 2010, 264). It is thought to be a native species in the south, on calcareous chalk and limestone soils (Johnson and More 2004, 358; Coates 1999, 15), which largely corresponds to the limited southerly distribution of box-related major names (*Fig.32*); however, as half of the 38 names in *box* and **byxe* assessed by Coates (1999, 37) are on non-calcareous soils, it was perhaps also an introduced species at some sites with a less favourable geology. Coates (1999, 39–41) establishes that there is a correlation between sites with a box place-name and evidence of Roman settlement. Over 60% of the locatable box place-names explored by Coates share a parish with at least one probable Roman settlement site, including four of the below discussed parish names: Box W is the site of four known Roman villas, Boxford Brk of two confirmed villa sites and a Roman road (RR41b), Boxley K has three suspected Roman sites, and Boxgrave Sx has one surmised villa. At box-named locations where the geology is supportive of native box, there was possible exploitation of a local natural resource, but where box is less likely to have existed naturally, it could imply the species was introduced in a Roman context.

2.22.1 *box* as a simplex name:

Box W (*Boczam* 1144; *la Boxe*, *Boxa* 1181; *la Bosse*; 1216; *Boxe juxta Ferlege* 1226) is an example of a south-westerly box-named site on Jurassic limestone. Coates (1999, 23) suggests that like the minor name Box in Minchinhampton Gl, which was attested as *La Boxe* in 1260, the twelfth-century form *la Boxe* 1182, does not necessarily indicate that a singular tree should be inferred; instead this was probably a site of calcareous box woodland. This collective use of *box* may be paralleled in the charter reference to *wican æt þam boxe* (S412), which could have been a farm with a single box-tree but was perhaps instead a farm with box woodland. This collective use of singular tree-names is seen also for other species (see also 2.1.1 **āc**: Noke O; 2.67.1 **sealh**: Sale Ch; 2.69.1 ***sele**: Seal K).

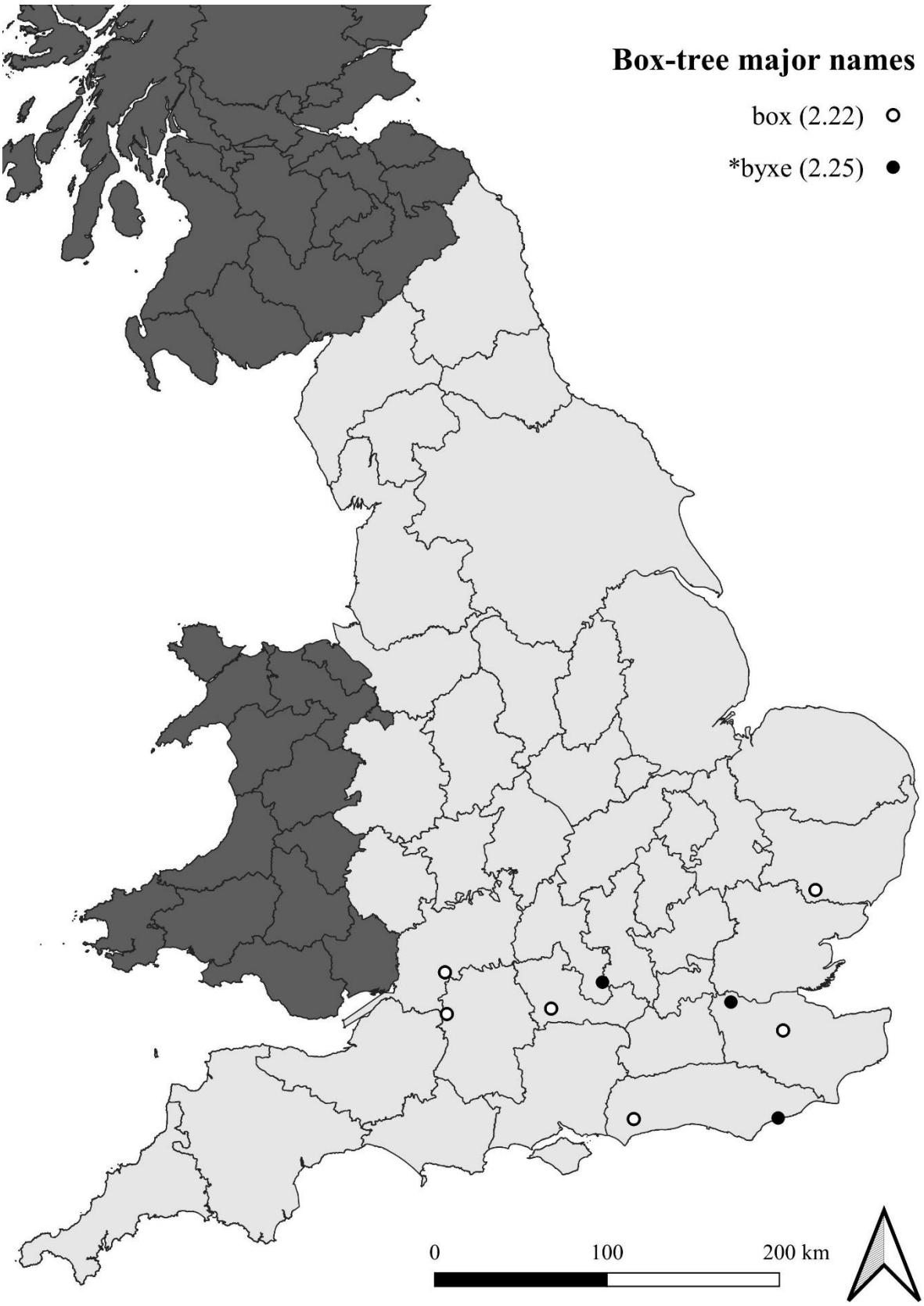


Figure 32: The distribution of potential *box* and **byxe* major names attested by 1200

2.22.2 *box* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Boxwell Gl (*Box*(*e*)*well*(*e*), *Box*(*e*)*wella* 1086; *Bocswelle* 1210) is situated on Jurassic limestone, which is well-suited to box growth and in 1954 it was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest as it is believed to be one of only three locations where box is a dominant native species (Boxwell SSSI). PNGl (iii 25) suggests this name meant 'box stream' and notes that in the 1960s 'the stream gush[ed] out from the rocks into a small valley where box-trees still flourish'; however, in The Box Wood (*the Boxeleaze* 1625) there is a water source called St Mary's Well after the neighbouring parish church (1880s OS: ST 81635 92628), which could mean this was instead a place known as the 'box well/spring'.

A similar woodland site may have been observable at Boxgrove Sx, the early forms of which suggest the OE compound *box*-*grāf*(*a*), 'box grove' (*Bosgrave* 1086, *Boxgrave* 1225, *Boxgrove* 1337), the generic indicating an area of lighter woodland growing with box. This is a rare example of a tree-species major name with a *grāf*(*a*) generic (see also Thorngrave Hundred W and Thorngrafton Nb: 2.72.4 **þorn**-*grāf*). Boxgrove was the name of the parish but also the hundred in DB (PNSx 66), which later came to be known as Box and Stockbridge Hundred (*Boxebrugg et Stok*, and *Boxe et Stocckebregg* 1279). Box is evidenced at this site in the records of Boxgrove Priory which state *dicitur ex ligno viridi Boxgravia digno* 'it is appropriately called Boxgrove from its [ever]green wood' and in 1105 Robert de Haye granted the tithe of his woods at Boxgrove to the abbey of Lessay in Normandy, which could suggest there was an unusual significance or value to the woodland here, perhaps as a source of box wood (Coates 1999, 28–9). It is not clear exactly where in the parish the 'box grove' lay, but the chalk bedrock in the north is the most likely location for native box growth. Coates (1999, 30) attempts to identify the site of the meeting-place that gave rise to the hundred name and suggests *The Box Common Field*. He notes that this is unlikely to have supported native box growth on geological grounds; however, box could have been planted in the parish more widely than its natural distribution.

Boxford Brk (*Boxora* 871(1200) S183; (*æt*) *Boxoran*, (*to*) *Boxorran* 958(1240) S577; *Boxora* 968 S761) appears to derive from the OE compound *box*-*ōra*, 'box-hill slope', that shows later confusion with *worð* (*Boxworth* 1535) and *ford* (*Boxforth* 1517). The sloping topography and chalk bedrock at this site are supportive of the presence of

native box. Coates (1999, 18) suggests the value of box wood could explain why the estate was recorded in two surviving charters (S577, S761) and why it was 'important enough to be granted to a thegn free of all dues except the *trinodal necessitas*'. In DB Boxford was held by the abbey of St Mary at Abingdon and by Humphrey Visdeloup, for whom it provided an annual income taxable at 10 pounds and 8 pounds respectively. It does not appear to have been a large agricultural settlement and these tax rates are perhaps indicative of the value of the box woodland at this site.

Boxford Sf is attested from the twelfth century with what appears to be a transparent box etymology (*Boxforde* c.1190(c.1265), *Boxford'* 1204, *Bokesford* 1218); however, the geology is not indicative of native box growth, as the parish lies on clay-based soils on alluvium gravel and sand. There is another Box- name 17 km to the north-west, Boxted Sf (*Bocsted*(*e*) 1154–1280, *Bocstede* c.1190(c.1265), *Bocsted'* 1221, *Boxstede* 1236), which has recurrent early forms that indicate the compound *bōc-stede*, 'beech place' (see 2.21.2.1), but some ME spellings with *box* that could be due to the influence of the nearby Boxford. Beech woodland is not common in eastern England but neither it appears is box woodland (Rackham 2003, 63), so the local ecological characteristics are not helpful in clarifying which species these names represented.

2.22.2.1 *box-lēah*

Early forms of Boxley K (*Boxlea*, *Boxelei* c.1100; *Boxle* 1100–35; *Boxley*(e), *Boxlega* 1100×7) suggest the compound OE *box-lēah*, 'box open woodland'. Boxley lies on the chalk ridgeway of the North Downs and Coates (1999, 8) observes that box has been recorded in the parish from the seventeenth century. The open woodland aspect of this site may have been favourable for box growth as this is a species that is tolerant of overshading but grows slowly, and Coates (1999, 15) suggests 'it is probable that full treehood (say twenty feet or more), and therefore worthiness for major lathework, can best be attained in locations where it is not overtopped by other trees'.

As a simplex name:

Box W (*Boczam* 1144) PNW 82

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Boxford Brk (*Boxora* 871(1200) S183) PNBrk 133 (**ford**); Boxford Sf (*Boxforde* c.1190(c.1265)) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 17 (**ford**); Boxgrove Sx (*Bosgrave* 1086) PNSx 66 (**grǣfe**); Boxwell Gl (*Box*(*e*)*well*(*e*), *Box*(*e*)*wella* 1086) PNGl iii 25 (**wella**)

With **lēah**:

> Boxley K (*Boxlea*, *Boxelei* c.1100) Wallenberg 1934, 133

2.23 brōm OE m. 'broom'

Germanic cognates, such as OHG *brâmo*, appear to have referred to thorny shrubs like gorse and bramble (OED: broom, n.1: etymology), but OE *brōm* was used of common broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), which is the only broom species native to Britain, and which has no thorns. This can be surmised from attestations of *brōm* in OE glossaries where it glosses Lat. *genista* (DOE: brōm, n.1), the name of the broom genus. Hooke (2010, 267) observes that *brōm* is frequently found in pre-Conquest charters (21 times) and LangScape records 16 charters that detail the bounds of 12 estates where *brōm* is mentioned as a topographical landmark. Although recurrent in charters it is more common in place-names, with 72 possible *brōm* major names attested by 1200 (*Fig.33*).

Names with *brōm* often display a complicated phonological development and have a wide variety of outcomes in their medieval and modern forms. *Brōm* is a possible etymon with medieval or modern forms in *Bram*-. This is the result of early shortening of *ō*, which before the nasal consonant became *a* in most ME dialects (PNYW vii 87; Jordan 1974, 50; Kristensson 1987, 73), as seen for Brandon Sf (*Bromdune* c.972, *Brandune* 1042×66(12th) S1051) and West Bromwich St (*Bromwic* 1086, *Bramwic* 1152). There may also have been influence from ME *brāme* 'briar, bramble', attested in literature from the fifteenth century (MED: brāme, n.1), a possible borrowing from Low German that may have influenced ME forms of *brōm* names (EPNE i 47; VEPN ii 42). Kristensson (1995, 51) notes that *ō* was sometimes also spelt *u*, which could explain alternation with early forms in *Brun*-: see Bramcote Nt (*Brunecote*, *Bruncote* 1086), Brumstead Nf (*Brumestada*, *Brunestada* 1086), Bromfield Sa (*Brunfelde* 1086), and Bramfield Sf (*Brunfelda* 1086). There are also

medieval spellings with *Brem-* that could be due to the OE adj. **bremen* 'growing with broom', or OE *brēmel* 'bramble' (VEPN ii 42), the influence of which is seen in medieval spellings of Bramshaw Ha (*Bremblessath* 1212, *Brambelshagh* 1272). EPNE (i 52) observes that *Brom-* forms are more common in the West Midlands 'where *o* before a nasal was usually kept' and there is indeed a denser concentration of *Brom-* major names in this region (*Fig.34*); however, *Brom-* forms are not exclusive to the West Midlands and it would be interesting to see if there is still a West Midlands bias in the distribution of *Brom-* names if minor names were to be included. Where there is interchange between spellings with *-m-* and *-n-*, it is possible that some of these names could preserve the OE pers.n. *Bruna* (PASE: *Brun*), but given their frequency and common association with heathland, broom seems the more likely etymology in most cases.

Broom is a species that prefers well-draining acidic sand and gravel soils (…) and is a notable feature of open landscapes, with bright yellow blossom that generally flowers between April and June (Blamey and Grey-Wilson 1989, 200) and its green branches give it an evergreen appearance, which would have made it distinctive even in the winter months. *Brōm* is most frequently found in compound with OE *tūn* 'farm, village' (2.23.3.1), OE *feld* 'open land' (2.23.4), and OE *dūn* 'hill' (2.23.4). The collocation with *feld* can probably be explained by the preference of broom to grow in sunny locations where it is not overshaded by large trees: open land and exposed hillsides would provide these conditions. Broom is far more recurrent in place-names than the similar-looking common gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) (nine major names: see 2.35 **fyrs**, 2.38 **gorst**, 2.50 ***hvin**) – although both are members of the *Fabaceae* (pea) family – this is perhaps due to its lack of thorns, which would have made it a preferable species with which to interact, although it should be noted that confusion between these species could have occurred.

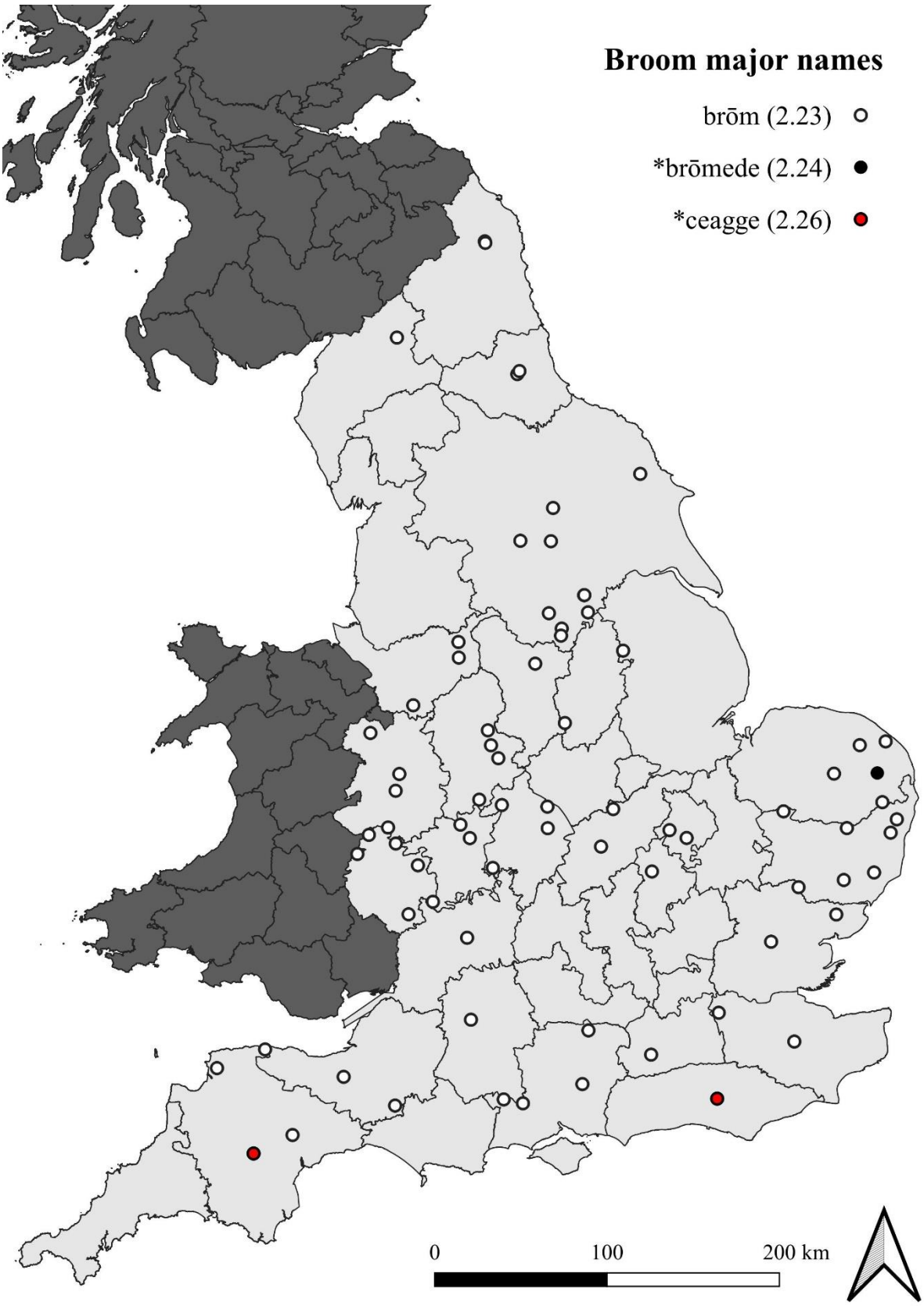


Figure 33: The distribution of broom major names attested by 1200

2.23.1 *brōm* as a simplex name:

There are seven simplex major names that derive from OE *brōm*: Brome Sf (*Brum*, *Brom* 1086), Broom Sa (*Bruma* 1086), Broom Wa (*Brome* 1086), Broome Nf (*Brom* 1086, 1087×98(12th)), and Broome Sa (*Brame* 1086) are all first attested in DB, while Broom Du (*Brom* 1153–95), and Broom Wo (*Brome* 1169) are first recorded in the twelfth century. As suggested by VEPN (i 43), it seems likely that *brōm* was here used in simplex form to refer to a 'place where broom grows'. Broom is a recognisable species, especially when in flower, and would have been a notable landscape feature.

2.23.2 *brōm* as the generic element:

There is only one example of *brōm* used as the generic element in major names attested by 1200, although VEPN (ii 44) records a probable ten later-attested and minor-name examples. The earliest attestations of Fallibroome Ch (*Falingbrome* 1153, *Fal*(*l*)*inbrome* 1246) suggest OE *felging* 'ploughed or fallow land' with generic *brōm*, probably indicating an area of fallow land growing with broom (PNCh i 197) or a broomy thicket associated with fallow land (Ekwall 1960, 173). Broom is a pioneer species of cleared land and is recurrent in compound with other elements that suggest an open or exposed landscape (see below: 2.23.4 *brōm-feld*, *brōm-dūn*; 2.23.4.1 *brōm-lēah*).

2.23.3 *brōm* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are 29 major names attested by 1200 that derive from the OE compound *brōm-tūn* (2.23.3.1) and nine habitative names with a generic element that is not *tūn*. Bramham YW (*Bram*(*e*)*ha'*, *Braham* 1086; *Brameham* 1119; *Bramham* 1147) and Bromham W (*Bromham*, *Brumham* 1086; *Bramham* 1168) are first attested in DB and have similar twelfth-century forms spelt *Bram-*. Bramham shows an earlier and sustained vowel change from /o/ to /a/, while Bromham displays more variation in its medieval forms. Both names probably derive from the OE compound *brōm-hām*, indicating a homestead or village where broom grew (PNW 254; PNYW iv 82; Watts 2004, 79, 92), although the parish church at Bramham sits in a river-bend, which could suggest a *hamm* etymology. The area known as Bramham Moor (2023 OS: SE 439 421) in Bramham parish suggests an open landscape, and the presence of whin (see 2.50 *hvin*), which favours the same ecological conditions as broom, can be seen

in the minor name Oglethorpe Whin Covert (1890s OS: SE 4426 4346). There is also open land at Bromham, which lies immediately south of Chittoe Heath and west of Sandridge Common, the latter correctly identifying the soil composition of this area as sand-rich and thus well-suited to broom. Bramham Bd (*Bruneham*, *Brimeham* 1086; *Bruham* 1164; *Bramham* 1228; *Brumham* 1262) has been identified as deriving from the OE gen. sg. *Brūnan*, 'Bruna's homestead' with later confusion with *brōm* and ME *brāme* (PNBd&Hu 28; Watts 2004, 92); however, the variation in spellings is consistent with other probable *brōm* names and this is perhaps more likely to be another *brōm-hām* compound.

Bromwich St (*Bromwic* 1086) is first attested in DB with /o/ but shows the typical later ME sound change to /a/ (*Bramwic* 1152, *Bramvic* 1203, *Bramwys* 1275). The affix, West, developed as a counterpart to Castle Bromwich Wa, which has an affix that refers to its twelfth-century motte and bailey (*Castelbromwic*, *Chastelbromwix* 13th, *Brumwyz Castel* 1262) (PNWa 40). The earliest form of this name (*Bramewice* 1168) with /a/ was perhaps influenced by twelfth century attestations of West Bromwich, but most subsequent forms suggest /o/ (*Bromwice* 1199, *Bromwyz* 1284, *Bromwych* 1292).

There are two major names that derive from the OE compound *brōm-cot*, 'cottages in the broom' (PNNt 140; Watts 2004, 78). These are Bramcote Nt (*Brunecote*, *Bruncote* 1086; *Bramcote* 1156; *Bromcote*, *Broncote* 1190) and Bramcote in Bulkington parish Wa (*Branc*(*h*)*ote* 1086, *Bramcota* c.1170, *Bromcote* 1208). Both show variation in the primary vowel and have spellings with *-m-* and with *-n-*. Bramcote Wa has a twelfth-century attestation that provides evidence of heathland belonging to the settlement (*Bramcotehethe* 12th): possibly the location at which broom was prevalent.

Brumstead Nf is first recorded in DB as *Brumestada*, *Brunestada* 1086. The preservation of various forms of this name can be seen in the modern OS spellings within this parish: Brumstead Common preserving *-m-* and Brunstead Hall and Brunstead Grange the alternative *-n-*. Later medieval attestations have both *-u-* and *-o-* forms (*Brumsted*(*e*) 1198, *Bromsted*(*e*) 1254), suggesting the compound *brōm-stede*, 'broom-covered place' (Ekwall 1960, 70). PNNf (ii 84–5) notes the identical minor name Brumstead Common Ess, once an open field in the parish of Hatfield Broad Oak.

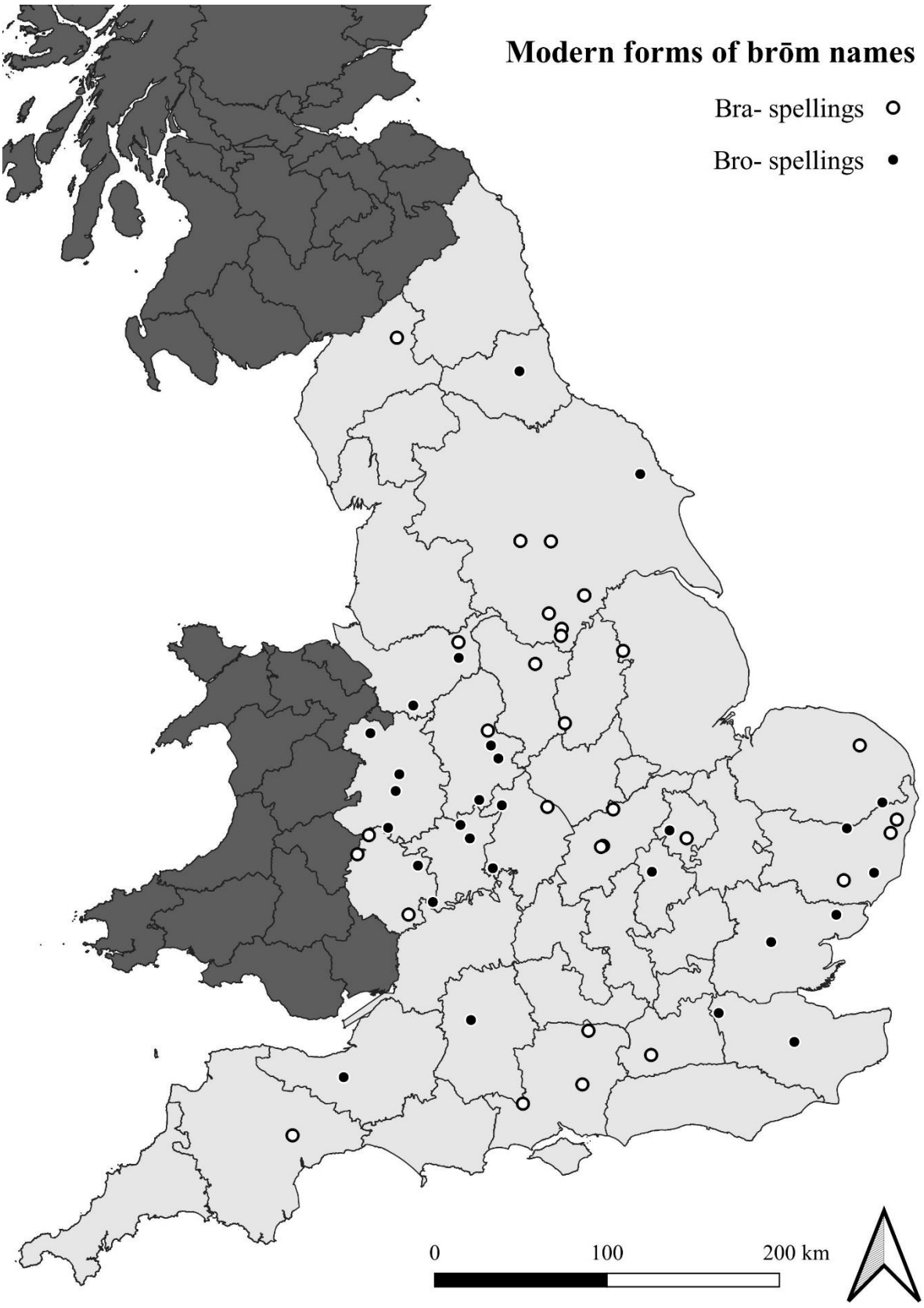


Figure 34: The distribution of *brōm* major names with modern forms spelt Bra- or Bro-

Bromyard He (*Bromgeard* 840×52(10th) S1270, *Brom*) and Bromsberrow Gl (2.23.4) are the earliest recorded broom major names, with attestations from the ninth and tenth centuries. Early forms of Bromyard suggest the OE compound *brōm-geard*, 'broom enclosure' (Ekwall 1960, 68; Watts 2004, 92), perhaps an indication of a broom hedge used to enclose land or animals. There is a comparable example of this compound in the minor name *Bromyardende* 1461, now Bromyard Forge in Aston parish Wa (PNWa 34).

2.23.3.1 *brom-tūn*

Except for Brampton Li (*Branthon* 1054) and Branton Nb (*Bremetonam* c.1135), all *brōm-tūn* major names are first attested in DB with *Bran-*, or *Brun-* spellings (Brompton YN: *Bruntun*(*e*) 1086; Little Brampton He: *Bruntune* 1086); none retains the /o/ vowel in the specific, but some show variation of the nasal consonant, like Brampton Cu (*Brantun*, *Brampton* 1086) and Brampton Sf (*Bramtuna*, *Brantuna* 1086). Although there are a variety of outcomes in medieval and subsequent modern spelllings – Branton Nb (*Brombton*, *Brampton* 14th), Branton YW (*Branton*(*e*), *Brantun*(*a*) 1086), Branton Green YW (*Brantun*(*e*), *Branton*(*e*), *Brantona* 1086; *Brampton*(*a*) 1089–1118), Braunton D (*Brampton*(*e*) 1157, *Brompton* 1226), Brompton Sa (*Brantone* 1121, *Bromptona* c.1140), Brompton YN (*Brunton* 1086, *Brompton*(*e*) 1285), Brympton So (*Brunetone* 1086, *Brimpton* 1264, *Bromton* 1331) – most *brōm-tūn* compounds are now spelt Brampton. Of these, only Brampton Sf (*Bromtune* 1199, *Brontun'* 1205), Brampton Abbots He (*Bromtun* 1242), and Church and Chapel Brampton Nth (*Bromton* 1215) have medieval *Brom-* forms. The *-p-* in modern Bramp- spellings is intrusive and expected between *m* and a dental consonant (PNNf iii 65).

Most *brōm-tūn* names in the south are spelt Brampton, with the exception of Brympton So and Braunton Hundred D (*Branton*(*a*) 1086). The development of the latter parallels that of Staunton names in Gloucestershire: Staunton in Botloe Hundred (*Stantun* 972(10th) S…, *Staunton* 1221), Staunton in St Briavels Hundred (*Stantun*(*e*) 12th, *Staunton*(*e*) 1221); Nottinghamshire (*Stantone* 1086, *Staunton* 1269); and Worcestershire (*Stantun* 972(c.1050), *Staunton* 1327), which derive from OE *stān-tūn* with early forms in *Stan-*, but through AN influence have become *Staun-* by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (PNGl ii 23). It has been suggested that the anomalous

Geld Roll forms *Branctone*, *Bractone* 1084 are either the result of a folk-etymological association with St Brannock's well in the parish of Braunton, or with a lost river name (Anderson 1939a, 75; PND i 32).

The recurrence of the compound *brōm-tūn* suggests there may have been some connection between *tūn*-type settlements and broom growth. In the medieval period broom was dried for use as domestic animal fodder (Hooke 2010, 267) and was a useful source of fuel, which could suggest these were settlements where broom was farmed as a resource. Alternatively, it is possible broom was cultivated as a living hedge to demarcate land or corral and protect livestock and the generic *tūn* may here have been intended primarily in the sense 'enclosure'. With its dense growth but lack of thorns, broom was likely preferred for creating hedges over spinier species like gorse or thorn. It could even have been used for a variety of purposes: as a means of enclosure but also as a ready source of fuel and fodder. As broom is a species that prefers well-draining, sandy, or light loam soils, it is unsurprising to observe that the soil composition at these sites is predominantly loam (47%) or sand-based (41%), with only Brampton Bierlow YW and Brampton en le Morthen YW situated on clay-rich soil.

2.23.4 *brōm* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are seven major names attested by 1200 that derive from the compound *brōm-feld*, which is independently attested in OE charter bounds (*bromfældas* S446) and ME literature (VEPN ii 43). *Feld* is also recurrent with specific elements indicating gorse, a species in the same family as broom and which grows in similar conditions. Of the eight major names with a gorse-element specific, three have the generic *feld* (2.35.1 *fyrs*: Fersfield Nf; 2.36.1 ***fyrsen**: Fressingfield Sf; 2.37.1 ***gorsiht**: Gosefeld Hundred Brk).

Bromfield Sa is the earliest recorded, with a mid-eleventh century attestation (*Bromfelde* 1060–1), while the six other examples are all first attested in DB. PNSa (i 60–1) suggests that *feld* is most often used 'to denote a contrast with adjacent woodland or with adjacent higher ground' and proposes that for Bromfield Sa the name may refer to land where the river valley broadens into Hereford Plain. At Brimfield He and Broomfield So (*Brunfelle* 1086) – as with Bramham YW and Bromham W (2.23.3) and Breamore Ha (see below) – there is unenclosed common

land, known as Brimfield Common and Broomfield Common respectively; while at Broomfield K (*Brunfelle* 1086) there is the minor name Scrub Wood (1890s OS TQ 8344 5184) and an adjacent settlement called Langley (*longanleag* 814 S173: Watts 2004, 360) with attached heathland known as Langley Heath.

Brimpsfield Gl is first recorded with forms spelt *Brim-* and *Brym-* (*Brimesfeld*(*e*), *Brymesfeld*(*e*) 1086). PNGl (i 144–5) suggests Brimpsfield could have the specific OE *brēmel* 'bramble' with early raising from *ē* to *ī* in OE and the substitution of *brōm* in some ME forms (*Bromesfeld* 1262, *Bromfeld* 1287), or as Watts (2004, 87) proposes, *Breme-* and *Brym-* spellings could indicate the OE pers.n. *Bremi* or **Brymi* (*Bremesfeld'* 1221, *Brymesfeud* 1227), which would give a satisfactory explanation of forms with gen. *-s*. There is such a wide variation in vowel outcomes that it is perhaps prudent not to make too much of these forms and instead to look at parallel examples. Brimfield He has early forms with *Brom-* (*Bromefeld,* 1086, *Bromesfeld'* 1141, *Bromfeld*(*e*) 1174–86), and later development of attestations with *Brim-* (*Brimfield* 1174–86); medieval forms of Brympton So have various vowel spellings (*Brunetone* 1086, *Brimpton* 1264, *Bromton* 1331); Bromfield Sa (*Bromfelds* 1060–1, *Brunfelde* 1086, *Brumefeld* 1154×89) is only 10 kms north-west of Brimfield He and has no medieval forms with medial *-i-* but is attested as *Brimfield* in 1826 (Coplestone-Crow 2009, 56); while Broomfield Ess (*Brumfeldam* 1086) also has a ME form spelt *Brimfeld*(*e*) 1224. Although there are alternative etymological possibilities for Brimpsfield, these comparable examples suggest it could be a *brōm* name, perhaps from gen. sg. *brōmes* (see Bromsberrow Gl and Bromeswell Sf below).

Breamore (*Brumore* 1086; *Brommore*, *Brummore* 1196–1332) derives from the OE compound *brōm-mōr*, 'broom moor'. A potential OE/ME adj. **bremen* 'broom-grown' could explain some of the later interchange of forms (*Bremmora* 1245, *Brymmore* 1299–c.1490), and Coates (1989, 40), citing a 1950s publication, notes that 'every parish in Hampshire whose name includes *brōm* or a relative has unenclosed common surviving today'. That unenclosed land still exists at Breamore despite the enclosure of surrounding parishes. The geology of Breamore parish and the ecology of broom makes it more likely to have been a dry 'broom moor' than a 'broom marsh', as the soil at the site is highly permeable, and broom grows best on well-draining light soils.

Bromswold, the name of a once large woodland district, is preserved in the parish names Leighton Bromswold Hu (*Bruneswald* 1169, *Brouneswald* 1268, *Leghton super Bromeswolde* 1287) and Newton Bromswold Nth (*Newton Bromsholde* 1605, *Newenton al. Newton Bromswolde* 1639), which lie approximately 15 kms apart (*Fig.35*). It is suggested to derive from the pers.n. *Brūn*, gen. sg. *Brūnes*, 'Brun's wold' (PNBd&Hu 246, PNNth 193–4, Watts 2004, 369); however, Gelling and Cole (LPN 256–7) observe that although the 1268 form of Leighton Bromswold supports an etymology from *Brūn*, other attestations do not, and it is 'doubtful whether a personal name is acceptable as the qualifier for the name of such a great forest'. Ultimately, they propose that a pre-English district name is the most likely origin. Yet considering the late attestation of this name and the typical vowel and consonant changes *brōm* names often underwent in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, OE *brōm* (gen. sg. *brōmes*) with *wald*, 'broom's wold' is also a possibility.

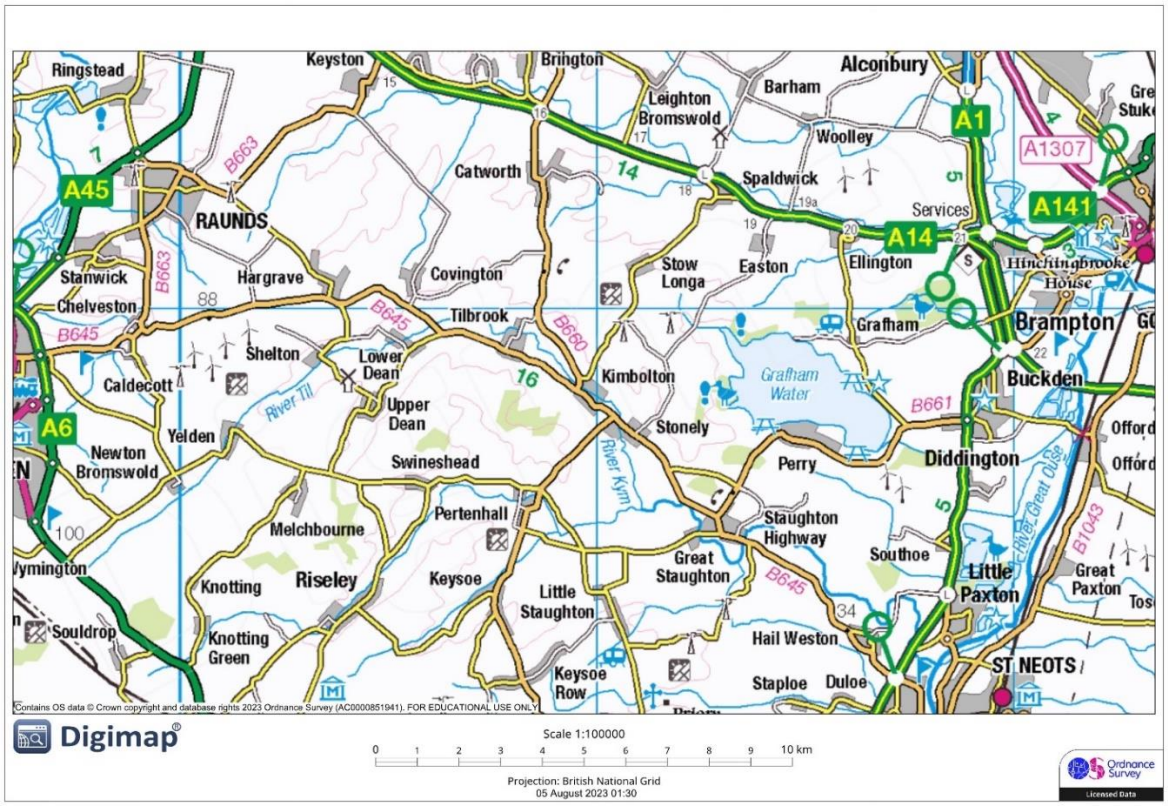


Figure 35: OS 2023 (1:250 000) map showing the district of Bromswold: with Leighton and Newton Bromswold, Brampton, Riseley, and Great Staughton (Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire)

Wald is an element that seems originally to have indicated a wooded landscape, but the meaning changed over time to 'open high ground', as the result of felling and clearing of these wooded areas (LPN 253). Broom is a common pioneer species of cleared ground and may have colonized the open landscape as trees were felled. Other broom and scrub-related place-names of the region attest to Anglo-Saxon recognition of an open woodland landscape. Leighton Bromswold is 10 kms north-west of Brampton Hu (*Brantune* 1086) and Newton Bromswold lies less than 5 kms north of Riseley Bd (*Riselai* 1086), a name that derives from OE *hrīs* or adj. **hrīsen* with *lēah*, probably indicating a place brushwood could be gathered (Watts 2004, 502). Clearance of this large, wooded area may be exemplified by the parish name Great Staughton (*Stoctun* 974×1016(11th) S1487), about 9 kms south of Newton Bromswold, possibly OE *stocc-tūn*, 'stock farm' (Watts 2004, 573), that was perhaps a site where coppice wood was processed (see 3.2: timber case-study). The minor woodland names Leighton Gorse (1880s OS TL 0947 7535) 1.5 kms west of Leighton Bromswold, and Newton Gorse (1900s OS TL 0022 6536) 450 metres south-east of St Peter's church at Newton Bromswold, provide later evidence of a scrub landscape suited to gorse and therefore also to broom.

There are 13 *brōm* major names with a generic that describes the topographical elevation of the area. Seven of these probably derive from the OE compound *brōm-dūn*, 'broom hill', which is also a compound recurrent in the five Brendon minor names in Devon[32] (PND i 58–9) and in early charter attestations for two *brom dune* sites at Corscombe Do (S975) and Ottery St Mary D (S1033).

The earliest attested major name example is Brandon Sf (*Bromdune* c.972, *Brandune* 1042×66(12th) S1051; *Brandona* c.1075) that has forms showing the development from *Brom-* to *Bran-*. Brandon Wa (*Brandune* 1086), Brandon Parva Nf (*Brandun* 1086), Brundon Ess (*Brandunā*, *Bramduna* 1086), and Brendon D (*Brandon*(*a*) 1086) are all first recorded in DB. PND (i 58–9) suggests the later-medieval forms of Brendon D spelt *Bra-* and *Bre-* (*Brandun*, *Bramdon*, *Bremdon*(*e*) 12th) may result from confusion with OE *brēmel* 'bramble' with early loss of medial *-l-*, which could

[32] Brendon in Buckland Brewer D (*Bremdon* 1281), Brendon in Halwill D (*Bremdon* 1330), Brendon in Pancrasweek D (*Brendon* 1333), Brendon in Sutcombe D (*Bremdon* 1330), Brendon Fm in Holsworthy D (Brendon, Breyndon 1314).

explain some of the vowel variation seen in other *brōm* names like Brandon Nb (*Bremdona* c.1150; *Braindune* (sic) c.1190; *Bremedon*, *Bramdon*, *Bromdun* 13th), although this could also be due to the influence of OE **bremen*, 'growing with broom' (Watts 2004, 80). Brandon Parva Nf has the Lat. affix *parva* 'little', but there is no surviving evidence of a 'Brandon Magna' (Watts 2004, 80). The *dūn* at Brandon Parva is an example of an uninhabited hill adjacent to a settlement (LPN 167). Barnham Broom – first attested *Bernham* 1086–1276 with the later addition of ModE *broom* (*Barnham Broom* 1838) – lies across the River Yare from Brandon and indicates the continued growth of broom in this area.

Brandon Nb and Brandon Du (*Braindune*, *Brandune Bromdune*, *Brandun* c.1190) are the two most northerly-situated *brōm* major names. There are obvious *dūn*-shaped hills at both sites – low-lying with fairly level and extensive summits (LPN 164) – although their geology differs. The soil composition at Brandon Nb is well-suited to broom, and like Branton Nb (2.23.3.1), lies adjacent to the Cheviot Hills. Brandon Du sits largely on clay-based soil, but it too abuts an exposed area of land known as Ushaw Moor. Except for Brandon Du, all *brōm-dūn* major names appear to have been situated on well-draining light soils, which, coupled with the sun-exposed hillside topography, would have provided excellent conditions for prolific broom growth.

The earliest attestations of Bromsberrow Gl (*Bremes burh*, *æt Bremes byrig* 910(11th)) could suggest an etymology from the OE pers.n. *Brēme* (gen. sg. *Brēmes*) and generic OE *beorg*; however, later medieval forms with *Brom-* are more indicative of gen. sg. *brōmes*, 'hill of broom' (*Bromesberg*(*a*), *Bromesberg*(*h*), *Bromesberegh* 1180; *Brommesberg*(*h*)*e* 1255; *Bromesburghe* 1279). This could be a pers.n. reinterpreted as a *brōm* name, but as PNGl (iii 166–7) observes, there are an abundance of local broom-related field-names — Broom's Green, Broomy Banks, Broomy Pauls — that support an etymology relating to the local flora. As with Bramham YW and Bromham W (2.23.3), there is exposed open land in this parish, known as Bromesberrow Heath, where the soil is sand-based and well-suited to broom growth.

Bramdean Ha is first recorded in copies of two tenth-century charters as *bromdene* 924(12th) (S283) and *bromdæne* 932(12th) (S417). These forms comprise the OE compound *brōm-denu*, 'broom valley' (Coates 1989, 39; Watts 2004, 78), with later ME shortening of the primary vowel (*Bramdene* 1436). Bramhope YW (*Bra*(*m*)*hop*

1086, *Bramehop*(*a*) 1154) is another 'broom valley' name from OE *brōm-hop*, an apparent reference to the small side-valley of Wharfedale (PNYW iv 195–6). Bramshall St (*Branselle* 1086 and later as *Brumeshel* 1195, *Bronsulf'* 1242 and *Bromschulf* 1327) has various medieval attestations that suggest specific *brōm* with generic OE *scelf*, 'broom-covered shelf' (Ekwall 1960, 60), although the <u> in the spellings of the generic element could also readily be interpreted as a reflex of *hyll* 'hill' in the WMids. This feature can be identified as the flat-topped hill with sand-gravel soil where the church sits (Horovitz 2005, 144).

Broomhall Ch (*Brunhala* 1086, *Bromhale* 1096) and Bramhall Ch (*Bramale* 1086) are *brōm-halh* names (PNCh i 258; iii 114). The *halh* of Bramhall may have referred to the shallow valley of Lady Brook, which lies between Bramhall and Bramhall Moor (1870s OS: SJ 9132 8692); while the *halh* at Broomhall was perhaps the small depression of land west of the River Weaver where there is an area of sand-based soil on glacial gravel. The adjacent place-names Sound Ch (*Sond* 1208) and Sound Heath Ch, from OE *sand* 'sand', i.e. 'sandy place', also indicate a geology well-suited to broom.

There are four *brōm* major names with a potential water-related generic element. Bramford Sf (*Bromford* in 1035×44(14th)) is the earliest attested and derives from OE *brōm-ford*, 'broom ford' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 19). Brampford Speke D (*Branfort*, *Branfortuna*, *Brenfort* 1086; *Bramford* 1194; *Bramford Spec* 1275) is possibly another *brōm-ford* with typical early vowel alternation; however, Watts (2004, 79) points out that this cannot account for the charter attestation *Brenteforlond* 944(14th) (S498) that is attributed to this settlement. There is some discussion as to the spuriousness of this charter (eSawyer) and its late copy date may call into question the accuracy of this early spelling of the name; it should therefore remain under consideration as a possible broom-related name. Broom does not grow well on waterlogged land, which perhaps explains the relative infrequency of this compound when compared with other broom names; however, Bramford and Bramford Speke both sit on sand gravel soils on the bank opposite the floodplain of their respective rivers.

Bromeswell Sf is (*Brammesuuella* c.1075(12th); *Bromeswella*, *Brameswella* 1086) derives either from OE *brōmes-wella* 'stream of broom', or OE *brōm-*swelle*, 'broom

hill' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 22). Bromeswell sits on well-draining sandy soil beside the River Deben, amidst a number of small streams and pools, so an etymology from *wella* is perhaps preferable on topographical grounds.

Bromham Bd has a topographical context that suggests a probable *hamm* etymology. LPN (48) proposes that although they have no early forms with *-hamm*, Bromham and other Bedfordshire names along the Ouse ending *-ham* were probably originally *hamm* sites. The settlement sits beside a deep meander in the River Great Ouse, suggesting the meaning 'land hemmed in by water' for *hamm*. The riparian environment of Bromham does resemble that of other more firmly identified *hamm* names that are compounded with references to vegetation, such as Barkham Brk ((*æt*) *Beorchamme* 932(16th) S559) and Farnham Sr ((*æt*) *Fearnhamme* 894 ASC). The soil in the river meander at Bromham is well-draining and sand-rich, suggesting a habitat suitable for broom. Alternative specific elements have been proposed, including the OE pers.n. *Bruna* (see PASE: *Brun*) from the forms *Bruneham* 1086 and *Brunham* 1276 (PNBd&Hu 28–9) and possible confusion in some forms (*Bramham* 1228) with potential ME **brame* 'bramble' (Watts 2004, 92), but the typical variation in early vowel forms and the favourable geology makes origin in *brōm* likely.

There are 11 possible major names where *brōm* is compounded with a woodland-related generic element. Bramshaw Ha has various medieval forms that look to derive from *brōm* (*Bramessage* 1086, *Brumesaghe* 1186), with later attestations showing the influence of OE *brēmel* (*Bremblessath* 1212, *Brambelshagh* 1272) (Coates 1989, 39; VEPN ii 42). Bramshaw is in the New Forest, adjacent to the settlement of Furzley Common (1870s OS SU 2859 1636), possibly OE *fyrs-lēah*, 'furze/gorse open woodland', and to Broom Hill (1860s OS SU 2612 1471), which suggest the enduring presence of broom and gorse in the landscape.

The various spellings of Kirk Bramwith YW present a range of etymological possibilities, although it was probably a 'broom wood, clearing'. The DB forms (*Branuuat*, *Branuuet* 1086) suggest OE *wudu* 'wood', or perhaps ON *þveit* 'clearing', while later attestations (*Bramwith* 1119, *Brampwyth* 1316) point to ON *viðr* 'wood' (PNYW ii 29; Watts 2004, 79). Attestations with *-wik* and *-wit* are perhaps the result of confusion with OE *wīc* 'farm' (*Bramwik* 1154, *Bramwit* 1155), or could be due to what PNYW (ii 29–30) describes as the medieval ambiguity of <c> and <t>. The

early attested site of South Bramwith (*Branuuode*, *Branuuit*(*h*)*e*, *Branuuat* 1086) in the parish of Hatfield YW is possibly comparable, as its DB forms show the influence of ON *viðr* on OE *wudu* 'wood' (PNYW i 13).

Bromsgrove Wo once again has early spellings that suggest OE pers.n. *Brēme*, this time with generic OE *grāf* 'grove' (*Bremesgraf* 803(11th), *Bremergrafan* 803(c.1000), *Bremesgrefan* 803(11th), *Bremesgrave* 1086); however, there are no forms recorded prior to the eleventh century and *brōm* in a ME context can have a wide variety of outcomes, including forms with *-i-* (*Brimesgrav* 1161, *Brimesgraua* 1173), *-u-* (*Brumesgrava* 1162, *Brunesgrave* 1171), and *-o-* (*Bromesgrava* 1167, *Bromesgrove al. Brommesgrove* 1441). PNWo (337) suggests these variations may have been due to possible folk association with broom and confusion with the forms of nearby Birmingham (*Bermingehā* 1086, *Brumingeham* 1189, *Brimingham* 1200) and Castle Bromwich Wa (*Bramewice* 1168, *Bromwice* 1199), yet circumstantial evidence also supports a broom etymology. Broom was a common source of firewood throughout the medieval period and according to DB Bromsgrove was required to supply 300 carts of fuel for the salt-works at Droitwich Wo (Hooke 2011, 159). Cole (2012, 255) notes that Grafton (*Grafton*(*e*) 1086), OE *grāf-tūn*, 'grove farm', just south of Bromsgrove, may have been the site where the production of faggots for the saltworks took place and from there these bundles were sent to Droitwich. Other names in Bromsgrove parish also suggest an open wooded landscape that was heavily managed, such as Timberhanger (*Timbrehangre* 1086), from OE *timber-hangra*, 'timber wooded-slope' (see 3.3: timber case-study), Gorsehill (*Gorsthal*(*e*) 1275), OE *gorst-halh*, 'gorse-grown nook', which provides evidence of an environment favourable for scrub flora like broom and gorse, and Barnt Green (*Barnte* 1290, *Brante* 1317), OE *bærnet* 'burnt', possibly in this context a place where charcoal was produced for the saltworks. For further discussion on fuel production in the Droitwich area see section 3.6 of timber case-study.

2.23.4.1 *brōm-lēah*:

There are seven major names attested by 1200 that derive from the OE compound *brōm-lēah*. The earliest recorded of these is Bromley Hundred K, which contains the parishes of Bromley and Beckenham (Anderson 1939b, 112) and is first attested in the ninth century (*Bromleag* 862 S331, *Brom leage* 955(10th) S671). Abbots Bromley St

(*Bromleage* 942(14th) S479, *Bromleg*(*e*) 996(11th) S878) and Kings Bromley St (*Bromlege*, *Bromle* 942(13th) S479) are both first recorded in the tenth century, with early forms similar to those found in tenth-century charter bounds at Bury St Edmunds (*brom leage* S507) and Sandford near Crediton D (*brom leage* S405). While these early attestations are diagnostic of *brōm*, those first attested in DB have a greater variation in vowel forms: including Great and Little Bromley Ess (*Brūbeleiam*, *Brumleā*, *Brumleiam* 1086), Bramley Ha (*Brumelai* 1086), Bramley Sr (*Brunlei*, *Brunlega*, *Bronlei*, *Brolege* 1086), and Bramley YW (*Bramelei*(*a*), *Bramele*, *Bramelia*, *Brameley*(*e*), *Bramelay* 1086). The soil at these sites is suited to broom as it is well-draining and either loam- or sand-based. The nature of the generic element *lēah* 'open woodland' also suggests a habitat suitable for broom, as a lighter area in a more densely-wooded landscape would provide the necessary sunlight for broom to grow. These clearings may have been natural, the result of livestock grazing (Hooke 2010, 268), or they may have been the consequence of coppicing: Rackham (2003, 422) notes that broom is one of the two earliest recorded plants associated with coppice wood. Even as a by-product of agriculture or arboriculture, broom would have been a valuable resource and may have been cut and dried for fuel or for livestock fodder.

As a simplex name:

> Brome Sf (*Brum*, *Brom* 1086) Watts 2004, 91; Broom Wo (*Brome* 1169) PNWo 278; Broom Du (*Brom* 1153–95) Mawer 1920, 32; Broom Wa (*Brome* 1086) PNWa 202; Broom Sa (*Bruma* 1086) PNSa i 62; Broome Nf (*Brom* 1086) Watts 2004, 93; Broome Sa (*Brame* 1086) PNSa i 62

As the generic element:

> Fallibroome Ch (*Falingbrome* 1153) PNCh i 197

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Bramcote Nt (*Brunecote*, *Bruncote* 1086) PNNt 140–1 (**cot**); Bramcote Wa (*Branc*(*h*)*ote* 1086) PNWa 101 (**cot**); Bramham YW (*Bram*(*e*)*ha'*, *Braham* 1086) PNYW iv 82 (**hām**); Bromham W (*Bromham*, *Brumham* 1086) PNW 254 (**hām**); Bromyard He (*Bromgeard*

840×52(10th)) Watts 2004, 92 (**geard**); Brumstead Nf (*Brumestada*, *Brunestada* 1086) PNNf ii 84–5 (**stede**); Castle Bromwich Wa (*Bramewice* 1168) PNWa 40 (**wīc**); West Bromwich St (*Bromwic* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 153 (**wīc**)

With **tūn**:

Brampton Cu (*Brantun*, *Brampton* 1086) PNCu i 65; Brampton Db (*Brandune*, *Brantune* 1086) PNDb ii 220; Brampton Hu (*Brantune* 1086) PNBd&Hu 233–4; Brampton Li (*Branthon* 1054) Cameron 1998, 19; Brampton Nf (*Brantuna* 1086) PNNf iii 65; Brampton Sf (*Bramtuna*, *Brantuna* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 19; Brampton Abbotts He (*Brvntvne* 1086) Watts 2004, 79; Brampton Ash Nth (*Branton*(*e*) 1086) PNNth 158; Brampton Bierlow YW (*Brantone* 1086) PNYW i 106; Brampton Bryan He (*Brantune* 1086) Watts 2004, 79; Brampton en le Morthen YW (*Brantone* 1086) PNYW i 162; Branton Nb (*Bremetonam* c.1135) Watts 2004, 81; Branton YW (*Branton*(*e*), *Brantun*(*a*) 1086) PNYW i 40; Branton Green YW (*Brantun*(*e*), *Branton*(*e*), *Brantona* 1086) PNYW v 84; Braunton D (*Branton*(*a*) 1086) PND i 32; Brompton Sa (*Brantune* 1086) PNSa i 61; Brompton YN (*Bruntun*(*e*) 1086) PNYN 96; Brympton So (*Brunetone* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 71; Chapel and Church Brampton Nth (*Branton*(*e*) 1086) PNNth 79; Little Brampton He (*Bruntune* 1086) Coplestone-Crow 2009, 191

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Bramdean Ha (*bromdene* 924(12th)) Watts 2004, 78 (**denu**); Bramfield Sf (*Bu'feld'*, *brunfelda* 1086) Watts 2004, 79 (**feld**); Bramford Sf (Bromford 1035×44(14th)) Watts 2004, 79 (**ford**); Bramhall Ch (Bramale 1086) PNCh i 258 (**halh**); Bramhope YW (*Bra*(*m*)*hop* 1086) PNYW iv 195 (**hop**); Brampford Speke D (*Branfort*, *Branfortuna*, *Brenfort* 1086) PND ii 422–3 (**ford**); Bramshall St (*Branselle* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 144 (**scelf**); Bramshaw Ha (*Bramessage* 1086) Watts 2004, 79 (**sceaga**); Brandon Du (*Braindune*, *Brandune Bromdune*, *Brandun* c.1190) Watts 2002, 17 (**dūn**); Brandon Nb (*Bremdona*

c.1150) Watts 2004, 80 (**dūn**); Brandon Sf (*Bromdune* c.972) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 20 (**dūn)**; Brandon Wa (*Brandune* 1086) PNWa i 157 (**dūn**); Brandon Parva Nf (*Brandun* 1086) Watts 2004, 80 (**dūn**); Breamore Ha (*Brumore* 1086) Watts 2004, 82 (**mōr**); Brendon D (*Brandon*(*a*) 1086) PND i 58–9 (**dūn**); Brimfield He (*Brum*(*e*)*feld*, *Brom*(*e*)*feld* 1086) Coplestone-Crow 2009, 56 (**feld**); Brimpsfield Gl (*Brimesfeld*(*e*), *Brymesfeld*(*e*) 1086) PNGl i 144 (**feld**); Bromeswell Sf (*Brammesuuella* c.1075(12th)) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 22 (**wella**); Bromfield Sa (*Bromfelde* 1060–1) PNSa i 60 (**feld**); Broomfield Ess (*Brumfeldam* 1086) PNEss 241 (**feld**); Broomfield K (*Brunfelle* 1086) Watts 2004, 93 (**feld**); Broomfield So (*Brunfelle* 1086) Watts 2004, 93 (**feld**); Bromham Bd (*Bruneham*, *Brimeham* 1086) PNBd&Hu 28–9 (**hamm**); Broomhall Ch (*Brunhala* 1086) PNCh iii 114 (**halh**); Bromsberrow Gl (*Bremes burh*, *æt Bremes byrig* 910(11th)) PNGl iii 166–7 (**beorg**); Bromsgrove Wo(*Bremesgraf* 803(11th), *Bremergrafan* 803(c.1000), *Bremesgrefan* 803(11th)) PNWo 336–7 (**grāf**); Brundon Ess (*Brandunā*, *Bramduna* 1086) PNEss 408 (**dūn**); Kirk Bramwith YW (*Branuuat*, *Branuuet* 1086) PNYW ii 29 (**wudu**, **viðr**); Leighton Bromswold Hu (*Bruneswald* 1168) PNBd&Hu 246 (**wald**); South Bramwith YW (*Branuuat*, *Branuuode*, *Branuuit*(*h*)*e* 1086) PNYW i 13 (**wudu**, **viðr**)

With **lēah**:

Abbots Bromley St (*Bromleage* 942(14th) S479) Horovitz 2005, 152; Bramley Ha (*Brumelai* 1086) Watts 2004, 79; Bramley Sr (*Brunlei*, *Brunlega*, *Bronlei*, *Brolege* 1086) PNSr 225; Bramley YW (*Bramelei*(*a*), *Bramele*, *Bramelia*, *Brameley*(*e*), *Bramelay* 1086) PNYW i 134; Bromley Hundred K (*Bromleag* 862) Watts 2004, 92; Great and Little Bromley Ess (*Brūbeleiam*, *Brumleā*, *Brumleiam* 1086) PNEss 332; Kings Bromley St (*Bromlege*, *Bromle* 942(13th) S479) Watts 2004, 92

2.24 *brōmede OE adj. ‘broomy, growing with broom’

A possible OE adjective that is unattested outside place-names, deriving from OE **brōm** (see 2.23). This has a similar meaning to the better-attested OE **brōmig* ‘broomy, overgrown with broom’, which appears in a number of minor names and later-attested major names (VEPN ii 44).

2.24.1 **brōmede* as the specific in a topographical compound

The first element of Brundall Nf (*Brundala* 1086, *Brundale* c.1180 and *Brundhal* 1257) is uncertain but this may be OE **brōmede-halh* (Ekwall 1960, 70; Watts 2004, 95), indicated by recurrent medial *-d-* in early spellings and meaning ‘nook of land growing with broom, broomy nook of land’. Forms with <u> find many parallels among *brōm* place-names (see 2.23); for assimilatory change of /m/ to /n/ compare the *brōm-dūn* (see 2.23.4). Formally an etymology from *brōm-dæl* looks possible; however, although the River Yare runs south of Brundall, there is no apparent valley at this location that OE *dæl* could refer to. For the secondary sense of OE *dæl* ‘pit, hollow’, LPN (112) suggests only one example north of the Thames in the south-east Midlands and that is Dawley Mx, which does not rule out the possibility.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Brundall Nf (*Brundala* 1086) Watts 2004, 95 (**halh**)

2.25 *byxe OE, **bexe* (Kentish) ‘box’

This could be a noun reconstructed from the adj. *byxen* ‘made of box, growing with box’, perhaps a borrowing of a Latin derivative adj. like *buxeus* with *-en* suffix (compare post-classical Latin *buxinus*); the stem vowel *-y-* could be analogical, or show i-mutation of *u*, which is a regular development in Latin loanwords (OED: box, n.1: etymology). The adj. *byxen* is attested in OE glossaries (DOE: byxen, n.1) and in early minor names like Bixmoor (*Bixenore* 1337) and possibly Bexington (*Bessintone* 1086, *Buxinton* 1212) (VEPN ii 119). Coates (1999, 36), however, notes that analogical changes usually occur in the direction of the base-form rather than from adj. to noun and suggests instead a Proto-Germanic *jōn*-stem formation, in this case **buksjōn*, where the ‘derived form has no discernible meaning-difference from the historical root-form’, which he argues is paralleled in other OE tree words like **plȳme** ‘plum’ (see 2.65) and *syrfe* ‘service tree’. It appears that ‘**byxe* was a word of far

more restricted linguistic characteristics than *box*', as it seems to have occurred only as a simplex name and in compound with OE *lēah* (Coates 1999, 36). The credibility of names with a proposed **byxe* etymology depend at least in part on the topographical, geological, and ecological characteristics of a site and it is necessary to compare these names with those that have a diagnostic *box* etymology (see 2.22; *Fig.32*).

Ekwall (1960, 46) proposed that Bixley Nf (*Biskele*, *Bichesle* 1086; *Biskele* 1196; *Bixle* 1228) is a **byxe-lēah* alongside Bixley Heath Sf (*Bischelea* 1086), which has since been reanalysed as a **bysce* 'bush' name (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 13). Bixley Nf has various early forms and is consistently spelt with -*sk*-, which Coates (1999, 26) states cannot be assumed to indicate **byxe*. It should also be noted that although it lies on chalk, this is the most northerly suggested example of box and is well beyond the supposed natural distribution, although the human introduction of this species is a possibility. It seems likely that this too has an origin from **bysce*.

2.25.1 **byxe* as a simplex name:

Bix O is the only example of a **byxe* major name attested by 1200 that appears to have a straightforward box etymology, from simplex **byxe* (*Bixa* 1086, *Bixest* 1152, *Bixe* 1201). The parish sits on chalk bedrock in a broad valley with relatively steep sides, a topographical and geological type typical of native box (see 2.22 for discussion of the ecology of box). Coates (1999, 35) suggests that from a linguistic and landscape perspective, Bix O and the two minor names: Bixmoor Wood in Ipsden O (*Bixenore* 1337) and *Bixley feild* in Litchfield Ha, are probably the most secure instances of **byxe* in English place-names.

2.25.2 **byxe* as the specific in a possible topographical compound:

2.25.2.1 Possible **byxe-lēah* names:

Two difficult to determine names are Bexhill Sx and Bexley K. It has been suggested that Bexhill Sx (*bexlea*, *bixlea*, *bæxwarena land* 772(c.1300) S108; *Bexelei* 1086, *Bixla'* 1166) might derive from specific **byxe* (Kentish **bexe*) with generic OE *lēah*, 'box-tree clearing' (PNSx 489, Watts 2004, 54); however, as Coates (1999, 32) points out, none of the medieval forms are suggestive of a *lēah* etymology (with -*gh*- or -*ly*) apart from the DB record and the supposed eighth-century attestation from a spurious

fourteenth-century charter. It is also significant that the geology at this site is not favourable for native box growth, as this is a coastal settlement that lies on silt and sand soil. Coates (ibid) notes that 'given classical assumptions, no box can ever have grown at or near the junction of the Hasting beds and the alluvium of the Pevensey Levels'. Bexley K (*Bixle* 765×85(12th) S37, *Byxlea*, *Bixlea* 814(10th) S175, *Bix* 1086, *Bixle* 12th), also a suggested **byxe-lēah* name (with Kentish **bexe*) (Wallenberg 1931, 134; Ekwall 1960, 41; Watts 2004, 54), does not show the expected development of **bexe* and is not geologically characteristic of native box, situated as it is in on sand and gravel two miles from the nearest chalk outcrop (Coates 1999, 33). Despite the linguistic doubts that arise through examination of these names and the probable geological unsuitability for native box growth, there are no satisfactory etymological alternatives to **byxe* (**bexe*). The geology, while not ideal, does not rule out the possibility that box-trees were introduced at these locations during the early medieval period. In contrast with *box* names, there is no good evidence of adjacent Roman settlement in any of these parishes, so the introduction of box in a Roman context is doubtful, but perhaps not impossible.

As a simplex name:

Bix O (*Bixa* 1086) PNO 66

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Possible *lēah* names:

Bexhill Sx (*bexlea*, *bixlea*, *bæxwarena land* 772(c.1300) S108) PNSx 489; Bexley K (*Bixle* 765×85(12th) S37) Watts 2004, 54

2.26 *ceagge OE f. 'broom, gorse, brushwood; stump'

According to VEPN (iii 2) there is no certain evidence for the gender of this element, but a weak fem. **cægge* or **ceagge* (with palatal diphthongisation), both of which would result in Chag-, has been suggested to lie behind the major-name examples below. It is attested in charter bounds and DOE (ceacga, ceacge, n.1) proposes it was used of common broom (see 2.23 **brōm**), common gorse (see 2.35 **fyrs**, 2.37 **gorst**, 2.50 ***hvin**), or brushwood. The OED defines brushwood as 'cut or broken twigs or branches; small wood' (n.1) and 'small growing trees and shrubs; thicket, underwood' (n.2): all definitions that could refer to broom and gorse and to other species of shrub

such as hawthorn and hazel. The later dialect term *chag* ‘branch of broom or gorse’, which survives in Leicestershire, Shropshire, and Yorkshire (EDD: chag, sb.), may provide a species-specific link with both broom and gorse, although VEPN (iii 2) points out a possible alternative dialect derivative in *kag* ‘stump’ (from weak masc. **cagga*).

Major and minor place-names with **ceagge* are generally found in the south (*Fig.33*) and most frequently compounds with elements that suggest uncultivated marginal land or a riparian landscape. Jackmoor D (*Chagmore* 1505) looks to derive from OE **ceagge-mōr*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood moor’; *Jagwell* Ru 1634 from OE **ceagge-welle*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood spring’; *Chaggynham* Brk 1497 from **ceagge-hamm*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood hemmed in land’; and the major name Chagford (discussed below: 2.26.1) likely derives from the OE compound **ceagge-ford*. OE charter bounds also attest to **ceagge* used solely in compound with topographical elements: there was a *ceacga*/*ceaggan cumb*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood valley’, at Stoke Canon D (S389, S390, S971); a *ceaggan heale*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood corner or nook’, at Waltham St Lawrence Brk (S461, S915); a *ceacgan seað*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood pit/hole’, at Burghclere Ha (S487); and a *ceacga broc*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood brook’, at Shobrooke D (S387). Some of these examples of genitive **ceaggan* could have referred to a ‘place called Ceagge’, or as suggested by PNSx (ii 296) and Wallenberg (1934, 236–7) an unattested pers.n., perhaps a nickname deriving from the plant name. VEPN (iii 2) remains sceptical of this unattested pers.n. but acknowledges the signficance of **ceagge* appearing in place-names only as the specific element and never as the generic, which could give weight to the pers.n. argument. Tree-species specifics in the genitive are not uncommon in place-names however, and *brōm* major names with the specific gen. sg. *brōmes* (see 2.23.4: Bromsberrow Gl, Bromeswell Sf) could be a comparable name type.

2.26.1 **ceagge* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Early forms of Chagford D (*Cagefort*, *Kagefort* 1086; *Chageford*(*e*) 1196; *Chaggeford*(*ia*) 1234) suggest the OE compound **ceagge-ford*, ‘broom/gorse/brushwood ford’ (PND ii 424; Watts 123). There is one twelfth-century attestation (*Chaggesford* 1184) with a possible genitive *-es*. This cannot be the genitive of **ceagge*, which is a weak noun and would thus decline as **ceaggan*, as

seen in the charter bounds above, but it is possibly the result of folk etymology: deriving from the assumption that the specific was originally a pers.n.. There are two *brōm-ford* major names (see 2.23.4 *brōm*: Bramford Sf and Brampford Speke D) that perhaps provide parallel examples of a ford marked by broom. In Chagford parish there are areas of open common land well suited to scrubland species known as Padley Common (Padeleghe 1432), Meldon Common (*Milledone* 1393), Nattadon Common (Nottedone 1334), and Chagford Common far to the south of the parish (Meanamoore al. Comon Moore 1738). Chagford lies at the eastern edge of Dartmoor, which is littered with place-names like the neighbouring Thornworthy D (*Thornwrthy* 1275: PND i 65), 'thorn enclosure', and Fernworthy D (*Fernewrda*, *Ferneurda* 1086: PND i 178; 198), 'fern/bracken enclosure', that indicate the presence of other scrubland plants.

2.26.1.1 **ceagge-lēah*:

Chailey Sx (*Cheagele*, *Chaglegh* 1087) likely derives from OE **ceagge-lēah*, 'broom/gorse/brushwood open woodland'. Later attestations show spellings with *J-* (*Jaggelee* 1279; *Jaggeley*(*e*) 1371) and *Sh-* (*Shaglegh*, *Shagleye* 1438), but the development of this name to Chailey rather than **Chagley* – which would be expected from a **ceagge* etymology (Watts 2004, 123) – is not explained by any of these early forms. Broom and gorse are species that thrive in open wooded areas and this compound is perhaps a similar type to the recurrent *brōm-lēah*, which is responsible for seven *brōm* major names (see 2.23.4.1).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Chagford D (*Cagefort*, *Kagefort* 1086) PND i 424 (**ford**)

With **lēah**:

Chailey Sx (*Cheagele*, *Chaglegh* 1087) PNSx ii 296

2.27 eik ON f. 'oak'

There are five major names attested by 1200 with early forms that suggest an etymology in ON *eik* (*Fig.3*), a cognate of OE **āc** (see 2.1). This is a word attested in ON prose (ONP: eik, sb. f.) where it is glossed as meaning 'oak, oak-tree' (ONP: eik, sb. 1.) but also 'hard-wood tree' (sb. 2.), and 'fruit-bearing tree' (sb. 3.). It appears to

have influenced the dialect pronunciation of oak and the development of oak-tree place-names in the Danelaw area; however, the names included here are those that suggest origin from *eik*, rather than influence on or replacement of OE *āc*.



Figure 36: Medieval oak pollards at Staverton Park, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2019)

2.27.1 *eik* as a simplex place-name:

Eyke Sf (*Eik* 1185, *Eik'* 1214, *Eyk* 1270, *Eyck* 1291) looks to be simplex ON *eik* 'the oak-tree' (Watts 2004, 222; Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 50). This could have referred to a single notable oak-tree, or it may have been indicative of single-species oakwood. The geology of the settlement is the same as that of Staverton Park (*Stauretuna*, *Staurestuna* (sic) 1086), which borders Eyke parish and lies on highly acidic blown-sand soil: prime conditions for pure oakwood but less favourable for most other deciduous trees. Staverton has one of the best examples of medieval oak wood-pasture in England (*Fig.36*). It was recorded as a deer park from as early as the thirteenth century, although Williamson (2013, 214) suggests a much earlier origin. It has

around 4,000 oak pollards, with many that 'have the combination of a massive trunk and a small crown that characterizes oaks of medieval date' (Rackham 2003, 294).

2.27.2 *eik* as the generic element:

Thonock Li (*Tunec* 1086, *Tuneic* 1115, *Tunaik* 1232) has a run of medieval spellings that suggest the ON compound *þunnr-eik* 'thin/slender oak' (Cameron 1998, 125). This was likely a single tree that was notable for its appearance, which is a common construction for *āc* major names (see 2.1.2: Braddock Co, Hennock D), but it is not clear why an oak would be noted for the quality of being thin or slender, as landmark oaks now tend to be recognised for the girth that signifies their advanced age. Perhaps in this case the tree was notable as being a particularly tall and thin standard oak that stood alone or was surrounded by shorter vegetation. It is possible the specific is instead the pers.n. name *Þunor*, which appears once in reference to an individual in the ASC (PASE; Briggs 2022, 260), which is a type that would parallel *āc* names with a pers.n. specific (see 2.1.2: Hodsock Nt); alternatively, it may have been a reference to the pre-Christian god *Þunor* (see 2.1.2: discussion of *Þunor* under Holyoaks Le).

2.27.3 *eik* as the specific in a topographical compound:

The DB form of Aiskew YN (*Echescol* 1086; *Aikescogh*, *Aykescogh* 12th), spelt with *-col* is likely the result of AN confusion between <og> and <ol> and later spellings suggest generic ON *skógr* 'wood' (PNYN 236). Aysgarth YN (*Echescard* 1086; *Aykescart*(*h*), *Aikeskarth*, *Aykeskarth* 12th; *Aykesgarth* 1374) appears to have the generic ON *skarð*, 'oak opening', referring here to the gap in the hills south of the River Ure (Ekwall 1960, 21; Watts 2004, 29). PNYN (262) states that Aysgarth lay at the centre of the Forest of Wensleydale and that many of the place-names in the wapentake 'indicate the wooded nature of the country'. Both Aiskew and Aysgarth have medieval forms with medial *-e-*, suggesting either gen. pl. *eika* '(of the) oaks', or ON *eiki* 'oaken, oakwood'.

Eakring Nt (*Echeringhe*, *Ecringhe* 1086; *Ekering*(*a*) 1174) could have generic ON *hringr* or it could be an Anglo-Scandinavian compound with OE *hring* (Watts 2004, 202). The medieval spellings once again have recurrent medial *-e-*: either gen. pl. *eika* 'the circle of oak-trees' (PNNt 49), or *eiki*, 'the oaken circle'. Eakring is 7 km south-east of the remaining medieval oak wood-pasture and ancient pollarded oakwood of Sherwood Forest Country Park (2023 OS: SK 620 679). The size and woodland

composition of Sherwood Forest in the early medieval period is uncertain as agriculture, enclosure, and coal mining has altered the landscape over the centuries; however, Watkins (2014, 145) notes that when the forest was first mentioned in 1154 it covered most of Nottinghamshire north of the River Trent, comprising a patchwork of heath and oak-birch woodland.

As a simplex place-name:

> Eyke Sf (*Eik* 1185) Watts 2004, 222

As the generic element:

> Thonock Li (*Tunec* 1086) Cameron 1998, 125 (**þunnr**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Aiskew YN (*Echescol* 1086) PNYN 236 (**skógr**); Aysgarth YN (*Echescard* 1086) PNYN 262 (**skarð**); Eakring Nt (*Echeringhe*, *Ecringhe* 1086) PNNt 49 (**hringr**)

2.28 ellern OE n. 'elder'

In OE glossaries *ellern* glosses Lat. *sambucus* and is attested several times in early medieval medical texts where its fruit, blossom, leaf, pith, bark, shoots, and roots are all noted as sources of medicine or food (DOE: ellen, n.2, ellern). It also appears often in early medieval charters: Hooke (2010, 202) notes 48 instances in boundary clauses attested by 1100, making this the sixth most common charter tree-species by her reckoning; however, it is rare in place-names, occurring only a possible ten times in major names (*Fig.37*). It is possible *ellern* – or the variant forms *ellen*, *elle* (EPNE i 150) – was more common in place-names than it appears and that its use is obscured by the difficulty of distinguishing it from other OE words, such as the proposed pers.n. *Ella*,[33] ON **elri** 'alder' (see 2.32), and the OE adj. *elren* 'growing with alders'. Confusion with alder may have been increased by a positive association between sites where alder and elder grow as underwood (Rackham 2003, 308). ME *hylder*(*-tre*) is a parallel form that appears to have derived from ON *hyldri* (OE ***hyldre**: see 2.51),

[33] Briggs (2022, 120) lists possible examples of this name in the English toponymicon, but PASE has no record from alternative sources.

related to OHG *holuntar*, but is not attested in English until the fourteenth century (EPNE i 274).

It is interesting to note the absence of *ellern* as a generic element or a simplex name and that 'no adjective is ever used to describe an elder appearing as a charter boundary landmark' (Hooke 2010, 236). When elder is identified it appears to have been the sole descriptive feature of a location. Elder is most frequently mentioned in charter bounds as a *stubb* 'stump'. Of the 29 mentions of elder in charters recorded on LangScape (ellen), 14 are an *ellern stubb*. The recurrence of this compound implies that elder was deliberately cut possibly as a method of controlling growth and stimulating a better fruit yield or perhaps due to negative cultural association with the tree. Hooke (2010, 234) discusses the unpopularity of elder in medieval Christian mythology, noting that in Wulfstan's *Canons of Edgar* (c.1005–8) the *ellenum* '(place) at the elders' was one of the locations at which *ðone deofles cræft* 'the devil's craft' was carried out and that according to Langland in the later-medieval *Piers Plowman*, it was the tree upon which Judas hanged himself. If the elder was indeed considered to be an inauspicious species, then this may have had a limiting influence on the development of *ellern* place-names.

2.28.1 As the compound **ellern-stubb*:

Elstub Hundred W (*Alestabe hundred*, *Eilestebba*, *Ailestebba* 1086) is the only major name that includes reference to the ubiquitous 'elder stump'. The meeting of the Hundred court appears to have taken place in a field called Elstub in the parish of Enford W (Anderson 1939a, 168; PNW 327). According to charter bounds, Wiltshire was a county disproportionally littered with elder stumps in the early medieval period. Of the 29 mentions of elder on LangScape (ellen), 11 are found in Wiltshire, and of these, seven refer to an *ellern stubb* (*Fig.37*). There is a comparable 'elder stump' compound in later-attested major name Elstob in Great Stainton Du (*El*(*l*)*estob*, *Ellsstobe* 1235×6) (PNDu i 202) and in Ashford Carbonel Sa there was an *Ellernestob* (1317, 1323; also, *Elnar Stub* 1317) that was apparently described as being a thorn-bush (PNSa viii 149). The prevalence of elder in the charters of south-west England, especially in Wiltshire, can perhaps be explained by the preference of this species for growing on open downland (Rackham 2003, 136), which comprises a large portion of the landscape in this region.

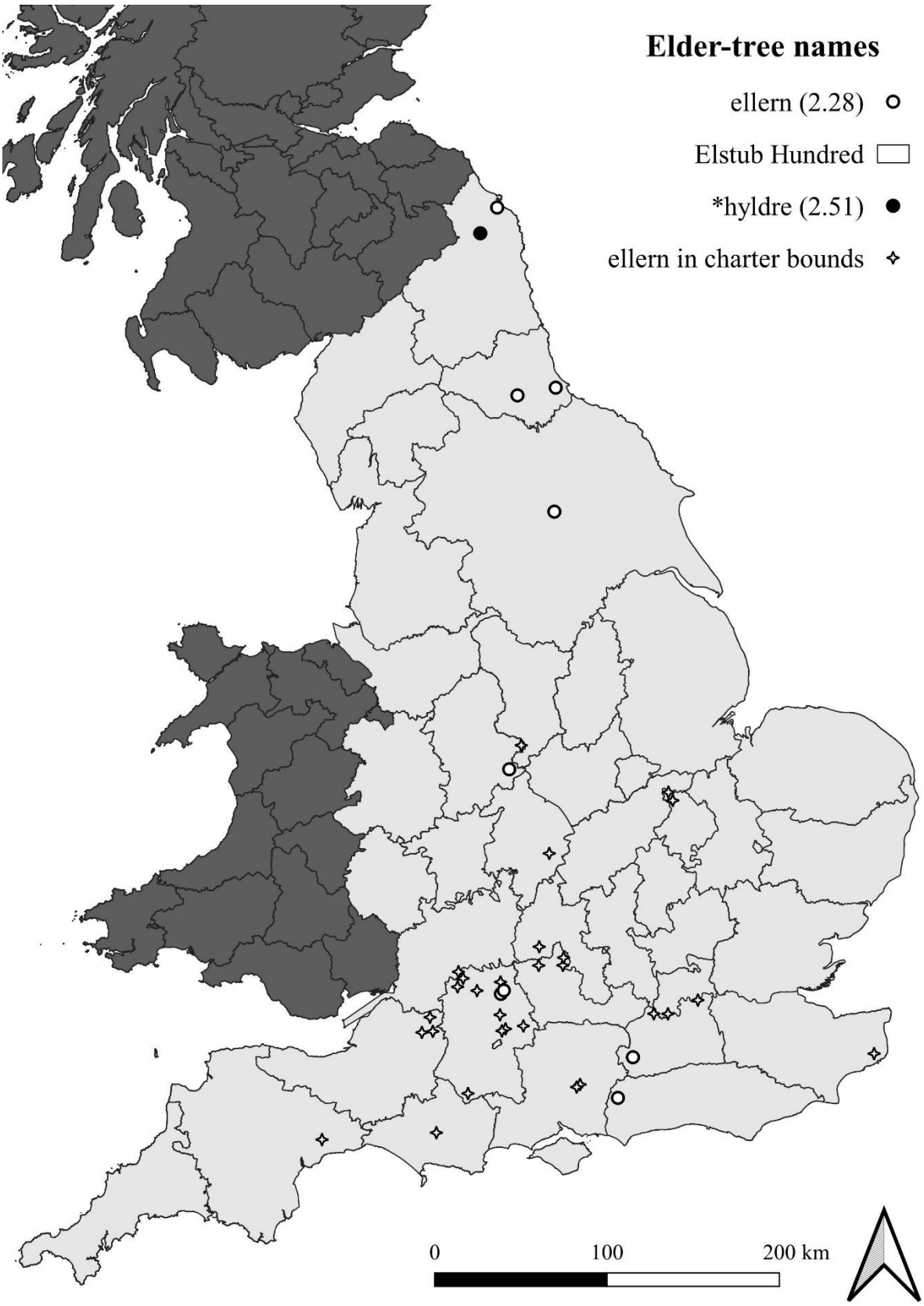


Figure 37: The distribution of elder major names and estates where *ellern* is mentioned in charter bounds (LangScape)

2.28.2 *ellern* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Elsted Sx (*Halestede* 1086, *Ellesteda* 1180) has thirteenth-century forms with medial *-n-* (*Elnestede* 1212, *Elenestede* 1230) suggest either the variant *ellen*, 'elder-tree place', or gen. pl. *el*(*le*)*na*, 'place of the elder-trees' (PNSx i 34). Elstead Sr (*Helestede* 1128, *Ellestede* 1222, *Elestede* 1225) is first attested in the twelfth century. It has no records with medial *-n-* but none of the forms are particularly early (PNSr 167) and it is possible Elstead has the same etymology as Elsted.

Elwick Du (*Ailewic* c.1150, *Ellewic* 1174–1441), Elwick Nth (*Ellewich* 1154×66, *Ellewic* 1203), and Elwicks YW (*Eleuuic* 1086; *Ellewic*(*k*), *Ellewyc*, *Ellewik* 1173–99) may derive from *ellern-wīc*, 'elder-tree farm/village'. Watts (2004, 215) suggests Elwick Du is either the pers.n. *Ella* or *Ægla*, the latter perhaps explaining the earliest spelling; however, considering the late date of attestation, *ellern* remains a possibility. PNYW (v 6) proposes an *ellern* name for Elwicks YW, probably due to the consistent forms with medial *-e-* that display probable metathesis (*Elnewic*, *Elnewik*, *Elnewyk* 12th; *Helnewyc* 1199). While this does seem convincing, it must be noted that the gen.sg. pers.n. *Ellan* cannot be ruled out.

2.28.3 *ellern* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are three possible topographical *ellern* major names attested by 1200. Eldon Du (*Elledun* c.1040, *Eldon* 1250) looks to be a reduced form of *ellern* or the OE pers.n. *Ella* with OE *dūn* (Watts 2002, 39). Pers.ns are common in compound with *dūn*, but so are references to vegetation (LPN 168–9). An abandoned medieval village lies at Old Eldon, which sits at the base of Eldon Hill, presumably the *dūn* to which the name refers.

The lost site of *Ellendun* W, which was associated with the parish of Wroughton in the twelfth century but recorded previously as a separate settlement, appears four times in the ASC spelt *-dun* (*Ellendun* 823(890), *Eallandun* (823)1000, *Ællandun* (823)1000, *Ellandun* 823(1150)) and then in DB -as *dune* (*Elendune* 1086). Although it is unclear where the settlement of *Ellendun* once stood, there are several *dūn* names in the surrounding area, including Swindon directly to the north of Wroughton and Chiseldon to the east, suggesting *dūn*-shaped hills were a common topographical feature and popular place-name element of this landscape. There is another possible elder-tree name in the early-attested site of Elcombe W (*Elecome* 1086, *Ellecumba*

1168) that also lies in the parish of Wroughton and a tenth-century charter that mentions an *ællen stybbæ* as a boundary marker for land granted by King Eadwig at *Ellendune* (S585). From this we can be confident of the presence of elder in this region during the early medieval period.

Elford St (*Elefurd* 1086, *Elleforda* 1102) has the generic OE *ford* and once again the specific could be *ellern* (*elle*) 'elder', although LPN (74), Watts (2004, 211), and Horovitz (2005, 245–6) are more inclined towards the pers.n. *Ella*. Gelling and Cole (LPN 73–4) demonstrate that compounds with a pers.n. specific and a *ford* generic are common, citing 77 potential examples (including two potential *Ella-ford* names); however, etymological ambiguity cannot be solved in this instance by considering how often this type of compound occurs, as tree-names with *ford* are also common. There are 37 possible tree-species major names attested by 1200 with a *ford* generic and fords named for trees are also recurrent in minor names[34] and charter bounds. Three comparable examples can be found in the bounds of *ellen ford* at Ottery St Mary D (S1033), *Ellenforda* at Hinton Ampner Ha (S942, S1007), and *ellen forda* at Tichworth and Beaworth Ha (S444). These are all possible 'elder ford' or 'Ella's ford' names; however, there are a further two charters with an unambiguous reference to elder in proximity with a ford that may reinforce an 'elder ford' etymology: *of þan ellan on þone forð* 'from the elder(s) to the ford' at Wetmoor St (S930) and *of þam chiric stede innan stræd ford on þæt ellen* 'from the church place to the street ford to the elder' at Overton W (S784).

In support of these being 'elder ford' sites it is important to note that elder is often found in the same ecological underwood context as alder (Rackham 2003, 308), which is a well-known riparian species. Although elder is not as tolerant of water-logging as alder, it grows well beside rivers not liable to extensive flooding, and perhaps grew at fordable locations where the land was slightly raised. Elder may also

[34] Some examples include *Acford'* in Pamphill Do (*Acford'* 1270) and *Acfordale* in North Thoresby Li (*Acfordale* 1451–3) (from OE *āc*); Ashford Lodge in Halstead Ess (*Aissesford* (*bridge of*), *Æsseford*, *Asse*(*s*)*ford* 12th), Ashford in Aveton Giffard Do (*Ayshford* 1339), Ashford Fm in Stoke Dabernon Sr (*Asshefordemulle* 1492) (from OE *æsc*); Bromford in Aston Wa (*stagnum de Bramford* 1285) (from OE *brōm*); and Salfords in Horley Sr (*Salfordebrugg'* 1316) (from OE *sealh*).

have grown at ford sites because of sustained human impact; it is an indicator species of soils rich in phosphorus (Rackham 2003, 75), the levels of which often appear to have increased at common stopping places along popular routeways, where human and livestock waste contributed to the mineral richness of the soil (Cole 2003, 49).

As the compound **ellern-stubb*:

> Elstub Hundred W (*Alestabe hundred*, *Eilestebba*, *Ailestebba* 1086) PNW 327

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Elstead Sr (*Helestede* 1128) PNSr 167 (**stede**); Elsted Sx (*Halestede* 1086) PNSx i 34 (**stede**); Elwick Du (*Ailewic* c.1150) Watts 2004, 215 (**wīc**); Elwick Nth (*Ellewich* 1154×66) Watts 2004, 215 (**wīc**); Elwicks YW (*Eleuuic* 1086) PNYW v 6 (**wīc**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Elcombe W (*Elecome* 1086) PNW 279 (**cumb**); Eldon Du (*Elledun* c.1040(12th)) Watts 2002, 39 (**dūn**); Elford St (*Elefurd* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 245 (**ford**); *Ellendun* W (*Ellendun* 823(890) ASC) PNW 278 (**dūn**)

2.29 elm OE m. ‘elm’

A strong masculine OE noun, cognate with OHG *elm* and ON *almr* (OED: elm, n.: etymology). It occurs seven times in OE medical texts and glossaries, where it is glossed with Lat. *ulmus* (DOE: elm, n.2), but it is rare in charters. There appear to be only five charter that mention *elm*, each referring to an identifiable major name (Hooke 2010, 202; LangScape: elm): Elmley Lovett (S118) and Elmley Castle (S1342, S1597) in Hartlebury Wo and Elmsted K (S168, S1617) (see 2.82 ***ylmen**: Ilmington Wa); however, *elm* is relatively common in place-names, with 17 attestations. It is interesting to note that **wice** ‘elm’ (see 2.77), possibly ‘wych-elm’, is more common in OE charters, with 19 possible attestations (LangScape: wice), but much less frequent in major names, with only six occurrences.

There are three species of elm that may be native to Britain and among these there are many cultivars and wild hybrids. These species are wych-elm (*Ulmus glabra*),

English elm (*Ulmus procera*), and field elm or smooth-leaved elm (*Ulmus minor*). It is not possible to determine which species OE *elm* referred to, if indeed the species were differentiated at all, as distinction was not 'properly drawn even by professional botanists, until the eighteenth century' (Rackham 1986, 237). There is some argument for the identification of wych-elm with the term *wice*, but this is by no means definitive (see 2.77 *wice*).

The derivative OE ***elme**, 'elmwood' (see 2.30) has been proposed as the possible explanation for some place-names, although it is difficult to distinguish from declined forms of *elm* and from the OE adj. *elmen* 'growing with elm-trees' (EPNE i 50). Elm can grow to become an exceptionally large and distinctive tree, English elm up to 45 metres and wych-elm up to 40 metres. Elm is traditionally a suckering woodland tree, so it would be less likely for a single elm to be identified as a landmark than other species like ash and oak, unless it was the remnant of former woodland. Prior to the devastating effects of Dutch Elm Disease, elm was abundant in semi-natural hedgerows on agricultural land because of its economic value as a good timber and pollard tree (Williamson et al. 2017, 104).

2.29.1 *elm* as a simplex name:

There are two possible simplex *elm* major names first attested by 1200; however, as the attestations are irregular, and it is uncommon for elm to grow naturally as a single tree these names should perhaps be treated with caution. Great Elm So (*Teluue*, *Telma* 1086; *Elme* 1327) has unusual DB attestations that have been attributed to an early case of misdivision of *æt Elme*, which produced a prefixed *T*- (Watts 2004, 213). If this is the case, then this name looks to derive from dat. sg. *elme* '(at) the elm' but could also originate from **elme* 'elm wood'.

Elm C is attested in the ASC c.1150 for the year 656 as *Ælm* and from the tenth century as *Elm* (c.975(c.1253), c.1213), which could indicate an etymology from dat. sg. *elme*, or OE **elme* 'elm wood'. One charter records the form *Eolum* 973(15th) (S792), which with the attestation *Elym* 1221, led to the suggestion that this could alternatively derive from the folk-name *Eole*, dat. pl. *Eolum* that is attested in *Widsith* (*Widsith*: eds Krapp and Dobbie 1936, 152; PNC 266–7); however, this charter is generally considered to be of spurious origin, and this attestation may not accurately represent a tenth-century form (eSawyer). Watts (2004, 213) has more convincingly

stated that this name is almost certainly due to dat. pl. *elmum* – presumably with dissimilatory loss of the primary /m/ in some forms – but acknowledges the difficulty of explaining the *Eolum* and *Elym* spellings. Elm is one of three possible elm major names in Cambridgeshire and one of nine elm major names in East Anglia (*Fig.38*). The smooth-leaved elm (*Ulmus minor*) was once a prolific tree in East Anglia and the north-east Midlands: Rackham (2003, 266) states that although elm generally comprised 1–10% of wildwood, in Norfolk it often exceeded 20% of woodland coverage. It seems likely therefore that the name referred to an area of elm woodland, which would support an etymology from both **elme* 'elmwood' and dat. pl. *elmum* '(place at) the elms'.

2.29.2 *elm* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are five habitative *elm* major names first attested by 1200. Except for Elmton Db, the distribution of these names is confined exclusively to the east of England, in contrast, topographical *elm* names appear to proliferate in the west. If these habitative settlements were established to exploit local timber (see South Elmham below), it would make sense that elms were recognised for this purpose in the east where they appear to have made up a greater percentage of regional woodland cover.

Elmstead Ess (*Elmesteda*, *Almesteda* 1086) likely derives from gen. pl. *elma* and generic OE *stede*, 'place of the elms'. Elmsted K (*elmanstede* 811 S168; *elmanstede* 811(13th) S1617; *elmes stede* 811(13th) S1617; *Elmested*(*e*) 1087(13th), 11th–1354) is a difficult name and although later forms suggest gen.pl. *elme-stede*, this cannot satisfy the earliest attestations. Wallenberg (1931, 118–9) prefers scribal confusion with a weakly inflected pers.n. **Elma*, while Sandred (1963, 214) is sceptical and favours Ekwall's (1960, 164) *elm* with early reduced *hām-stede*, for which he provides parallel examples (Sandred 1963, 67; 89). There are six other *hām-stede* place-names with a tree-related specific attested by 1200 (see 2.1.3 *Ackhampstead* Bk; 2.10.3 Ashampstead Brk; 2.16.1 Great Berkhamstead Hrt, Little Berkhamstead Hrt; 2.68.2 Sulhamstead Brk; 5.3 Nuthampstead Hrt).

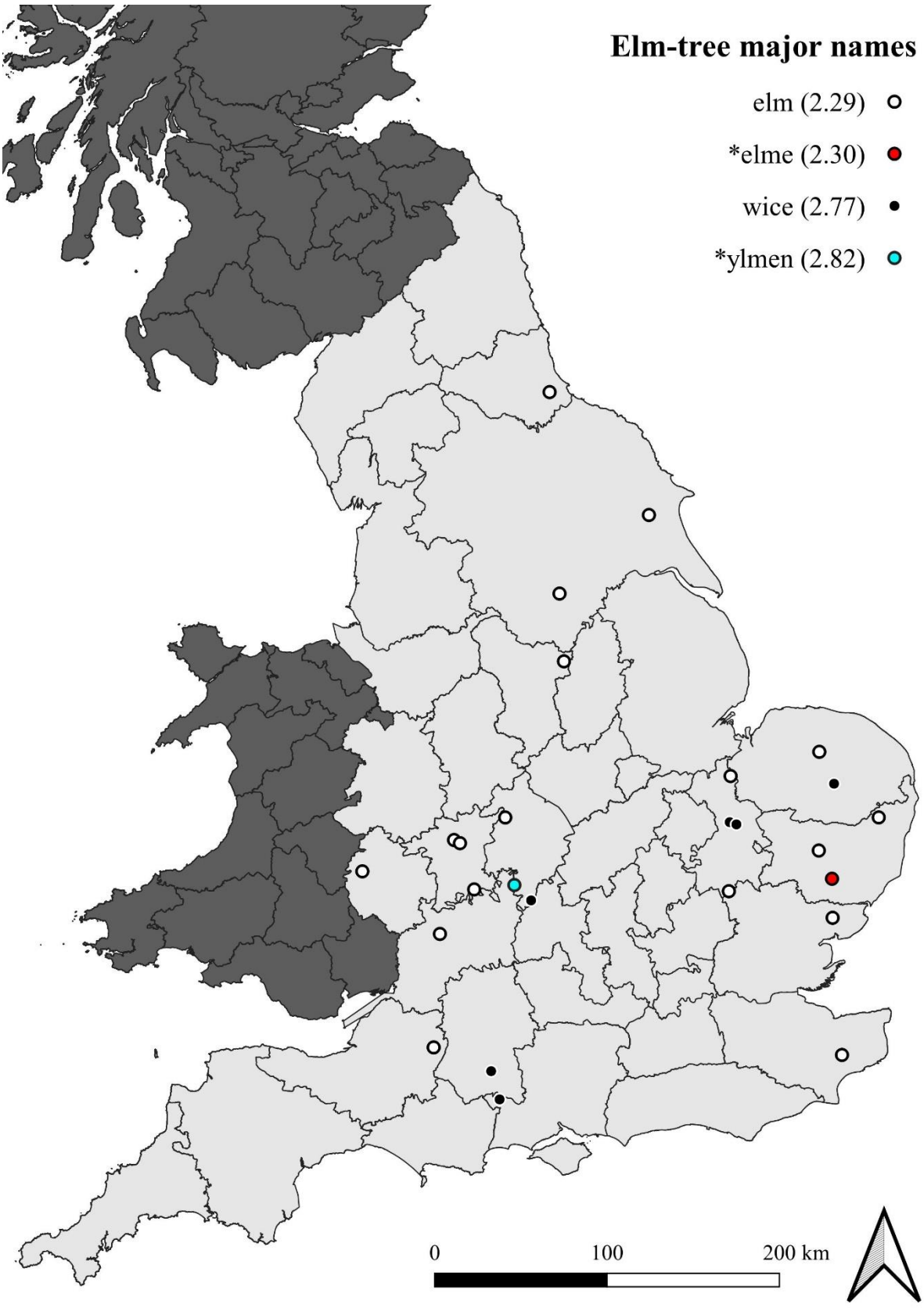


Figure 38: The distribution of elm major names first attested by 1200

North Elmham Nf was first distinguished from South Elmham Sf in the thirteenth century (*Northelmeham* 1252). In both 1035 and 1047 it was recorded simply as *Ælmham*, probably deriving from OE *elm-hām*, 'elm village/homestead', although the DB form *Elmenham* suggests influence from the adj. *****elmen*. Elm was once particularly abundant in woodland in Norfolk (see 2.29.1: Elm C), so it is interesting that North Elmham is the only elm major name in the county. As elm was so common, perhaps it was not typically a species considered worthy of note as a landmark in this region.

South Elmham Sf is first attested in the late twelfth century (*Elmham* 1198, *Elmeham* 1200, *Suthelmeham* 1327). The repetition of forms with *Elme*- suggest gen. pl. *elma*, 'place of the elm-trees' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 47–8). Watts (2004, 213) notes the various uses of elm wood and suggests that *elm-hām* place-names may have been estates where elm was worked. These were perhaps an alternative example of an *elm-tūn* type name, in an area where *tūn* was not such a common generic element: an eastern equivalent of western *āc-tūn* names perhaps (see 3.5 and 3.6), that made use of the abundant natural elmwoods of the region.

2.29.2.1 *elm-tūn*

Elmton Db (*Helmetune* 1086, *Elmeton*(*e*) 1176) appears to be gen. pl. *elma*, 'farm of the elms', although one thirteenth-century record (*Elmenton* 1276) may preserve the OE adj. *****elmen*, 'farm growing with elm-trees' **(**PNDb ii 256). The recurrence of functional tree-names with *tūn* encourages the interpretation of this as a site where elm timber was produced. Elm is the second most common timber in medieval buildings, likely a choice made with consideration of the properties of the wood rather than a reaction to which timber trees were most readily available, as ash (after oak) was the second most common timber tree-species in the medieval landscape (Rackham 2003, 267). Although Rackham's survey of medieval timber species was predominantly of extant medieval buildings, mostly of later construction than when these names were coined, there is little reason to believe the distribution and use of elm was not largely consistent throughout the medieval period.

2.29.3 *elm* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are 11 topographical *elm* major names attested by 1200, where *elm* is compounded with seven OE generic elements. The distribution of topographical *elm*

names varies, although the majority cluster in the west of England: in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, which was a well-wooded region in the medieval period (Rackham 2003, 114; 117; Hooke 2010, 120–1). This would suit the ecological characteristics of elm, which was predominantly a woodland tree that grew in stands and was largely reliant upon suckering for propagation.

There are two *elm* major names with generic OE *dūn*. The earliest forms of Elmdon Ess (*Elmdunā* 1086, *Elmedon*(*a*) 1141) appear to compound gen. pl. *elma*, or **elme*, and OE *dūn*, 'hill of the elm-trees' or 'elmwood hill'; however, as noted in PNEss (252) the suspension mark in the DB form is problematic and perhaps suggesting a shortening of **elmen*, 'elm-covered hill', which could also explain the later medieval attestations *Edelmedon* 1275 and *Elmendon* 1301. Watts (2004, 213) appears solely convinced of an etymology from **elmen-dūn*, 'hill growing with elm-trees'. Elmdon Wa shows similar development, with the DB form *Elmedone* 1086 and one later medieval form, *Elmendon* 1316 likely displaying the influence of **elmen*. Elmdon Ess sits at the summit of a hill, while the *dūn* at Elmdon Wa was probably the hill on which the old medieval church of St Nicholas once stood, later replaced by a new church in the eighteenth century (Salzman 1947, 67–9).

Elmbridge Wo (*Elmerige* 1086) looks to derive from gen. pl. *elma*, or **elme*, and OE *hrycg*, 'ridge of the elm-trees' or 'elmwood ridge'. By the thirteenth century it has forms with intrusive /b/ (*Elingbrige* 1211, *Aumbrug'* 1212, *Ellebrug'* 1235), possibly due to confusion with ME *brugge* 'bridge' (PNWo 290; Watts 2004, 213). Embleton Du is the most northerly elm-tree major name and is not attested until the twelfth century (*Elmedene* 1190, *Helmedena* 1200), with forms that look to compound gen. pl. *elma* and OE *denu*, 'valley of the elms' or 'elmwood valley'. PNDu (i 178) notes that in the nineteenth century the valley contained the remains of an old elmwood.

North and South Elmsall YW (*Ermeshala*, *Ermeshale* 1086; *Elmeshale* 1170; *Elmesale* 1264) were first differentiated in the thirteenth century (*Suthelmeshal*(*e*) 1230) but appear to have been one estate in the eleventh century, with forms that suggest gen sg. *elmes* (PNYW ii 36–7). The DB forms show liquid confusion between /l/ and /r/ that does not continue in later spellings (Mawer and Stenton 1933, 106). The generic is probably OE *halh*, 'nook of land, small valley, dry ground in marsh', with gen. sg. *elmes*. Gelling (1984, 108) has expressed uncertainty about the meaning

of *halh* in this name, as the location of the settlement is unclear, and it is difficult to ascertain which meaning of *halh* would be appropriate.

Elmore Gl (*Elmoura*, *Elmovre* 1137; *Elmofr'* 1210) is attested from twelfth century with forms suggesting OE *elm-ōfer*. The settlement sits in a large, waterlogged meander of the River Severn and is surrounded on three sides by the river (*Fig.39*), thus the *ōfer* here most likely referred to the 'river-bank' (PNGl ii 162). This is the only *elm* name that has a topographical association with the riparian landscape. On the European continent elm is predominantly a fenland tree, but this type of habitat for elms is 'unrepresented in Britain, which has had no native floodplain woodland for at least a thousand years' (Rackham 2003, 280). It is possible Elmore is indicative of a now lost elm fenland, a type that remains the principal habitat of elm-trees in mainland Europe (EAFTS 186) (see 2.77.2 Witchford C, Witcham C).

Elmswell Sf is first attested in the eleventh century (*Elmeswella* 1045×65, *Elmeswellam* 1086). It could be a compound of gen. sg. *elmes* and *wella*, 'spring of the elm', or, as proposed by Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 48–9) *elmes-***swelle*, 'hill of the elm', or **elme-***swelle*, 'hill of the elmwood'. They suggest the topography of this area is more suited to an etymology from OE **swelle*, as Elmswell is on a small hill: on which lies St John's Church and the Almshouses (2022 OS: TL 98229 63605). The ecological characteristics of elm also suggest this was perhaps an 'elmwood' rather than a singular elm-tree; however, LPN (32) treats this as a *wella* name and as **swelle* is not a well-attested element (EPNE ii 171) and there is a stream at the site, *wella* could be a possible alternative. It is worth noting that elm is a tree quite resistant to rot when waterlogged and it would thus grow well beside a spring or stream even if partially subject to seasonal flooding (Williamson et al. 2017, 104).

Elmswell in the parish of Great Driffield YE is a possible comparable example, with an *elm*-derived specific and a *wella* generic. It has previously been interpreted as 'Helm's spring' from the OE pers.n. **Helm*, as many of its early attestations begin with *H-* (*Helmesuuelle*, *Helmeswell*(*e*), *Helmeswella* 1086; *Elmeswell als*. *Helmeswell als*. *Helmeswell upon the Wolde* 1598) (PNYE 154); however, PASE has no record of a monothematic **Helm* and there are also recurrent early forms without *H-* (*Elmesuuelle* 1086, *Elmeswell*(*e*) 1112–22, *Em*(*e*)*swell* 1518). As there is nothing about the ecology or distribution of elm that would prevent the possibility of its

growth at this site and with a possible parallel example in Suffolk, this should be taken under consideration as an *elm* name.

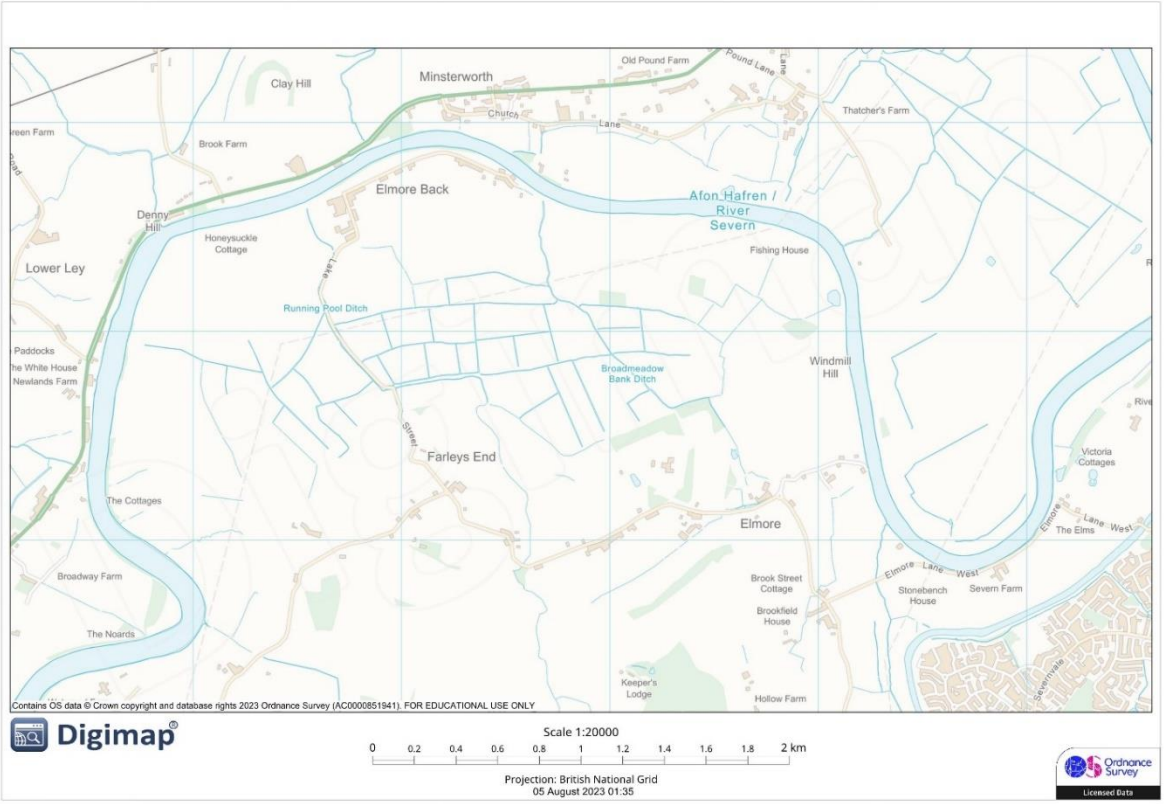


Figure 39: OS 2023 (1:20 000) map showing the location of Elmore within a meander of the River Severn

2.29.3.1 *elm-lēah*:

There are three examples in major names of *elm* compounded with OE *lēah*. Elmley Castle Wo is the earliest attested of these settlements, with charter references from the eleventh century (*Elmlege* 780(11th) S118; *Emlæh* 1042(18th) S1396).[35] Almeley He first appears in DB (*Elmelie* 1086) and then in 1165 as *Almeleia*, which is identical to the DB spelling of Elmley Lovett Wo (*Ælmeleia* 1086), these likely represent gen. pl. *elma* (Watts 2004, 213), 'open woodland of the elm-trees'. There are also two records of Elmley Lovett (*Elmesetene gemære* 817(11th) S1597; *Elmsetena gemære* 980(11th) S1342) that appear to refer to the boundary of the people of Elmley (Watts 2004, 213–4).

[35] The first of these references (S118) is generally considered to be a forgery (eSawyer) and may therefore better represent an eleventh-century spelling of this name.

While these *elm-lēah* names perhaps indicated clearings within predominantly elm-populated woodland, they may also have been sites where elm was coppiced. The traditional management of woodland elm is to coppice or treat suckers as underwood, interspersed with larger standard trees of elm or oak (Rackham 2003, 266). In the parish of Elmley Lovett there is support for the association of managed oak and elm in the early-attested minor name Acton (*Akton* 1275), which derives from the recurrent compound *āc-tūn*, probably a site where oak timber was managed or worked (see 3.5).

As a simplex place-name:

> Elm C (*Ælm* 656(1150) ASC) PNC 266; Great Elm So (*Teluue, Telma* 1086) Watts 2004, 213

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Elmstead Ess (*Elmesteda*, *Almesteda* 1086) PNEss 337 (**stede**); Elmsted K (*elmansteda* 811(13th) (S168, S1617) Watts 2004, 214 (**hām-stede**); North Elmham Nf (*Ælmham* 1047×70) Watts 2004, 213 (**hām**); South Elmham Sf (*Elmham* 1198) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 47 (**hām**)

With **tūn**:

> Elmton Db (*Helmetune* 1086) PNDb ii 256

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Elmbridge Wo (*Elmerige* 1086) PNWo 290 (**hrycg**); Elmdon Ess (*Elmdunā* 1086) PNEss 525 (**dūn**); Elmdon Wa (*Elmedone* 1086) PNWa 60 (**dūn)**; Elmore Gl (*Elmoura*, *Elmovre* 1137) PNGl ii 162 (**ōfer**); Elmsall, North and South YW (*Ermeshala*, *Ermeshale* 1086) PNYW ii 36, 39 (**halh**); Elmswell Sf (*Elmeswella* 1045×65) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 48 (***swelle**/**wella**); Elmswell YE (*Elmesuuelle* 1086) PNYE 154 (**wella**); Embleton Du (*Elmedene* c.1190) PNDu i 177 **(denu**)

With **lēah**:

> Almeley He (*Elmelie* 1086) Watts 2004, 10; Elmley Castle Wo (*Elmlege* 780(11th) S118) PNWo 122; Elmley Lovett Wo (*Elmesetene gemære* 817(11th) S1597) PNWo 240

2.30 *elme OE m. 'elmwood'

A collective noun that is unattested outside of place-names and is difficult to distinguish from oblique forms of OE **elm** (see 2.29) and the OE adj. ***elmen** (see 2.31); it may therefore account for more than just the one example detailed below (*Fig.38*) (see also 2.29.1: Elm C and Great Elm So; 2.29.2: Elmstead Ess; 2.29.3: Elmdon Ess, Elmbridge Wo, and Elmswell Sf).

2.30.1 **elme* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Elmsett Sf ((*æt*) *Ylmesæton* 962×91(11th) S1494, *Ylmesætun* 1000×1002(11th) S1486, *Elmeseta* 1086) appears to derive from the OE compound **elme-sǣte*, which Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 48) suggest could mean 'inhabitants of the elmwood'; however, Baker (2014a, 64–6) observes that even in the dat. pl. *sǣtum* this could alternatively have been the generic *sǣte* or (*ge*)*set*, giving '(at the) elm wood houses' or '(at the) elm wood folds'. Watts (2004, 214) notes that the first form *Ylme-* is the hypercorrect spelling for *Elme-* (see 2.82 ***ylmen**).

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Elmsett Sf (*Ylmesæton* 962×91(11th) S1494) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 48 (**sǣte**)

2.31 *elmen OE adj. 'growing with elm-trees, made of elm'

This OE adj. is not attested outside of place-names but may account for some major names discussed under **elm** (see 2.29), as early attestations of these names have forms that could suggest the medial *-n-* of **elmen*, describing a location where elm-trees grew (see 2.29.2: Elmsted K, North Elmham Nf, and Elmton Db; 2.29.3: Elmdon Ess and Elmdon Wa).

2.32 elri ON n. ‘alder, alderwood’

An ON noun that sometimes appears to have replaced or influenced **alor** ‘alder’ (see 2.2) in major names in the Danelaw area (EPNE i 150; VEPN i 11–12, 142) (see 2.2.3.1 *alor-tūn* names: Ellerton Abbey YN, Ellerton Priory YE, and Ellerton on Swale YN; 2.2.4 Ellerbeck YN, Ellerker YE).

2.33 epli ON n. ‘apple, fruit’

Frequently attested in ON texts (ONP: epli, sb. n.), where it is generally associated with Lat. *malum* ‘apple’ but was also used of other fruit. ON *epli* may have replaced the cognate OE **æppel** (see 2.7) in some major names in the Danelaw area; however, it is not possible to determine from early spellings whether these names originally derived from this element or whether the development of ON-influenced dialects affected later spellings (see 2.7.1.2 *æppel*: Appleby We, Eppleby YN; 2.9.1 ***æppling**: Eppleton Du; 2.8.2 **æppel-trēow**: Appletreewick YW).

2.34 eski ON n. ‘place growing with ash-trees, ashwood’

A collective noun indicating a place at which ash-trees grow (*Fig.14*); it sometimes replaced or influenced OE **æsc** (see 2.10) and/or ON **askr** (see 2.4) in place-names (VEPN i 21; 32). EPNE (i 160) suggests *eski* was used as a prefix meaning ‘ashen’, in place of and replaced by *æsc*.

2.34.1 *eski* as the generic element:

Louthesk Wapentake Li (*Ludes* 1086, *Ludesc* 1115, *Ludeske* 1202) does not have spellings with *-k-* until the thirteenth century but the *-c* of earlier forms was perhaps a velar /k/. Louthesk was the site of a meeting-place and Cameron (1998, 82) states ‘it is very likely that *eski* has replaced OE *æsc*’ and that it means ‘the ash at Louth’. If this was a case of replacement by *eski* it implies OE *æsc* referred collectively to a notable stand of ash-trees rather than a single ash.

2.34.2 *eski* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Early records of Eastoft YW (*Eschetoft*(*h*) 1164 –77, *Esketoft* 1199, *Es*(*s*)*hetoft* 1276 *Essetoft* 1304) suggest the ON compound *eski-topt*, ‘homestead by the ashwood’. PNYW (ii 4) notes that some early attestations appear to be influenced by OE *æsc*, although it is also possible the influence ran the other way, and this was originally an

Anglo-Scandinavian compound. Eastoft sits on the alluvial floodplain created by the River Ouse where the soil is clay-rich and nutrient-dense. Ash is tolerant of seasonal waterlogging and 'often found in flood-plain forests' (EAFTS 98–9), so the growth of ash-trees at this location is feasible (*Fig.23*).

As the generic element:

Louthesk Wapentake Li (*Ludes* 1086) Cameron 1998, 82 (**p.n.**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Eastoft YW (*Eschetoft*(*h*) 1164–77) PNYW ii 4 (**topt**)

2.35 fyrs OE m. 'furze'

The origin of this word is uncertain (OED: furze, n.: etymology) but a possible connection with OE *furh*, *fyrh* 'fir' has been suggested (EPNE i 190). In popular use it is an alternative name for common gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), which is also known regionally as whin (see 2.37 ***gorsiht**; 2.38 **gorst**; 2.50 ***hvin**). OE *fyrs* glosses Lat. *rhamnose paliurus* 'Christ's thorn' (possibly 'buckthorn'), *ruscus* 'butcher's broom', and *iuniperus* 'juniper' and there is also mention made of *fyrses berie* 'furze berry', which, as common gorse does not produce berries, is probably a reference to juniper (DOE: fyrs, fyres, n.).

There are only three major names attested by 1200 with a *fyrs* element and one from the derivative adj. ***fyrsen** (see 2.36) (*Fig.40*). OE *fyrs* is mentioned in six charters (LangScape: fyrs), where it is noted at the site of a ford in Corscombe Do (*fyrs ford*: S975, S933) and twice as the distinguishing feature of a hill at Halstock Do (*fyres hyll*: S290) and at Ashburton D (*fyrs penn*: S1547). There was also a *fyrs ige*, 'furze island', at Brimpton Brk (S500) and an *imeren fyrs garan*, 'boundary furze gore', at Cheselbourne Do (S955). Hooke (2010, 269) observes that references to gorse, including *fyrs* and **hvin*, are more common in later-recorded minor names. This is perhaps because the areas so-named were marginal land and were thus less likely to be associated with early settlements. The most common element to compound with gorse-related names is OE *feld* 'open land' (see 2.35.2: Fersfield Nf; 2.36 **fyrsen*: Fressingfield Sf; 2.37.1 **gorsiht*: Gosefeld Hundred Brk).

2.35.1 *fyrs* as a simplex name:

Furze D in Buckland parish is first recorded in DB as *Fersa* 1086 and in 1330 the estate belonged to Roger *atte Forse* in 1330 (PND i 35). Furze is in Braunton Hundred D, which is a *brom-tūn* place-name and further evidence of the possible scrub-like nature of the landscape in this area of Devon (see 2.23.3.1).

2.35.2 *fyrs* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Early forms of Fersfield Nf (*Fersafeld* 1035×40, *Ferseuella* 1086, *Fersfelde* 1212) suggest the OE compound *fyrs-feld*. The recurrence of *-e-* of the eleventh-century forms has led to the proposition that this could alternatively be OE **fers* 'heifer' (gen. pl. **fersa*) (Watts 2004, 229); however, PNYW (iii 228–30) suggests a possible furze etymology with a non-WSax form **fers* (see also 2.35.2.1 Farsley YW) The hamlet of Fersfield Common is 1.5 km north-east of Fersfield (1880s OS TM 0717 8406), suggesting there was unenclosed common land associated with this settlement. Shrub species like gorse and broom have strong associations with the open landscape of commons (see 2.23.4 *brōm-feld*).

2.35.2.1 *fyrs-lēah*:

Farsley YW (*Fersellei*(*a*) 1086, *Ferselg*, *Fersley*(*a*), *Ferslay* 1208) has early forms that consistently indicate the generic OE *lēah*. It has been suggested that these *Fe-* attestations and the medial *-e-* of the DB form give an etymology from OE **fers* 'heifer' (gen. pl *fersa*), which is perhaps supported by the name of the neighbouring parish of Calverley YW (*Cauerlei*(*a*), *Caverlei*(*a*) 1086), 'calf open woodland' (PNYW iii, xiii; Watts 2004, 226); however, an etymology from *fyrs* cannot be ruled out as this proximity might alternatively have encouraged reanalysis of *fyrs* as **fers*. PNYW (iii, 228–30) is more convinced of a *fyrs* etymology and suggests a non-WSax form **fers*, which could also explain the early forms of Fersfield Nf (see 2.35.2 above). The recurrent compound *brōm-lēah* (see 2.23.4.1) may provide a comparable example of this name type, as gorse, like broom, grows well in clearings and on woodland margins where there is adequate sunlight.

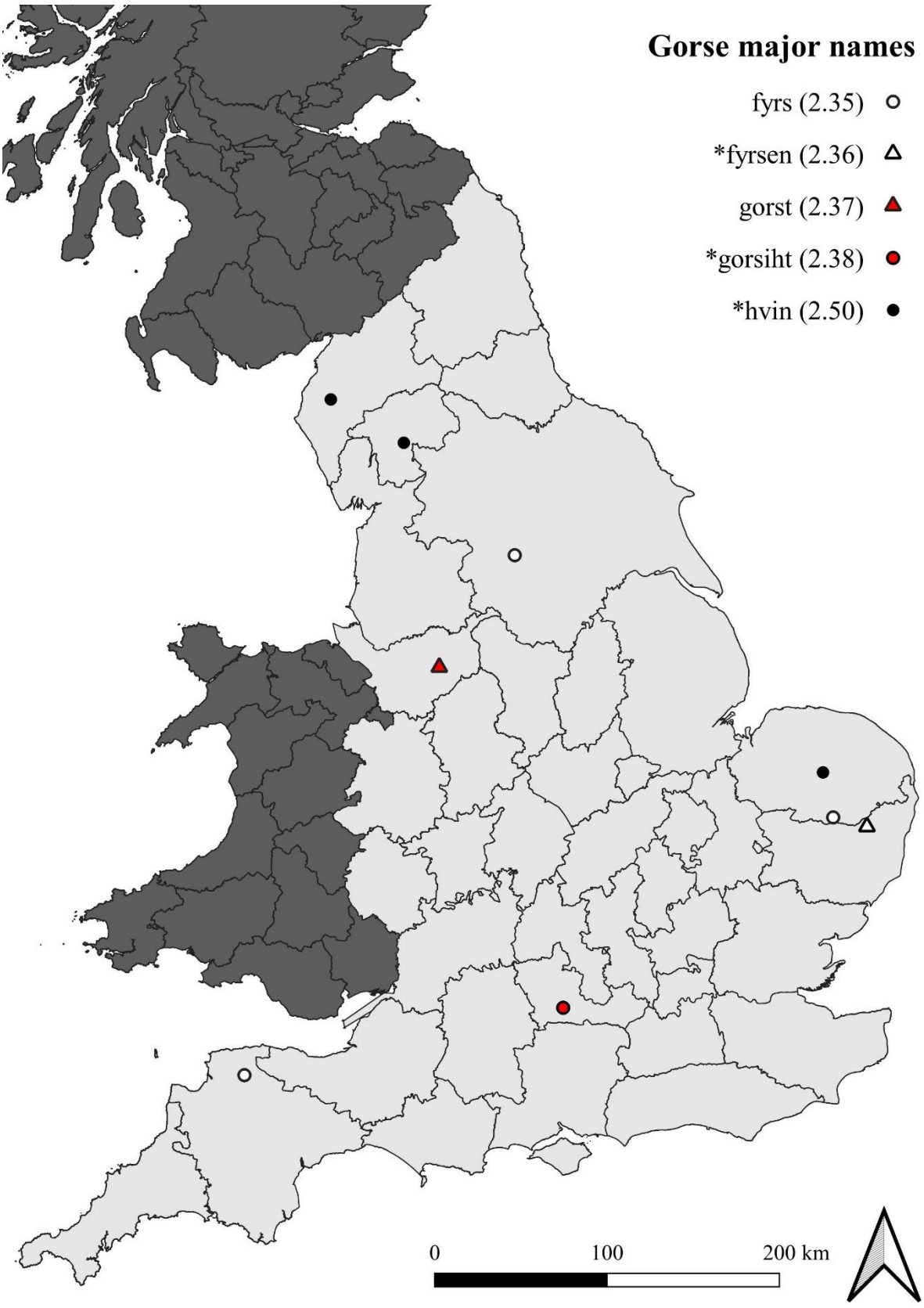


Figure 40: The distribution of gorse major names attested by 1200

As a simplex name:

Furze D (*Fersa* 1086) PND i 35)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Fersfield Nf (*Fersafeld* 1035×40) PNYW iii 228–30 (**feld**)

With **lēah**:

Farsley YW (*Fersellei*(*a*) 1086) PNYW iii 228

2.36 *fyrsen OE adj. ‘growing with furze’

See 2.35 **fyrs** for etymological discussion.

2.36.1 **fyrsen* as the specific in a topographical compound:

The name Fressingfield Sf (*Fessefelda* (sic) 1086, (*boscus de*) *Fressefeld* 1194) is partly uncertain, but some early forms suggest the OE adj. **fyrsen* and OE *feld*, ‘open land growing with furze’, with metathesis of *r* from at least the twelfth century (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 56). The alternative suggestion that the specific element could relate to the OE folk-name **Frisingas*, ‘people called after Frisa, the Frisian’ (Watts 2004, 241), is less likely – as although there are many later attestations with *-ing-* (*Fersingafelda* 1107×10, *Fressingfeud* 1254, *Fresingefeld’ Abbatis* 1291, *Fresingfeld* 1327) – it cannot explain the earliest forms (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 56). If this is a **fyrsen* name then it contributes to the association of gorse names with *feld*, which is the generic element in a third of gorse-related major names (see 2.35.2: Fersfield Nf; 2.37.1 ***gorsiht**: Gosefeld Hundred Brk).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Fressingfield Sf (*Fessefelda* (sic) 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 56 (**feld**)

2.37 *gorsiht ‘gorse’

See 2.38 **gorst** for etymological discussion.

2.37.1 **gorsiht* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Gosefeld Hundred Brk is a lost hundred name, now a part of Faircross Hundred. It is first attested in the mid-twelfth century (*Goseteldhdr’* 1169; *Goseteld’hdr’*1177;

Gosseteldhundredurn 1183; *Gossetеteldhundredum*, *Gosseteld'* 1188) and looks to be a compound of OE *feld* and **gorsiht*, a proposed derivative of *gorst* that would explain the *-et-* forms (Anderson 1939a, 206; PNBrk i 231). This gives the meaning 'gorse-covered open land'. The lack of attestations with the /f/ of *feld* can be attributed to assimilation with the final /t/ of **gorsiht*.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Gosefeld Hundred Brk (*Goseteldhdr'* 1169) PNBrk i 231 (**feld**)

2.38 gorst OE m. 'gorse'

In OE this word referred to *Ulex europaeus*, common gorse, but in a wider Germanic context may have encompassed a variety of prickly plants (OED: gorse, n.: etymology). OE *gorst* is attested in early medieval glossaries, where it is used to gloss Lat. *rubus* 'bramble', *ruscus* 'butcher's broom', *sentis* 'thorn, brier', *tribulus* 'thorn, thistle', and *iuniperus* 'juniper', along with other words of unknown meaning (DOE: gorst, n.). These glosses suggest that the meaning of *gorst* may have varied through time and by region, and although most point to a smaller shrub-like plant, the compound *gorst-bēam*, 'gorse tree' (DOE: gorst-bēam, n.), implies that gorse was perceived as a more tree-like species as well (see 1.3.2 for discussion of what a tree might have been in the early medieval mindset).

Common gorse had other names in OE that also form place-name compounds (see 2.35 **fyrs** and 2.50 ***hvin**). There are only two probable *gorst* derived major names attested by 1200 (see also 2.37 ***gorsiht**) and only nine gorse-related major names in total, including those with *fyrs* and **hvin* elements (*Fig.40*). This could suggest that gorse was a species not considered worthy of much note within the early medieval landscape, or perhaps more likely, it was a species not commonly associated with settlements. Gorse has long been used as a source of fuel and may have been dried and fed to livestock in the winter months when pasture was scarce; however, the prickly nature of this plant perhaps made it less appealing than a species like broom (see 2.23 **brōm**), which although similar in appearance, does not have thorns and is thus easier to handle.

2.38.1 As the compound *gorst-trēow*:

The name Goostrey Ch (*Gostrel* 1086, *Gostreo* 1199, *Gorestre*(*e*) 1192) probably derives from the OE compound *gorst-trēow* 'gorse tree'. Although from a modern perspective Ekwall (1960, 201) is correct in stating that this compound 'gives no sense', it is possible gorse was once perceived as a type of tree, much the same as hazel and broom, which, in the modern day, are categorised as shrubs (see 1.3.2). Alternatively, this may have been a reference to the juniper tree (PNCh ii 227), the modern name of which is not attested in English until the fourteenth century (MED: *juniper*, n.). This is not the only use of the compound *gorst-trēow* in place-names as Gostrow Hundred Sx (*Gosetre* 1230, *Gosetrewe* 1279, *Gosetrowe* 1316) has similar early attestations (PNSx ii 514).

As the compound **gorst-trēow**:

Goostrey Ch (*Gostrel* 1086) PNCh ii 226–7

2.39 haga OE m. 'haw, fruit of the hawthorn'

This word may be an elliptical form of **hægberie*, although this is not a sense found in other languages (OED: haw, n.2: etymology; EPNE i 221). In early medieval glossaries *haga* glosses Lat. *cinus*, which DOE (haga, n.2) interprets as an 'aphetic form of *acinus* '"berry"'. It is difficult to distinguish from OE *haga* 'hedge', as both appear to derive from Germanic **hagon*-, the latter cognate with ON *hagi* and OHG *hag*, from which developed MHG *hagen* 'thornbush' (OED: haw, n.1: etymology). The propensity of hawthorn to grow as a dense hedgerow species and its use as a means of demarcating land no doubt explains the semantic development and further complicates differentiation in place-names. LangScape gives one charter reference to a *hag treowe* in the bounds of Hendon Mx (S1450) (for further discussion see 2.40 **hagu-þorn**).

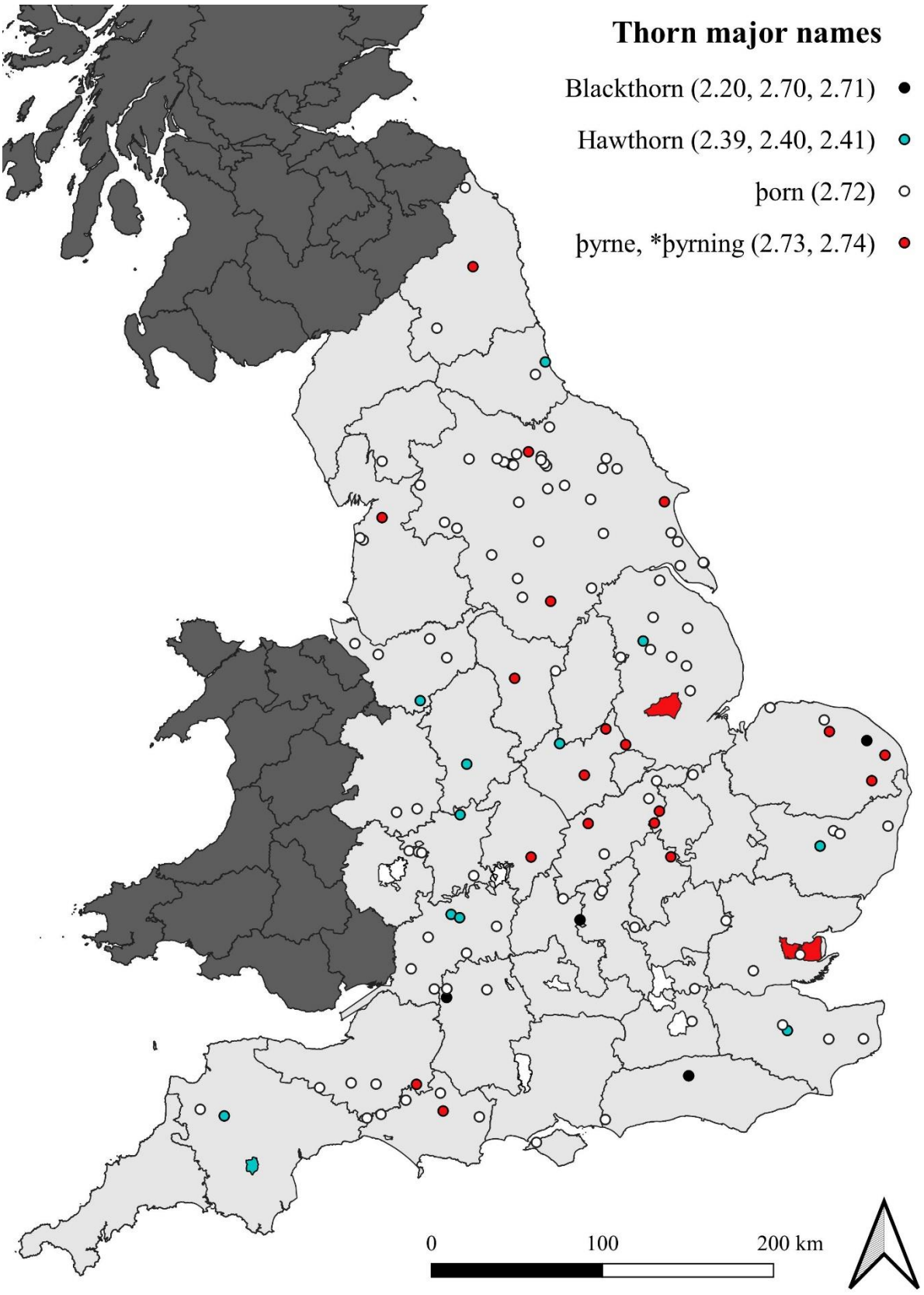


Figure 41: The distribution of all thorn major names attested by 1200

2.39.1 *haga* as the specific in a topographical compound:

2.39.1.1 *haga-lēah*:

There are two possible major-name examples of the OE compound *haga-lēah* (*Fig.41*) that may be identical in meaning with recurrent *haguþorn-lēah*, 'hawthorn open woodland' (see 2.40.3.1). Alternatively, this could have meant 'hedge open woodland', perhaps indicating an area of coppice woodland surrounded by a hedge to protect new growth from browsing deer and livestock. This is a traditional woodland management technique apparent in later records and still used to this day (*Fig.42*), and it is noteworthy that thorn is a common component of these 'dead hedges' (Williamson et al. 2017, 7; 58) (see also 2.72.4 *þorn-haga*). The compound *haga-lēah* is also recurrent in minor names, with examples like Great Hagley in Hopton Castle Sa (*Haggele* 1255), Hagley in Chirbury Sa (*Adam de Haggeleye* 1327, *Haggeley* 1525), Hagley in Rugeley St (*Hageleia* 1130, *Haggleges* 1166; *Hagelega* 1169), and Hagley in Alkington Gl (*Haggele* 1248).



Figure 42: A dead hedge surrounds a recently coppiced area of Bradfield Woods, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2018)

Haughley Sf is first recorded in the eleventh-century (*Hag'e'le* 1035×44(13th) S1521, *Hagala* 1086). It has two medieval forms that end in *-et* ((*de honore de*) *Hagenet* c.1190, (*honour of*) *Haghenet* 1253), representing a noun suffix that Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 66) note is a frequent attachment to vegetation names and in this context could mean 'clumps of hawthorn'. The collective function of the suffix *-et* when compounded with a tree-species is evidenced in OE and ME charters (EPNE i 161) and appears to have been used also of sloe in *slāhett* and thorn in *þornett* and *þyrnett*. The apparent lack of OE *lēah* in these *-et* forms suggests an alternative name or perhaps reference to a different landscape feature (compare other early spellings such as *Haule* 1254; *Haghele*, *Haggele* 1254; *Haule*(*gh*), *Hauleg*, *Hauley* 1254–1400). There is no satisfactory explanation for the medial *-n-*, but it was perhaps the oblique form *hagan*.

PNWo (292) states that Hagley Wo (*Hageleia* 1086; *Hagelega* 1168; *Haggele*(*ge*), *Haggeleg*, *Haggeley* 1212) derives from the OE pers.n. *Hæcga*. While this is formally possible, an etymology from hawthorn seems preferable as hawthorn is a light-seeking pioneer species of woodland margins and clearings (*Fig.43*) and is often represented in *lēah* names (see 2.40.3.1 *haguþorn-lēah*; 2.72.4.1 *þorn-lēah*). Attestations with <gg> may be the result of interchange with **hagga* 'haw, hawthorn', which EPNE (i 222) describes as a secondary geminated form of *haga*, while Ekwall (1960, 211) suggests that **hacga* could be a hypocoristic form of *haga*.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

With **lēah**:

Hagley Wo (*Hageleia* 1086) PNWo 292; Haughley Sf (*Hagele* 1035×44) Watts 2004, 287



Figure 43: White-flowering hawthorn in a coppiced clearing at Arger Fen, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2018)

2.40 hagu-þorn OE m. ‘hawthorn’

A compound of OE **haga** ‘haw’ (see 2.39) and **þorn** ‘thorn’ (see 2.72), that is cognate with ON *hagþorn* and developed parallel to MHG *hage*(*n*)*dorn*, *hagdorn* (OED: hawthorn, n.: etymology). The variant form ***hagu-þyrne** (see 2.40), with OE **þyrne** ‘thorn-bush’ (see 2.73) is discussed below. There are 12 independent attestations in OE glossaries that gloss *hagu-þorn*, *hæg-þorn* as Lat. *alba spina* ‘white thorn’, another name for the common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), which produces white blossom in late spring (DOE: hagu-þorn, hæg-þorn, n.). There are two uses of the compound *hay thorn* in the charter bounds of Harmondsworth Mx (S119) and Dauntsey W (S1580), a *hegðorn* in the bounds of Overton Ha (S377), a *hæg þorne* at Weston near Bath So (S508), and an *agen þorn* at Iwerne Minster Do (S630): perhaps a reduced form of declined *hagan*.

There are nine possible *hagu-þorn* major names recorded by 1200; five have a reduced modern spelling beginning Hather-, which presents the possibility that these names alternatively derive from, or were influenced by, OE *hǣddre*, ME *hather* 'heather'. Hatherton St (2.40.2.1) provides the only clear example of an early OE attestation of *hagu-þorn* (*Hagenþorndun* 996(19th) S1380), with the declined form *hagen*, and while this charter is of spurious origin, consensus opinion is that it is based on authentic OE material (eSawyer). Hatherton St is subsequently attested as *Hargedone* 1086, with total loss of the *þorn* element, and *Hatherdon* 1203, which shows possible confusion with ME *hather*. From this it can be suggested that a similar contraction of *þorn* took place with the compounds *haguþorn-tūn* (2.40.2.1) and *haguþorn-lēah* (2.40.4.1).

2.40.1 As the compound *hagu-þorn*:

There are four major names that derive from the compound *hagu-þorn*, two of which were the names of hundred meeting-places. Haytor Hundred D (*Heithorn* 1184, *Heithornhundredum* 1185) is attested from the twelfth century. PND (ii 504) suggests the alternative OE compound (*ge*)*hæg-torr*, 'outcrop with an enclosure', on the strength of repeated attestations with *-tor* (*Heitor*(*r*) 1187, *Haitorehundredum* 1188, *Heytore* 1238); however, as Anderson (1939a, 96) notes, there is evidence for the loss of /n/ after /r/ at the end of place-names and it is more likely *þorn* came to resemble *torr*, which is a recurrent generic in the county, rather than the reverse. Most early attestations of Eyhorne Hundred K are spelt *-horne*, with some variation of forms in DB (*Haiborne* (sic), *Aihorde*, *Haihorne Hund'*, *Haihorne* 1086). This suggests an etymology from *hæg-þorn* with early and sustained loss of the initial *H-* and AN substitution of /h/ for the <th> of *þorn* (Wallenberg 1931, 101; Wallenberg 1934, 218). It is not entirely clear why thorn-related sites appear so often to have been the location of meeting-places (see 2.72 *þorn*). This may have had something to do with the remarkable appearance of hawthorn in late spring, when it is covered with an abundance of white blossom (*Fig.44*).



Figure 44: A hawthorn hedge in full bloom at Bestwood Country Park, Nottingham (J. Treacher, May 2020)

Hackthorn Li (*Haggethorn* 968; *Hagetorne*, *Hagetorn*, *Agetorne* 1086) shows AN influence on the generic, although this does not appear to have been consistent (*Hacæthor* (sic) 1150). Like Smith's (EPNE i 222) proposal of a secondary geminated form **hagga* (see also 2.39.1.1 *haga*: Hagley Wo), PNLi (vi 167) suggests a sideform – OE **hægg-þorn* – that can explain the earliest attestation and the later development to *Hac-*. Alternatively, Watts (2004, 268) proposes interchange with a possible **haca-þorn*, 'hook thorn', that may also explain the later development of the name Hackthorn W (*le Hakthorn* 1360). Hawthorn Du is not recorded until the twelfth century (*Hagathorne* c.1115, *Hagethorn* 1155, *Hagelhthorn* (sic), *Haithethorn* c.1190), but appears to be a straightforward example of the compound *hagu-þorn* (Watts 2004, 289) – with possible later influence from ME *hather* 'heather' – indicating a '(place at) the hawthorn(s)'.

2.40.2 *hagu-þorn* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.40.2.1 *haguþorn-tūn*:

The early forms of Hatherton Ch (*Haretone* 1086, *Hatherton* 1262, *Hathyerton* 1341) are perhaps the result of radical reduction of the compound *haguþorn-tūn* 'hawthorn farm' – a variant of the recurrent northern compound *þorn-tūn* (see 2.72.3.1) – and show later influence from ME *hather* 'heather'. PNCh (iii 62) is convinced of a *haguþorn-tūn* etymology, while Watts (2004, 286) proposes an alternative in **hǣthor-tūn*, 'heath settlement'. It is worth noting that minor names in the area indicate heathland (*Chorlton Heath* 1831, *Heath Field* 1842) and plants associated with heath (*The Broomlands* 1831, *Gorsty Bank* 1842 and Gorse Wood 1900s OS: SJ 67543 46855), suggesting possible origin from OE *hǣddre* 'heather' or OE *hǣð* 'heath, heather'; however, hawthorn is also a heathland inhabitant.

2.40.3 *hagu-þorn* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Hatherton St derives from the OE compound *haguþorn-dūn*, 'hawthorn hill' (discussed above: 2.40).

2.40.3.1 *haguþorn-lēah*:

There are three major names with the OE compound *haguþorn-lēah* that show early contraction of the consonant cluster <rnl>, although as already discussed (2.40), an etymology from OE *hǣddre* 'heather' is also formally possible. Down Hatherley Gl (*Athelai* 1086, *Haiderleia* 1150, *Haþerle*(*a*) 1200, *Dun Heytherley*(a) 1255) has the prefix ME *doun* 'down' to differentiate from Up Hatherley Gl (*Hegberleo* (sic) 1022(15th) S1424, *Hupheberleg'* 1221, *Up Hetherleye* 1263–84), which lies 5 km upstream on Hatherley Brook (PNGl ii 145–6).

Hatherleigh D (*Hadreleia* 1086 *Hatherlegam* 1193) is comparable with six minor name examples beginning Hather-, Heather-, or Hether- in Devon that show similar linguistic development: Hatherton (*Hatherdon* 1418), Hathercombe (*Heddrescumbe* 1277), Hatherland (*Hederlond*(*e*) 1286), Hatherleigh (*Hatherlegh* 1330), Heathercombe (*Heddercumb* 1244), and Hetherland (*Lahedreland* 1205). PND (i 142–3) suggests that while it is possible some of these names could have indicated heathland, from OE *hǣð* 'heath', 'there is no evidence that the word heather was in

common use in Southern England until modern times and there is no evidence for the presence of the plant itself at many of the places in question'. The compound *hagu-þorn* is thus perhaps the preferable etymon.

Looking beyond Devon and considering names with the generic *lēah*, it is apparent that the compound *hǣð-lēah*, with the meaning 'heath open woodland' does not make much topographical sense, as heathland is not usually associated with woodland, even open woodland like that implied by the generic. The secondary sense of *hǣð* 'heather', or the compound *hǣddre-lēah*, 'heather open woodland', could be possible, as clearance of trees may have allowed for the growth of heather 'or other similar small plants and shrubs' (EPNE i 219). It is possible that some of the more northerly situated names may derive from one of these compounds, but a *hagu-þorn* etymology makes the most sense, as hawthorn is a light seeking plant that prefers to grow in clearings and on woodland margins and is a common pioneer species of cleared land (*Fig.43*). The Midland or 'woodland' hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) is more often found growing in ancient woodland than common hawthorn and, despite the name, is generally now found in the south and east of England (Rackham 2003, 352). It was perhaps this variety that gave rise to woodland-related thorn names, of which there are relatively few: only 8.45% of all thorn major names, the majority resulting from a compound with generic *lēah* (see 2.39.1.1 *haga-lēah*: Hagley Wo, Haughley Sf; 2.70.1.1 *slāh-lēah*: Sloley Nf; 2.72.4.1 *þorn-lēah*: Thorley Hrt, Thorley Li, Thorley Wt).

As the compound *hagu-þorn*:

> Eyhorne Hundred K (*Haiborne* (sic), *Aihorde*, *Haihorne Hund'*, *Haihorne* 1086) Anderson 1939b 123; Hackthorn Li (*Haggethorn* 968) PNLi vi 167; Hawthorn Du (Hagathorne c.1115) Watts 2002, 56; Haytor Hundred D (*Heithorn* 1184) Anderson 1939a 96

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

> Hatherton Ch (*Haretone* 1086, *Hatherton* 1262) PNCh iii 62

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Hatherton St (*Hagenþorndun* 996(19th) S1380) PNSt i 123 (**dūn**)

With **lēah**:

Down Hatherley Gl (*Athelai* 1086) PNGl ii 145; Hatherleigh D (*Hadreleia* 1086) PND i 142; Up Hatherley Gl (*Hegberleo* 1022) PNGl ii 146

2.41 *hagu-þyrne OE f. 'hawthorn'

See 2.40 **hagu-þorn** and 2.73 **þyrne** for discussion.

2.41.1 As the compound **hagu-þyrne*:

Hathern Le (*Avederne* 1086, *Hauthirn*(*e*) c.1130, *Hauethirn*(*e*) a.1150) has early attestations that suggest the OE compound **hagu-þyrne*, which is not attested outside of place-names, but appears to be a variant form of *hagu-þorn* (Ekwall 1960, 224). It is possible that the two thirteenth-century forms with medial *-c-* (*Hacthurne* 1230, *Hachethyrn* 1242) show the influence of **haca-þorn*, which PNLe (vii 83) suggests corresponds to Dutch *haakedorn*, like Hackthorn Li (see 2.40.1).

As the compound *hagu-þyrne*:

Hathern Le (*Avederne* 1086, *Hauthirn*(*e*) c.1130) PNLe vii 83

2.42 hasl ON m. 'hazel'

Cognate with OE **hæsel** (see 2.43) and OHG *hasal* (OED: hazel, n.: etymology), this word is also attested independently in ON (ONP: hasl, sb. m.). It may originally have had a parallel collective form in ON *hesli* 'place growing with hazels' (see 2.47). Hasland Db (*Has*(*e*)*land* 1310, *Heslond* 13th) has forms that suggest an etymology either from the Anglo-Scandinavian formation *hæsel-lundr* or ON *hasl-lundr*, with possible later influence from ON *hesli* (*Heselunt* 1263) (see 2.43.4).

2.43 hæsel OE n. 'hazel'

OE *hæsel* is recorded in early medieval medical texts, charters, place-names, and in OE glossaries where it glosses both Lat. *coryllus* and Lat. *avellana/avellanus* (DOE:

hæsel, n.). It is a cognate of OHG *hasal* and ON *hasl* (OED: hazel, n.: etymology), the latter possibly influencing some toponyms (see 2.42 **hasl**). The interchange between forms beginning *Ha-* and *He-* in place-names can perhaps be attributed to differences in OE dialect and to the influence of ON **hesli** (see 2.47) on the development of Old and Middle English (EPNE i 218). There are 20 *hæsel* major names first attested by 1200. Of these, none are habitative names, although there are three *hæsel-burh*, 'hazel fortification', sites recorded in charter bounds at Tadmarton O (S584, S617), Bradford-on-Avon W (S899), and Woodchester Gl (S103), and two possible uses of the OE collective noun ***hæsling** in compound with *tūn* (see 2.46.1.1).

Native hazel (*Corylus avellana*) is technically a shrub as it has many shoots that grow from a submerged root base, rather than a single trunk (Rackham 2003, 203); however, modern taxonomic categorization is not necessarily reflective of the perceptions of early medieval people (further discussion 1.3.2). Most hazel major names have a north and westerly distribution (*Fig.45*), many conforming to an area identified by Rackham (2010, 72; 101) as the 'oak-hazel province', which aligns with the Palaeozoic geology of the region: resulting in soil that is acidic, well-draining, and infertile – a habitat particularly suited to oak and hazel woodland. Heavier annual rainfall in the west also benefits the development of hazelnuts and subsequently the propagation of the species (Rackham 2010, 286). For further discussion of the distribution of hazel names see Chapter Five (5.3).

Some names are excluded from this corpus despite the suggestion that they may derive from *hæsel*, as their linguistic and geological contexts do not provide convincing evidence to support their inclusion. It has been suggested that Hasfield Gl (*Hasfeld*(*e*) 1086, *Hesfeld* 1199, *Esfeld* 1240) could derive from the OE compound *hæsel-feld*, 'hazel open country' (PNGl iii 148); yet the complete early absence of *-el* is suspicious and these forms could indicate instead an etymology from *hǣs*, *hese*, 'brushwood open country'. OE *feld* is recurrent with broom (see 2.23.4: Bramfield Sf, Brimfield He, Brimpsfield Gl, Bromfield Sa, Broomfield Ess, K, So) and gorse (see 2.35.2: Fersfield Nf) names, which like brushwood, are species that often grow in open spaces without the cover of dense woodland canopy. The clay-rich soil at Hasfield is unfavourable for pure hazelwood, which Rackham (2003, 214) defines as a stand with underwood more than three-quarters hazel and which tends to grow on less-fertile acidic sand-based soil.

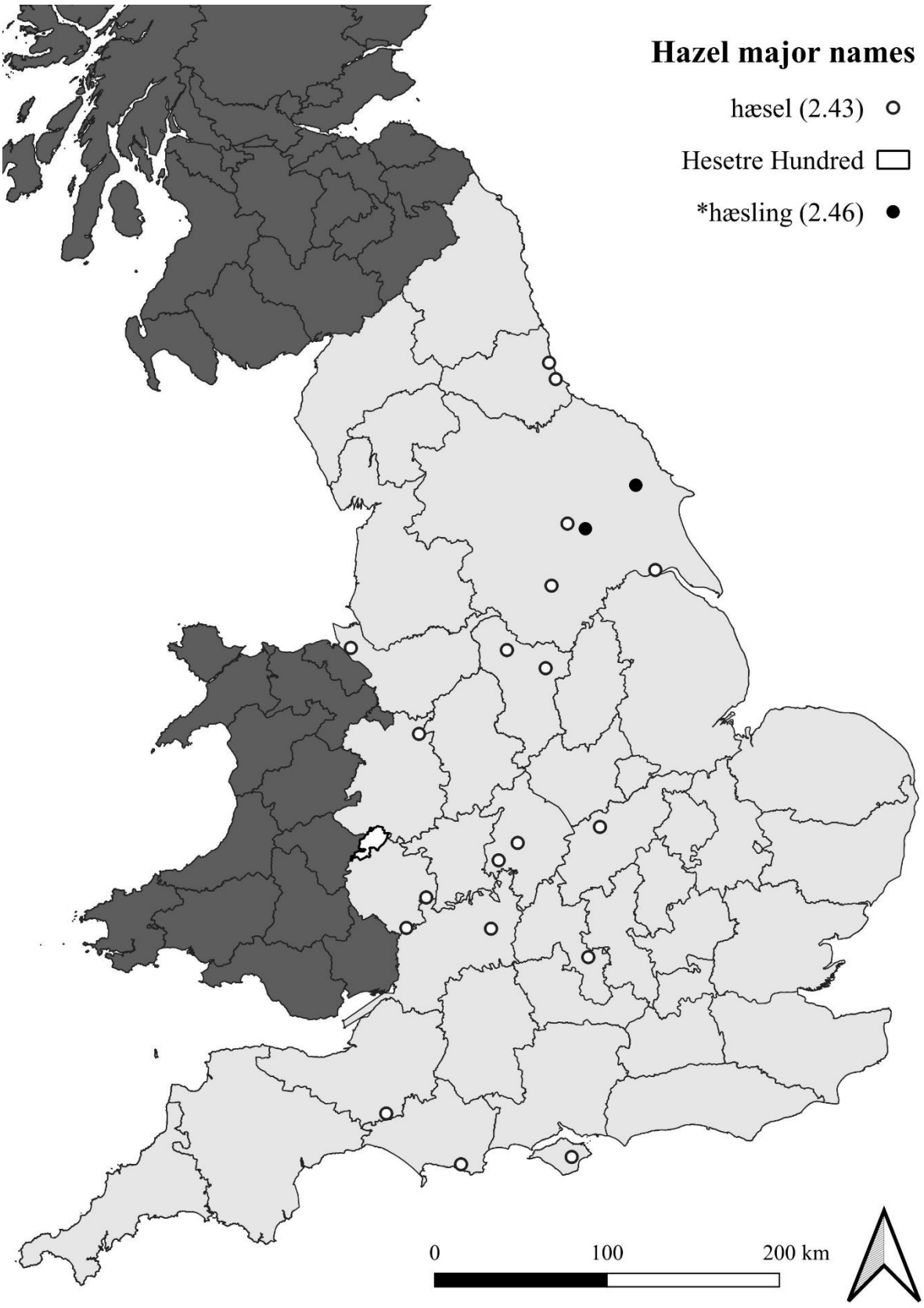


Figure 45: The distribution of hazel major names first attested by 1200

Ekwall (1960, 224) treats Haswell Du and Haswell near Goathurst So as *hæsel-welle* names. Watts (2004, 285) prescribes Haswell Du (*Hessewella* 1131; *Hessewell'*, *Heswell* 1153×95; *Hesewell* 1190) as having an uncertain etymology, as it has no forms with medial *-l-* until the sixteenth century (*Hasilwell* 1580). He suggests a pers.n. cognate with the Germanic pers.n. *Hasso*, *Hesso* or OE *hægtesse*, *hætse* 'witch'. Haswell (ModE Halswell) So (*Hasewelle* DB, *Halswell* 1243) has a thirteenth century form with medial *-l-*, which is possibly a metathesized form of *hæsel*, but is perhaps more likely reflective of OE *hals* (WSax *heals*): as seen with Halsinger D (*Halsangra* 1167); Halsway So ((*æt*) *Healswege* c.1080 ASC); Halse in Bow D (*Hax* 1086, *Halse* 1196) and Halse So (*Halse* 1086). Both names contrast the similarly spelt Heswall Ch (2.43.4), which does appear to be a hazel name.

2.43.1 *hæsel* as a simplex place-name:

There are two simplex *hæsel* major names: Hessle YE (*Hase* 1086) and Hessle YW (*Hasele*, *Asele* 1086). In later medieval records, most forms for Hessel YE (*Hesel*(*l*) 1156, *Hesil*(*l*) 1252, *Hessell*, *Hessyll* 1285) and Hessel YW (*Hesal* 1119, *Hesel*(*a*) 1215, *Hesil*(*l*) 1277), are spelt *He-*, probably through the influence of ON *hesli* 'place growing with hazels' (PNYE 215, PNYW 89). This influence suggests these names may have referred to a group of hazels rather than a single tree, which is also an ecological probability as hazel grows most often in clusters (Hooke 2010, 254). Yet, there is precedent in charter bounds for reference to single specimens, such as the *haran hæsl*, 'hoar hazel', at Fovant W (S881) and *þe hasil*, 'the hazel', at Uplyme D (S442). Hessle YE appears to have given rise to the DB hundred name *Hase hundret* 1086, which according to Anderson (1934, 16) was a district around Hessle in the south-east corner of Harthill Wapentake.

2.43.2 As the compound **hæsel-trēow*:

The hypothesized compound **hæsel-trēow* could explain the Domesday hundred name *Hesetre* He (*Hezetre*, *Hesetre hd'* 1086), later a part of Wigmore Hundred (Anderson 1934, 162). The lack of medial *-l-* is paralleled in the medieval forms of *Hase hundret* 1086, named from Hessel parish YE (see 2.43.1) and Hazelbury Bryan Do (*Hasebere*, *Haseberg*(*e*) 1201) (see 2.43.4 under discussion of Hazelbury Plucknett So). The element *trēow* potentially lessens the likelihood of this being OE

hǣs, *hese*, as 'brushwood tree' would make little sense. See 1.3.2 for further discussion of this compound.

2.43.3 *hæsel* as the generic element:

Thirteenth-century forms of Colehurst Manor Sa consistently suggest the generic *hæsel*, making this the sole example of a *hæsel* generic in major names. Some early attestations are obscure and show probable AN influence (*Corselle* 1086, *Cunshesel* 1291–2, *Colsesene* 1291–2) but some have what looks to be genitive *-s* (*Colsisel* 1242, *Coleshasel* 1255–6), which suggests the qualifier is possibly the OE pers.n. *Col* (PNSa i 95–6; v 232). Gelling (PNSa i 95) suggests that *hæsel* was used collectively to mean, Col's hazel clump', as seen of *alor* in Longnor (see 2.2.2). As it is rare to find hazel growing in isolation (2.43.1), this does seem likely.

2.43.4 *hæsel* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are 16 topographical hazel major names with a *hæsel* specific that compounds with one of 11 generic elements. The earliest forms of Cold Hesleden Du (*Heseldene* 1040(12th), *minori hæseldene* 1172×95) and Monk Hesleden Du (*Heseldene* c.1050, *Hæseldene* c.1085) indicate the OE generic *denu* 'valley' (Mawer 1920, 112; Watts 2002, 28). Monk Hesleden is situated beside a typical *denu*: a long narrow valley with moderately steep sides (LPN 114). In the valley below the village is a small area of woodland known as Heselden Dene (2022 OS: NZ 4417 3776), indicative perhaps of pleonastic suffixing of a later reflex of *denu*. The valley has acidic sand-based soil that is well-suited to hazelwood growth, in contrast with the surrounding landscape and the site of the village itself, which sits on flatter and more fertile clay-rich soil. It is not as easy to distinguish the *denu* site at Cold Hesleden as there is no immediately apparent valley. The remains of the medieval village stand directly east of the modern hamlet (2022 OS: NZ 4166 4676) and the topography here is high and relatively flat. Directly south-west and following the course of the modern roads there is a decrease in elevation (15 metres lower than the medieval settlement) and a change in soil type from clay-rich to sand-loam (*Fig.46*). It is possible that this was once the *denu* described in the name, but industrialisation of the area over the past few hundred years means it is not possible to be certain. The exposed elevation of this site explains the prefix OE *cald* 'cold, exposed' (Watts 2004, 300).

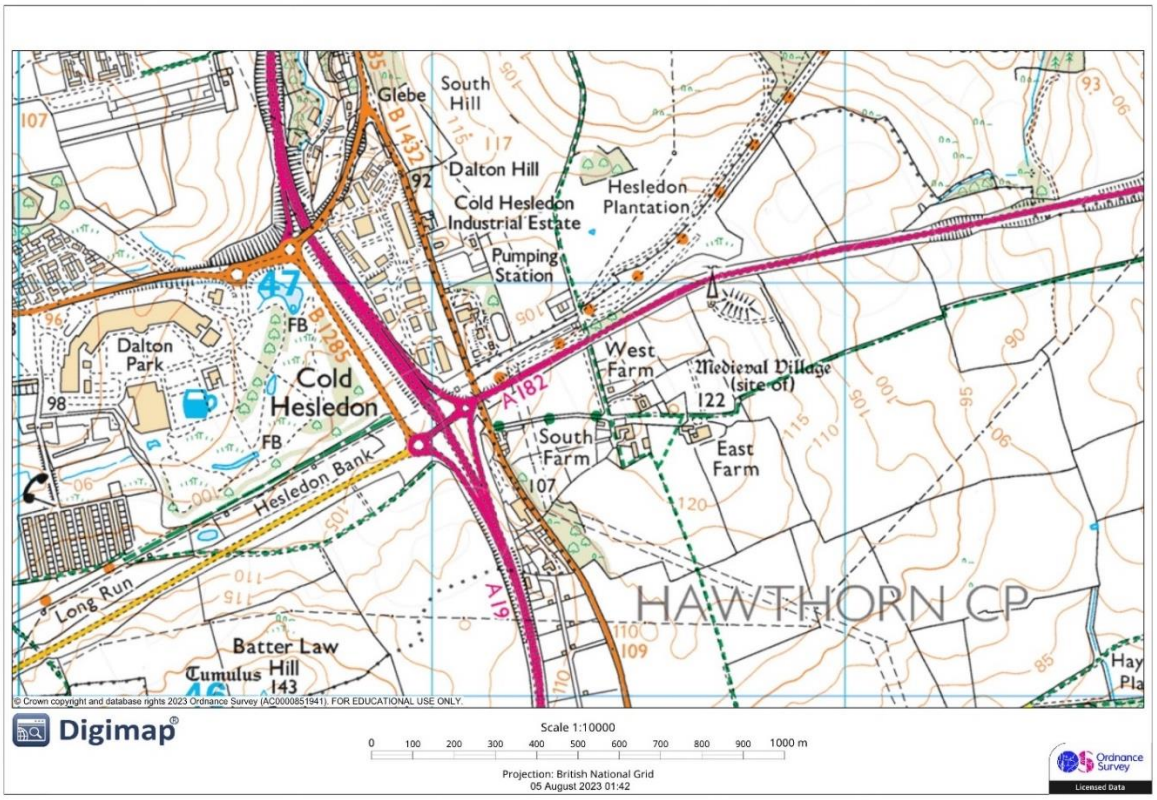


Figure 46: OS 2023 (1:25 000) map showing the elevation surrounding the hamlet of Cold Hesleden, including the shallow glacial river valley where the B1432 (orange) and A19 (pink) now run

The earliest forms of Hazleton Gl indicate the generic OE *denu* (*Hasedene* 1086, *Heseldene* early 12th), while some later forms appear to be a reanalysis to OE *tūn* (*Haselton*(*a*) 1174, *Heselton*(*a*) 1201) (Watts 291). There is an area of woodland called Hazelton Grove (*Hasilton groue* 1530) immediately north of the settlement, which sits at the top of a long valley. The soil here is loam-rich and alkaline, which is an environment not immediately favourable for pure hazelwood, but there is still a possibility of hazel in mixed woodland, which if cultivated for coppice could explain possible later association with the element *tūn* (see also 2.46.1.1 the compound **hæsling**-*tūn*, 'farm producing hazel').

Haselor Wa (*Haseloue* 1086, *Haseloure* 12th, *Haseloura* 1150) looks to be a compound of OE *hæsel-ofer*, 'hazel-tree ridge' (Watts 2004, 285). LPN (201) identifies the *ofer* as the level hilltop on which the medieval church now stands (Historic England: 1024525). The loam-based mildly alkaline soil at the site could support hazel but is not suggestive of pure hazelwood. Hasler Do was the site of a

meeting-place that gave its name to the Hundred. The earliest known record of the name is from DB (*Haselore hundret* 1086), which with subsequent attestations ((*hund' de*) *Haselor*(*e*) 1198, (*hund' de*), (*hund' de*) *Heselore*) points to the generic OE *ōra*, although one spelling shows substitution with OE *ofer* (*Haselovere* 1210). It is recorded that the hundred court used to be held at a barrow overgrown by hazelwood (Anderson 1939a, 121–2). The name of the meeting-place survives as the name of a small coppice half a mile north-west of Steeple parish church (2022 OS: SY 9054 8145), which lies on the slopes of the Purbeck Hills (PNDo i 70–1). Although *ōra* has multiple possible meanings, in this instance it likely referred to the 'slope of a flat-topped ridge' (LPN 206), one that was apparently populated by hazel.

Hazelhurst Sx (*Hæselersc* 1018, *Halsesse* 1086, *Haslerse* c.1180) in Ticehurst parish has early forms that suggest the generic OE *ersc* 'a ploughed field, stubble field' (PNSx ii 452), which with the specific *hæsel* could mean something like 'ploughed/stubble land overgrown with hazels'. The change to -hurst in the modern spelling of the name is possibly through association with the parish name Ticehurst (*Tycheherst* 1248). EPNE (i 157) notes that in place-names *ersc* 'is combined usually with significant words' and gives two examples with the tree-name specific *āc*: Akurst Fm K (*Akers* 1522: Wallenberg 1931, 347) and Oakhurst Hrt (*Acersce* 944–6(13th): PNHe 68).

Hessay YW (*Esdesai*, *Hesdesai* 1086) is recorded in DB with forms that suggest an excrescent medial *-d-*, which does not appear in subsequent attestations (*Hessey*(*e*), *Hessai*, *Hessay* 1100; *Hassay* 1154). The twelfth-century spelling *Heslesaia* 1109 indicates an etymology from gen. sg. *hæseles* and OE *ēg*, 'island of the hazel' (PNYW iv 256–7). It is thought that in Yorkshire some *ēg* names may have signified 'good land in moor' (LPN 38), and the *ēg* here appears to refer to an area of higher ground on Marston Moor (Watts 2004, 300). The geology may have played more of a role than the slight increase in elevation, as the settlement sits on well-draining sandstone bedrock with sandy soil, surrounded by the water-logged clay lowlands of the moor. The drier and more acidic geology at the settlement site is suited to hazelwood, where the surrounding moorland is less so; thus, Hessay likely indicated an area of drier land on the moor where hazel-trees grew.

It is not possible from the early records of Haselbech Nth (*Esbece* 1086, *Haselbech*(*e*) 12th, *Heselbech*(*e*) 1220, *Haselbeht* 1235) to differentiate between the possible generic elements OE *bæce* (*bece*) 'stream valley' (see Hazelbadge Db below) and OE *bæc* 'ridge'. PNNth (115) is in favour of a *bæc* etymology, while Watts (2004, 284) is more circumspect as the settlement sits on the end of a short ridge above a typical *bæce* valley to the north (Watts 2004, 284). The soil on the ridge at Haselbech is acidic and sand-rich and thus suitable for pure hazelwood, while the valley has alkaline loam-rich soil and is liable to flooding. It is therefore more likely that hazel grew on the ridge than in the valley, as it prefers dry acidic soils (Johnson and More 2004, 198).

In contrast, it appears that Hazlebadge Db (*Hegelebec* 1086; *Haselbech*(*e*), *Hasilbech*(*e*) 1251) is a *bæce* 'stream valley' name. Fellows Jensen (1978, 218) proposes this is the valley of Bradwell Dale (2022 OS: SK 1708 8015); although there is no stream evident there today the valley topography suits Gelling's (1984, 12) assertion that this element referred to 'a fairly well-marked, but not dramatic valley', and this does not preclude the presence of running water when the site was first named. Fellows Jensen (1978, 218) proposes that some of the post-DB forms show the influence of ON *hesli* and ON *bekkr* 'stream' (*Eslessbecke* 1271, *Heselbache* 1367).

Heswall Ch (*Eswelle* 1086, *Haselwell* 1190, *Heselwall* 1200) likely derives from WMids **hesel* with generic WMids *wælla*, *wælle*, 'hazel spring, stream' (Watts 300). It is unlikely to be ON *hesli* as ON elements with *wella* are uncommon (LPN 31–3). The geology at Heswall is suitable for pure hazelwood and the name likely referred to a spring near a stand of hazels but could formally also have referred to a single tree. PNCh (iv 276–7) notes that popular tradition associates the place-name with a well by the roadside in Heswall known as Hessle Well. The minor names Hazelwells (*Haselwelle* 1255, *Hassewall* 1255–6) in the parish of Highley Sa may also derive from *hæsel-welle*, suggesting this was a recurrent compound.

There are six *hæsel* names with a woodland-related generic, including four *hæsel-lēah* compounds (2.43.4.1). The earliest attestations of Haselbury Plucknett So (*Halberge* 1086, *Heselberge* 1176) look to have the generic OE *beorg* 'hill, barrow' but later forms (*Haselbere* 1327, *Hasylbere* 1610) suggest instead generic OE *bearu* 'small

wood, grove' (Watts 2004, 284). LPN (223) prefers the latter suggestion, presumably due to the recurrence of *bearu* forms and the lack of evidence for a hill or barrow at this site. Hazelbury Bryan Do, which is first attested in the thirteenth century, shows a similar possible interchange in its earliest forms (*Hasebere*, *Haseberg*(*e*) 1201), but subsequent attestations also support a *bearu* generic (*Haselber*(*e*) 1237, *Hesilber*(*e*) 1261, *Haselber*(*e*) *in Blakemor*(*e*) 1268, *Asalber*(*e*) 1291) (PNDo ii 100).

Hasland Db does not appear in the written record until the early twelfth century (*Haselont* 1129, *Haselund* 1200) and is probably a compound of OE *hæsel* or ON *hasl* (see 2.42) and the generic ON *lundr* 'small wood, grove' (Fellows Jensen 1978, 154). Some later forms, such as *Heselunt* 1263 likely show the influence of ON *hesli*, 'place growing with hazels' (PNDb ii 260). The soil here is not typical of pure hazelwood but would not prevent the growth of hazel in mixed-species woodland. LPN (242) suggests that woodland called *lundr* had economic value, perhaps in this instance as coppice or as a source of hazelnuts.

2.43.4.1 *hæsel-lēah*:

Great and Little Haseley O appear originally to have been one settlement, first attested in the eleventh century (*Hæseleia*, *Hæsellea* 1002(13th) S902; *Haselie* 1086), with spellings akin to early attestations of Haseley Wa (*Haseleia* 1086, *Haselea* 1195, *Haselega* 1208), Heasley Manor in Newchurch Wt (*Haselie* 1086, *Haseleie* 1141–3), and Hazle Fm in Ledbury He (*Hasles* 1086, *Hesela* 1141, (*La*) *Hasele*(*g'*) 1210–12). In each case this appears to be OE *hæsel-lēah*, 'hazel open woodland' (PNO i 128–9; PNWa 210; Mills 1996, 58; Coplestone-Crow 2009, 133). As hazel was one of the two species most often used in medieval wattle structures (Rackham 2003, 205; 465), it could be argued that these *hæsel-lēah* sites were places where hazel was coppiced, a process that would have created clearings within woodland. The soil at both locations is predominantly sand-based making it suitable for pure hazelwood and thus a good location for hazel coppice. This compound is found twice in charter bounds at Brightwalton (S448) and Appleton (S480) in Berkshire and is recurrent in minor names with six possible examples: Haseley St (*Haseleye* 1290), Hazel Hill Gl (*Haselege* 1184), Hesley Hall Nt (*Heselay* 1217), Hesley Hall YE (*Hesteley*, *Hestelay* 1344), Hesleyhurst Nt (*Heselyhyrst* 1268), and Hesleyside Nt (*Hesleyside* 1279).

As a simplex place-name:

> Hessle YE (*Hase* 1086) PNYE 215; Hessle YW (*Hasele*, *Asele* 1086) PNYW ii 89

As the compound ***hæsel-trēow**:

> *Hesetre Hundred* He (*Hezetre*, *Hesetre* 1086) Anderson 1934 162

As the generic element:

> Colehurst Manor Sa (*Corselle* 1086, *Coleshasel* 1255–6) PNSa i 95

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Cold Hesleden Du (*Heseldene* 1040(12th)) Watts 2002, 28 (**denu**); Haselbech Nth (*Esbece* 1086) PNNth 115 (**bæc**); Haselbury Plucknett So (Halberge 1086, *Heselberge* 1176) Watts 2004, 284 (**bearu**); Haselor Wa (*Haseloue* 1086) PNWa 211 (**ofer**); Hasland Db (*Haselont* 1129) PNDb ii 260 (**lundr**); Hasler Hundred Do (*Haselore hundret* 1086) PNDo i 70, 98 (**ōra**); Hazlebadge Db (*Hegelebec* 1086) PNDb i 118 (**bæce**); Monk Hesleden Du (*Heseldene* c.1050) Watts 2002, 79 (**denu**); Hessay YW (*Esdesai*, *Hesdesai* 1086) PNYW iv 256 (**ēg**); Heswall Ch (*Eswelle* 1086) PNCh iv 276 (**wella**); Hazelhurst Sx (*Hæselersc* 1018) PNSx ii 452 (**ersc**); Hazleton Gl (*Hasedene* 1086) PNGl i 174 (**denu**)

With **lēah**:

> Haseley Wa (*Haseleia* 1086) PNWa 120; Haseley, Great and Little O (*Hæseleia*, *Hæsellea* 1002(13th)) PNO i 128; Hazle Fm He (*Hasles* 1086) Coplestone-Crow 2009, 133; Heasley Manor Wt (*Haselie* 1086) Mills 1996, 58

2.44 *hæslen OE adj. ‘growing with hazels’

An OE adj. that is unattested outside of place-names, which appear to have described locations at which hazel-trees grew in abundance. Due to the common interchange of medial *-en-*, *-in-* and *-ing-* in ME attestations, it is often difficult to distinguish from OE ***hæsling** (see 2.46) ‘place growing with hazels, hazel wood’ and may have

influenced some early forms of Heslington YE (*Haslinton*, *Eslinton* 1086). See 2.5 **æcen** for discussion of similar adjectival construction (also 2.11 **æscen**; 2.19 ***bircen**; 2.55 **linden**; 2.59 ***peren**).

2.45 *hæsler OE 'hazel'

A possible secondary form of OE **hæsel** (see 2.43), which is unattested outside of place-names but may be related to Middle Dutch *hazelare*, a secondary form to Middle Dutch *hazel* (EPNE i 219). OE **mispeler* 'medlar' is a secondary form of OE **mispel*, which according to PNYE (121–2), arose with an *-er* suffix through the influence of Latin. If so, the same may be true of OE **hæsler*. East and West Heslerton YE has medieval forms that suggest alternation between ***hæsling** (see 2.46.1.1) and **hæsler* (*Esrelton*, *Haslintonis*, *Heslerton*(*e*) 1086; *Heseleretuna*, *Heselereton* 1150, *Haslintune* 1160) (Watts 2004, 300).

2.46 *hæsling OE 'place growing with hazels, hazelwood'

A collective noun deriving from OE **hæsel** (see 2.43) that is unattested outside of place-names. EPNE (i 218–9) notes that the ME interchange of medial *-en-*, *-in-* and *-ing-* makes it difficult to distinguish from the OE adj. ***hæslen** (see 2.44) 'growing with hazels'. If a place was recognised for its hazel-trees then it is possible this was an area of pure hazelwood, which is a woodland type that occurs on acidic sand-based soil of low fertility (Rackham 2003, 214; see 2.43 for further discussion).

It has been suggested that Helsington We (*Helsingetune* 1086, *Helsington'*, *Helsyngton'* 1187–1200) could be an early metathesized **hæsling* name; however, the limestone bedrock at this site and its resulting alkaline soil make this ecologically improbable and the alternative folk-name *Haelsingas*, 'dwellers of the pass', proposed by both PNWe (i 108) and Watts (2004, 295), seems preferable. Haslingfield C (*Haslingefeld*(*e*), *Heslingefelda* 1086) also looks to derive from OE **hæsling*, but the persistent medial *-e-* in medieval forms is more supportive of an etymology from gen. pl. **Hæsel*(*a*)*-ingas*, 'open land of the Hæselingas, the people called after Hæsela' (PNC 78; Watts 2004, 185), and once again, the clay-rich alkaline soil at this settlement site is not particularly favourable for hazelwood.

2.46.1 **hæsling* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.46.1.1 **hæsling-tūn*:

There are two Yorkshire place-names with a possible **hæsling* specific and generic OE *tūn* 'farm, settlement at the hazel wood' (*Fig.45*). The early forms of Heslington YE (*Haslinton*, *Eslinton* 1086; *Heseligtuna* 1145; *Heselintuna* 1156) and East and West Heslerton YE (*Esrelton*, *Haslintonis*, *Heslerton*(*e*) 1086; *Heseleretuna*, *Heselereton* 1150; *Haslintune* 1160) suggest **hæsling*, although the latter has spellings that show probable alternation with ***hæsler** (see 2.45) (Watts 2004, 300) and the possible influence of ON **hesli** (see 2.47). The geology at both sites provides conditions suitable for pure hazelwood, with acidic sand-based soils. In light of this, it is possible that the compound **hæsling-tūn* (or **hæsler-tūn*) could have referred to a settlement where hazel wood was cultivated as coppice.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

Heslington YE (*Haslinton*, *Eslinton* 1086) PNYE 273; Heslerton, West and East YE (*Esrelton*, *Haslintonis*, *Heslerton*(*e*) 1086) PNYE 121

2.47 hesli ON n. 'place growing with hazels, hazel wood'

An i-mutated form of the Germanic predecessor of ON **hasl** (see 2.42) and OE **hæsel** (see 2.43), used collectively in English place-names to indicate a place where hazels grew. This word is attested in ON prose where it is used of a single hazel-tree, but also of a hazel wood (ONP: hesli, sb. n.). In the Danelaw are some major names have medieval forms beginning *Hes-* that could attest to the influence of ON *hesli* on the development of OE and ME (EPNE i 218), although it should be noted that some of these may be the result of the WMids dialect form **hesel* 'hazel'. See 2.43.1: Hessle YE, Hessle YW; 2.43.4: Hasland Db, Hazlebadge Db; 2.46.1: East and West Heslerton YE.

2.48 *hlyn, *hlin* OE m. 'maple'

This word is likely a cognate of ON *hlynr* 'maple' (see also 2.56 ***mapel**), which is well attested in ON literature (ONP: hlynr sb. m.). It has been suggested that **hlyn* is the older form, with *hlin* a later OE spelling (PNBk xxxii). There is only one

independent attestation in OE, which is in a riddle of *The Exeter Book* where *hlin* appears alongside oak, yew, and holly (Riddle 55: eds Krapp and Dobbie 1936, 208). DOE (hlin, n.) suggests it could alternatively be an early form of the first element in ME *lyn tre*, which was used to gloss Lat. *tilia* 'lime'. ME *lyn* appears to have been a rare alternative form of ME *lind* (MED: lĭnd(e n.), from OE **lind** (see 2.54). While development from *lind* is possible, the resemblance with ON *hlynr* speaks in favour of **hlyn* being either an ON addition to the English lexicon, or the legacy of a shared Germanic root-word. EPNE (i 254) notes the difficulty in distinguishing this element in place-names from OE *līn* 'flax' and OE *hlynn* 'a torrent (lit. 'the noisy one')'.

2.48.1 **hlyn* the specific in a habitative compound:

The separate parishes of Linstead Magna Sf and Linstead Parva Sf originally appear to have been a single estate, recorded in DB as *Linesteda*, *Linestede* 1086. Subsequent spellings (*Linsted*(*e*) 1199, *Lynsted*(*e*) 1240) do not have the inorganic /e/, which Sandred (1963, 191) attributes to DB convention. While the generic is clearly OE *stede* 'place', the specific could be either **hlyn* 'maple', or *līn* 'flax'; an etymology from *hlynn* 'a torrent (lit. 'the noisy one')' is topographically improbable. Ekwall (1960, 299) and Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 90) are more confident of an origin from *līn-stede*, 'place where flax was grown'; however, the geology does not rule out the possibility of maple-trees and although not specifically favourable for maple woodland, eastern England is a region where mixed ash-maple-hazel woodland is particularly abundant, comprising some 40% of the native woodland area (Rackham 2003, 203). If this is a maple major name, then it is the most easterly example and the only one in East Anglia (*Fig.47*), a stronghold of mixed-maple woodland (Rackham 2003, 205).

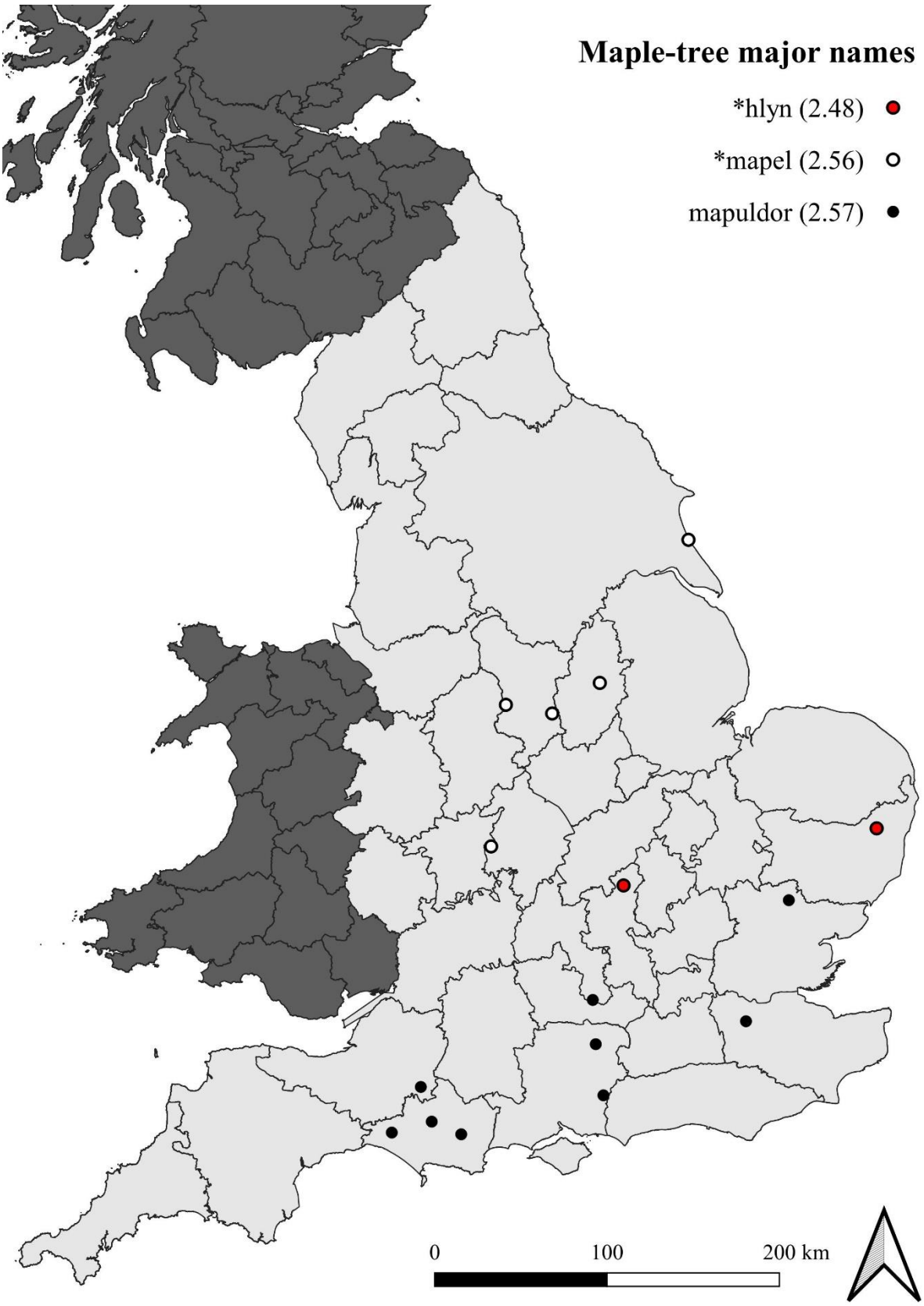


Figure 47: The distribution of maple major names attested by 1200, excluding the lost *Mapleham* Ha (see 2.56.1)

2.48.2 **hlyn* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Great Linford Bk and Little Linford Bk also appear to have been a single estate at the time of DB (*Linforde* 1086) and are not differentiated by affix until the thirteenth century (*Parua* 1224, *Magna* 1227). PNBk (19) suggests the OE compound *hlynn-ford*, perhaps with the sense 'noisy ford', with recurrent *Lin-* and *Lyn-* forms the result of regular East Midlands spelling (*Linforde* 1175, *Lynford* 1284), attestations spelt *Lim-* or *Lym-* showing partial assimilation of <nf> to <mf> (*Limford* 1291, *Lymford* 1316), and epenthetic /d/ in forms spelt *Lind-* or *Lynd-* (*Lindeford* 1175, *Lyndford* 1560). Addenda to PNBk (xxxii) acknowledges that this could also formally be OE **hlyn* and there is indeed no obvious ecological reason for this not to be a possibility. The landscape between these settlements is artificially modified so the original site of the ford is not apparent; however, the calcareous Hanslope clay soil of the region would have provided ideal conditions for maple woodland, which strongly favours heavy clay-rich calcareous soils (Peterken 1993, 125; Rackham 2003, 203). For this reason, it is also unlikely to derive from OE *lind* 'lime', which although formally possible when considering the recurrence of early forms with *Lind-*, would not grow well in this region, as lime woodland tends to prefer more acidic sand-based soils (Rackham 2003, 244–5).

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Linstead Magna and Parva Sf (*Linesteda*, *Linestede* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 90 (**stede**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Linford, Great and Little Bk (*Linforde* 1086) PNBk 19 (**ford**)

2.49 holegn, *holen* OE m. 'holly'

This word is related to OHG *hulis*, *huls* and Welsh *celyn* and survives in the dialect words *hollin*, *hollen* (OED: hollin, hollen, n.) and *holm* a corruption of the variant *holn* (OED: holm, n.2; EDD: holm, sb.2). In Anglo-Saxon glossaries it was generally used to gloss Lat. *acrifolus*, common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), but also twice as a gloss for Lat. *ruscus*, which has been identified as butcher's broom or knee-holly – the latter of which is also recorded in early medieval medical texts as *cnēow-holen* – and as Lat. *ulcia* 'probably a corruption of *vicia* "vetch"' (DOE: holen, n.2).

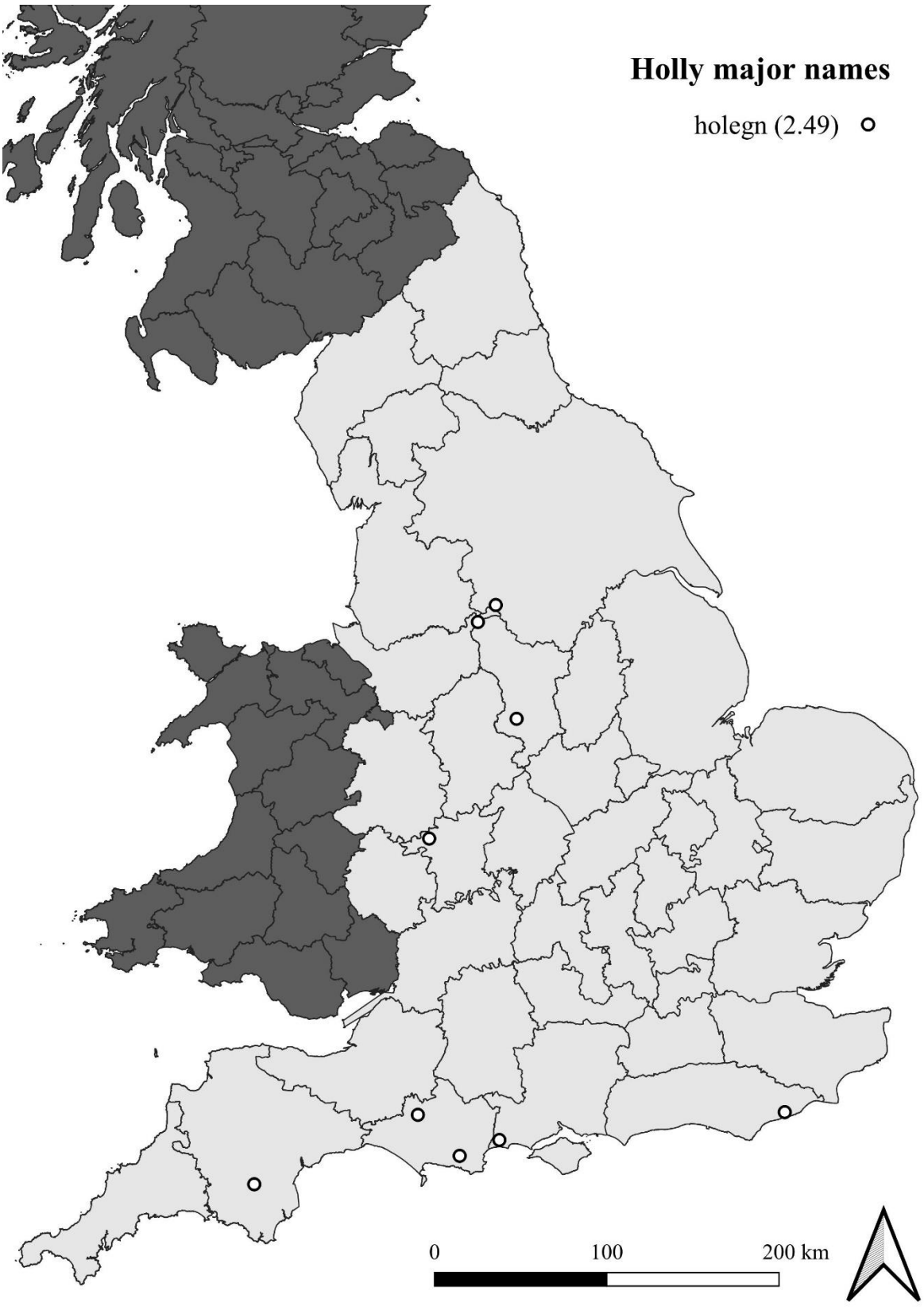


Figure 48: The distribution of holly major names attested by 1200

There are only nine holly major names in England recorded by the end of the twelfth century, which makes it the twentieth of 22 tree types that appear in major names (see *Fig.1*). This infrequency is paralleled in charter bounds where holly appears only nine times (Hooke 2010, 202) accounting for a mere 1% of tree-species in charters. The westerly distribution of holly major names (*Fig.48*) is likely the result of climatic pressures, as holly grows well in the west and south where winters are more temperate, and summers are less prone to drought (Rackham 2003, 345). Several holly names may have indicated an enclosure that was made from holly (2.49.2: Hollingworth Ch; 2.49.2.1: Hollington Db and Hollington Sx), perhaps used as a means of protecting livestock, which may also have doubled as a source of animal fodder. It is well recorded that holly was coppiced and pollarded to produce a source of winter feed for livestock from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Peterken 1993, 17; Hooke 2010, 212), a practice that would presumably have taken place long before records began. Spray (1981) suggests it would have been particularly common in regions where holly was abundant, or pastureland was scarce. The soft and young upper leaves of holly may also have provided a valuable source of browsing fodder for livestock (Hooke 2011, 171).

2.49.1 *holegn* as a simplex name:

As a simplex name *holegn* could have indicated a place '(at) the holly-tree(s)' (PNDo i 82), or perhaps a 'place abounding in holly' (PND i 301–2). Holly is a conspicuous evergreen tree that rarely grows in isolation, but it is possible that one large and distinct holly existed as the remnant of a once wooded area. Rackham (2003, 345) states that holly is a long-lived tree that may remain, often in hedgerows, where woodland and other species have declined. Two early medieval charters have bounds marked by what appears to be a single notable holly-tree. The tenth-century charter of the Old Swinford estate Wo records a tree called *ymman holigne*, 'Ymma's holly' (S579), while the ninth-century charter of South Hams D notes *ðæm beorge ðe mon hateð æt ðæm holne* 'the barrow that one calls "at the holly"' (S298). A modern example of remarkable holly-trees can be seen at Staverton Park Sf, where the ancient oak wood-pasture has given way to dense growth of holly in an area of the park known as Staverton Thicks. It is suggested that holly is abundant in the Thicks because it lies on a thin bed of Chillesford clay, which contrasts the arid sand-based soil found elsewhere at Staverton (Rackham 2010, 128–9). Due to lack of competition

from other species and a cessation of grazing, the hollies have grown so tall and imposing that they have begun to over-shade and kill the ancient oak pollards (*Fig.49*). It is possible a similar phenomenon may have occurred at the three simplex-named sites, where holly was the defining feature.

The DB spelling of Holne D (*Holla* 1086; *Holne*, *Holna* 1166) appears to be anomalous and later attestations show a similar development to the DB attestations of East Holme Do (*Holne*, *Holna* 1086). The spelling of these names can be attributed to the weak stress of the second syllable of *holegn* and subsequent reduction of the word, resulting in the loss of the second vowel in spoken and written form. East Holme (*Holm* 1218, *Holme* 1280, *Holum* 1287, *Esteholme* 1545) has later forms, including the modern spelling, that reflect the development to ME *holm*(*e*) 'holly' (MED: hōlm(e n.2), which survives in southern dialect as *holm* (EDD: holm, sb.2) and is a recurrent element in the minor names of Dorset.[36] Hollin Fms in Rock Wo is attested in DB (*Hollim* 1086) but also twice in a tenth century (*to þam gemære æt þam holignan*, *of ðam holigena gemæra* c.957 S1185) with what appears to be a late form of dat. pl. *holegnum* (PNWo 72), giving the original meaning 'to the boundary at the hollies, from the hollies' boundary'.

Holme YW (*Holne* 1086, *Holm*(*e*) 1316) is a township in the parish of Almondbury YW. Holmfirth (*Holnesfrith* 1274, *Holmesfryth'* 1392) is an early-attested site in the parish (4 km down the River Holme), with spellings that show gen. sg. forms of the specific element, suggesting this name denoted a 'wood belonging to Holme'. PNYW (ii 289) states that in this instance the 'assimilation of *-n-* to *-m-* is due to the following labio-dental *-f-*' and that this was later extended to the township name itself. It is possible ON *holmr* 'island, inland promontory, river meadow' also affected the development of *holegn* names in the north, as it is a common element (LPN 56–7 provides 47 potential examples) surviving in dialect as *holm*(*e*) (EDD: holm, sb.1).

[36] Holm and Ivy Fm (*la Holmene Theuele* 1341) in Cann (PNDo iii 93–4), Holm Bushes Fm (PNDo iii 345), Holm Fm (PNDo iv 232), Holmbush (PNDo iv 496–7), Holme Bridge (*Holmebrygge* 1530) in East Stoke (PNDo i 149), Holme Cleve (PNDo iv 397), Holmes Copse (PNDo iv 389), Holmwood in Hampreston (PNDo ii 227), and Holmwood in Parkstone (PNDo ii 40).



Figure 49: A giant holly (right) encroaching upon an ailing oak (left) at Staverton Thicks, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2019)

2.49.2 *holegn* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are three major names where the specific *holegn* is compounded with a habitative generic. Hollingworth Ch is first attested as *Holisrude* 1086, but this appears to be an anomalous form as all subsequent medieval attestations suggest OE *holegn-worð*, 'holly enclosure' (*Holinewurth'* 13th, *Holinwrd* 1285, *Holingworth* 1286). The appearance of /g/ forms from the thirteenth century may have been a mistaken reanalysis as connective *-ing-* (2.49.2.1: Hollington Db, Sx), perhaps

through association with other enclosure names, such as Faldingworth Li (*Fal*(*d*)*ingeurde* 1086) and Fallingworth YW (*Faldyngworth* 1379), from OE **falding* 'the act of enclosing animals', which with *worð* gives the meaning 'folding enclosure, the folding place' (Watts 2004, 223). Holly can form an impenetrable hedge and may have been the means by which enclosure was achieved. A comparable use of holly is perhaps evidenced in the compound *holegn-fæsten*, 'holly stronghold', which occurs in as many as five minor names.[37] Baker (2008, 335; 2012, 317–19) suggests that rather than indicating strongholds intended to repel human invaders, these were probably locations related to animal husbandry where livestock were temporarily corralled. The importance of holly as a source of fodder for livestock may also have had some bearing on the development of holly enclosure names (see 2.49 above).

2.49.2.1 *holegn-tūn*:

Hollington Db and Hollington Sx are both first attested in DB as *Holintune* 1086, although Hollington Sx also has the DB form *Horintune* 1086, presumably the result of AN /l/ and /r/ confusion. PNSx (ii 503) suggests Hollington Sx may originally have been *Holingatun*, with the specific OE *hol*, meaning 'farm of the dwellers in the hollow', perhaps prompted by a thirteenth-century form with medial *-e-* (*Hulingeton'* 1202), and the use of Hollingbourne K (*Holungaburna* S1503) as a parallel example. This seems less likely than a *holegn* etymology as there are no other attestations with medial *-e-* (*Holintuna*, *Holyntuna*, *Holynton* 12th; *Hollyngton* 1535) and the topography of this site does not conclusively indicate the existence of a *hol*. In EPNE (ii 188–9), Smith states that *tūn* seems to have denoted a fence or hedge in Primitive Germanic (see cognate OHG *zūn*) and in OE the derivative verd *tȳnan* means 'to enclose, fence'; however, he does note there are no certain examples of this meaning in English place-names. It could be that *tūn* here retained an older sense when compounded with *holegn* and the holly at this settlement site functioned as a means of enclosure (see above 2.49), although 'farm, settlement by the holly' is also a possibility.

[37] These include Hollyfast Fm Wa (*Holifast*, *Colgrimesholifast* c. 1250) PNWa 153; Holyfast in Aston Wa (*Hollyfaste* 1569) PNWa 34; Hollyfast Meadow in Forton St (*Hollyfast Meadow* 1839) PNSt i 149; *Holy Vaste* (lost) in Westbury Gl (*Holy Vaste* 1637) PNGl ii 208; and Holdfast Wo (*Holanfaestene*, *Holenfesten* 10th(11th) S1355) PNWo 140.

2.49.3 *holegn* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Holnest Do (*Holeherst* 1185; *Holenhurst*(*e*), *Holnhust* 1268), has spellings that suggest the OE compound *holegn-hyrst*, 'holly wooded hill', with later reduction of the generic element. Holdenhurst Ha (*Holehurst* 1086 (Ekwall 1960, 245); *Holehurst* 1169) looks to derive from the same compound, although it has no forms with medial *-n-* until the late fourteenth century (*Holnhurst* 1397), which (Coates 1989, 94) suggests could be due to an early reduced form in dialect competition in the same period. Holly is generally a woodland dwelling tree and can be found growing prolifically as an understory species in mixed woodland, but also as the dominant tree on soils that are less suitable for other species. The geology at the sites of Holnest and Holdenhurst is sand-based and acidic, providing conditions suitable for the prolific growth of holly, which thrives on more acidic soils (Rackham 2003, 345).

As a simplex name:

> East Holme Do (*Holne*, *Holna* 1086) PNDo i 82; Hollin Fms Wo (*to þam gemære æt þam holignan*, *of ðam holigena gemæra* c.957 S1185) PNWo 72; Holme YW (*Holne* 1086) PNYW ii 269; Holne D (*Holla* 1086) PND i 301–2

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Hollingworth Ch (*Holisrude* 1086, *Holinewurth'* 13th) PNCh i 309 (**worð**)

With **tūn**:

> Hollington Db (*Holintune* 1086) PNDb iii 572; Hollington Sx (*Holintune*, *Horintone* 1086) PNSx ii 503

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Holdenhurst Ha (*Holehest* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 245 (**hyrst**); Holnest Do (*Holeherst* 1185) PNDo iii 336 (**hyrst**)

2.50 *hvin ON (ME *whin*) 'whin, gorse'

The northern dialect word *whin*, from ME *whin*, likely derives from ON **hvin*, the root of Norwegian *kvein* 'thin grasses', Swedish *hven* 'bent-grass', and early Danish

hvinegræs ‘tall thin grass’ (OED: whin, n.1; EPNE i 270–1). It is a regional term generally found in place-names in northern and eastern counties where ON has influenced the language. Although gorse major names tend to be found more often in the north, other gorse-related elements do have a more varied distribution in place-names (*Fig.40*) and in early medieval charter bounds (see 2.35 **fyrs** and 2.38 **gorst**). *Whin* is a term used of common gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and of similar plants such as petty whin *Genista anglica* and dwarf furze *Ulex galli* (Hooke 2010, 269).

2.50.1 **hvin* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Whinburgh Nf (*Wineberga* 1086, *Quyneberge* 1254) could derive from ON **hvin-berg* ‘whin hill’ (Watts 2004, 672); however, by the eleventh century it is conceivable that this originally ON word had entered the English toponymicon, as a precursor to ME *whin* and was used in compound with OE *beorg*, ‘whin hill/mound’. Two major names in the north-west of England likely derive from the ON compound **hvin-fjall*, ‘whin hill, hill overgrown with whin’; these are Whinfell Cu (*Wynfell* 1170, *Whinnefelde* 1230) and Whinfell We (*Quinfel*(*l*), *Quynfel*(*l*), *Qwynfel*(*l*), *Winfel*(*l*), *Wynfel*(*l*) 1154, *Whinfel*(*l*), *Whynfel*(*l*) 1200) (PNCu ii 446; PNWe i 142). Whin Fell or Hatteringill Head at Whinfell Cu has a high point of 385 metres (2022 OS: NY 1335 2475) while Whinfell Beacon at Whinfell We reaches heights of 471 metres (2022 OS: NY 5735 0029). The exposed nature of these landscapes is well-suited to gorse, which prefers well-draining heathland and hillsides where it is not overshadowed by woodland. There are minor name examples of this compound at Whinfell in Brougham We (*Winefeld*, *Wynefeld* 1204) and at Whin Fell YW (*Winfell* 1771).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Whinburgh Nf (*Wineberga* 1086) Watts 2004, 672 (**burg**); Whinfell Cu (*Wynfell* 1170) PNCu ii 446 (**fjall**); Whinfell We (*Quinfel*(*l*), *Quynfel*(*l*), *Qwynfel*(*l*), *Winfel*(*l*), *Wynfel*(*l*) 1154) PNWe i 142 (**fjall**)

2.51 *hyldre OE ‘elder’

An alternative word for elder-tree to the more recurrent OE **ellern** (see 2.28), but not attested outside place-names until the early fourteenth century (MED: hilder, n.). It appears to be a cognate of OHG *holuntar* and ON **hyldri* from Germanic **hul-*

(OED: elder, n.1: etymology), which could be the root of other tree-names like OE **holegn** (see 2.49) and *hyles* 'holly' (EPNE i 274). The OED (elder, n.1: etymology) suggests that a connection with the nouns *hole* and *hollow* is feasible, as the elder may have been named from its tubular stems. ON **hyldri* survives in Danish *hyld*, *hyldetræ*, and Swedish *hyll* 'elder, elder-tree' and is known from Scandinavian folktales of the Hyldemoer who protects elder trees (Hooke 2010, 232). There is one reference to a *Hildertrestubb* 14th in Nottinghamshire, from **hyldre* or ME *hilder* (MED: hilder, n.), which contributes to the number of elder-tree stumps that were recognised as medieval landmarks (see 2.28 *ellern*).

Hinderclay Sf was initially suggested to be the OE compound **hyldre-clēa*, 'tongue of land growing with elder-trees' (EPNE i 274; Ekwall 1960, 240; Watts 2004, 305); however, Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 69) have more recently and convincingly proposed an etymology from the OE pers.n. *Hilderīc* or *Hildrīc* and OE *lēah*, which better explains the earliest forms (*Hildriceslea* 978×1016(15th), *Hilderic lea* 978×1016(13th), *Hildericlea* 978×1016(13th) S1219).

2.51.1 **hyldre* the specific in a habitative compound:

2.51.1.1 **hyldre-tūn*:

Ilderton Nb (*Ildretona* c.1125, *Hilderton* 1189) looks to derive from the OE compound **hyldre-tūn*, 'elder farm' (*Fig.37*), with influence from ME *hilder* (Watts 2004, 329). Watts (2002, 122) suggests the specific could be the OE pers.n. *Hild*, but this does not provide as satisfactory an explanation for the repetition of medial *-re-*, *-er-*, and *-ir-* present in all forms of the name (*Ildertone* 1228, *Ildirton* c.1250, (*H*)*ilderton* 1255). The ON pers.n. *Hildr* (gen. sg. *Hildar*), however, could explain these early forms. As there are no comparable examples of an 'elder farm' name with the compound *ellern-tūn*, a pers.n. etymology may be preferable, but **hyldre* cannot be ruled out.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

Ilderton Nb (*Ildretona* c.1125) Watts 2004, 329

2.52 *hyper OE ‘osier or another tree of the *Salix* genus’

A word attested in Lancashire dialect as *hipper* ‘osier’ (EDD: hipper, sb.). EPNE (i 243, 276) suggests that while the origin of **hyper* is obscure it may be related to OE *hēope* ‘the fruit of the wild rose, a hip, dog rose or bramble’, although this seems unlikely considering how little resemblance an osier bears to the dog rose or bramble. For this to be true, Lancashire *hipper* must have a different origin than OE **hyper*.

2.52.1 **hyper* as a simplex name:

This element occurs only once in a major name attested by 1200. Hipperholme in Halifax YW (*Huperun* 1086, *Hyperum* 1185) appears from its earliest forms to be simplex dat. pl. **hyperum*, ‘(the place at) the osiers’ (PNYW iii 79; Watts 2004, 307). EPNE (ii 225) notes that replacement of dative *-um* by *-holme* in modern forms of place-names is common and EDD (hipper, sb.) states that a *hipper holm* was ‘a field in which hipper withies grow near the water side’, which may have further influenced the development of this name. Osiers were once a common feature of open fields in riparian landscapes (Rotherham 2022, 2503). This suits the settlement of Hipperholme, which is surrounded by small streams (all within 3 km²): Red Beck, Clifton Beck, Hoyle House Beck, Jum Hole Beck, Coley Beck, Wyke Beck, and Bottom Hall Beck and there are a series of wells, springs, and waterfalls in the immediate vicinity of the town.

As a simplex name:

Hipperholme YW (*Huperun* 1086) PNYW iii 79

2.53 īw (**īg*, **eow*) OE m. ‘yew’

This word is cognate with OHG *īwa*, *īwo*, *īwi* and ON *ýr*; however, the wide range of yew-related words in Germanic languages, including the OE variants **īg* and **eow*, is phonologically problematic and not fully explicable (OED: yew, n.: etymology). These OE words for yew are attested in early medieval glossaries as a gloss for Lat. *taxus* ‘yew’ and *ornus*, also possibly a reference to yew (DOE: īw, ēow, ēoh, n.). The European or English yew (*Taxus baccata*) is the only native species of yew-tree in Britain and the longest-lived native British species (Johnson and More 2004, 22). It is also one of only three evergreen species (with box and holly), that is recurrent in English major names.

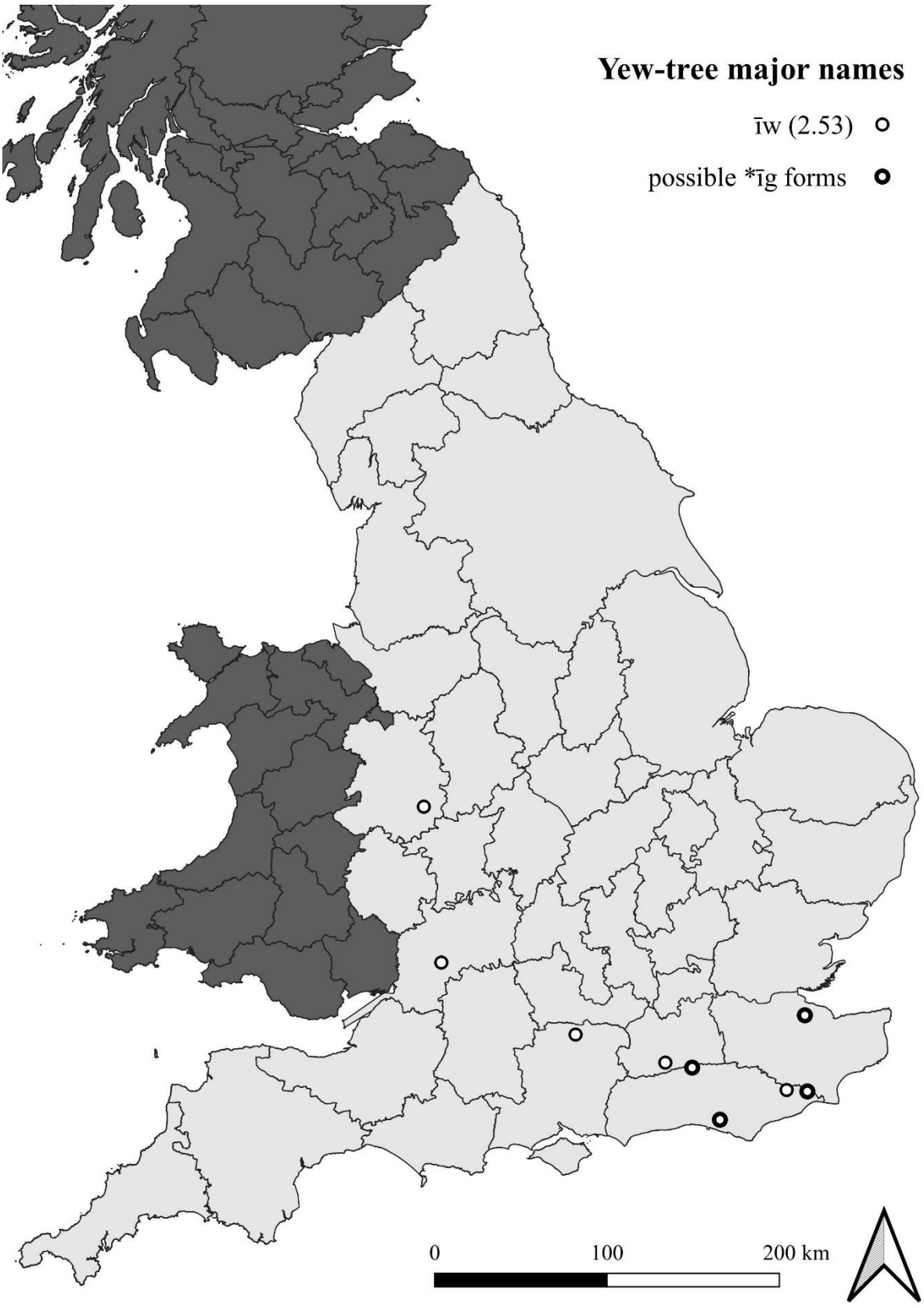


Figure 50: The distribution of possible yew major names attested by 1200

There are nine possible uses of *īw* as the specific element in major names attested by the end of the twelfth century, all of which are topographical compounds. The natural distribution of yew extends into northern England and north-west Scotland (EAFTS 183) but *īw* major names have a largely southerly distribution, extending from the south of Shropshire to the north of Kent (*Fig.50*).[38] Hooke (2010, 207) notes only 10 occurrences of *īw* in charter bounds, again with a more southerly distribution, although as she observes, this 'may be affected by the availability of charter evidence' for which there is greater coverage in the south. In the south-east, some names appear to derive from or have been influenced by the variant form OE **īg* (*Fig.50*). The replacement of *-w* with *-g* in this region is paralleled in OE *nīwe* 'new' and *nīge*, and OE *hīwan* 'household' and *hīgan* (EPNE i 305; ii 50). This alternate form may account for some early spellings of Iden K (*Hydeñ* 1261), Ifield Sx (*Yfeld* 1210), Iford Sx (*Yfford* 1263), Iwade K (*Ywada* 117×78) (see below 2.53.1), and the minor name Iridge Sx (*Yrugge* 1248).

The rarity of yew in charters and major names (1.16% of corpus) and the lack of early Hundred names that refer to yew is surprising when it is considered how often ancient yew-trees stand at gathering places, especially those of religious significance (Hooke 2010, 41–44; Hall 2019, 19; 29–39), like the famous Ankerwycke Yew at Runnymede (*Fig.51*).[39] The religious significance of yew can be seen in pre-Christian European cultures and may have been adopted into Christianity as early as the late Roman period (Hooke 2010, 41). Churchyard yews are common throughout Britain, due to their traditional association with death and the resurrection of Christ, which was likely inspired by the extreme longevity and startling regenerative abilities of this species. The seeming absence of yew in early records of the landscape is thus hard to explain. Unlike oak, which is the closest competitor for longevity and which features in many place-names and charter records, yew is recognised only as a single tree or as the specific in a compound describing a landscape feature: such as the *iw dene*, 'yew valley', at Tidenham Gl (S610); the *eow cumbe*, 'yew coombe', at Stoke Bishop Gl

[38] There are some minor name examples in Yorkshire: Yeadon in Ripon YW (*Iweden* 1154–91: PNYW v 150) and Ewood Hall in Halifax YW (*Ewewood* 1548: PNYW iii 160).

[39] Hall (2019, 40) provides an account of 76 significant ancient yew-trees in Britain, nearly all of which reside in churchyards. Some other well-known examples include the Fortingall yew in Perthshire, the St Cynog yew in Defynnog, and the Crowhurst yew in Surrey.

(S218); and the *ig felda*, 'yew open land', at Bedwyn W (S756). It is possible that due to the form of the name, *īw* (**īg*) could be liable to confusion with other specific elements, such as *īeg* 'island' (2.53.1: Ifield Sx and Iford Sx) and this may go some way towards explaining its relative obscurity.

2.53.1 *īw* as the specific in a topographical compound:

The only compound that appears more than once in yew-tree major names is OE *īw-hyrst*, 'yew wooded hill', which is the root of Ewhurst names in Hampshire, Surrey, and Sussex. Ewhurst Ha is recorded in a charter of 1023 as *Ywyrstæ* (S960) and in DB as *Werste* 1086 (Coates 1989, 74), which is also the DB spelling and first written record of Ewhurst Sx (PNSx ii 518), while Ewhurst Sr (*Iuherst* 1179) is not attested until the twelfth century (PNSr 237). There are two ecological characteristics of yew that may explain the recurrence of *īw-hyrst* sites. Yew grows well on wind-sheltered slopes where saplings are protected by mature trees and it tends to be the dominant species where it grows, as yew saplings can flourish in the dense shade of larger yew-trees where other species cannot (Watt 1926, 286–8). This association with a hill, although not necessarily with a sheltered site, can again be seen at Eudon Burnell and Eudon George Sa, which in DB appears to have been a single manor known as *Eldone* 1086, later *Eudon'* 1242. PNSa (i 127) identifies the generic as OE *dūn* and suggests it derives from association with the typical *dūn*-shaped hill at Eudon George. In contrast with this elevated topography, Ifield Sx (*Ifelt* 1086, *Yfeld* 1210) is probably the OE compound *īw*(or *īg*)-*feld*, 'yew open land'. As noted by PNSx (i 207), although formally possible, this name is unlikely to derive from OE *īeg* 'island', as the surrounding topography does not support this interpretation.

Two major names may have arisen in relation to a river crossing marked with yew-trees. Iford Sx is first attested in the eleventh century (*Iuorda* 11th, *Niworde* 1086, *Iford*(*e*) 1091) and possibly derives from the variant **īg* compounded with OE *ford*, 'yew ford', although Watts (2004, 329) presents the alternative suggestion of a specific from OE *īeg* 'island', as a reference to higher land in the Ouse flood plain. He notes that on an 1813 map there is a track that runs between Iford, and two areas of raised land known as Upper and Lower Rise. Yew-trees are resistant to temporary flooding, but 'susceptible to long-term poor drainage' (EAFTS 183), which would rule out the possibility of yew-trees having populated the floodplain at Iford;

however, the early twelfth-century church at Iford is south-west of the floodplain (Historic England: 1222119) on highly-permeable sand-gravel bedrock with loam-rich topsoil, providing more favourable conditions for yew growth and suggesting the name may originally have indicated a site where a yew-tree or trees marked the beginning of a ford across flood-prone land. Rackham (2003, 103) states that in the eastern Fens 'where the soil was more sandy … yews of great age predominate', perhaps providing a modern example of yew-trees growing in what would initially appear to be a hostile environment.



Figure 51: The Ankerwycke Yew within the ruins of St Mary's Priory, Surrey. It is 8 metres in diameter and has an estimated age of up to 2,500 years old (J. Treacher, January 2016)

Ekwall (1960, 268) glosses Iwade K as *īw-gewæd* 'yew ford'. He suggests a tentative connection with an eleventh-century reference in the *Domesday Monachorum* to a place called *Ætwangeræde* (Page 1936, 256), which he reconstructs as **æt Iwangewæde*. This cannot, however, explain the subsequent forms (*Ywada* 117×78, *Iwade* 1235) and *Ætwangeræde* may not belong to this name. Watts (2004, 335)

suggests Iwade could be simplex *gewæd* ‘ford’, with /i/ as a relic of *ge-*, in reference to the crossing from Iwade over marshland and tidal streams to the Isle of Sheppey. The geology at the settlement site is not particularly supportive of a yew etymology, as the bedrock is a clay-silt mix with low permeability, but the specific *īw* (or **īg*) is formally possible.

Iden Sx (*Idene* 1086, *Hiden* 1204, *Hydeñ* 1261) appears to compound specific *īw* (or **īg*) with the Kentish generic *denn*. PNSx (ii 530) and Watts (2004, 329) have identified this as being a site where swine were pastured among yew-trees; however, this seems unlikely, as yew leaves and the seeds of yew berries are toxic and harmful to livestock (EAFTS 183). It may be pertinent therefore to consider the other possible connotations of *denn* as a generic element. EPNE (i 129) suggests *denn* had the less specific meaning ‘wood-pasture’ when associated with tree names and other animal names, but this does not help to explain the meaning of Iden. It may be appropriate to consider this a Kentish equivalent of the *īw-lēah* compound of Uley Gl (2.53.1.1), a naturally lighter area of yew woodland, that may have arisen through the less frequent use of *lēah* in the south-east (Gelling 1984, 202; LPN 239). Alternatively, a different, perhaps early reduced, specific element may better explain this name: possibly *īeg*, referring to land in the bend of the River Rother, although this is difficult to substantiate as the river looks to be fairly engineered in this area. It is also perhaps possible this is a *denu* generic with reference to the river valley, although LPN (267) notes the frequent development of *denu* to *-dean* in Sussex and Kent spellings, which is not apparent for Iden.

2.53.1.1 *īw-lēah*:

Uley Gl (*Euuelege* 1086) appears to derive from OE *īw-lēah*, suggesting a location where yew-trees were the dominant or most evident species in a sparsely-wooded area. Yew is shade-tolerant and grows well under the canopy of trees of the same and of different species (Rackham 2010, 17). This quality, coupled with the inability of other trees – excepting beech – to grow in the shade of yew (Watt 1926, 299), may explain how yew could become a dominant woodland species. It is unlikely Uley was a location at which livestock were pastured, for the reasons set out above (2.53.1: Iden K), and while some *lēah* names appear to have denoted areas of coppice woodland (Wager 2017, 104), there is little historical evidence for yew as a coppice species.

Rackham (2003, 493) does, however, provide a rare modern example at Bix Bottom O where ‘there is a small patch of coppiced yew-wood’. Yew is a hard wood and is described as such in a riddle in *The Exeter Book* where four types of wood, including *hearda īw*, ‘hard yew’, are listed (Riddle 55: eds Krapp and Dobbie 1936, 208). Although the hardness of yew makes it resistant to rot, it is also heavy, which means it is unlikely to have been used structurally in buildings, but there are extant examples of its use for household objects, like the buckets found in the Sutton Hoo and Oseberg ship burials (*Fig.52*). Despite these rare archaeological examples and the capacity for yew to form coppice woodland, it seems unlikely that the yew-trees at Uley would have been managed like other tree-species names that are compounded with *lēah*.



Figure 52: Two yew-wood buckets found in the ninth-century Oseberg ship burial, Vikingskipshuset, Oslo (J. Treacher, February 2020)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Eudone, Burnell and George Sa (*Eldone* 1086, *Eudon’* 1242) PNSa i 127 (**dūn**); Ewhurst Ha (*Ywyrstæ stigel* 1023(12th) S960) Coates 1989, 74 (**hyrst**); Ewhurst Sr (Iuherst 1179) PNSr 237 (**hyrst**); Ewhurst Sx (*Werste* 1086) PNSx ii 518 (**hyrst**); Iden Sx (*Idene* 1086) PNSx ii 530 (**denn**); Ifield Sx (*Ifelt* 1086) PNSx i 207 (**feld**); Iford Sx (*Iuorda* 11th)

PNSx ii 317 (**ford**); Iwade K (*Ywada* 117×78) Watts 2004, 335 (**gewæd**)

With **lēah**:

Uley Gl (*Euuelege* 1086) PNGl ii 253

2.54 lind OE (ON *lind*) f. 'lime'

OE *lind* (and weak fem. *linde*) is cognate with OHG *linda*, *linta*, and ON *lind*; in early medieval glossaries it is glossed as Lat. *tilia* (OED: lind, n.1), a reference to the small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*) or large-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*) that are both native to Britain (EAFTS 184–5). In place-names *lind* compounds 12 times with a topographical generic and over half of these names are woodland-related compounds, which is probably because lime is a species most commonly found in woodland (Rackham 2003, 242). The distribution of *lind* major names is wide-spread and appears to have no distinct regional preference apart from its absence from East Anglia, where the less recurrent element OE **bæst** (see 2.14) 'bast, the bark of the lime-tree, lime-tree(s)' can be found (*Fig.24*).

Great and Little Linford Bk are not included in this corpus of lime names. These settlements were originally recorded as a single estate and there are two early forms where *lind-ford*, 'lime ford', is formally possible (*Lindeford* 1175, *Lyndford* 1560); however, the /d/ is probably epenthetic (PNBk 19) and the majority of attestations instead suggest an etymology from OE ***hlyn** 'maple' (see 2.48.2) or OE *hlynn* 'torrent' (*Linforde* 1086, *Linforde* 1175, *Lynford* 1284, *Limford* 1291, *Lymford* 1316).

2.54.1 *lind* as a simplex name:

Lindon in Rock parish Wo has early spellings that suggest variation between dat. sg. *linde* (*Linde* 1086, *Linda* c.1150, *Linde* 1169) and dat. pl. *lindum* (*Lyndon*, *Lindon* 1225; *Lynden*(*e*), *Linden* 1275) (PNWo 73), giving '(place) at the lime-trees(s)' or there may have been alternation with the OE adj. *linden* '(place) growing with lime-trees'. PNWo (73) notes that *Coudray* 1328 was an alternative name for this settlement, deriving from OFr *coudraie* 'hazel grove, hedge', which is also found in Cowdray Sx (*la Coudreye* 1279: PNSx i 17), and further supporting the suggestion that this area was well-wooded.

2.54.2 *lind* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Lindsell Ess (*Lindesela*, *Lindeseles* 1086) looks to derive from OE *lind-sele*, 'lime-tree hall' (PNEss 486–7; Watts 2004, 374) or 'dwelling among lime-trees' (Mills 2011, 297). Rackham (2003, 240–1) discusses two other place-names in Essex with a probable *lind* specific: *Lyndenehallefeld* is attested in 1331 in the parish of Takeley, less than 10 km south-west of Lindsell, which may be the product of weak fem. gen. pl. *lindena* or the OE adj. **linden** 'growing with lime' (see 2.55) and Lynderswood (*boscus de lindris* 1250) in Black Notley – 13km south-east – which is probably OE *lind-hris*, 'brushwood by the lime-tree(s)' (PNEss 294). Rackham (ibid) states that the woodland at Lynderswood has partially survived and is now known as Paul's Wood (in relation to the parish church) and that it still contains lime as an underwood species. This cluster of *lind* names may support the claim that lime was once most populous in the woodlands of eastern England than it is today (Rackham 2003, 237).

2.54.2.1 *lind-bȳ*

Lindby Nt (*Lidebi* 1086, *Lindebey* 1163) appears to be either a purely ON derived name or Anglo-Scandinavian, with weak fem. *linde* or OE/ON gen. pl. *linda* and ON *bȳ*, 'lime farm/settlement'. ON-speaking settlers were likely familiar with lime: the word *lind* is attested in ON texts (ONP: lind, sb. f.) and *Tilia cordata* is native to Denmark and the southern regions of Norway, Sweden, and Finland (EAFTS 184). Excavation of Viking Age ships in Scandinavia has found that bast (inner lime-bark) was commonly used to make rope (Bill 2007, 43; Williams 2014, 39) and the word *bast* appears in ON prose (ONP: bast, sb. n.1) with the dual meaning 'bark' and 'cord' (see 2.14 *bæst*).

2.54.3 *lind* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Lympsham So has an uncertain etymology. Its earliest attestations (*Lympelesham* 1189, *Linpelesham* 1225, *Limpelesham* 1254) appear to preserve the gen. sg. form of the place-name like **Lind-pyll*, 'lime pool', or **Lin-pol*, 'flax pool', or the pers.n. **Limpel* (Ekwall 1960, 309; Watts 2004, 390). Although OE *hām* is a possiblity, Lympsham lies in the clay-rich flood-prone landscape of the Somerset Levels, which perhaps favours a *hamm* generic with a watery connotation like 'land hemmed in by water or marsh'. This is not an environment typically characteristic of lime-tree woodland but as lime does grow as a single tree or in small stands on a variety of soils

(Rackham 2003, 244), derivation from *lind* cannot be dismissed. Lindfield Sx lies in a fork where Scrase Stream meets the River Ouse. The early forms of this name (*Lindefeldia*, *Lendenfelda* 765(1300) S50; *Lindefeld*, *Lyndefeld* 12th) suggest the OE generic *feld* in compound with either gen. pl. *linda*, 'open land of (or with) lime-trees' (PNSx 340) or weak fem. gen. pl. *lindena*, or gen. sg. *lindan* 'lime-tree open land'. Alternatively, these early attestations may show the influence of the OE adj. *linden* (see 2.55).

Great Limber Li (*Lindbeorhge* 1066–8 (c.1200), *Lindberge* 1086) from OE *lind-beorg*, 'the hill where lime-trees grow' (PNLi ii 219), Lyndon Ru (*Lyndon*(*e*), *Lindon*(*e*) 1167; *Lindun*(*e*) late 12th) from OE *lind-dūn*, 'hill with lime-trees upon it' (PNRu 189), and Lindridge Wo (*Lynderycge* 11th; *Lyndrug*(*g*)*e*, *Lindrugge* 1125–50) from OE *lind-hrycg*, 'lime-tree ridge', or gen. pl. *linda-hrycg*, 'ridge of the lime-trees (PNWo 57), all have consistent early attestations with a medial *-d-*, suggesting an etymology from *lind*. Lime tends to be a tree of lowlands and the lower slopes of hills (EAFTS 184), but large stands of lime do on occasion populate flat-topped hills where there is a lot of moisture (Rackham 2003, 244–5). The *beorg* generic of Great Limber is perhaps a reference to the tumulus that once sat on a flat-topped hill to the north of the town and is now dominated by an eighteenth-century mausoleum (OS 2022: TA 13328 08901). The soil here is sand-based and acidic, which could have provided more favourable conditions for abundant lime-tree growth than the alkaline clay-rich soil of the surrounding landscape. The village of Lyndon Ru is situated on the lower slope of a shallow hill. The bedrock and soil of the flat hilltop is acidic and poorly draining, which suits Rackham's (ibid) suggestion that lime stands prefer wet flat-topped hills. The modern settlement of Lindridge Wo sits on the lower slope of a sharply elevated ridge above the River Teme valley. As is characteristic of European lime species (EAFTS 184), lime-trees likely grew on the loam soils of the lower hillslopes. Lime Tree Cottage sits beside the river, about 1.5 km downstream (2022 OS: SO 69007 67617), providing possible evidence of the endurance of lime in the surrounding landscape, although it should be noted that lime has become a popular cultivar in the past few hundred years.

The early forms of Lyndhurst Ha (*Linhest* 1086, *Lindeherst* 1165, *Lindhurst* 1196) suggest OE *lind-hyrst*, 'lime-tree wooded hill', and Lindhurst Hill, directly to the west of the modern settlement, is the best candidate for this location. Coates (1989, 113)

notes that there are other early lime-tree place-names in the area – Linwood in Broomy Walk (*Lyndewode* c.1170) and Linford in Ringwood ((*on*) *lind ford* 961) – that may serve to demonstrate how common lime once was in the New Forest; he cites Rackham (2003, 242) when explaining that the disappearance of lime from the forests of southern England can likely be attributed to soil impoverishment and the effects of wood-pasture grazing. Natural regeneration of lime would be difficult in an area like the New Forest that has been perpetually used for wood-pasture, as the leaves and bark tend to be stripped by browsing livestock and this can damage trees irreparably (EAFTS 184). Another explanation for the disappearance of lime may be due to the effect of medieval coppicing, which with its short seven-year rotation cycle of growth and cutting would not have given lime time to flower and pollinate and may have restricted lime growth to pre-existing stools (Rackham 2003, 242).

There are two Linwood major names in Lincolnshire that derive from the compound *lind-wudu*, 'lime-tree wood'. Linwood Li (*Lindude* 1086) is first attested in DB with medial *-d-* and has a further four records from the twelfth century with *-d-* (*Lindwda* 1115, *Lindwode* 1182, *Lindewode* 1187, *Lindwude* 1196) (PNLi iii 58). It seems likely the woodland called Lynwode Wood, to the east of the medieval church (Historic England: 1166212; OS 2022: TF 12043 85787), is the location of this limewood. Rackham (2003, 240–1) states that it conforms closely to the DB entry of there being '100 acres of underwood'[40] and still contains large lime stools once used for coppicing. Linwood in Blankney parish, now Linwood Hall Farm Li, is not attested until the twelfth century (*Lyndewode* 1135, *Lindwod* 12th, *Lyndewode* c.1230) (Cameron 1998, 81). It appears to have followed a similar pattern of linguistic development as Linwood parish, with the complete post-medieval loss of medial *-d-*. Linwood Hall Farm is on the very edge of the fenland of the Wash, and it is likely that this lime-tree woodland once stood on the sand-based acidic soil to the east, rather than on the saturated clay to the west.

2.54.3.1 *lind-lēah*:

There are four possible *lind* place-names that have the generic OE *lēah*. These names could simply mean 'lime-tree open woodland' as lime is a gregarious woodland tree

[40] Referred to as *silva minutia*, a Latin term used to indicate coppice woodland in DB (Peterken 1993, 24).

that ‘tends to form pure stands with sharply-defined edges’ (Rackham 2003, 242), or it could perhaps have referred to areas of lime-tree coppice. Lindley YW is the only *lind-lēah* major name with early medieval attestations that have a diagnostic *lind* etymology. It is first attested as *lindeleh* 972(10th) (S1453) and then *on Linde-leage* c.1030. The DB form *Lillai*(*a*) is anomalous as all subsequent medieval attestations are spelt *Lind-* or *Lynd-*. Lindrick (*Lyndric* late 13th, ‘lime strip, ditch’) is another *lind* place-name with medieval attestations, about 20 km to the north in the parish of Ripon YW, and it provides further evidence of lime in this region. The now lost *Bickerton* YW (*on Biceratuna* c.1030), from OE *bīcere-tūn*, ‘bee-keepers farm’, is thought to have been in Newall Clifton in Otley parish YW and lies 2 km south-west of Lindley. This name may attest to the importance of lime-trees in the area, as lime flowers support abundant honey production and lime-tree honey is historically much valued for its flavour and supposed anti-inflammatory properties (EAFTS 184).

The following three names: Lilley Hrt, Linley Sa, and Lindley Le, have an absence of very early spellings with medial *-d-*, which presents the possiblity that these instead derive from OE *lin* ‘flax’, or OE **hlyn* ‘maple’ (see 2.48) (PNLe vi 113–4). Lilley Hrt (*Linleia* 1086, *Linlege* 1204, *Lilley* 1275) has no recorded forms with *-d-*, but early simplification of /ndl/ could have occurred and PNHrt (18) notes that the high exposed location of Lilley makes it an unlikely place for growing flax. The later-attested place-name Beech Hill, which is directly south of Lilley Wood, may support the suggestion that lime once grew here, as beech is a common natural successor of lime, and medieval limewoods have often been replaced by beech- or oak-dominated woodland (Rackham 2003, 242).

Linley Sa, although first attested *Linlega* c.1135, has early thirteenth-century forms with *-d-* (*Lindleg’* 1203–4, *Lindele* 1208–9, *Lyndleg’* 1261–2) that parallel another Shropshire Linley (*Lindele* 1208–9) in More parish, 34 km to the west. PNSa (i 177–8) suggests these *-d-* forms are unsupportive of a *lin* etymology. Further support for lime comes from the acidic loam-based geology of the region, which is an area Rackham (2010, 286) refers to as the oak-hazel province, where high-levels of rainfall and the resultant less-fertile soils have led to an abundance of oakwood. Oak, like beech, is a natural successor of lime, so although limewoods are now restricted largely to East Anglia, they were likely more common throughout England during the early medieval period.

Lindley (*Linlai* 1199, *Linlay* 1208) in the parish of Higham on the Hill Le, also has no forms with *-d-* until the thirteenth century (*Lindeleya* 13th). The geology at this location is variable and it is not possible to pinpoint the probable early-medieval *lēah* site; however, Lindley Wood (OS 2022: SP 36283 96974) lies just to the north of Lindley Hall, beside another area of woodland named Ashpole Spinneys, from *æsc-pāl*, 'ash pole' (PNLe vi 211), which may have been an area of ash coppice. Ash is a tree associated with coppice limewood, for although ash is usually over-shaded by the dense canopy in limewoods, some seedlings survive and can grow to become standard trees (Rackham 2014, 38). As lime declined throughout the English landscape, it is possible ash was the natural successor at this site.

As a simplex name:

Lindon Wo (*Linde* 1086) PNWo 73

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Lindsell Ess (*Lindesela*, *Lindeseles* 1086) PNEss 486 (**sele**)

With **bȳ**:

Lindby Nt (*Lidebi* 1086) PNNt 122

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Great Limber Li (*Lindbeorhge* 1066) PNLi ii 219 (**beorg**); Lindfield Sx (*Lindefeldia*, *Lendenfelda* 765(1300)) PNSx ii 340 (**feld**); Lindridge Wo (*Lynderycge* 11th) PNWo 57 (**hrycg**); Linwood Li (*Lindude* 1086) PNLi iii 58 (**wudu**); Linwood Hall Farm Li (*Lyndewode* 1135) Cameron 1998, 81 (**wudu**); Lympsham So (*Lympelesham* 1189) Watts 2004, 390 (**pyll**; **hamm**); Lyndhurst Ha (*Linhest* 1086) Watts 2004, 390 (**hyrst**); Lyndon Ru (*Lyndon*(*e*), *Lindon*(*e*) 1167) PNRu 189 (**dūn**)

With **lēah**:

Lilley Hrt (*Linleia* 1086) PNHrt 18; Lindley Le (*Linlai* 1199) PNLe vi 113; Lindley YW (*lindeleh* 972(10th)) PNYW v 60; Linley Sa (*Linlega* c.1135) PNSa i 177

2.55 linden OE adj. ‘growing with lime-trees’

An adjective deriving from OE **lind** ‘lime-tree’ (see 2.54) that described an area growing with lime-trees (EPNE ii 25), perhaps limewood, which was once a common woodland type but is now much reduced in the English landscape (Rackham 2003, 242). This element may have influenced early forms of Lindon Wo (*Lyndon*, *Lindon* 1225; *Lynden*(*e*), *Linden* 1275) (see 2.54.1), Lindfield Sx (*Lindefeldia*, *Lendenfelda* 765(1300) S50; *Lindefeld* 12th) (see 2.54.3), and the early-attested minor name *Lyndenehallefeld* 1331 in the parish of Takeley (see 2.54.2), although these could alternatively be the product of weak fem. gen. pl. *lindena* ‘of the lime-trees’. See 2.5 **æcen** for discussion of similar adjectival construction (also 2.11 **æscen**; 2.19 ***bircen**; 2.44 ***hæslen**; 2.59 ***peren**).

2.56 *mapel OE ‘maple’

This is an element that is not independently attested in OE literature and in charters appears only as part of a compound (EPNE ii 36). It could be a shortening of the compound *mapel-trēow*, which is attested in OE literature and has been suggested to be an altered form of OE **mapuldor** (see 2.57) that arose ‘earlier than the date of the extant records’, yet it is also possible *mapel-trēow* derives from **mapel* despite the lack of early uncompounded forms (OED: maple tree, n.). Place-name evidence provides earlier possible attestations of **mapel* than otherwise appear in literary sources.

According to Hooke (2010, 202), the maple-tree is attested 30 times in early medieval charters but compounded forms of **mapel* appear to have been much less common than *mapuldor*: LangScape records 21 charters with *mapuldor* and only three with *mapel*: a *mapel treo* in the bounds of Bishops Cleeve Gl (S1549); a *mappille cnap*, ‘maple hillock’, at Uplyme D (S442); and a *ruge mapel treow*, ‘rough maple-tree’, at Stoke Prior Wo (S60), although it should be noted that this latter is generally deemed to be of spurious origin (eSawyer). There looks to be alternation of **mapel* and *mapuldor* in early attestations of Mappleborough Wa and associated minor names (2.56.1), suggesting these words could have been used interchangeably in the Midlands.

This disparity in the number of attestations of **mapel* and *mapuldor* can perhaps be explained by looking at the distribution of these elements in place-names. With the

exception of *Mapleham* Ha (2.56.1), **mapel* does not occur in major names in the south of England; in contrast, *mapuldor* major names are almost exclusive to this region (*Fig.47*), suggesting a linguistic preference that parallels the distribution of *apuldor* names that are also only found in the south (Hough 2003, 47). The general southerly bias of charter material can perhaps therefore explain the infrequency with which **mapel* occurs. The field maple (*Acer campestre*) is the only native species of maple-tree, and its growth tends to correlate particularly with areas of lime-rich soil in central and southern counties, and thus with the majority distribution of maple in charters (Hooke 2010, 257) and place-names. It is doubtful that the northerly distribution of **mapel* major names is attributable to the influence of ON lexical elements, as ON *hlynr* 'maple' appears to have been the common ON word for maple (ONP: hlynr sb. m.) and it has been suggested that development of the rarer Old Icelandic *mǫpurr* was in fact due to OE influence (OED: maple tree, n.).[41]

2.56.1 **mapel* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Mappleborough Green in Studley Wa is attested in DB as *Mapelberge* 1086 and in the copy of a ninth-century charter as *Mepelesbarwe* 840×52(12th) (S191), both of which indicate the OE compound **mapel-beorg*, 'maple hill, mound'. PNWa (226) and Watts (2004, 397) suggest that the original form of the name must have been *mapuldor-beorg*, with later replacement by *mapel*. This is based upon the thirteenth-century form *Mapeldreborch* c.1200 and the reference to a *Mapoldreu geat* 972(1050) (S786) at Beoley, 6 km to the north. Although it is possible the charter may have referred to a 'maple-tree' unrelated to Mappleborough, this nonetheless provides evidence for the use of the word *mapuldor* in this region.

There is a now lost settlement in the New Forest Ha, which is attested solely in DB as *Mapleham* 1086 (Coates 1989, 114). This appears to be a **mapel* name with the generic OE *hām*, 'maple homestead', or OE *hamm* 'maple hemmed in land'. With no other early attestations, it is difficult to suggest why could be such an outlying example of a **mapel* name when *mapuldor* is the maple word usually found in the south (see 2.57.2 Mapledurham Ha and 2.57.3 Mapulderwell Ha). Unfortunately, as

[41] Old Iceland masc. *mǫpurr* 'maple', the etymon of Modern Icelandic *möpur*, occurs only once in ON texts in the *Þul Viðar*, where it is listed alongside other rare tree words (Skaldic Project: Viðar heiti (Anonymous Þulur) — Þul Viðar 1 III).

the location of this settlement is lost, the topographical probability of the generic is difficult to assess; however, LPN (53–5) notes that there are only two *hamm* names in Hampshire (Damerham and Southampton), neither in the New Forest area, which perhaps favours a *hām* etymology.

2.56.1.1 **mapel-tūn*:

Mapleton (or Mappleton) Db (*Mapletune* 1086) and Mappleton YE (*Mapleton*(*e*) 1086) appear to derive from OE **mapel-tūn*, 'maple farm'. The early forms of these names differ from those derived from *mapuldor-tūn*, the two examples of which in major names have medial *-r-* in their earliest attestations (see 2.57.2.1: Maperton So and Mapperton Do). Mapleton Db sits on sandstone bedrock and loam-based calcareous soil, in contrast with the neighbouring parish of Ashbourne (*Esseburn*(*e*), *Eseburna* 1086) – from *æsc-burna* 'ash stream' – which lies on richer clay-loam soil. This is significant as ash-maple-hazel woodland is a common type that is particularly abundant in the Midlands (Peterken 1993, 125) and prefers 'moderately calcareous soils (pH 5.0–7.0) with a moderately high clay content' (Rackham 2003, 210). Although maple tends to be found in this type of woodland on the richest soils, it also prefers sloping ground with good drainage, an environment perhaps provided by the hillside above Mapleton. In contrast, ash tends to grow on wetter sites (Rackham 2010, 277), which would suit the situation of Ashbourne in the flood-prone valley of Henmore Brook. Mappleton YE sits on equally well-draining calcareous clay-rich soil and is thus also situated in an area suitable for optimal maple-tree growth.

2.56.2 **mapel* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Maplebeck Nt has persistent early forms deriving from the generic ON *bekkr* 'stream' (*Mapelbec* 1086, *Mappelbec* 1243, *Mapilbek* c.1270), but there are also associated sporadic forms with the generics OE *berg* 'hill' (*Mapleberg*, *Mapelberg* 1086) and OE *tūn* 'farm/settlement' (*Mapelton'* 1182) (PNNt 189). It is possible these are earlier names for the same settlement, or they may have been names associated with the estate that referred to the same tree or group of trees. Maplebeck lies beside and above the floodplain of a waterway named The Beck (PNNt 189), on loam-clay soil, to the east of the acidic sand-based soils of the oak-birch woodland of Sherwood Forest.

These distinctly contrasting arboreal environments perhaps explain the recognition of maple as a toponymic feature in this area.

2.56.2.1 ***mapel-lēah**:

The earliest forms of Mapperley Db (*Maperlie* 1086; *Maperleya*, *Maperley*(*e*), *Maperleg*(*e*) 13th) suggest OE ***mapel-lēah**, 'maple open woodland', with dissimilation of <ll> to <rl>, although it is also possible they indicate an early reduced form of *mapuldor* (PNDb ii 583–4; Watts 2004, 397) but perhaps less likely given the general distribution of these elements (*Fig.47*). The soil here is clay-rich and well-suited to ash-maple-hazel woodland (see 2.56.1.1: Mapleton Db). Peterken (1993, 126) observes that most woodlands of this type have been managed as coppice and that of these, ash and hazel have traditionally been the more abundant. At Mapperley, where conditions are optimal for maple-tree growth, it could be that here maple was the dominant coppice species. ***Mapel-lēah** is a rare place-name compound: see also Mapperley Nt (*Mapurley barns* 1496) in Old and New Basford (PNNt 139), while *æsc-lēah* and *hæsel-lēah* are more common, with nine and four major name examples respectively. This could suggest that greater value was placed on ash and hazel wood than on maple.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Mappleborough Green Wa (*Mepelesbarwe* 840×52(12th) S191) PNWa 226 (**beorg**); *Mapleham* Ha (*Mapelham* 1086) Coates 1989, 114 (**hām**)

With **tūn**:

> Mappleton Db (*Mapletune* 1086) PNDb ii 387; Mappleton YE (*Mapleton*(*e*) 1086) PNYE 63

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Maplebeck Nt (*Mapleberg*, *Mapelberg*, *Mapelbec* 1086) PNNt 189 (**bekkr**/**berg**)

With **lēah**:

> Mapperley Db (*Maperlie* 1086) PNDb iii 583

2.57 mapuldor OE ‘maple-tree’

This word is cognate with Old Saxon *mapulder* and OHG *mazaltra*, *mazzaltra*, *mazzoltra* (OED: maple tree, n.) and appears to have been a parallel form of OE *mapel-trēow* (see also 2.3 **apuldor** and 2.8 **æppel-trēow**). It is attested in charter bounds and in nine major names first recorded by the end of the twelfth century. See 2.56 ***mapel** for discussion of the parallels between these elements their contrasting distributions in place-names and charter bounds (*Fig.47*).

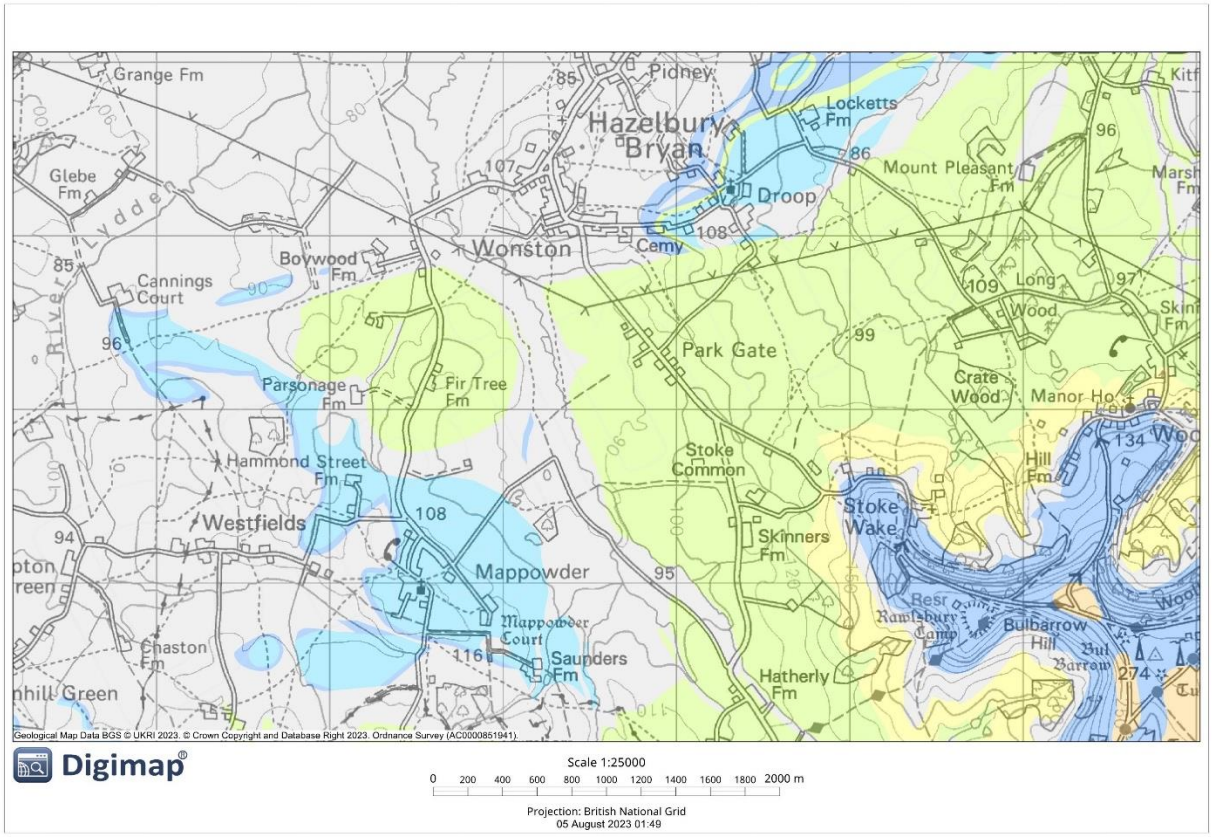


Figure 53: OS Calcium Carbonate Content (1:25 000) map showing the geology at Mappowder and Haselbury Bryan, Dorset: more alkaline soils are light blue (50%+ CaCO3) and more acidic soils are grey

2.57.1 *mapuldor* as a simplex name:

Mappowder Do (*Mapledre* 1086, *Mapeldra* 1088) is the only simplex major name that refers to a maple-tree. It is unclear whether Mappowder referred to a single notable maple-tree, or a maplewood. The OED (maple tree, n.: etymology) states that only in OHG did the Germanic tree suffix (represented by OE *-der*, *-dre*) ‘remain productive and transparent’, which could be significant when considering its restricted

use in *mapuldor* and *apuldor* names. It is possible *mapuldor* was understood simply as 'maple' with no implicit assumption of this being a single tree, although charter evidence does provide examples where *mapuldor* has been used in this way: *ealdan mapuldre*, 'old maple-tree' (S772), *mycclan mapeldran*, 'great maple-tree' (S1004), *lytel mappeldre*, 'little maple-tree' (S508), *ruge mapel treow*, 'rough maple-tree' (S60), and *hore mapuldure*, 'grey/hoar maple-tree' (S1165). Mapowder sits on highly calcareous soil on limestone bedrock, in contrast with the neighbouring parish of Haselbury Bryan (*Hasebere* 1201) – OE *hæsel-bearu* 'hazel wood' – which lies on more acidic soil (*Fig.53*). These names perhaps provide evidence that the area was once populated by ash-maple-hazel woodland, a common deciduous woodland type in the south of England (Rackham 2003, 210), which could support the use of simplex *mapuldor* in a collective sense.

2.57.2 *mapuldor* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There is variation in early forms of Mapledurham O (*Mapeldreham*, *Malpedreham* 1086; *Mapulderham* c.1160; *Mapultreham* 1087(15th), c.1110(15th)) between *mapuldor* and either corruption of this or an alternate form *mapel-tre*, 'maple-tree'. No spellings point diagnostically to the generic being OE *hamm* but this is a formal possibility. PNO (i 59–60) and Watts (2004, 397) gloss this name as *mapuldor-hām*, 'maple-tree homestead' and LPN (49) does not include it under discussion of *hamm*, even though it sits beside a stretch of the River Thames that is described on the 1870s OS map (SU 6713 7588) as liable to floods. Maple does not favour waterlogged ground as readily as ash – with which it often grows in mixed woodland – but the calcareous loam-clay soil of the slope above Mapledurham could have provided the rich, well-draining soil maple prefers. Mapledurham Ha (*Malpedresham* 1086, *Mapeldereham* 1217) was a once extensive DB estate in Buriton parish (Page 1908, 86). Once again it is not included in LPN (49) under *hamm*, although there are a number of small streams in the area that may support the possibility of a river-related *hamm* name. Coates (1989, 114) glosses this as another *mapuldor-hām*, drawing a parallel with Mappledurham O.

Maplestead Ess, now Great and Little Maplestead, was a single estate in the eleventh century (*Mapulderstede* 1042, 1066; *Mapoldrestede* 1083) with a name deriving from OE *mapuldor-stede*, 'maple-tree place' (PNEss 445). It has attestations suggesting

alternative forms with the generics *ford* (*Mapuldureforde* 1042) and *feld* (*Mapeltreffeld*, *Mapetereffeld* 1254). The two settlement sites are approximately 1.6km apart and the situation of the original estate is uncertain. Geologically, Little Maplestead is perhaps the site more likely to have inspired the name, as the soil there is calcareous and has a lower sand content, providing an environment that correlates better with the general preferences of maple woodland.

2.57.2.1 *mapuldor-tūn*:

The early forms of Maperton So (*Malpertone* 1086, *Maperton* 1219), Mapperton Do (*Malperetone*, *Maperetone* 1086), and Mapperton Fm Do (*Mapeldertune* 943(15th) S490; *Mapledretone* 1086) suggest the OE compound *mapuldor-tūn*, with probable early metathesis for Maperton So and Mapperton Do. Maperton So sits on clay-loam soil bordering an area with a high calcium carbonate content; this is well-suited to maple, which prefers well-drained clay-based soils with little sand (Rackham 2010, 277) and in the south-west tends to occur on drier calcareous soils (Peterken 1993, 125–6). Mapperton Do is situated on loam-clay soil in an area that is more highly calcareous than its surroundings and Mapperton Fm Do lies on alkaline loam soil, again suggesting good conditions for maple. Although these names could simply mean 'farmstead where maple trees grow' (PNDo iv 305) this name type may have indicated places of timber or coppice production (see 2.56.1.1: Mapleton Db and Mappleton YE).

2.57.3 *mapuldor* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Maplescombe K (*Mapeldrescamp* 11th, *Mapledescam*, *Maplescamp* 1086, *Mapeldurescamp* 1195) seems to be OE *mapuldor-camp*, 'maple-tree field' (Wallenberg 1934, 45), the generic element having later been altered to *combe* (Ekwall 1960, 313). Maplederwell Ha (*Mapledrewelle* 1086, *Mapeldurewelle* 1183) appears to derive from the OE compound *mapuldor-wella*, 'maple-tree spring'. Both sites are favourable for maple-tree growth: Maplescombe K lies on chalk bedrock with clay-based soil and Maplederwell on calcareous well-draining fertile soil beside the River Lyde, which 'rises close to the church' (Coates 1989, 114).

As a simplex name:

Mappowder Do (*Mapledre* 1086) PNDo iii 259

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Mapledurham Ha (*Malpedresham* 1086, *Mapeldereham* 1217) Coates 1989, 114 (**hām**); Mapledurham O (*Mapeldreham*, *Malpedreham* 1086) PNO i 59 (**hām**); Maplestead Ess (*Mapulderstede* 1042(14th)) PNEss 445 (**stede**)

With **tūn**:

> Maperton So (*Malpertone* 1086, *Maperton* 1219) Ekwall 1960, 313; Mapperton Do (*Malperetone* 1086) PNDo iv 305; Mapperton Fm Do (*Mapeldertune* 943(15th) S490) PNDo ii 56

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Maplederwell Ha (*Mapledrewelle* 1086) Coates 1989, 114 (**wella**), Maplescombe K (*Mapeldrescamp* 11th) Ekwall 1960, 313 (**camp**)

2.58 *mispeler OE 'medlar'

This word is a possible cognate of OHG *mespila* and post-classical Lat. *mespilum*, *mespila* (OED: mespil, n.). It is first attested in literary sources in the fourteenth century as *mespile* (MED: mespile, n.) and appears to have existed alongside ME *medler*, *meddeler*, deriving from Old French *medler* and the source of modern medlar (*Mespilus germanica*) (MED: medler, n.). An unrelated OE word for medlar was *openærs*, which may have been a descriptive term or perhaps reflected its use a purgative (O'Hare 2004, 182). This word is attested in OE texts and glossaries where it is glossed as Lat. *mespila* (BosworthToller: open-ears, n.).

2.58.1 **mispeler* as the possible specific in a habitative compound:

Kirby Misperton YN was recorded as two manors in DB (*Chirchebi* 1086, *Mispeton* 1086). In the twelfth century Misperton was also attested as an independent estate (*Misperton*(*a*), *Mysperton*(*a*) 1137) and by the sixteenth century Kirby had the alternative appellation *Kirkebye Overkare* 1549, 'Kirkby above the marsh', from ON *kjarr* (Watts 2004, 350). It has been proposed that Misperton is the sole example of a place-name with the specific OE **mispeler*, compounded with OE *tūn*; however, Hough (2003, 51) is sceptical, especially as the case according to Smith appears to rely solely on analogy with Germanic cognates (PNYN 75–6). She states that

although this could be a pre-dating of ME *mesplier*, which is first attested in the fifteenth century alongside fourteenth- and fifteenth-century attestations of ME *mespile*, a medlar etymology is by no means certain. It is worth considering whether this might be a name that derives directly from Lat. *mespila*, perhaps one that was coined originally in an ecclesiastical context.[42] In DB, the adjoining estate *Chirchebi*, from ON *kirkja-bȳ*, 'church farm/settlement', is recorded as having a church and priest and was held in part by the canons of York. The remains of early medieval masonry and an Anglo-Saxon grave slab in the walls of the fifteenth-century church indicate that a pre-conquest ecclesiastical structure once stood at this site (Page 1923, 448–9; Historic England: 1167989).

As the possible specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

Kirby Misperton YN (*Mispeton* 1086) PNYN 75–6

2.59 *peren OE adj. 'growing with pears'

An adjective deriving from OE **peru** 'pear' (see 2.61) that is not attested in OE outside place-names (EPNE ii 62). See 2.5 **æcen** for discussion of similar adjectival construction (also 2.11 **æscen**; 2.19 ***bircen**; 2.44 ***hæslen**; 2.55 **linden**).

2.59.1 **peren* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Parndon Ess (*Perenduna*, *Perendunā*, *Perindunā* 1086) is the only major name attested by 1200 with a possible **peren* element (*Fig.54*). PNEss (48–9) proposes that Parndon Ess (Great & Little Pardon) has a specific element from the OE adj. **pirigen* 'growing with pear-trees', a derivative of OE **pirige** (see 2.62), with generic OE *dūn*. EPNE (ii 62; 66) lists this name under both **peren* and **pirigen*, while Ekwall (1960, 358) and subsequently Watts (2004, 462) and Mills (2011, 362) give the specific **peren*. This latter suggestion is more convincing as attestations are consistently spelt *Peren-* (*Perenduna*, *Perendunā* 1086; *Perenduna* 1138–48; *Perendon*(*e*), *Perendona* 1200), *Perin-* (*Perindunā* 1086, *Perindon* 1262, *Perinden Magna* 1428), or *Paren-* (*Parendon*(*e*) 1202, *Parrendun* 1207, *Parindon*(*e*) 1208). Parallel

[42] The relationship between ecclesiastical centres and fruit-tree names is explored in Chapter Four (see 4.2).

constructions can potentially be seen in Parnholt Ha (*Parenholt* 1235, *Parnholt* 1255, *Perneholte* 1354), Prinstead Sx (*Pernested*(*e*) a.1151, 1253), Purnish Sr (*Pernehrs* 1252; *Perneric*, *Pernerich* 1263; *Perenersh* 1332), and two minor names in the parish of Parndon Ess noted by PNEss (48): *Parrenham* 1207 and *Parn Mead*.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Parndon Ess (*Perenduna*, *Perendunā*, *Perindunā* 1086) PNEss 48–9 (**dūn**)

2.60 *persc OE ‘osier (a tree of the *Salix* genus), a twig’

An OE word unattested outside of place-names that became ME *persche* and survives as Gloucestershire dialect *persh* (EDD: *persh*; PNWo 217). EPNE (ii, 62–3) suggests it possibly developed from *pearr* ‘enclosure’ and the noun-forming suffix *-isc*, ‘in allusion to hurdles or the like made from twigs or osiers’.

2.60.1 **persc* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are two major names attested by 1200 with a probable **persc* specific. Pershore Wo (*Pershoram* 674×9(14th) S70, (*in*) *perscoran* 972 S786, *Persore* 1086) has the topographical generic OE *ōra* (PNWo 217). Watts (2004, 469) suggests this name to mean ‘ridge by the osier beds’ in reference to the riverward side of the ridge on which the settlement lies. LPN (206) is more specific still and suggests ‘ridge which overlooks an osier bed’. If the original location of the settlement is taken to be the site of the Anglo-Saxon Abbey of Pershore (Willis-Bund and Page 1971, 127), then the highly permeable sand-loam soil at this location would indeed provide a good habitat for *Salix*-species (see 2.78 ***wilig**).

Piercebridge Du (*Persebrigce* c.1040(12th), *Persebrig* 1104×7) probably derives from the OE compound **persc-brycg*. It has been suggested that the ‘bridge’ cannot refer to a crossing of the River Tees and is more likely to have been a causeway of osier faggots laid across marshy ground (Watts 2002, 95; Watts 2004, 472); however, this does not consider the presence at this site of a third-century Roman bridge with stone piers that once enabled the continuation of Dere Street across the River Tees. The remains of the south pier now lie some distance from the river and the north pier is submerged due to changes in the watercourse (Cool and Mason 2008). In the eighteenth century the piles of an earlier bridge, which lie 200 metres upstream, were

recorded by the antiquarian William Hutchinson (Bidwell and Holbrook 1989, 110–12). It seems reasonable to suggest that while this river crossing may not have been in use during the early medieval period, bridge remains were probably still evident in the landscape. The south pier is situated on the river floodplain where *Salix*-species may have grown, and the name perhaps originally meant 'bridge among the osiers'.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Pershore Wo (*Perscoran* 972(1050) S786) PNWo 217 (**ōra**);
> Piercebridge Du (*Persebrigce* c.1040) Watts 2002, 95 (**brycg**)

2.61 peru OE f. 'pear'

The OED (pear, n.) suggests OE *peru* is the result of Germanic borrowing of post-classical Latin *pera* (see also OHG *bira*, Old Icelandic *pera*). The evidence of OE glossaries and medical texts suggests that in early medieval England, *peru* specifically indicated the fruit of the pear-tree; an example is seen in a Leechbook recipe that recommends *peran* (a weak form of the noun) as a cure for a sore throat (fol.67r: Cockayne 2012 ii 181). It is possible the alternative element OE **pirige** 'pear-tree' (see 2.62) originally had a complementary but ultimately distinct meaning, allowing for specific reference to the tree itself rather than the fruit. In place-names *pirige* was perhaps used to refer to places with a pear-tree(s), while *peru* had the sense 'where pears grow'; however, this is difficult to substantiate and it is possible the words were used interchangeably, just as we might today refer to a pear-tree simply as a pear (see also 2.3 **apuldor** 'apple-tree' and 2.7 **æppel** 'apple'). There are nine major names attested by 1200 that have a possible *peru* specific, although a number of these have difficult etymologies. Although fruit-trees do not always produce a viable fruit crop, the general implication was likely to fruit-producing sites and *peru* would have indicated the presence of a tree or trees where fruit could be had (see 4.4 for discussion of horticultural fruit-tree names).

There appears to be a possible regional distinction in the distribution of pear-related toponyms (*Fig.54*). OE *peru* is found in East Anglia in the names Parham Sf (*Perham* 959(11th)) and Prested Ess (*Perestedā* 1086, *Per*(*e*)*sted*(*e*) 1203), and Great Parndon Ess (*Perenduna*, *Perendunā* 1086) derives from the related adjective ***peren** (see 2.59.1); in contrast, major names with *pirige* generally cluster in the south (*Fig.54*) and although EPNE (ii 65–6) suggests there are *pirige* minor names in Yorkshire and

Kent (Perry K, Pierce Hey YW), there is currently no place-name evidence of this element in East Anglia. This could imply that in toponymic use dialect may have been the principal determining factor in the use of these words.

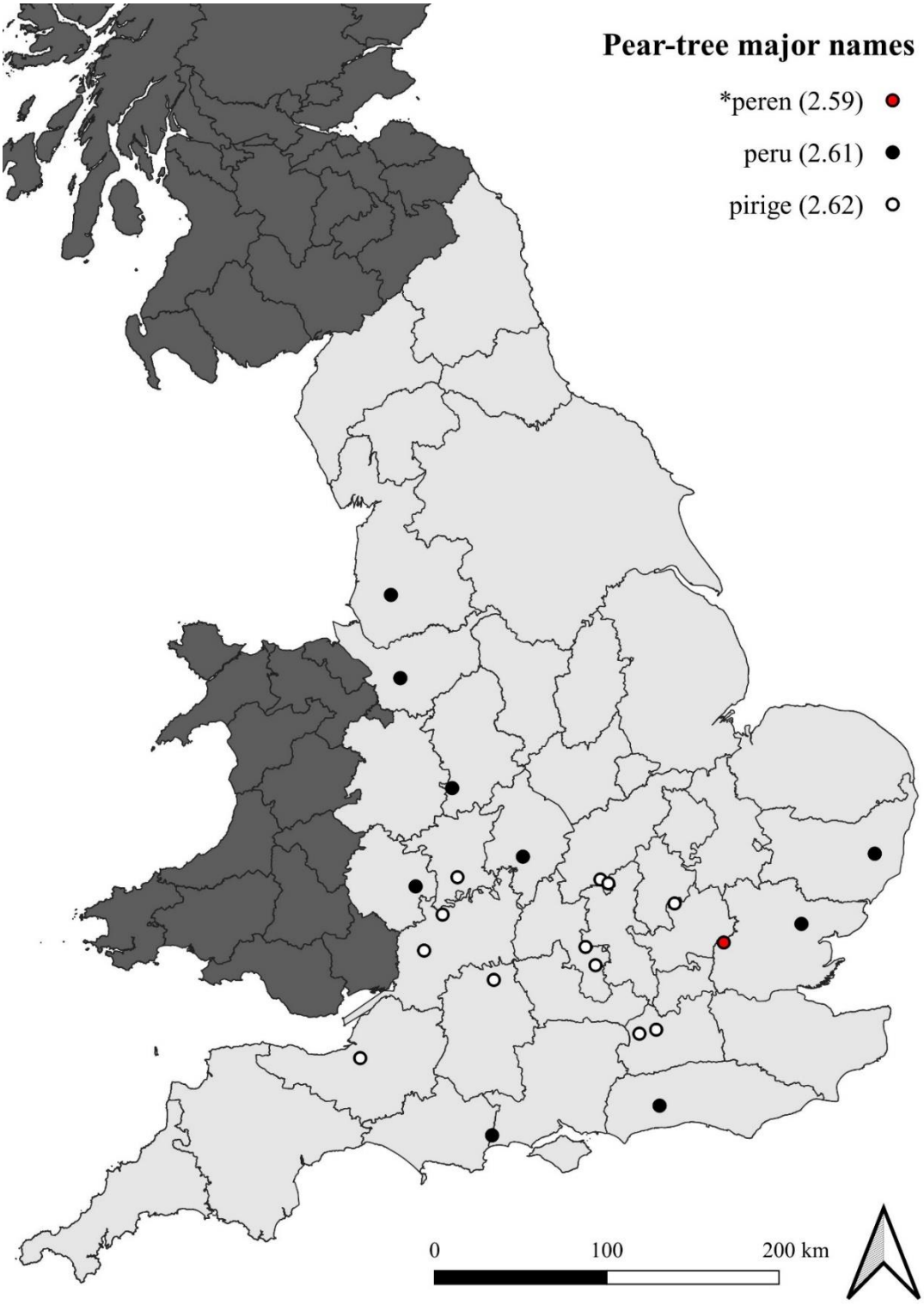


Figure 54: Pear major names attested by 1200

2.61.1 *peru* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Parbold La (*Iperbolt* 1195, *Perbold*(*e*) 1199–1233(1268), *Parbold* 1243) is the most northerly pear-related major name attested by 1200 (*Fig.54*). The first form looks to be corrupt, but subsequent spellings suggest OE *peru-boðl*, 'pear-tree dwelling, homestead' (Ekwall 1922, 130; Watts 2004, 461), with characteristic West Midlands spelling of the generic (VEPN i 136). Pear-tree place-names are not common in the north of England. This is likely due to the natural climatic limit of European wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*), which is caused by an intolerance of late frosts (Bricknell 2012, 444); however, the limit during the early medieval period is unclear and may have been more extensive. Pear wood has been found in charcoal in southern England from the Neolithic period (Rackham 2003, 356; Johnson and More 2004, 316), and although wild varieties are now uncommon in the landscape they do appear in isolation in hedgerows (Sterry 2007, 206) and ancient woodland in the south and east of England (Hooke 2010, 251). This complements the medieval evidence for pear-trees in charters, where wild pear tended to exist in hedgerows or as a free-standing tree 'well away from settlements or probable cultivation' (Rackham 2003, 356). Even if this was a domestic variety (*Pyrus communis*) at Parbold, wild pear was likely once present as domestic pear is unreliably self-fertile and must be grafted onto the root stock of a botanically compatible species to produce viable fruit (Sterry 2007, 212).

The earliest attestations of Parham (Hundred) Sf (*Pereham* c.1075(c.1180), *Perreham* 1086) and Parham Sx (*Perham* 959(11th) (S1293), *Pereham* 1066) suggest *peru* with generic OE *hām* or OE *hamm* (PNSx i 152). For Parham Sf, Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 108–9) assign a *hām* etymology; however, Parham lies beside the River Ore, which could make this a candidate for *hamm*. Pear-trees are relatively tolerant of seasonal flooding and can thrive in wetter conditions than other fruit-trees (Bricknell 2012, 444), although they do not fare well in standing water. It is worth noting that there are three other possible pear-related major names with an element that suggests proximity or exposure to water (2.61.1.1 Wasperton Wa; and 2.62.1 Waterperry O, 2.62.4 Pyrford Sr). The settlement of Parham Sx is now the location of Parham House, which lies on the northern edge of the limestone escarpment of the South Downs, on land raised above the floodplain of the River Arun and bordered by marshland at Amberley Wild Brooks. This could again suggest a *hamm* derivation, perhaps with the meaning 'land hemmed in by water or marsh'; however, Dodgson

(1973, 33) assigns this name a *hām* etymology and LPN does not include it in the lists of *hamm* names with a riparian meaning (49–51). There are no pear-related *tūn* names in the south-east (*Fig.55*) and if these two Parham names are *peru-hām* settlements, there may be some merit in the suggestion that they are the south-easterly equivalent of *peru-tūn* (2.61.1.1), in a region where *tūn* is relatively rare (Gelling 2010, 129) and *hām* is particularly common (EPNE i 227).

2.61.1.1 *peru-tūn*:

There are three major names that could derive from OE *peru-tūn*, 'pear orchard', a possible variant form of the more recurrent *pirige-tūn* (see 2.62.3.1; 4.4); however, two of these have difficult etymologies. The most diagnostic *peru-tūn* major name is Perton in Tettenhall parish St. Early attestations suggest *peru* (*Perton* 1086, 1198) while other forms show the influence of *pirige-tūn* (*Periton* 1193, *Pirton* 1606), which is a common compound in the west (*Fig.55*). The Tettenhall pear is a famed cultivar of this parish, recorded from the eighteenth century (see 4.4.3).

Ashperton He (*Sp*(*er*)*tvne* 1086, *Aspretonia* 1144, *Aspretuna* 1146, *Espertona* 1160×70, *Espreton'* 1174–86) looks to be a *peru-tūn* compound with prefixed OE *æsc*, 'ash-tree at the pear orchard' (Coplestone-Crow 2009, 34; Watts 2004, 22). Ekwall (1960, 15) suggests OE *æsc-burna* or *æsc-beorg*, but as Coplestone-Crow (2009, 34) notes, none of the spellings suits this suggestion and *burna* is a very rare element in Herefordshire. A pers.n. etymology is possible, either from OE *Æscbeorht* and *tūn*, '*Æ*scbeorht's farm/settlement', with devoicing of /b/ to /p/, or perhaps the OE pers.n. *Æsc* with *peru-tūn*, '*Æsc*'s pear orchard', comparable to Ab Kettleby Le, which has attestations that show the addition of the OE pers.n. *Abba* or ON *Abbi*/*Abbe* to an earlier name (*Chetelbi* 1086; *Ketelbia* c.1160; *Abbe-*, *Abe-* 1236) (PNLe ii 157).

Wasperton Wa is recorded in DB (*Wasmertone* 1086) and in two spurious eleventh-century charters (*Waspertune* 1043(17th) S1000, *Wasperton* 1050(17th) S1226: eSawyer: S1000). The first element looks to be OE **wæsse* 'land by a meandering river which floods and drains quickly' (Pears et al. 2020, 383), likely indicating the floodplain of the River Avon. Early spellings suggest **wæsse* may have been affixed to a pre-existing *peru-tūn* name (PNWa 266), or as with Ashburton D (PND 462), /p/ could have replaced the /b/ of *burh-tūn* (Ekwall 1960, 500; PNWa 266), meaning 'fortification by the flooded land'. The existence of the potentially comparable watery

compound *burh-welle*, 'fortification by the spring', is perhaps supportive of the latter idea (see 2.15.2.1: Burbeach). Without reliable early forms it is not possible to propose more about the etymology of Wasperton, beyond acknowledging that pear-trees can thrive in damp conditions and periodic flash-flooding may not have been detrimental to pear-tree growth. It is interesting that two potential *peru-tūn* names have gained an affix at the beginning, rather than the original name being used as the qualifying element with an affixed generic and this does cast some doubt upon their etymologies.

2.61.2 *peru* as the specific in a topographical compound:

2.61.2.1 *peru-lēah*:

West Parley Do (*Perlai* 1086, *Perlea* 1187, *Parlea* 1194) looks to be OE *peru-lēah*, 'pear open woodland'. It is the most southerly major name with a pear element attested by the end of the twelfth century. In the early medieval period, it was the administrative centre of a parish that once included parts of Hampreston and all of West Moore (Royal Commission 1975 v, 74).

Tarporley Ch (*Torpelei*, *Torplei* 1086) is another potential *peru* name with a puzzling etymology. It lies 8 km east of the modern extent of the city of Chester and has been the subject of much onomastic discussion. Ekwall (1960, 460) suggests *peru-lēah*, with a hill named *Torr* and states this is likely the prominent hill directly north of the settlement; however, consideration of later forms with a second medial *-r-* (*Torperley* 1198, *Thorperleg*(*h*) 1280), has led to the suggestion that this is **þorpera-leah* with gen. pl. of **þorpere* 'one who lives in a thorp', a late OE development of ON *þorpari* 'a peasant, a cottager', and that an ethnic minority of Scandinavians in the district could have been named 'the Thorp-ers' by their English neighbours (PNCh iii 294–5). Fellows Jensen (1997, 82) is unconvinced and states it is unlikely 'an ethnic minority in central Cheshire would have been referred to as "thorpers" by English neighbours who could not have been familiar with Scandinavian place-names in *-þorp*'. Watts (2004, 600) also favours an etymology from **þorpere* due to it being 'formally satisfactory and less problematic than other attempts' but acknowledges that a lack of *þorp* names in the region casts some doubt on this suggestion. The comprehensive study of *þorp* by Cullen et al. (2011, 20) has found no evidence of an ON *þorp* or OE *þrop* place-name attested during the medieval period in Cheshire and only one

attested after 1700, close to the Staffordshire county boundary. This apparent lack of familiarity with the element *þorp* and the suggestion of an otherwise unattested later-OE word does indeed cast doubt on an etymology from **þorpere*.

One objection to a pear etymology is that Tarporley lies further north than most pear major names (*Fig.54*) and that the known modern climatic limit of European wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*) does not extend this far north, although it must be acknowledged that the medieval limit of wild pear is unknown (see 2.61.1 Parbold). Where wild pear grows, domestic pear (*Pyrus communis*) can be cultivated and Tarporley's proximity to the Roman city of Chester and the remains of a Roman villa at Eaton (<2 km east) could be significant. The domestic pear was introduced to Britain during the Roman period, and it is possible that sustained cultivation into the early medieval period explains the presence of pear-trees in the north of England.

Ekwall's (1960, 460) suggestion that the first element of this name is *Torr*, comparable perhaps to Tor Hill Gl (*to þæm torre*: S467), is possible; however this could also be OE *þorn*, as seen in Tarbock La (*Torboc* 1086, *Thorboc* 1243, *Torbok* 1257), 'thorn brook' (Ekwall 1922, 113; Watts 2004, 600), and Torbeck in Dumfriesshire (*Thorbrec* 1194–1214, *Torbrack* 1552), 'thorn hill/slope' (Fellows Jensen 1985, 171), which show similar development to early forms of Tarporley (*Torpelei*, *Torplei* 1086, *Thorpeleg'* 1289). A tree specific compounded with a pre-existing *peru* name is perhaps seen at Ashperton He (2.61.1.1), although the etymology of this name is also unclear.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Parbold La (*Iperbolt* 1195) Ekwall 1922, 130 (**bold**); Parham Sx (*Perham* 959(12th) S1293) PNSx i 152 (**hām/hamm**); Parham Sf (*Pereham* c.1075(c.1180)) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 109 (**hām/hamm**); Prested Ess (*Perestedā* 1086) PNEss 390 (**stede**)

With **tūn**:

> Ashperton He (*Sp*(*er*)*tvne* 1086) Watts 2004, 22; Perton St (*Pertone* 1086) Horovitz 2005, 436; Wasperton Wa (*Wasmertone* 1086) PNWa 266

As the specific in a topographical compound:

With **lēah**:

Tarporley Ch (*Torpelei*, *Torplei* 1086) PNCh iii 294–5; West Parley Do (*Perlai* 1086) PNDo ii 231



Figure 55: The distribution of *pirige-tūn* and possible *peru-tūn* major names, compared with other pear major names attested by 1200

2.62 pirige, *pyrige* OE f. ‘pear-tree’

The word *pirige* appears to be a borrowing of post-classical Lat. **pirea*, **perea* (OED: perry, n.1). It is attested in OE glossaries and charter bounds (LangScape: pirige) and appears in 12 major names recorded by the end of the twelfth-century. These names cluster predominantly in the south (*Fig.54*), suggesting that pear-trees were common and important in this region. There are no *pirige* names in East Anglia but there are names in **peru** ‘pear’ (see 2.61).

2.62.1 *pirige* as a simplex name (with later affix):

Simplex *pirige* suggests a single pear-tree but it is possible the word was also used toponymically to refer to multiple trees. Waterperry O (*Pereivn* 1085, *Perie* 1086) is first attested as a simplex name and with affix by the twelfth century (*Waterperi* 1186, *Waterpyrye* 1203), probably due to the need for differentiation from Woodperry O (*Perie* 1086, *Wdeperie* 1220) (PNO i 192), which is a small village in the neighbouring parish of Stanton St John. Although these settlements are approximately 6 km apart, Woodperry lies close to the Waterperry parish boundary, and it is possible they were named from the same estate or in relation to the same stand of trees. The affix ‘Water’ alludes to the fact that the land along the River Thame is liable to flooding (PNO i 192), which may not have been detrimental to pear growth (see 2.61.1).

Paulerspury Nth (*Pirie* 1086) and Potterspury Nth (*Peire* 1086) are both first recorded as simplex *pirige*. Although attested separately in DB, they are less than 5 km apart and the name may originally have belonged to one estate. Paulerspury was distinguished by the affix ‘west’ in the twelfth century (*West Pyria* 12th) but became known by association with the Pavelli family from the thirteenth century (*Pirye Pavely* 1280) (PNNth 103). Potterspury, initially ‘East Pury’ (*Pery Esypirie* 1229), later acquired the occupational affix OE *pottere* ‘a potter’ (*Potterispirye* 1287, *Potteresburi* 1315) (PNNth 105). Archaeological excavation has uncovered several medieval and post-medieval pottery kilns in and around the village (Riden and Insley 2002, 318). The use of gen. sg. *potteres* may have influenced the spelling of Paulerspury with intrusive medial *-er-* (Watts 2004, 463).

2.62.2 *pirige* as the generic element:

Hartpury Gl (*Hardepirer'* 1150, *Hardeper*(*i*)*er* 1154) looks to derive from OE *heard-pirige*, with probable influence from OFr *perier* in the earliest forms (PNGl iii 155). This name literally means 'hard pear-tree', but the intended sense was probably '(at the) pear-tree(s) with hard pears', suggesting the tree or trees in question were the native Wild Pear (*Pyrus pyraster*), which produces fruit that is generally smaller, harder and less palatable than that of the cultivated pear (*Pyrus communis*) (Rackham 2003, 356), or perhaps the perry pear (Watts 2004, 284), a semi-domesticated variety that has tougher fruit than *Pyrus communis*.

2.62.3 *pirige* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.62.3.1 *pirige-tūn*:

There are six habitative *pirige* major names attested by 1200, all with generic OE *tūn*. This compound has been suggested to indicate the location of early medieval pear orchards (EPNE ii 65–6; Gelling 1984, 219–20; Coates 2012, 214), with *tūn* signalling a location where pear-trees were cultivated as an edible resource. It is comparable in frequency to *æppel-tūn* major names (see 2.7.1.1); however, *æppel-tūn* and *plūm-tūn* (see 2.63.1.1) names are more widespread than *pirige-tūn* and *peru-tūn* major names (*Fig.55*), which have a south-westerly distribution largely corresponding with the traditional 'orchard counties of England' (Hooke 1990; 78–9; Barnes and Williamson 2021, 15).

All *pirige-tūn* major names are recorded in DB with *Peri-* and *Piri-* forms: Pirton Hrt (*Peritone* 1086) and Purton Gl (*Periton*(*e*), *Peritune* 1086) for the first time. Major names with *pirige-tūn* are also unusually recurrent in early medieval charters. Purton W (*æt Piertean* 796(13th), *æt Piergean, et Pirigean* 796(c.1400) S149) is recorded in two eighth century charters as *æt pirigean* 'at the pear-tree', which PNW (37–8) suggests is the original name. All subsequent spellings, including other eighth century attestations show the compound *pirige-tūn* (*Perytun* 796(13th) S149; *Puriton*(*e*), *Puriton*(*a*) 796(13th) S1586). Pirton Wo is recorded from the eight century (*Piritun* 760(17th), *Pyritune* 972 S786), Puriton So (*Piriton* 854(14th) S303) appears in a ninth-century charter, and Pyrton O ((*to*) *Pirigtune* 987(11th) S1354) is attested by the tenth century. Pyrton O was earlier named *Readanoran* (887(11th) S217, late 10th(11th)

S104) ‘the red ridge’ (PNO i 86), which suggests the pear orchard developed later in the early medieval period and that this led to a renaming of the site to reflect this more important landscape feature. While some attestations may belong to later forged documents or suffer from the influence of ME spelling, they suggest that ‘pear orchard’ settlements were early-recorded and relatively important sites.

For further discussion of pear orchard names see Chapter Four (4.4).

2.62.4 *pirige* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are two *pirige* names with a topographical generic in Surrey. They lie less than 10 km apart either side of the present-day extent of Woking. Early attestations of Pirbright Sr (*Perifrith* 1166, *Pierrefrid* 1170) suggest generic OE *fyrhþ*(*e*), ‘pear-tree scrubland’. PNSr (144–5) notes that the district is well-wooded and LPN (224–6) observes that Pirbright ‘lies in a vast expanse of heathland’. These need not be contradictory and may have indicated *fyrhþ*(*e*) uncultivated land where woodland bordered heath. It is possible *pirige* here referred to the European wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*), which is now rare but tends to be found in woodland in southern and eastern England (Hooke 2010, 251).

Pyrford Sr (*æt Pyrianforda* 956(c.1250) S621; *Piriford* 1067) looks to be gen. sg. *pirigan* and generic OE *ford*, ‘ford of the pear-tree’. PNSr (132) identifies an ancient crossing of the River Wey here, which is noted in the tenth-century charter attestation (*andlang Weyan on pyrian ford* S621). It is unclear whether *pirige* here referred to a cultivated tree(s) but the charter also mentions an ‘apple-tree enclosure’ (*on worþ apuldor*) along the bounds, implying there were other cultivated fruit-trees in the region. The land bordering the River Wey at Pyrford is prone to flooding but pear-trees are tolerant of water-logged soils and intermittent flooding (see 2.61.1).

As a simplex name (with later affix):

> Paulerspury Nth (*Pirie* 1086) PNNth 103; Potterspury Nth (*Perie* 1086) PNNth 105; Waterperry O (*Pereivn* 1085) PNO i 192

As the generic element:

> Hartpury Gl (*Hardepirer’* 1150) PNGl iii 155 (**heard**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

> Pirton Hrt (*Peritone* 1086) PNHrt 21; Pirton Wo (*Piritun* 760(17th)) PNWo 233; Puriton So (*Piriton* 854(14th) S303) Watts 2004, 485; Purton Gl (*Periton*(*e*), *Peritune* 1086) PNGl iii 259; Purton W (*Perytun* 796(14th) S149; *Puriton*(*e*), *Puriton*(*a*) 796(13th) S1586) PNW 37–8; Pyrton O (*Pirigtune* 987(11th) S1354) PNO i 86

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Pirbright Sr (*Perifrith* 1166) PNSr 144-5 (**fyrhþ**(**e**)); Pyrford Sr (*æt Pyrianforda* 956(c.1250) S621) PNSr 132 (**ford**)

2.63 plūme OE f. 'plum'

The development of this word into OE is uncertain. It may be a Germanic borrowing of post-classical Lat, *pruna* 'plum', although satisfactory explanation of the shift from *pr-* to *pl-* and *-n* to *-m* in most Germanic forms cannot be given (compare OHG *pflūma*, Old Saxon *plūm*, Old Icelandic *plóma*) (OED: plum, n.: etymology). Typically, Germanic use seems only to have indicated the fruit and the sense 'plum-tree' – suggested of English toponyms with *plūme* – is paralleled only in Middle Low German and eighteenth-century Dutch (OED: ibid). As the OE compound **plūm-trēow** 'plum-tree' is attested in OE literature and place-names (see 2.64), *plūme* may have referred to a place where plums grow in a toponymic context (see 2.7.2 **æppel** and 2.61 **peru**); however, this distinction likely had little practical meaning as where plums grow there must always be plum-trees. The doublet form **plȳme** (see 2.65) is apparent in place-names with a south-westerly distribution (*Fig.56*) and did not survive into ME. The by-form **prūme* has been surmised from Broomhill Sx (see 2.66) (OED: ibid).

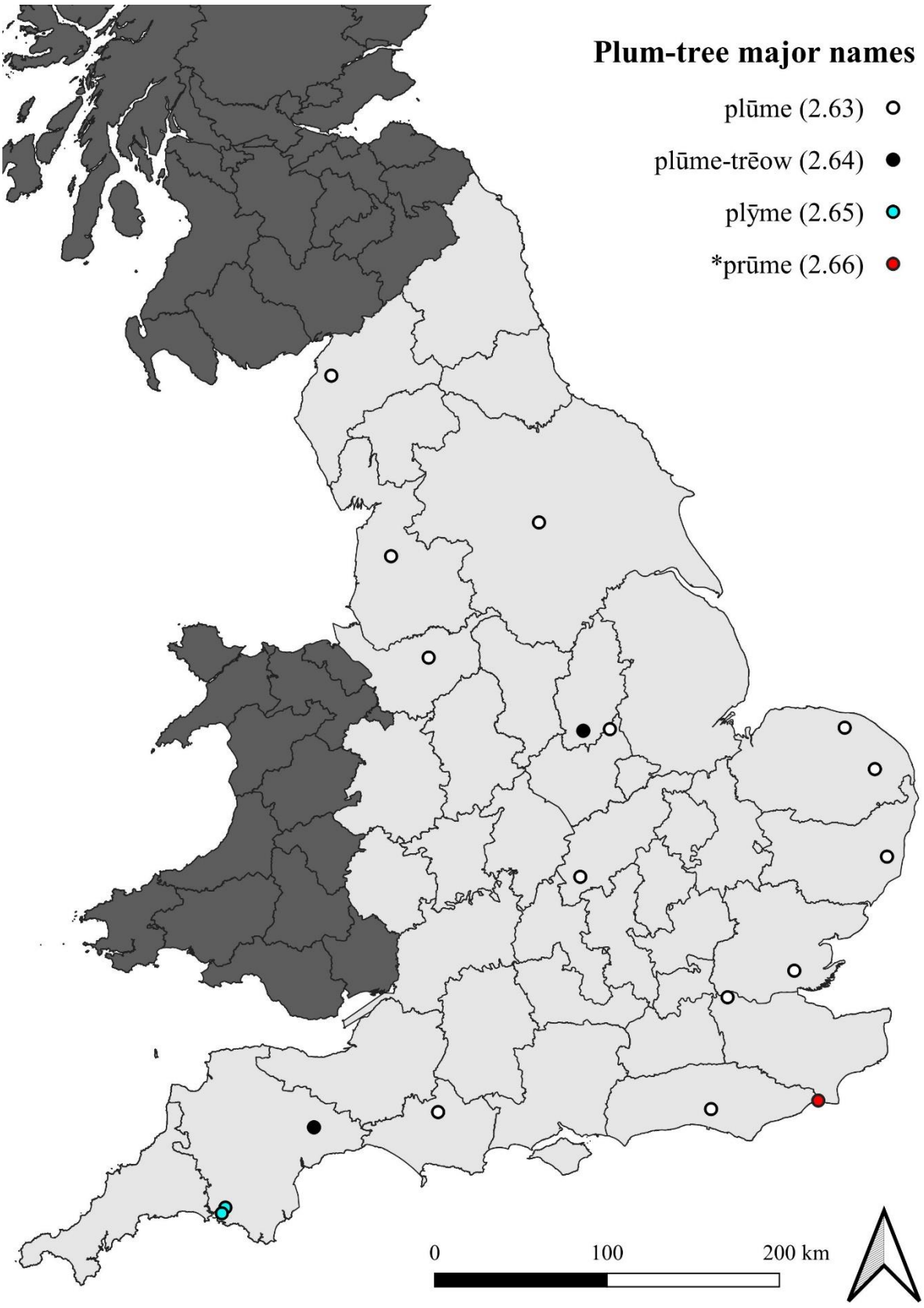


Figure 56: The distribution of plum major names attested by 1200

It is not entirely clear which species was referred to by the use of *plūme* in OE. Modern taxonomy assigns to *Prunus* a variety of closely related fruit-trees including plum, cherry, nectarine, apricot, and almond (Johnson and More 2004, 322–45). There are three native *Prunus* species in Britain: wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), bird cherry (*Prunus padus*), and the blackthorn or sloe (*Prunus spinosa*). There is the native or naturalized bullace (ME *bolās*: MED) (*Prunus domestica* spp. *insititia*) that is usually 'regarded as a relic of cultivation, although its stones have been found as far back as the Iron Age' (Rackham 2003, 352) and damson (*Prunus domestica* spp. *insititia*), which was originally thought to be from Damascus, hence the ME form *damascēne* (MED: *damascēne* adj. as n). Finally, there is the cultivated European plum (*Prunus domestica*), which originated in the Middle East (Hooke 2010, 252) and was likely – as with other fruit-trees of the rosaceae family (apple and pear) – introduced to England during the Roman period (see 4.2).

The words **blæc-þorn** 'blackthorn' (see 2.20) and **slāh** 'sloe, fruit of the blackthorn' (see 2.70) are recorded in OE literature, charter bounds, and place-names. The OE compound *plūmslā* 'plum-sloe' is used to gloss Lat. *pruniculus* (BosworthToller: plúm-slá, n.). Hooke (2010, 252) proposes that this was an improved variety of native wild sloe and suggests it may be the type recognised in place-names. Perhaps this was an early cultivar related to modern bullace (*Prunus domestica* spp. *insititia*), which looks similar to blackthorn (*Fig.31*) from which it is probably descended, but has larger more edible fruit (Rackham 2003, 352). As blackthorn is well-attested it seems unlikely names with *plūme* would have referred to this species, but it is a possiblity.

Cherry (*Prunus avium*; *Prunus padus*) is a native tree but is uncommon in the written record. In OE literature it appears twice as *ciris* or *cyrs* (DOE: ciris, n.), twice as *ciris-trēow* (DOE), and four times in the compound *ciris-bēam* (DOE). These few references to the name *ciris* perhaps reflected knowledge available solely in a learned monastic environment, where continental Lat. terms were glossed for the first time in OE (*cirisbeam* from Lat. *cerasius*: DOE: ciris-bēam, n.) and where much of the cultivation of fruit-trees in early medieval England took place (see 4.2 for discussion). Evidence for the use of *ciris* in the vernacular is less definitive. Churchstanton D (*Cheristontone* 1258–79, *Chery Sta*(*u*)*nton* 1282) appears to have an affix related to OE *ciris* or ME *chiri*, which was later confused with *church* (PND ii 618–9).VEPN (iii 50; 74) notes cherry field-names from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

(*Kirsetres* c.1250, *Chersebemfeld* 1377 and possibly *La Cheritone* 1365–7), but *ciris* does not occur in place-names attested during the early medieval period or with certainty in OE charters (Hooke 2010, 168; 202). A possible tenth-century charter example from Hampshire (S619) records the name *cirscumbe* 'cherry valley', although this could alternatively be OE *cerr* 'turn, bend' (VEPN iii 49).

Rackham (2003, 351) suggests that the infrequent occurrence of cherry in the written record when compared with other rosaceous species could mean it was less common in early medieval England than it is today. Unfortunately, this potential absence cannot be corroborated by the pollen record as rosaceous species are insect pollinated and therefore feature poorly. An absence of cherry trees in the landscape could certainly explain the lack of cherry place-names, but it is possible that cherry-trees – due to similarity with other small-fruited wild *Prunus* species – were thought to be a type of plum and were thus referred to as *plūme*. Differentiation may only really have begun in the later medieval period, coinciding with an increase in the appearance of cherry in field-names that could be a product of ME *cheri* 'cherry, cherry-tree' (developed from OFr *cherise*) rather than OE *ciris*. The more obvious differences between *Prunus* species may have resulted from an increase in domestication. Records of cherry cultivation begin to appear from the thirteenth century: a poor crop of cherries is recorded by Matthew Paris in 1257 and may have included both the wild or sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*) and the sour or morello cherry (*Prunus cerasus*) (Barnes and Williamson 2021, 8–9).

It could be the case that all *Prunus* varieties found in England in the early medieval period that produced plum-like fruit were referred to as *plūme*. This might have included wild cherry species, which are suspiciously rare in the written record; the fruit of native blackthorn and its more palatable relative the bullace; as well as domesticated varieties like the European plum. As cultivation of fruit-trees became more widespread throughout England in the later medieval period, differentiation between *Prunus* varieties likely become more important and is probably reflected in later medieval place-naming practices and modern vocabulary.

2.63.1 *plūme* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are three *plūme* major names with the habitative generic OE *stede*. Plumstead K (*Plumstede* 961×971(1173) (S809), *Plum*(*e*)*stede*) is now part of Greater London,

while both Great Plumstead (*Plum*(*m*)*esteda*, *Plum*(*m*)*estede* 1086) and Plumstead by Holt (*Plumestede* 1086) are settlements in Norfolk. Great Plumstead, initially *Grimene*, *Grumene Plumstede* 1254 (from ME *grome* 'groom, boy, servant' or ON *Grimarr*: Watts 2004, 475), has the affix Lat. *magna* 'great' (*Magna Plumstede* 1275) from the thirteenth century to differentiate from the neighbouring Little Plumstead (*Parva Plumsted*(*e*) 1257). These *plūme-stede* settlements have an easterly distribution and do not intersect with the more common habitative plum compound *plūm-tūn*, 'plum orchard' (2.63.1.1). Sandred (1963, 133) suggests that tree-names with *stede* simply indicated a 'group of' said species; however, it seems possible this regionally specific compound was a parallel construction to fruit-tree *tūn* names, in an area where *tūn* is generally less common (Gelling 2010, 129; see 2.61.1 *peru*), therefore *plume-stede* may also have meant 'plum orchard'.

2.63.1.1 *plūm-tūn*

There are four major names that derive from OE *plūm-tūn*, 'plum orchard', and one from the regional doublet form *plȳme-tūn* (see 2.65.1.1: Plympton D). Like *æppel-tūn* (see 2.7.1.1), *pirige-tūn* (see 2.62.3.1), and *peru-tūn* (see 2.61.1.1), *plūm-tūn* appears to have been a recurrent lexical name used of places where fruit-trees (principally plum-trees) were cultivated as an edible resource (see Chapter Four for discussion: 4.4). Plumpton Sx is first attested as *Plumtone* 1086, while Plumpton Nth (*Pluntun*(*e*) 1086), Plompton YW (*Plontone* 1086), and Woodplumpton La (*Pluntun* 1086) are all recorded with assimilatory medial *-n-* in their earliest forms. By the thirteenth century these names had developed an epenthetic /p/ between /m/ and the /t/ of *tūn* (Kristensson 1995, 151), which is preserved in their modern spellings. Woodplumpton La has the affix 'Wood' from the fourteenth century (*Wodeplumpton* 1327) for distinction from neighbouring Fieldplumpton (Ekwall 1922 151).

2.63.2 *plūme* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Topographical place-names with *plūme* may have referred to domesticated varieties of plum, perhaps in some cases the remnants of earlier sites of cultivation, or they recognised a wild or semi-native variety of *Prunus*, possibly blackthorn or cherry.

Plomesgate Hundred Sf (*Plummesgete* c.1075(c.1180); *Plumesgata H'*, *Plumestgata Hundret* 1086; *hundred' de Plumesgat'* 1235; *Hundred de Plomesgate* 1327) has the generic OE *geat* 'gap/pass/gate' and a specific element that is likely a derivative of

plūme (Anderson 1934, 90); OE *plume* is a weak noun (gen. sg. *plūman*, gen. pl. *plūmena*) so cannot by itself explain what initially looks to be a genitival construction. Briggs and Kilpatrick (2016, 110) suggest a hypothetical **plȳmett* (gen. **plȳmettes*), 'plum orchard', which would better account for the *-es* forms, although there is only one spelling with <t>. The proposed site of the meeting-place is at Rose Hill House, once known as Plomesgate Mill (ibid). The geology at this site is a sand-gravel mix that would provide good conditions for cultivated plum-trees, which thrive on stony soil (More and White 2013, 523) and like all fruit-trees, prefer well-drained conditions (Sterry 2007, 210). Anderson (1934 xi.iv) notes that Plomesgate Hundred also came to encompass the half hundred of Parham Sf (see 2.61.1) and was therefore known as a 'hundred and a half' in the thirteenth century.

Plungar Le (*Plungar(')*, *Plumgath* c.1130; *Plumgard'* c.1130–1242; *Plungard*(*e*) 1155×68–1308; *Plumgar* 1243, 1254; *Plongarth'* 1343) has a variety of early forms that show interchange between OE *gāra* 'a gore, a triangular plot of ground' and ON *garðr* 'an enclosure'. PNLe (ii 204–5) suggests the name was originally *plūme-gāra*, 'the point of land growing with plum-trees', which was later enclosed and cultivated, explaining a reanalysis of the name to *plūme-garðr*, 'plum-tree enclosure'. Cox (PNLe ii 205) is not convinced of an Anglo-Scandinavian *plūme-garðr* as he believes it is unlikely early *-gar* endings would be a condensed form of this compound. While there is merit to this argument, it is worth noting that in the Danelaw area *garðr* is often associated with animal and plant names (EPNE i 195), including *æppel*, which has the sense 'orchard' (see 4.4.1: *æppel-garðr*) and this could favour a similar construction with *plūme*. It may also be significant that Langar Nt (*Langare* 1086, *Langara* 1108), from OE *lang-gāra*, is less than 5 km west and could have affected the development of Plungar.

Plumberow Ess (*Plumberga*, *Plumbergā* 1086; *Plumberg* 1248) derives from OE *plūme-beorg*, 'plum-tree hill' (PNEss 187), which is the name of a barrow in the parish of Hockley (OS 2022: TQ 83987 93828). There was perhaps a particularly notable *Prunus* tree marking the site, or a stand of trees of which *Prunus* comprised a notable percentage. Plumbland Cu (*Plumblund* 1150, *Plumlund* 1175) is likely a compound of OE *plūme* and ON *lundr*, 'plum grove'. The ON cognate *plóma* 'plum' is less likely as this is only attested in ON from the fourteenth century (ONP: 1*plóma*, sb. f.). As noted for Hasland Db (see 2.43.4), *lundr* may have been indicative of

woodland with economic value (LPN 242), in this case the production of a fruit crop. Plumber Fm Do (*Plumbere* 1086, *le Plumber* 13th, (*bosco de*) *Plumbar*(*e*) 1258) is an early-attested name in the parish of Lydlinch. The generic looks to be OE *bearu*, giving 'wood or grove where plum-trees grow' (PNDo iii 349). Blackthorn and both species of wild cherry (*Prunus avium* and *Prunus padus*) are commonly found in or near lighter woodland margins, and all are strongly suckering plants that will invade clearings and glades (Rackham 2003, 351–2) (see also 2.63.2.1: Plumley Ch).

2.63.2.1 *plūme-lēah*:

Plumley Ch (*Plumleya*, *Plumleia*, *Plumbeia* 1119) looks to derive from OE *plūme-lēah*, 'plum open woodland', perhaps indicating a sparsely-treed area of woodland where a wild *Prunus* species grew. Like Plumber Do (2.63.2), this probably indicated a wild *Prunus* species.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Great Plumstead Nf (*Plum*(*m*)*esteda*, *Plum*(*m*)*estede* 1086) Watts 2004, 475 (**stede**); Plumstead K (*Plumstede* 961×971(1173) S809) Ekwall 1960, 369 (**stede**); Plumstead by Holt Nf (*Plumestede* 1086) PNNf iii 27 (**stede**)

With **tūn**:

> Plompton YW (*Plontone* 1086) PNYW v 30; Plumpton Nth (*Pluntun*(*e*) 1086) PNNth 43; Plumpton Sx (*Plumtone* 1086) PNSx ii 303; Woodplumpton La (*Pluntun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 161

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Plomesgate Hundred Sf (*Plummesgete* c.1075(c.1180)) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 110 (**geat**); Plumber Fm Do (*Plumbere* 1086) PNDo iii 349 (**bearu**); Plumberow Ess (*Plumberga*, *Plumbergā* 1086) PNEss 187 (**beorg**); Plumbland Cu (*Plumblund* 1150) PNCu ii 309–10 (**lundr**); Plungar Le (*Plungar*(*'*), *Plumgath* c.1130) PNLe ii 204–5 (**gāra**/**garðr**)

With **lēah**:

> Plumley Ch (*Plumleya*, *Plumleia*, *Plumbeia* 1119) PNCh ii 90–1

2.64 plūm-trēow OE n. ‘plum-tree’

This compound is attested in two major names attested by 1200. A similar *-trēow* construction is seen with the fruit-tree compound **æppel-trēow** (see 2.8).

See 2.63 for discussion of which species **plūme** might have referred to.

2.64.1 As the compound *plūme-trēow*:

Plumtree Nt (*Pluntre* 1086, *Plumtre* 1175(1337)) is first recorded as a settlement name (PNNt 239) and appears to have been the location of an early meeting-place for the wapentake (*Wapentak de Plumptre* 1266, *Plumptre wapentake* 1310) (Watts 2004, 475) (*Fig.56*). The earliest forms of Plymtree D (*Plumtrei* 1086; *Plumtre, Plumtreoue* 1200) indicate *plūm-trēow*, but one medieval attestation (*Plimtre* 1219) and the modern spelling suggest the influence of OE south-westerly variant **plȳme** (see 2.65).

It is possible the plum-tree in question at these sites was a cultivated specimen that produced palatable fruit, perhaps the remnant of a previous orchard; however, native, and naturalized *Prunus* species like blackthorn and bullace may have been more notable to an early medieval population than they are today, especially considering the seasonal availability of fruit. If *plūme* was used of a variety of *Prunus* species, then it is possible these sites hosted native wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), which is, as Rackham (2003, 349) puts it, ‘a tree of great beauty and distinction: a cherry-wood in blossom, or a single giant [up to 25 metres] and aged tree covered in white flowers from top to bottom, are things to be remembered’.

As the compound **plūm-trēow**:

> Plumtree Nt (*Pluntre* 1086) PNNt 239; Plymtree D (*Plumtrei* 1086) PND ii 567

2.65 plȳme OE f. ‘plum’

This element is a doublet form of **plūme** (see 2.63) that has not survived into ME (OED: plum, n.: etymology). There are two possible occurrences of this element in major names in the south-west and it appears to have influenced the name Plymtree D (see 2.64.1). As it is only securely identified in Devon this may have been a dialect term.

The etymology of Blymhill St has been suggested as *plȳme-hyll*, but this seems doubtful as all medieval attestations of this name have spellings with *B-* (*Brumhelle* 1086, *Blumehil* 1167), except for one fifteenth-century record (*Plymylle* 1423). PNSt (i 128–9) and Watts (2004, 67) explain this by noting that the initial voicing of /p/ to /b/ is not uncommon in the Staffordshire dialect. They also suggest that forms with medial *-n-* (*Blumenhall* 1194, *Blimenhul* 1236, *Blomenhull* 1248) show variation with an unattested adj. **plȳmen* 'growing with plum-trees'. Horovitz (2005, 132), however, proposes an alternative etymology from OE **blȳm*(*e*) 'bloomery (a forge that produces blooms of iron)', varying with the oblique form **blȳman*, which would have developed into ME as *blumen-*, *blimen-*, *blomen-*. This suggestion is more phonologically satisfactory and would not require there to be an extreme outlier in *plȳme*, a considerable distance from the Devon enclave (*Fig.56*).

2.65.1 *plȳme* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Plymstock D (*Plemestocha* 1086, *Plumstok* 1228, *Plimstok* 1244, *Plimpstok* 1284) has early forms that indicate OE *plȳme-stoc*, meaning either 'plum place' or 'plum outlying settlement'. PND (i 256) suggests that the specific could refer to the River Plym, but this is unlikely as the river-name appears to be the result of back formation from Plympton D (2.65.1.1), as it is not attested until the thirteenth century (*Plyme* 1238) and there is no pre-English root from which this name could otherwise derive (Ekwall 1928, 328; Anderson 1939a, 92). Watts (2004, 476) more convincingly proposes that Plymstock could be a shortening of Plympton Stock, 'outlying farm belonging to Plympton', as Plympton was the name of the hundred in the eleventh century (*hundreto Plintona* 1084) and of a large settlement 3.5 km to the north.

2.65.1.1 *plȳme-tūn*:

Plympton D is first attested in a copy of a ninth-century charter as *Plymentun* 889×909(c.1500), although the authenticity of this document has been questioned (eSawyer: S380). If this spelling is reliable the earliest form of the name could have the OE adj. **plȳmen* and *tūn*, 'farm growing with plum-trees'. Later forms (*Plintona* 1086, *Plimtun* 1131) suggest *plȳme-tūn*, 'plum orchard', which may have succeeded an original **plȳmen-tūn*. Later spellings show an interchange of /i/ and /y/ vowels that was common in Devon in ME (Kristensson 2001, 116). Plympton is the most

westerly-situated fruit-tree *tūn* name (*Fig.56*). See Chapter Four for further discussion (4.4).

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Plymstock D (*Plemestocha* 1086) PND i 256 (**stoc**)

With **tūn**:

Plympton D (*Plymentun* 889×909(c.1500) S380) PND i 251–2

2.66 *prūme OE ‘plum’

A possible by-form of OE **plūme** (see 2.63) (OED: plum, n.: etymology) that corresponds to OHG *pfrūma* and MLG *prūme* (Ekwall 1960, 69).

2.66.1 **prūme* as the specific in a topographical compound:

The earliest records of Broomhill Sx are spelt with *P-* (*Promhelle* c.1195; *Prunhelle* 12th; *Prumhell*(*e*) c.1200; *Prunhill*, *Prunhull* 1201) and *Br-* forms do not appear until the later thirteenth century (*Bromhell, Bromhull* 1279), possibly though the influence of OE **brōm** ‘broom’ (see 2.23). The seventeenth century attestation *Promehill al. Bromehill* 1648 shows post-medieval interchange between these two forms. Spellings with *Pr-* suggest **prūme* and OE *hyll* (PNSx ii 529; Ekwall 1960, 69); however, there is no raised land at or in the vicinity of Broomhill Farm, Sands, Creek, or Level: the locations at which this name is preserved. Broomhill parish borders the coast and the topography here is no higher than 7 metres above sea level with most of the land not exceeding 4 metres. It is possible the ‘plum hill’ in question has been lost to coastal erosion; failing that, there is a narrow slightly raised strip of sand-loam soil at Broomhill Farm, which is surrounded by richer and more flood-prone loam-clay soil (*Fig.57*). *Prunus* species require good drainage to thrive, which the sand-based soil of this site may have provided.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Broomhill Sx (*Promhelle* c.1195) PNSx ii 529 (**hyll**)

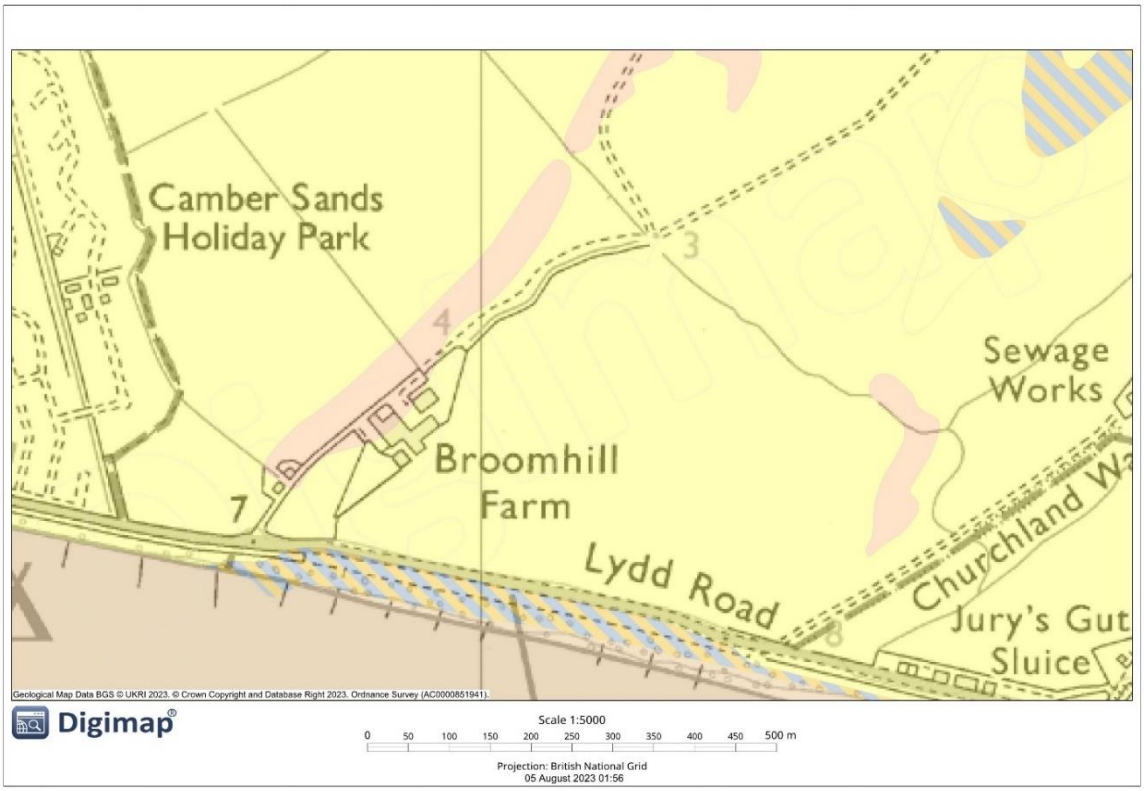


Figure 57: OS Soil Texture (1:5000) map of Broomhill Farm, Sussex, showing the strip of slightly elevated sand-loam soil (orange) in clay-based surrounds (yellow)

2.67 salh OE (Anglian), *sealh* OE (Kentish, WSax) 'sallow (a tree of the *Salix* genus), willow'

A word cognate with OHG *salaha* and ON **selja** (see 2.69) (OED: sallow, n.: etymology). The variant forms are due to differences in dialect, with OE *sealh* found mainly in place-names in the south and Anglian *salh* largely in the north-west (*Fig.58*). The differences in outcome can also be attributed to the use of different case forms: *salh* giving *Saugh*-, dat. sg. *sale* giving *Sale*-, and gen. pl. *sala* giving *Sal*(*e*)- and *Saw*- (EPNE ii, 96).

It is unclear exactly what *salh*(*sealh*) meant in place-names and how its meaning might have differed from other willow-related elements (see *Fig.1*). The modern rendering of this word is 'sallow', which encompasses all plants of the *Salix* genus, but is more commonly used in the present day of species other than osier and willow; however, even with modern taxonomic categorisation this is not straightforward, as the grey sallow/willow (*Salix cinerea*) and the goat willow (*Salix caprea*) are also known as the common sallow (Johnson and More 2004, 168). It is possible early

medieval people had an entirely different approach to distinguishing these species and it is unfortunate the possible nuances of these distinctions are lost to us. Of all *Salix* elements, *salh* compounds most often with woodland-related generics; there are 11 *Salix* major names attested by 1200 that have a woodland generic and seven (63.63%) are compounded with *salh* (2.67.3).

2.67.1 *salh* as a simplex name:

The lost settlement of Soham Db (*Salham* 1086, *Salvin* 1244, *Salme* 1415) in Hartington Middle Quarter, is probably dat. pl. *salum*, 'at the willows' (PNDb ii 366). Early attestations of Zeals W (*at Seale* 956(12th) S637; *Sele*, *Sela* 1086) and Sale Ch (*Sala*, *Sale* 1199–1216; *la Sale* 1285) suggest simplex dat. sg. *sēale*, '(at the) sallow', although most later records of Zeals instead indicate nom. pl. *sēalas* 'sallows' (*Seles* 1176, *Celes* 1264, *Seeles*, *Sceles* 1302) (PNW 182–3). *Salix* species tend to grow in large stands, but a single landmark tree is also possible. A *woche sæle*, 'twisted sallow', is mentioned in charter bounds of Pensax estate Wo (S1595) and there was an *ealde seale*, 'old sallow', in the bounds of Winterborne Tomson estate Do (S485).

Saling Ess (*Salingas* 1086; *Salingues* 1192; *Saling*(*e*), *Salyng*(*e*) 1220) has early attestations that have been identified as OE *salh-ingas*, 'sallow dwellers, dwellers at the sallow-trees' (PNEss 454); however, Coates (1997b, 38–40) has since proposed this could instead be a derivate of *salh* with the plural of a singular *-ing* suffix giving the meaning '(place at the) sallows, sallow copse'. A similar formation can perhaps be seen with other tree-related names, like Eashing Sr (see 2.10 **æsc**) and Stallingborough Li, which Hough (1998, 286–8) suggests as **stalling* 'young tree'. Ekwall (1960, 402) notes that in the first half of the twentieth century cricket bats were produced from the willows at Saling, an activity that continues at Saling Grove to this day.

2.67.2 *salh* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.67.2.1 *salh-tūn*:

Silton Do (*Seltone* 1086, *Selton*(*'*) 1194) appears to be OE *sealh-tūn*, 'sallow farm/settlement'. The recurrence of forms with *-i-* and *-y-* (*Cylton* 1327, *Silton* 1332, *Sylton* 1361) reflect a ME vowel shift from /e/ to /i/ (PNDo iii 64–5). Saighton Ch (*Saltone* 1086, *Salhtona* 1096) compounds *tūn* with *salh* (PNCh iv 121) and Salton

YN (*Saletun*, *Saleton* 1086) with gen. pl. *sala* (PNYN 57). These may have been sites where *Salix* species were coppiced, as sallows were among the most commonly used trees for coppice wood in medieval England (Rackham 2003, 465; see 3.7 for further discussion).

2.67.3 *salh* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Three of the four topographical major names with a *salh* specific have a river-related generic. Salford Bd (*Saleford* 1086, *Seleford* 1198) derives from OE *sealh-ford*, 'sallow ford' (PNBd&Hu 131). This is unsurprisingly a recurrent generic element with *Salix* species major names and can be attributed to the preferred riparian habitats of most *Salix* species (see 2.78.3 ***wilig**: Welford Bd, Wilford Hundred Sf; 2.80.2 **wīðig**: Widford Hrt and O, Wytheford Sa). Early records of Salford La (*Salford* 1086, *Sauford* 1169 *Shelford* 1230, *Salforde* 1346) suggest an etymology identical to Salford Bd (Ekwall 1922, 32; Kenyon 1984–5, 31); however, there is some later confusion with excrescent /t/ (*Saltford* 1257), which is likely a reanalysis due to the influence of recurrent OE *salt-ford*, 'ford on the salt way' names like Salford O (*Saltford* 777(12th) S112; *Salword*, *Salford* 1086) and Salford Priors Wa (*Saltford major* 714(16th) S1250, *Salford* 1086). Similarly, the 1260 form *Shelford* shows confusion with **sceldu-ford*, 'shallow ford', names like Shelford Nt (*Scelford*(*e*) 1086) and Shelford Ca (*Scelford* c.1050(13th)).

The DB record for Selborne Ha (*Selesburna* 1086) suggests gen. sg. *sēales*, while other attestations appear to be gen. pl. *sēala*, 'stream of the sallow(s)' (*seleborne* 903(14th) S370, *Seleburn* 1197) (Watts 2004, 536). With generic OE *burna*, this name presumably referred to a riverbank populated with sallows. Selborne appears to have been the original name of the river, though it is now known as Oakhanger Stream (Ekwall 1960, 536; Coates 1989, 145). The natural environment of Selborne is described in detail by the eighteenth-century ecologist and writer Gilbert White, who makes several references to the willows that grew there in the 1780s (White 2014, 41; 120; 242). A parish tithe map of 1842 also shows a large field by the stream that was known as *Plumb Tree Willow* (White 2014, 14–15).

Sawbridge Wa (*Salwebrige* 1086, *Salebrugia* c.1112, *Salubrigge* c.1155) in Wolfhampcote parish has early forms that suggest OE *salh-brigge*, 'bridge by the sallows' (Ekwall 1960, 405). It lies on the border of the parish of Willoughby Wa (see

2.77.2.1) (PNWa 151) beside the River Leam, over which the bridge presumably crossed. These names indicate that this area was particularly well-suited to *Salix* species.

Salph End Bd (*Salcho*(*u*) 1086; *Salhho* 1227) in the parish of Renhold is *salh-hō* (dat. sg. of *hōh*: Watts 2004, 525), 'spur of land with sallows'. Watts (2004, 525) notes that for the first element there is substitution of /f/ for the peripheral phoneme /x/, which gives the modern spelling *-ph*. Sawley Db (*Sallao* 1152; *Sallaw*(*a*), *Sallawe* 1166; *Sallou*, *Sallow*(*e*) 1176) has attestations that suggest the OE compound *salh-hlāw*, 'sallow hill/mound'. In DB it is recorded as *Salle*, which is similar to the early forms of the *salh-lēah* major name Salle Nf (*Salla* 1086, *Salle* 1196) (2.67.3.1). PNDb (499) notes that interchange with *lēah* is common in *hlāw* names, which likely explains the modern form. The hill or mound at Sawley has been identified as the slight rise above the River Trent on which stands the church (PNDb 499). The riparian landscape of the Trent is well-suited as a sallow habitat and various species of *Salix* still grow on the floodplain today.

Sawcliffe Fm Li (*Saleclif* 1086, *Salecliue* 1230) in Roxby cum Risby has the elements *salh* and OE *clif*, in reference to the steep slope at the top of which runs Ermine Street (PNLi vi 94–5). Forms with *-w-* appear from the fifteenth century and represent the vocalisation of /l/ to /w/ (*Sawclyffe* 1431) (ibid). Here *salh* perhaps referred to a *Salix* species often found in non-riparian environments like goat willow (*Salix caprea*), which is able to grow in the understorey of woodland (EAFTS 170) and was often found in upland areas in historical landscapes (Rotherham 2022, 2498).

Great and Little Saughall Ch (*Salhare*, *Salhale* 1086; *Salhala*, *Salghale* 1096) are townships in the parish of Shotwick and appear to have been differentiated by affix from the thirteenth century (*Parva Salechale* c.1220, *Magna Salhale* 1278). The eleventh-century attestations indicate *salh* and dat. sg. *hale* (Watts 2004, 528). It has been suggested *halh* referred to 'the valley running down to the old shore of Dee' (PNCh 202–3); however, the depression here is shallow and it might be more appropriate to consider the meaning 'slightly raised ground in marsh' (LPN 127). Before the River Dee was canalised west of Chester in the early eighteenth century (Barrow et al. 2005, 83–91), the river was free to flood, and the landscape comprised saltmarsh and shifting sandbanks. *Salix* species are resistant to moderate salinity

(Kuzovkina and Quigley 2005, 186), but do not fare well in areas of tidal flooding. Sallows may therefore have bordered the saltmarsh or grown on raised land that was not prone to inundation by saltwater. Willow Farm is less than 2 kms south-west of Saughall church. It is first recorded by the OS in 1880 and lies next to Old Marsh Farm, on land that was once saltmarsh and was presumably settled after the canalisation of the river. Despite its late foundation, this name is still a useful indication of the presence of *Salix*-species in the landscape surrounding Saughall.

Salehurst Sx (*Salhert* 1086, *Salhirst* 1205) appears to the compound *salh*(*sealh*)-*herst*, with the south-east dialect form of OE *hyrst*, 'wooded hill' (Watts 2004, 524). This settlement lies on the slope of a hill above the River Rother. The river valley has clay-rich soil and is prone to flooding, while the hill has lighter loam-based soil on sandstone bedrock. The use of *hyrst* suggests the trees grew on the hill itself and thus perhaps referred to a *Salix* species like goat willow (*Salix caprea*).

Selwood Forest W is first attested in the ninth century (*Seal wydu* 878 ASC, *Seluudu* 894 Asser) and derives from OE *sealh-wudu*, 'sallow wood'. Most of the forest lies within Somerset (PNW 15–16) and it occurs in the name Penselwood So, which is merged with the name (*æt*) *Peonnum* 9th ASC from the fourteenth century (*Penne in Selewode* 1345). The parish of Penselwood borders that of Zeals W to the east (2.67.1) and Silton Do (2.67.2.1) is less than 3 km south. These *sealh* names cluster within a 4 km² area (*Fig.59*), which has no distinct floodplain, but instead many tributaries of the River Stour along which a variety of *Salix* species may have thrive.

Great and Little Salkeld Cu (*Salchild* 1110) lie on opposite sides of the River Eden and appear to derive from a single original settlement named *salh-*hylte*, 'sallow wood'. Two estates were recorded here from the twelfth century, with Little Salkeld referred to as *Olde Salehhild* 1164 and *Alde Salehhild* 1165 (PNCu 236–7), suggesting it was the original settlement site. A later abundance of willows can be assumed from the name Willows Brow Wood, an area of woodland on the edge of the floodplain just south of Great Salkeld (OS 1970s: NY 55759 35774). Some early spellings suggest there was confusion with OE *hyll* (*Ealdessalchghilla* 1178, *Saulhill'* 1212) (Ekwall 1960, 402), while others display the influence of ON *kelda* 'spring, stream' (*Salkild* 1229, *Salukyld* 1250) (Watts 2004, 524).

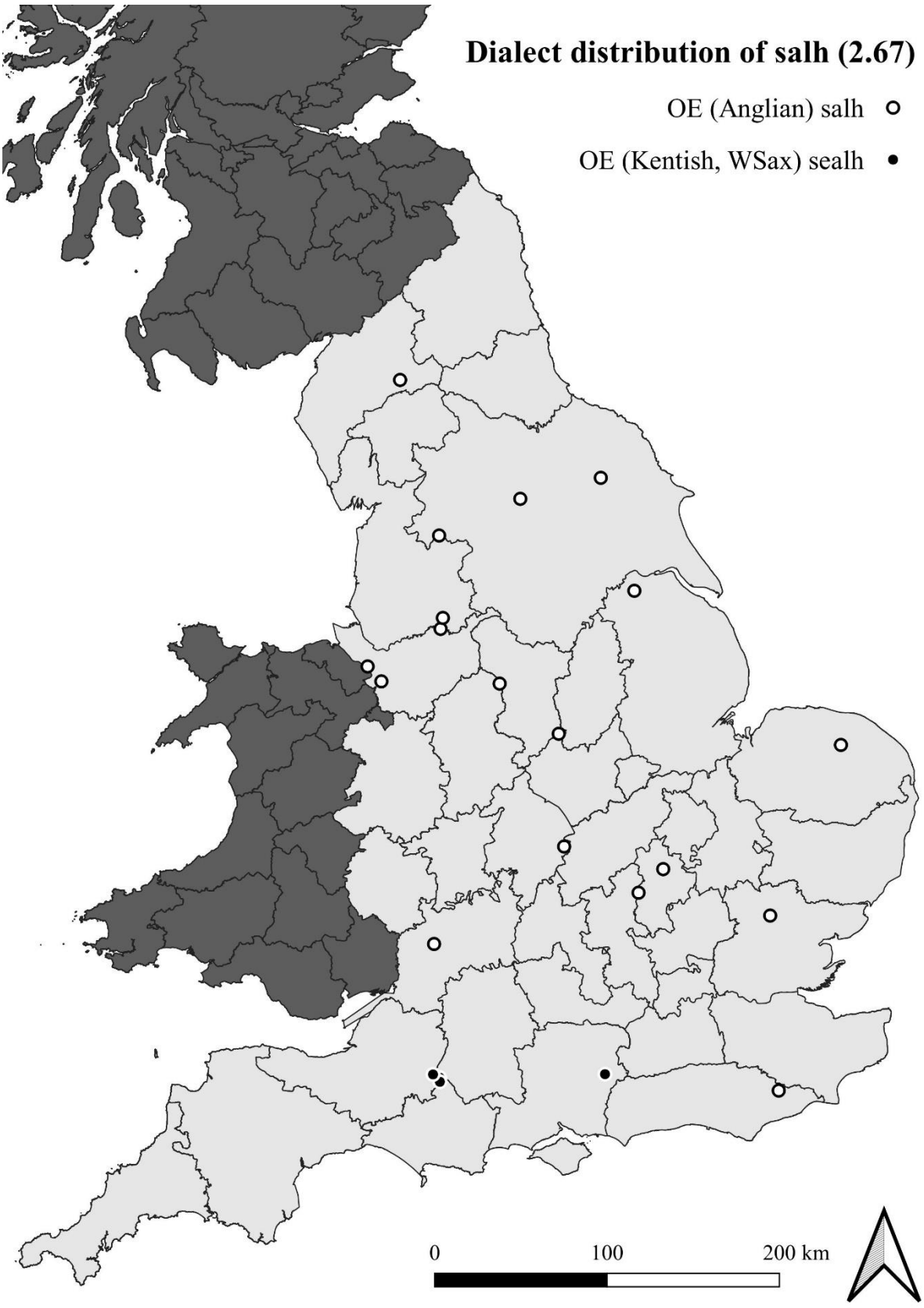


Figure 58: The distribution of *salh* (Anglian) major names and those with early forms that suggest WSax *sealh*



Figure 59: 2022 OS map (1:20 000) showing the proximity of Penselwood (Somerset), Zeals (Wiltshire), and Silton (Dorset)

2.67.3.1 *salh-lēah*:

Salle Nf (*Salla* 1086, *Salle* 1196, *Saulle* 1197), Saul Gl (*Salle* 12th, *Sal*(*l*)*eg'* 1221), Sawley YW (*Sotleie* 1086; *Sallai*(*a*), *Sallay*(*a*), *Sallea*, *Sallei*(*a*), *Salley* 1147), and Sawley in Ripon YW (*Sal-lege* 1030, *Sallai*(*a*) 1086) derive from the OE compound *salh-lēah* (Ekwall 1960, 402; PNYW vi 182; v 187), 'sallow open woodland', and were perhaps sites of managed woodland where coppice wood was produced (see 3.7 for further discussion). PNGl (ii 179) notes that Saul Gl is probably gen. pl. *sala* with unstressed *lēah*, as simplex nominative and dative forms would give *Saugh* and *Sale* respectively. This explanation can be extended to Salle Nf, which has similar medieval spellings.

The remains of the Cistercian Abbey in Sawley are labelled Salley on the 2022 OS map (SD 77646 46411) and appear to preserve the twelfth-century forms of the parish name. Sawley in Ripon is 160 metres above sea level and no major watercourses are apparent in the vicinity; however, the soil is clay-rich and there are several field drains and springs marked on the modern OS map (2022). Salle Nf is topographically similar

to Sawley in Ripon YW, with no evident watercourse but a large network of field drains. For both this suggests a habitat suitable for a *Salix* species such as goat willow (see 2.67.3: Sawcliffe Fm Li). Sawley YW is situated in a landscape more traditionally associated with *Salix* species as it lies beside the Ribble, a river with many large meanders that floods seasonally and presumably once fostered sallow beds along its extent.

As a simplex name:

> Sale Ch (*Sala* 1199–1216) PNCh ii 5; Soham Db (*Salham* 1086) PNDb ii 366; Saling Ess (*Salinges* 1086) PNEss 454 (**-ing**); Zeals W (*at Seale* 956(12th) S637) PNW 182

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

> Saighton Ch (*Saltone* 1086) PNCh iv 121; Salton YN (*Saletun*, *Saleton* 1086) PNYN 57; Silton Do (*Seltone* 1086) PNDo iii 64–5

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Salehurst Sx (*Salhert* 1086) PNSx ii 4578 (**hyrst**); Salford Bd (*Saleford* 1086) PNBd&Hu 131 (**ford**); Salford La (*Salford* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 32 (**ford**); Salkeld, Great and Little Cu (*Salchild* 1110) PNCu i 236–7 (***hylte**); Salph End Bd (*Salcho*(*u*) 1086) PNBd&Hu (**hoh**); Saughall, Great and Little Ch (*Salhare*, *Salhale* 1086) PNCh iv 202–3 (**halh**); Sawbridge Wa (Salwebrige 1086) PNWa 151 (**brigge**); Sawcliff Fm Li (*Saleclif* 1086) PNLi vi 94–5 (**clif**); Sawley Db (*Salle* 1086) PNDb ii 499 (**hlāw**); Selborne Ha (*seleborne* 903(14th) S370) Coates 1989, 145 (**burna**); Selwood Forest W (*Seal wydu* 878 ASC) Watts 2004, 467 (**wudu**)

With **lēah**:

> Salle Nf (*Salla* 1086) Watts 2004, 524; Saul Gl (*Salle* 12th) PNGl ii 179; Sawley YW (*Sotleie* 1086) PNYW vi 182; Sawley YW (*Sal-lege* 1030) PNYW v 187

2.68 *sele OE (Anglian, Kentish), **siele* OE (WSax) ‘sallow copse (a tree of the *Salix* genus)’

This is a proposed word that is unattested outside of place-names and is sometimes difficult to distinguish from OE *sele* ‘dwelling, hall’ and OE *syle* ‘bog, a miry place’ (EPNE ii 117) (see 2.68.1 Seal K). It has been suggested that Silchester Ha (*Silcestre* 1086, *Selechæstre* 1227) could have the specific **siele* (Ekwall 1960, 422); however, this is unlikely on ecological grounds as the settlement is situated on dry sand-based heathland soil. Both Coates (1988, 39–47) and Watts (2004, 550) favour an etymology from the survival and development of the Roman name of the town Calleva (*Kaléoua* 2nd cent., *Calleva* 4th cent., *Caleba* 6th cent., *Cilcestre* 1236). Coates (45–6) observes that although this ‘survival theory’ is not straightforward, with rare substitution of AN *s* for *c* it is the most satisfactory solution on morphological and orthographical grounds.

2.68.1 **sele* as a simplex name:

Seal K (*Lasela*, *La Sela* 1086; *Lausele*, *Sela* c.1100; *Sele* 1233) looks to derive from Kentish **sele*. Attestations with the French definite article *la* have led Watts (2004, 533) to state that this may instead be simplex OE *sele* ‘the hall’; however, north of the settlement there is an area of wet clay-rich land that could have inspired simplex use of OE *syle* ‘bog’ or **sele*, as the moist environment may have been well-suited to a ‘sallow copse’.

2.68.2 **sele* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Selworthy So (*Seleurde*, *Seleuurde* 1086) appears to be OE **siele-worð*, ‘sallow copse enclosure’. Thirteenth-century attestations suggest the later WSax form *syle* (*Syleworth* 1291, *Syleworthy* c.1350), while some forms alternate OE *worthig* ‘enclosure’ (*Sel*(*e*)*worthi* 1255, *Syleworthy* c.1350) (Watts 2004, 536), which is an element found predominantly in the south-west and is more common in Devon and Somerset than *worð*, from which it derives (EPNE ii 276).

For Selham Sx (*Seleham* 1086, *Seltham* c.1200, *Suleham* 1209, *Selham* 1230, *Sylham* 1428), PNSx (i 28) proposes OE *syle-hām*, ‘homestead of the wallowing-places’, presumably on the strength of forms with *-u-* and *-y-*; however, more recently it has been suggested to be OE **sele-hām*, ‘sallow copse homestead/village’, with possible

alternation with **selet*, **sielet* ‘a willow copse’ (EPNE ii 117; Ekwall 1960, 411). Dodgson (1973, 33) includes Selham in his list of *hām* names and LPN does not have it under *hamm*; however, the riparian topography of the River Rother and the ecological preferences of most *Salix* species for watery environments could encourage reanalysis as *hamm*.

The etymology of Sulhamstead (*Silamested’* 1197, *Silamesteda* 1202, *Silhamsted’* 1220, *Sillamsted’* 1224, *Sil*(*e*)*hamsted’* 1241, *Selehamsted’* 1267) in Sulhamstead and Sulhamstead Bannister Brk is difficult to ascertain. This could be OE *sylh* ‘bog, miry place’ as it lies on the floodplain of the River Kennet, which also may have provided the ecological conditions supportive of a **siele* specific (PNBrk i 185). Alternatively, this may be OE *sylh* (the gen. or dat. sg. of *sulh*) ‘furrow, narrow valley’ (Ekwall 1960, 453; Watts 2004, 589); PNBrk (i 185) notes that there are narrow valleys in the area but the settlements of Sulhamstead are widespread and the original site cannot be evaluated. Consequently, this name could be ‘sallow copse homestead’, ‘homestead at/of the narrow valley’, or ‘bog homestead’.

2.68.2.1 **sele-bȳ*:

Selby YW (*Seleby* 1030, *Selebi* c.1050) looks to be **sele-bȳ*, ‘sallow copse farm. PNYW iv 31–2) suggests a sallow etymology is more likely than OE *sele* ‘hall’, given the spellings in *Sal-* (*Saleby*(*a*), *Salebi*(*a*) 1070; *Salebe* 1137–40; *ecclesæ Salebiensi* 1070–1100), as **sele* was sometimes influenced by *salh* (gen. pl. *sala*) (see 2.67) and *selja* (see 2.69), which took the same form in ME. The location would favour a *Salix* etymology as the settlement is situated just beyond the floodplain of the River Ouse. It has been suggested *bȳ* may here be a replacement of an earlier *tūn* generic. Ekwall’s (1960, 411) suggestion that this is a Scandinavianisation of the lost *seletun* mentioned in the ASC(E) under the year 779 (*recte* 782) is incorrect according to Watts (2004, 536), who prefers the lost *Seletun* near Easington. This could of course also be an Anglo-Scandinavian name un-associated with either of these examples.

2.68.2.2 **sele-tūn*:

For Sullington Sx (*Sillinctune* 959(c.1100) S1293; *Sillingtune* c.1066(13th) S1043; *Sillintune* 1086), PNSx (i 179) favours an etymology from *syling* (derived from *syle*), ‘farm by the miry places’, on the strength of the surname (*atte*) *Sullingg* (1327, 1332) attested in the neighbouring parish of Storrington. Following a similar argument,

Ekwall (1960, 453) proposes **sīeling*, a possible derivative of **siele*, giving 'willow copse farm'. Watts (2004, 589) presents another option with **siele* or *syle* compound with the place-name forming suffix *-ing* and later *tūn*, 'the farm of estate called or at *Syling*'. While there are no obvious watercourses in the vicinity, the soil between Sullington and neighbouring Storrington to the north is slow-draining and clay-rich, which seems supportive of a *syle* etymology but cannot rule out **siele*.

As a simplex name:

Seal K (*Lasela*, *La Sela* 1086) Watts 2004, 533

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Selham Sx (*Seleham* 1086) PNSx 28 (**hām**/**hamm**); Selworthy So (*Seleurde*, *Seleuurde* 1086) Watts 2004, 536 (**worð**); Sulhamstead Brk (*Silamested'* 1197) PNBrk i 184–5 (**hām-stede**)

With **bȳ**:

Selby YW (*Seleby* 1030) PNYW iv 31–2

With **tūn**:

Sullington Sx (*Sillinctune* 959(c.1100) S1293) PNSx i 179

2.69 selja ON f. 'sallow (a tree of the *Salix* genus), willow'

A word cognate with OE **salh** (see 2.67), OHG *salaha* (OED: sallow, n.: etymology) and attested in ON prose from the thirteenth century (ONP: 2selja sb. f.). It is unclear which species this term refers to and it is possible that like *salh* it encompassed a variety of species in the *Salix* genus. Some common British species like the white willow (*Salix alba*) are not native to Scandinavia (EAFTS 168) but may have been referred to as *selja* in an Anglo-Scandinavian context. The major name Selby YW (*Seleby* 1030; *Selebi* c.1050) has early forms that suggest the possible influence of this element (see 2.68.2.1).

2.69.1 *selja* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Selside YW (*Selesat* 1086; *Seleseta*, *Selesete* 1190) in Horton parish was suggested to be ON *selja-sćtr*, 'sallow shieling' (Ekwall 1960, 411), or 'shieling near the willows' (PNYW vi 220). It has been noted, however, that with the lack of terminal *-r* this

could instead be ODan **sæta* 'residence' (Fellows Jensen 1972, 88; Watts 2004, 536). It also seems possible that the specific element is **sele* (see 2.68) instead of *selja*, 'shieling/residence at the sallow copse'. Directly east of the settlement, Selside Brook crosses the floodplain of the River Ribble to join the main watercourse: providing a landscape well-suited to *Salix* species.

As the specific in a habitative compound

Selside YW (*Selesat* 1086) PNYW vi 220 (**sætr**/***sæta**)

2.70 slāh OE f. 'sloe, the fruit of the blackthorn'

OE *slā*, *slāh* is cognate with OHG *slêha* (OED: sloe, n.: etymology). It referred to the fruit of the blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) but *slāh* (and ***slāh-þorn** (see 2.71)) also functioned as an alternative name for the tree itself (see 2.20 ***blæc-þorn**; TOE: 33. 04. n). Sloes are a fruit rich in Vitamin C and while not particularly palatable by modern standards, were a valuable source of food and medicine in early medieval England. Archaeology has found sloe stones with other small-stoned fruit in domestic contexts at the urban sites of of *Hamwic*, *Lundenwic*, and *Jorvik*, and the rural settlements of Springfield Lyons and West Cotton (Moffett 2011, 8). There are also references to sloes in the *Leechbook* where the juice of an unripe sloe is recommended as the cure for an eye malady (*genim onwćre sláh ðæt seáw … gif sió sláh biþ gréne*: fol.12a: Cockayne 2012 ii 33).

Hooke (2010, 202; 252) records six instances of *slāh* in early medieval charters and *plūmslā* is glossed as Lat. *pruniculus* in OE glossaries; the latter she suggests may have indicated an improved variety of native wild sloe (see 2.63 **plūme**). OE *slāh* is particularly recurrent in charters and place-names in compound with woodland-related elements: like the *slah grafan*, 'sloe grove', at Codicote Hrt (S900) and the *slah graues*, 'sloe grove', at Dinton W (S329); the *slāh-lēah*, 'sloe open woodland', names at Sloley Wa (*Slalea* 1173) and Sloley Nf (2.70.1.1); and the possible *slāh-þveit* etymology of Slaithwaite YW (*Sladweit*, *Sladwait* 1178). This makes ecological sense as blackthorn in a woodland context tends to grow along wood margins or in clearings where it is not over-shaded by larger trees.

OE *slāh* may be confused with OE **slohtre*, which is either a derivative of OE *sloh* 'slough, mire' (Watts 2004, 554), or related to Germanic *schulht*, 'ditch, ravine, deep

channel' (LPN 62). Slaughter names such as Lower Slaughter Gl (*Sclostre* 1086, *Sclotris* 1159), Slaughterford Sx (*Sloghtreford* 1276), Slaughters Sx (*la Sloghtre* 1293), and Slaughterwicks Sr (*Sloghterwyk*, *Slotʒterwyk* (sic) 1332) are probably **slohtre*, although in some cases like Slaughterford W (*Slachtoneford* 1176), OE **slāh-trēow* or **slāh-þorn* (see 2.71.1) is a possible alternative.

2.70.1 *slāh* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Slaugham Sx (*Slacham* 109, *Slagham* 1248) may mean 'homestead, village where sloes grow' with OE *slāh-hām*; yet, although LPN (53–4) does not include Slaugham under *hamm*, Watts (2004, 554) suggests this could be 'sloe promontory': referring to the hill-spur between two streams where the medieval church sits (Historic England: 1025603), or perhaps *hamm* with the sense 'enclosure, garden'. If this latter, blackthorn may have enclosed the space or was perhaps enclosed itself to protect the sloe crop.

2.70.1.1 *slāh-lēah*:

Sloley Nf (*Slaleia*, *Saleia* 1086) derives from OE *slāh-lēah*, 'sloe open woodland', or in this case perhaps a 'clearing with sloes'. PNNf (ii 191) suggests that the unidentified DB vill *Clareia* 1086 could also refer to Sloley, with dissimilation of /l/ to /r/, giving **Slareia* for **Slaleia* and the use of *-c-* for /s/, as seen in the DB spellings of Saddington L (*Cadington* 1086) and Slipton Nth (*Clipton* 1086).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Slaugham Sx (*Slacham* 1091) PNSx ii 277 (**hamm/hām**)

With **lēah**:

Sloley Nf (*Slaleia*, *Saleia* 1086) PNNf ii 191

2.71 *slāh-þorn OE m. 'sloe-thorn, i.e. blackthorn'

For phonological discussion see 2.70 **slāh**.

2.71.1 **slāh-þorn* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Slaughterford W (*Slachtoneford* 1176, *Sclachtesford* 1186, *Slauchterford* 1268) could be OE **slāh-þorn* compounded with OE *ford*, 'sloe-thorn ford' (Ekwall 1960, 426). Most of the medieval forms have *-ch-* to represent /χ/. PNW (111) suggests that an

etymology from *slāh-þyrne* is also possible. Alternatively, this could have been the 'miry ford' from OE **slohtre*, a derivative of OE *sloh* 'miry place or stream' (see 2.70 for comparative examples; *Fig.41*).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Slaughterford W (*Slachtoneford* 1176) PNW 111 (**ford**)

2.72 þorn OE/ON m. 'thorn'

A strong masculine cognate of OHG *dorn* and ON *þorn* that derives from Germanic **þurn-uz* and can be used to describe both a spike or prickle that protrudes from the stem of a plant and a plant that bears thorns (OED: thorn, n.1; 4). It is well-attested in OE texts and charter bounds as *þorn* and *ðorn* (BosworthToller: þorn, n.); Hooke (2010, 202) numbers 296 charters that refer to thorn and states that thorn was 'the most ubiquitous tree referred to in charters and early place-names' (239).[43] In place-names *þorn* is typically spelt with *th-* and rarely with *þ-* but for post-Conquest forms, usually those with *þorn* as the specific element, /θ/ is often represented with *-t-*, which has been interpreted as AN substitution (Zachrisson 1909 39–40; Kristensson 1995, 149).

OE *þorn* glosses Lat. *spinas* 'thorn' (OED: thorn, n.1), Lat. *sentes* 'thorn, brier', and Lat. *Alba spina* is *haeguthorn* 'hawthorn' (ibid, n.4). *Spinas* is also used to describe a hawthorn in the charter bounds of Dauntsey W (S1580): *ad spinam que appellatur hay thorne* 'to the thorn which is called hawthorn', but hawthorn is differentiated from *þorn* in the bounds of Iwerne Minster Do (S630), which describes *small þornes*, 'slender thorns', and an *agen þorn* 'hawthorn'. The variety of Latin words associated with *þorn* and compounds like *hagu-þorn* 'hawthorn' (see 2.40) and *slāh-þorn* 'blackthorn' (see 2.71) suggest this word had a range of meanings that encompassed several species of thorny plant.

OE **þyrne** (see 2.73) is a weak feminine i-mutated form that may have had the complementary meaning 'thorn-bush'. It is more often compounded in charter bounds with OE *bremel* 'bramble' and OE *brer* 'briar' than *þorn*, which are thorny shrubs rather than trees. In charters *þyrne* and *þorn* are used concurrently, presumably of

[43] Although it is not explicitly stated, this presumably includes all words associated with this species (*þorn*, *þyrne*, *hagu-þorn*, etc.).

different types of thorny flora. The charter bounds of Evesham Wo (S80) have three attestations of *þorn*: *lales þorn*, *pol þorn*, 'pool thorn', and *mere þorn*, 'boundary thorn'; and three attestations of *þyrne* including *mere þurne*, 'boundary thorn-bush', *brer þurne*, 'briar thorn-bush', and *litle þurne*, 'little thorn-bush'. Similar differentiation can be seen in the charters of Cheselbourne Do (S955), Beckley O (S943), and Aspley Guise Bd (S772).

With 142 references, thorn species are the most common type of tree-name in English major names and *þorn* is the second most recurrent tree element with 104 examples to the 117 of OE **æsc** (see 2.10). It is also the most common species to form a hundred or wapentake name, with 18 examples (12.67% of thorn-species major names), compared with eight examples (6.50 %) for the next most recurrent species ash. Thorn-trees were clearly popular landmarks, probably due to their physical characteristics: common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) is relatively long-lived, can grow up to 15 metres tall (Johnson and More 2004, 284), and in the mid- to late spring has an abundance of dense white blossom (*Fig.44*). It is a striking tree, described as *fegeran* 'fair' in the bounds of Rodbourne estate W (S1587) and is commonly found as a single tree in exposed windswept landscapes where other species struggle to grow, sometimes forming twisted shapes following the direction of the prevailing wind (*Fig.60*). Another reason for its ubiquity as a landmark could be because thorn tends to populate areas of open ground and cleared woodland; it is therefore likely to have been a common site where large gatherings took place in open landscapes.

The element *þorn* has a wide distribution, with only the OE compound *þorn-tūn* showing a distinct regional preference for northern counties (*Fig.69*). There is, however, a conspicuous absence of *þorn* major names in the central midland counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, and relatively few names in the southern counties of Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Wiltshire (*Fig.41*). An explanation for this is not straightforward, although it could be worth considering how woodland coverage may have affected the spread of notable free-standing thorns. Common hawthorn and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) are species that prefer light open landscapes and are, found most often in pastures, hedgerows, and on woodland margins (EAFTS 145); both grow well on a wide variety of soils, except the most acidic sands (Johnson and More 2004, 284;

340). The Midland or woodland hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) is more strongly associated with ancient woodland but grows almost exclusively in the south and east, 'hardly occurring north of Lincolnshire or west of Gloucestershire and Sussex' (Rackham 2003, 352).

Those counties with less woodland coverage could have provided a better habitat for thorn-trees and this should theoretically have presented more opportunity for the development of thorn names in these areas; however, assessing woodland coverage in early medieval England is difficult. Rackham's (1990, 48–54; 2003, 112–18) analysis of DB woodland coverage is invaluable, but the data is incomplete as woodland was not recorded in DB for some counties. Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire are counties with few *þorn* names that appear to have had large swathes of woodland (over 25% coverage) and The Weald in Sussex and Kent is also known to have been densely-wooded. In these regions an absence of thorn-trees may be expected; however, this does not account for the seeming lack of free-standing thorns in Rutland (9.6% coverage), or Leicestershire (3.3% coverage), which appear to have been 'almost entirely agricultural' with only 'groups of relatively small woods' (Rackham 2003, 118). A far more comprehensive survey of thorn-tree place-names and woodland coverage is required, that makes use of sources additional to DB.

2.72.1 *þorn* as a simplex name:

Thorne YW, Thorne St Margaret So, Thornfalcon So, and Thorngumbold YE are all first attested in DB as *Torne* 1086 and have manorial affixes from the mid-thirteenth century. Owthorne YE (*T*(*h*)*orne* 1086) has the affix OE (ME) *ut*(*e*) 'out' by the twelfth century (*Outthorn*(*e*), *Owtthorn*(*e*) 1187), which suggests the tree was remote or perhaps that it lay beyond the bounds of an enclosure. These can be compared with four *þyrne*/*þyrnir* simplex major names (see 2.73.1), three *hagu-þorn* (see 2.40.1), and one ***hagu-þyrne** (see 2.41.1).

2.72.2 *þorn* as the generic element:

There are 33 major names attested by 1200 with *þorn* as the generic element, which is 31.73% of the *þorn* corpus. Thorn is the tree-species that occurs most often as the generic element in major names by a considerable margin, with 43 names (including *þyrne*: 2.73.2) accounting for 30.28% of the thorn corpus; the next most common is oak with 16 (21.62%) examples (see 2.1.2 **āc**; 2.27.2 **eik**). These names presumably

developed in relation to thorn-trees that made striking landscape features and acted as local landmarks that helped to demarcate boundaries or the location of meeting-places. Between 12 and 18 of the names have a pers.n. specific (2.72.2.1; 2), and 15 have a specific that refers either to the location (2.72.2.3), the appearance (2.72.2.4), or the function (2.72.2.5) of the thorn-tree in question.

2.72.2.1 Pers.n. with *þorn* (secure):

There are 12 major names that can be securely identified as generic *þorn* with a pers.n. specific. The earliest attested, Eythorne K (*Heagyðe ðorne* 805×7 S41, *Aegyðe ðorn*, *Eagyðe ðornes* 824(10th) S1266), has the OE fem. pers.n. *Hēahgȳð* (Wallenberg 1934, 582). Cullen (1997, 499) and Watts (2004, 222) note later rationalisation with OE *hæg-þorn* 'hawthorn' (*heageþorne* 12th, *Hagthorn'* 1254).

Celfledetorn Hundred Gl, Elthorne Hundred Mx, and Godderthorn Hundred Do were each named after a thorn-tree associated with a person and these trees presumably marked the places where the hundred court once met. *Celfledetorn* Gl (*Celfledetorn*(*e*), *Celfle*(*o*)*de*, *Ceolflede hd'* 1086) derives from the OE fem. pers.n. *Cēolflæd* (PNGl i 229), Elthorne Mx (*Helet*(*h*)*orne* 1086) from the OE masc. pers.n. *Ella* (PNMx 31) or fem. pers.n. **Elle*, while Godderthorn Do (*Goderonestona hundret* 1086, *God*(*e*)*renethorne* 1288, *Gudredethorn'* 1244) is 'Godrūn's thorn', with the OE fem. pers.n. **Godrūn* (PNDo iv 467). Unfortunately, the location of these meeting places is no longer apparent and only the names of the hundreds remain.

Kelstern Li (*Cheilestorne*, *Chelestorne* 1086) has gen. sg. of the masc. OE pers.n. **Cægel*, 'Cægel's thorn', with probable later ON influence on the initial consonant (Cameron 1998, 72). Mosterton Do (*Mortestorne* 1086) is gen. sg. of masc. OE **Mort*, 'Mort's thorn', with development from *Mortes-* to Moster- through the influence of neighbouring Misterton So (*Mintreston* 1199) (PNDo iv 308–9). Pitstone Bk (*Pincelestorne* 1086; *Pichelesyorne* 1220, *Pychelestorn* 1235) is gen. sg. of masc. OE *Picel*, 'Picel's thorn'; later attestations show confusion with ME *pightel*, *pichel* 'a small enclosure' (*Pittleshorn* 1526, *Pightlesthorn* 1826) (PNBk 99). Rostherne Ch (*Rodestorne* 1086, *Rosthorne* 1188, *Rothesterne* 1188) is gen. sg. of ON *Rauðr*, 'Rauðr's thorn', with evidence of variation between OE *þorn* and OE *þyrne* or ON *þyrnir* (PNCh ii 57). Sigglesthorne YE (*Siglestone*, *Siglestorne* 1086) appears to be

ON *Sigell*, from ON *Sigulfr*, which Watts (2004, 550) suggests may have replaced earlier OE *Sigewulf*.

DB forms for Hardingstone Nth suggest ON *þorp*/OE *þrop* 'secondary settlement' or OE *tūn* and gen. sg. of masc. OE *Hearding* (*Hardingestorp*, *Hardingestone* 1086), but subsequent attestations (*Hardighestorn* 1145; *Hardingesthorn*(*a*) 1155–8) indicate *þorn* (PNNth 147). Paythorne YW (*Pathorme*, *Pathorp* 1086, *Pathorn*(*e*) 1196) has the specific ON by-name *Pái* 'the Peacock' and also shows DB confusion with *þorp*. There is precedent for the use of 'peacock' as a by-name in ON literature with the character of *Óláfr pái Hǫskuldsson* in *Laxdæla saga*, although, as PNYW (vi 174–5) suggests ON *pá*, meaning 'peacock-shaped', is formally possible.

Tedstone Wafre He and Tedstone Delamere He are less than 2km apart and were presumably named in relation to one estate. In DB Tedstone Wafre (*Tetistorp* 1086, *Tedestorna* 1160×70) shows possible confusion with *þorp* but Tedstone Delamere (*Tedesthorne* 1086, *Chedesthorn* c.1200, *Thoddesthorne le Mare* 1243) has consistent spellings with *thorn*(*e*) (Copplestone-Crow 2009, 207). The first element is probably OE *Teod* or **Teod*(*i*) (Watts 2004, 603) a strong form of OE masc. *Teoda* (PASE).

2.72.2.2 Pers.n. with *þorn* (partly uncertain):

There are a further six *þorn* major names with a possible pers.n. specific, although these are less certain and other qualifying elements are also possible. Cropthorne Wo (*Cropponþorn*, *Croppeþorne* 780(11th) (S118); *Croppanþorn* 841(11th) (S196)) appears to have early forms in gen. sg. *croppan* (from OE *Croppa*), 'Croppa's thorn' of which a diminutive form is recurrent in early OE nomenclature for Berkshire and Oxfordshire (*crypsan hylle* S104 and *crypsan dic* S491) (PNWo 119–20); however, Watts (2004, 170) suggests this could also be 'thorn-tree of (the hill called) *Croppa*', from OE *cropp*(*a*) 'sprout, blooms, cluster of berries', 'the crop of a bird', or possibly 'hump, hill, hill-top' like ModE *crop* 'round swelling'. It is worth noting that in ME from the fourteenth century, *crop* could indicate the 'head' or top of a tree, or its uppermost branches, often in a phrase that contrasted the *crop* with the roots (MED: crop, n.5). It is possible Cropthorn provides a much earlier example of this meaning, used here to describe a thorn-tree with notable upper branches.

Capesthorne Ch (*Copestor* 1086, *Capestorn'* 1238) could be gen. sg. of the OE by-name **Capp, *Cæpp*, from OE *cappa*, *cæppe* 'cap, cope, hood', or **Cap* from OE *cap*

‘a cope’; however, PNCh (i 73) also suggests the possibility of ON *kapp* ‘match, battle, contest’, meaning ‘the thorn-tree at the scene of a battle’. Glapthorn Nth (*Glapt*(*h*)*orn* 1185, *Glapet*(*h*)*orn* 1189) may derive from *Glappa*, ‘Glappa’s thorn’ (PNNth 203) or an unrecorded plant name **glaep-thorn* (Watts 2004, 251); while Scothern (*Scothern* 1067), is either the ethnonym OE *Scottas* ‘Scotsman, Irishman’, the OE pers.n. *Scot*, or the ON pers.n. and by-name *Skotr* (PNLi vii 104–5). Poston Sa (*Possetorn*(*e*) 1086, *Possethorn* 1194) might be ‘Possa’s thorn’ from masc. OE **Possa*; however, this name is not attested outside place-names and charters and there is some doubt as to whether a personal name is correct in these other instances (see the discussion of Purslow in PNSa viii 368).

Woodmansterne Sr has an anomalous DB form with *O-* (*Odemerestor* 1086), but subsequent medieval attestations begin *W-* (*Wudemaresthorne* 1186, *Wudemeresthorn* 1205), suggesting either an unattested OE pers.n. like **Wudumǣr*, parallel with Gothic *Vidimer* (PNSr 56), or a compound place-name with later *þorn* generic, such as **wudu*-(*ge*)*mære* ‘the wood boundary’ (Watts 2004, 696–7). Given the number of pers.n. compounds with *þorn*, a pers.n. specific should perhaps be expected; however, Hooke (2010, 241) states that the commonest descriptive element with thorn in charter bounds is (*ge*)*mære* (at least 16 examples), so a thorny woodland boundary, perhaps a hawthorn hedge, seems equally probable.

2.72.2.3 Qualifier denoting the location of *þorn*:

There are five *þorn* major names with a probable specific that gives some indication of where in the landscape the thorn-tree once stood. Crathorne YN (*Gratorne* (sic), *Cratorne* 1086) looks to be *þorn* and ON *krá*, ‘thorn in the corner of land’, which is probably reference to the nook of land between the River Leven and a tributary (PNYN 174). Souldern O (*Sulеþorne*, *Sulthorna* 1152) refers to a thorn-tree in a ‘gully’ with OE *sulh*. Cawthorn YN (*Caltorn*(*e*), *Caltorna* 1086) and Cawthorne YW (*Caltorn*(*e*) 1086, *Cawthorne* 1090), appear to derive from OE *cald-þorn*, ‘cold thorn’, probably describing a thorn standing in an exposed location, although this could alternatively have been descriptive of the tree itself in some way.

Chechemetorn Hundred Gl (*Chechemetorn hund’*, *Hund’ Cicimethorne*, *Hund’ de Cicemethorne* 1084; *Hundret’ de Cicemetone* 1086) has a more complex structure. Early forms suggest OE **Checghǣmaþorn*, ‘thorn of the people of Chedglow

hundred', from *þorn* with the group name **Checghǣme*, from the p.n. Chedglow and *hǣme* 'people of'. As the thorn-tree appears to have been associated with this settlement and because the hundred later became Chedglow Hundred (Anderson 1939a, 159), it is possible that the thorn-tree or trees once stood at Chedglow, perhaps at the site of the *hlāw* 'barrow' that forms the generic element of this name (see 2.26.1 Chedglow W).

2.72.2.4 Qualifier describing the appearance of *þorn*:

There are seven *þorn* major names with a specific element that describes something about the appearance of the thorn-tree. Two refer to a thorn-tree that has been deliberately cut, probably a pollard. These are Copthorne Hundred Sr (*Copededorne*, *Copedorne* 1086) with the specific OE *coppede* 'copped, pollarded' (PNSr 67–8) and Cutetorn Hundred He (*Cl'tethorn*, *Cvtestorn*, *Cvtestornes hd'* 1086) with a qualifier that is perhaps related to ME *kutte*(*n*), *kitte*(*n*), *kette*(*n*) 'to cut' (Anderson 1934, 165). Pollarded thorns also occur in the charter bounds of Dameham Ha (*coppenthorn*: S513), Worthy Ha (*coppedan þorne*: S351), and Battersea Sr (*coppede ðorne*: S645). Oak is the other species most often found with *coppede*, seen in the major name Copdock (see 2.1.2) and in the bounds of Stoke by Hurstbourne Ha (S359).

Pickthorn Sa (*Pichetorne* 1086) appears to be OE *pīc-þorn*, which could mean 'spiky thorn-tree' (PNSa i 234–5), which seems a somewhat redundant description considering the ubiquitous spikiness of thorn-trees. It perhaps instead described the shape of the tree, or the shape of a field or hill on which it stood. Althorne Ess (*Aledhorn* 1198, *Alethorn* 1203) looks to be OE *ǣled-þorn* (PNEss 208), 'burnt thorn', perhaps one that had been struck by lightning or purposely burnt. Hooke (2010, 243) notes two charter examples of thorn-trees that had been burnt. Rowthorn Db (*Rugetorn* 1086, *Ru*(*e*)*thorn* 1243) is OE *rūh-þorn*, 'rough thorn-tree' (PNDb ii 169), a compound that is also recorded in bounds of Mapperton in Almer estate Do (S490). Nachededorn Hundred Brk (*Nachededorn*(*e*) *hd'* 1086) is named for a meeting-place *þorn* that was apparently 'naked' or 'bare', according to the use of OE *nacod* (Anderson 1939a, 215). This may too have been a dead thorn-tree, perhaps one that stood in an exposed location, like the remains of a thorn that shares a hillside with the Uffington White Horse (*Fig.60*). PNBrk (ii 495) notes possible association with

the *unica spinosa arbor* around which Asser claims the battle of Ashdown was fought in 870.

Langthorne YN (*Langetorp*, *Langethorn*(*e*) 1086) appears to be OE *lang-þorn*, 'the tall thorn', with confusion with *þorp* in one DB form (Watts 2004, 360–1). In OE charters *þorn* compounds more often with adjectives that describe a large tree than a small bush, while *þyrne* does the opposite (see 2.73). Although Langthorne is the only major name example, this compound is recurrent in later-attested minor names: Longthorn Gl (*Longthorne* 1575), Langthorne Furlong Le (*Langhorne* 1606), and Longthorne Leas Ru (*Longthorne leas* 1634). Also recurrent are thorns described as either OE *brād* 'broad' or OE *micel* 'great': Bradthorn Ru (*bradthorn* 1373), Broadthorne Cu (*Broadthorne* 1587), and Micklethorne YW (*Mikilthrene* 13th, *le Mykkilthorne* 1553).

2.72.2.5 Qualifier describing the function of *þorn*:

There are three *þorn* major names with a specific that describes how the thorn-tree was perceived within a community or how it functioned in the landscape. Spelthorne Hundred Mx (*Spelet*(*h*)*orne* 1086) has specific OE *spell*, which is an element that appears to have related to locations where formal speeches and announcements were made (Pantos 2004, 185–7; Baker 2014b, 1496): an appropriate name for the site of a meeting-place. The precise location is unknown but PNMx (11) suggests it may have been near Ashford, as there was once a road in the vicinity named Spelthorne Lane. OE *spell-þorn* is a recurrent toponymic compound, other examples include the meeting-place of Winterstoke Hundred, which is remembered in the field-name Spelthorne that lies between Axbridge and Cheddar (Baker and Brookes 2013b, 154) and in the early attested field-name *Spelthorn* a.1238 in Oadby parish Le. Matlock Db (see 2.1.2) and Matlask Nf (see 2.10.2) are oak and ash names but have a similar meaning with the specific OE *mæðel* 'speech, assembly, council'.

Fretherne Gl (*Fridorne* 1086) has the specific OE *frið*, *freoðu*, or *freoðen*, denoting a place of 'refuge' or 'sanctuary' (PNGl ii 178). The meaning here is uncertain, but when considering other uses of *frið* '(a place offering) safety or asylum' (EPNE i 188), like the *freoðene felda*, 'sanctuary field', in the bounds of Paslow in High Ongar Ess (S1036), it is possible Fretherne was a location of civic or religious importance. The thorn may have marked a sanctuary space or place of refuge or was perhaps

considered to have a special quality, like the *helnes þorne*, ‘salvation/healing thorn’, recorded in the bounds of Purton W (S1586).

Spennithorne YN (*Speningetorp* 1086; *Spinithorn* c.1150; *Speningthorn*(*e*), *Spenyngthorn*(*e*) 1184) has consistent early forms with -*ing*-, suggesting OE **spenning* an -*ing* derivative of OE *spenn*, ‘hedge, dyke’ (Watts 2004, 565), giving ‘thorn-tree at the dyke/hedge’. There could be some connection between the meaning ‘hedge’ and the presence of thorn, although this is not entirely satisfactory. PNYN (253) notes that the first element is probably the same as that seen in Spennymoor Du (*Spennyngmore*) but offers no definite solutions.

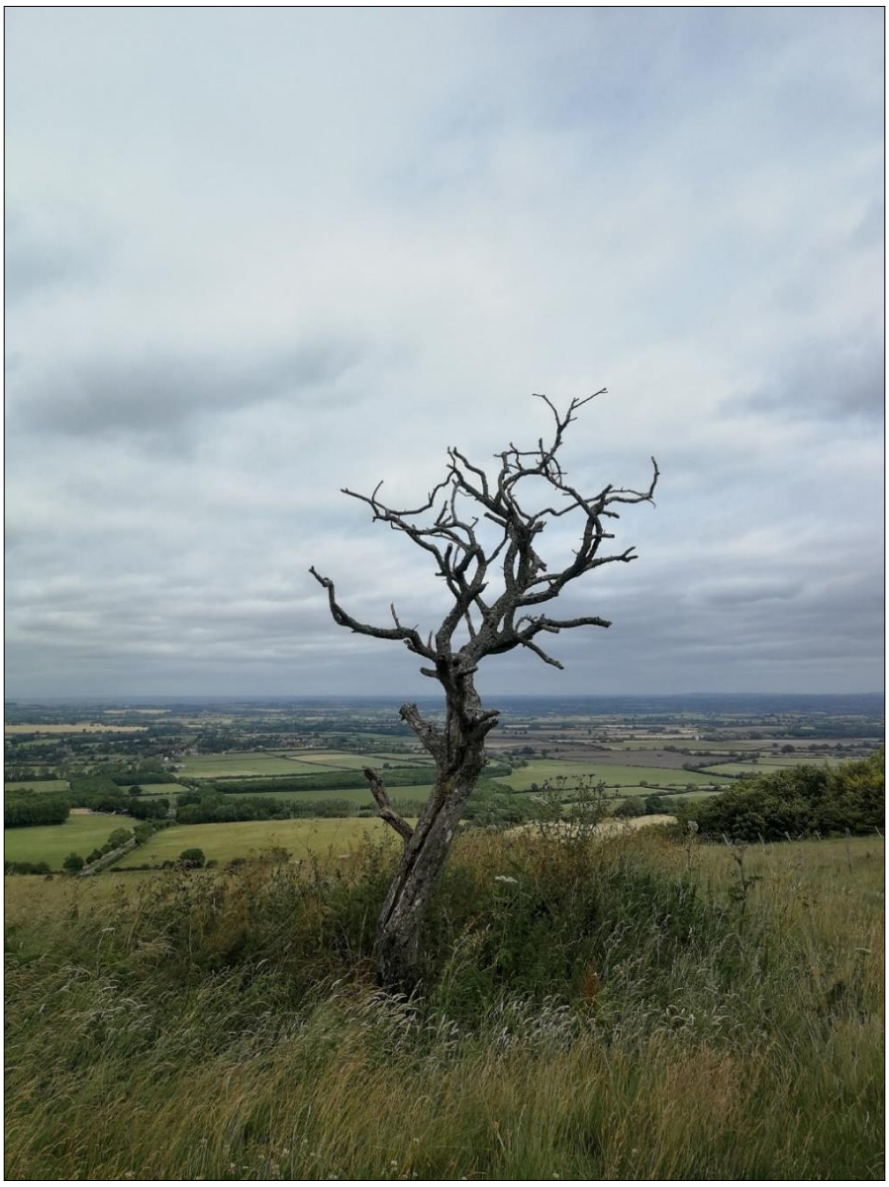


Figure 60: A dead thorn-tree at Uffington White Horse hill, Oxfordshire (J. Treacher, June 2020)

2.72.3 *þorn* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are 37 major names where *þorn* is the specific element in a habitative compound. Seven have a generic element that is not OE *tūn*: including four *þorn-burh* compounds in the names Thornborough YW (*Torn*(*e*)*burne* 1086, *Torneburg'* 1243) in Allerton Mauleverer, Thornbury D (*Torneberie* 1086), Thornbury He (*Torneberie* 1086), and Thornbury Hundred Gl (*to þornbyrig* 896(1560) S1441, *Tvrneberie* 1086). All have spellings that may suggest gen. pl. *þorna* and three Thornbury names have generic forms in dat. sg. *byrig*. These names likely referred to a fortified site protected by a thorn hedge or perhaps an abandoned fortification where thorns had grown up as a scrub species (Ekwall 1960, 467). The efficacy of the former as protection from concerted attack is questionable, although thorn-bushes would certainly be an uncomfortable obstacle (see 2.49.2 *holegn-fæsten* names for possible parallels). At Thornbury He the name may have referred to an Iron Age hill-fort known as Wall Hills, that Watts (2004, 609) states 'is surrounded by a ring of thorn-trees'.

According to Dodgson (1973, 30) the topography and early spellings of Thornham K (*Turneham* 1086, *Thornham* 11th) suggest OE *þorn-hām* and the same can be seen for Thornham Nf (*Tornham* 1086) and Thornham Magna and Parva Sf (*Thornham*, *Marthorham* (sic)1086, *Thornham* 1203). This compound perhaps referred to a *hām* settlement that was enclosed by thorns rather than a homestead with a single thorn-tree (Watts 2004, 610). The *Mar-* DB form for Thornham Magna results from the OE adj. *māra* 'greater, bigger' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 139). Withernwick YE (*Withforneuuinc*, *Widforneuuinc*, *Witforneuuinc* 1086; *Widornewic* 1154–80; *Wytornewyk* 13th) appears to compound OE *wīc* 'specialised farm', with the pre-existing place-name *Withthorn* (PNYE 69). Watts (2004, 690) suggests Withthorn is OE *with-þorn*, '(settlement) by the thorn(s)', or ON *við-þorn*, 'near/beside the thorn-tree'. This could also perhaps be OE *hwīt-þorn*, 'white thorn', possibly a reference to hawthorn (see 2.72.4 Withernsea YE).

2.72.3.1 *þorn-tūn*:

There are 29 *þorn-tūn*, 'thorn-tree farm/settlement', major names, making this the most recurrent *þorn* compound (20.42% of thorn names) and the tree-species that compounds most often with *tūn*; Coates (2012, 214) notes at least 38 examples including minor names. Of these major names, 21 are first attested in DB and four are

first recorded in the twelfth century, only Bishop's Thornton YW (*þorntune* 1030) and Thornton Fm Do ((*æt*) *þorntune*, (*at*) *þorntune* 958(15th) S656) are attested pre-DB. *Toren-* and *Torne-* forms are most common in DB (15 examples) and do not appear to have been regionally specific, with various contemporary forms found within counties. These include Thornton in Sefton La, Thornton in Poulton le Fylde La, Thornton YE, Thornton YW, Thornton Bridge YN, Thornton Curtis Li, Thornton Dale YN, Thornton in Craven YW, Thornton in Lonsdale YW, Thornton le Clay YN, Thornton le Moor Li, Thornton le Moors Ch, Thornton le Street YN, Thornton Rust YN, and Thornton le Beans, first attested as *Gri*(*s*)*torentun* 1086, with the prefixed ON pers.n. *Gríss*. Thornton le Moor YN (*Torentona* 1114) and Thornton on the Hill YN (*Torenton* 1167) are not recorded until the twelfth century but also have *Toren-* spellings.

Thorington Hall Sf, Thornton Horncastle Li, and Thornton Hough Ch have the variant *Torintune*/*Torintuna* in DB. Thornton Riseborough YN (*Tornitun*, *Tornentun* 1086) and Thornton Steward YN (*Tornenton*(*e*), *Tornentune* 1086) both have medial *-nen-* in DB, which suggests the influence of the OE adj. **þornen* 'growing with thorns', although this does not continue in subsequent attestations and may be anomalous. Conversely, Thornton Watlass YN (*Torreton*, *Torretun* 1086) and Thornton Bk (*Teritone* 1086, *Turintone* 1163) are first attested in DB with no medial *-n-*; PNBk (64) suggests OE *þyrne* could have influenced the early spellings of the latter. Thornton le Fen Li (*Torntuna* 1163) and Thornton Nb (*Thorneton'* 1183(c.1320)) are the latest attested *þorn-tūn* major names in the corpus and are not attested until the second half of the twelfth century. There are three other *þorn* names with *tūn*, but these were formed by compounding *tūn* with a pre-existing *þorn* place-name (see 2.72.4: Farmington Gl, Thorngrafton Nb, Tormarton Gl). The same is possible for Tarlton Gl (*Torentune*, *Tornentone* 1086; *Torleton* 1204–1590), which has later attestations suggesting a *þorn-lēah* name with generic *tūn*; however, the DB form appears to simply be *þorn-tūn* (PNGl i 106–7; Watts 2004, 600).

As Gelling (PNSa i 3) observes, the majority of *þorn-tūn* are situated in the north-east and north-east midlands: one in Northumberland, four in Lincolnshire and 16 in Yorkshire with a particular concentration in the North Riding (*Fig.69*), which likely says something about the characteristics of the region and the preoccupations of its residents. It is possible a *þorn-tūn* was a farm where thorn-trees happened to grow,

but it seems more likely this was a compound that indicated a particular type of settlement, perhaps a site where thorn hedges were used to demarcate land, to protect of a settlement from the elements, or as a means of corralling livestock. Hawthorn is a species often used for plashing, which is a technique that involves the cutting, bending, and weaving of branches to create a thick-set living hedge. The word plashing developed in ME from AN and MFr *plaisser*, *plaissier* and is not recorded until the fifteenth century (OED: plash, v.1), although it was a technique that likely existed long before.[44] With regular maintenance, a plashed hedge provides a barrier or boundary that can last for decades as the wood of the structure is still alive (*Fig.62*). A living hawthorn hedge would be a particularly notable feature of a settlement when it began to flower in late spring (see also 2.72.4 Thorney Nt, Thornhaugh Nth; 2.73.2 Bythorn Hu; 2.73.3 Turnworth Do).

2.72.4 *þorn* as the specific in a topographical compound:

There are 29 *þorn* major names with a topographical generic. The most recurrent compound is *þorn-lēah*, which has three examples (2.72.4.1). Ten *þorn* major names have an OE generic denoting a hill growing with a thorn or thorns. Thornborough Bk (*Torneberge* 1086, *Torneberga Hamonis* 1167) and Thornbrough YN (*Thorn*(*e*)*bergh*, *Thorn*(*e*)*berge* 1185) look to be OE *þorn-beorg*, 'thorn-tree hill' (Watts 2004, 609). The remains of a medieval village at Thornborough Bk are visible to the west of the town and south-west of a significant hill (2022 OS: SP 73611 33785). The parish neighbours that of Thornton Bk, which suggests thorn scrub may have been prominent in the local landscape (PNBk 56–7).

[44] Compare earlier pleaching, attested from the fourteenth century (OED: pleach, v.1).

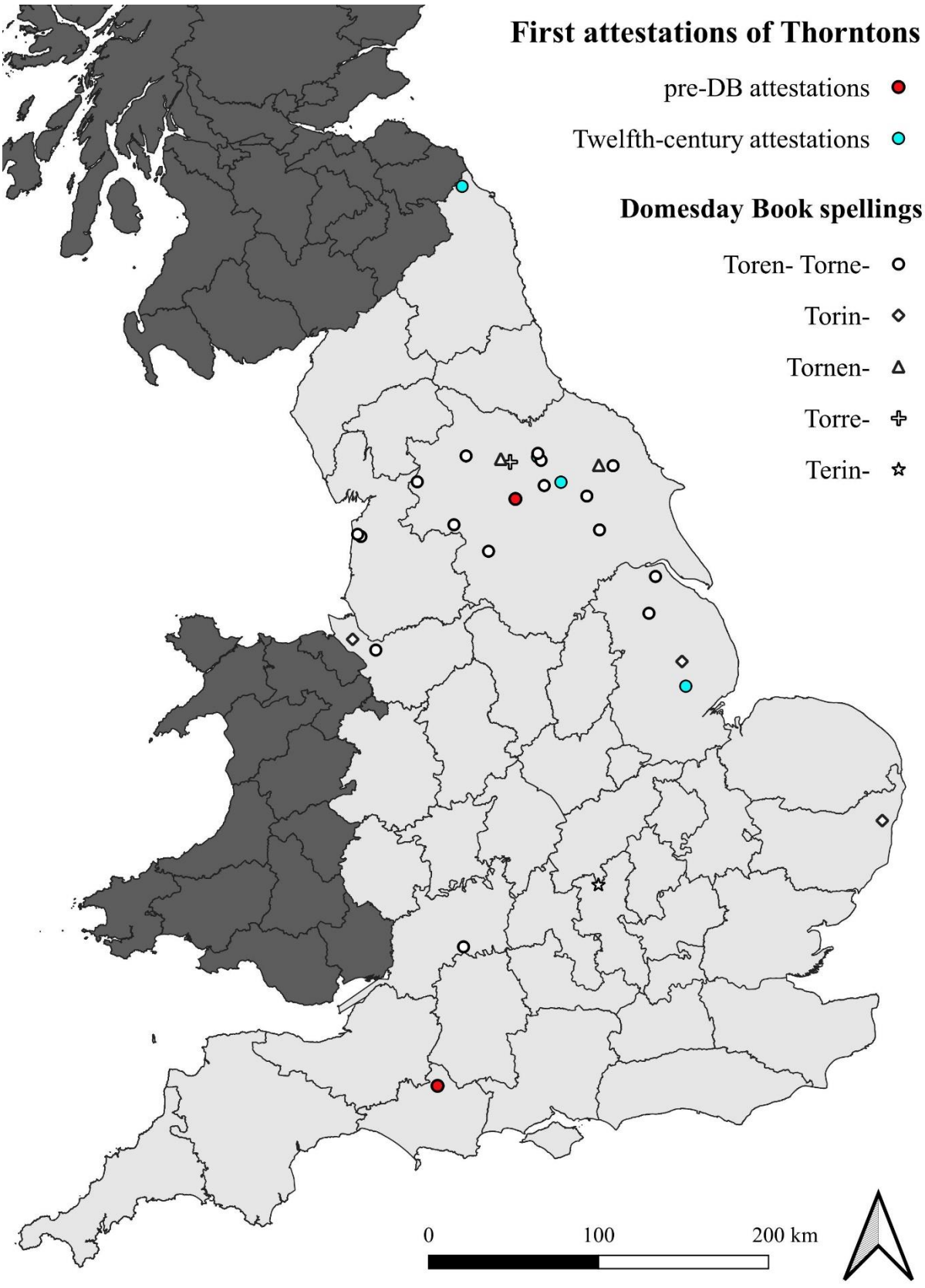


Figure 61: The distribution of *þorn-tūn* major names, organised by the spelling of their first attestation

The OE compound *þorn-dūn*, also ‘thorn-tree hill’, provides the etymology for Thorndon Sf (*Tornduna, Torentuna* 1086) and Horndon Ess (*Torindunam*, *Torinduna* 1086). The second DB form of Thorndon shows the influence of Thornton names, with a *-tuna* spelling and intrusive *-e-* (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 138), which is identical to the most common DB form of *þorn-tūn* (2.72.3.1). Horndon shows AN *T-* for *Th-*, which with the introduction of the affixes East (*Estthorn*(*e*)*don’* 1228) and West (*Westhorndon* 1238) led to assimilatory loss of /þ/ to /t/ (*Esthorendun’* 1240, *Westorenden* 1274), followed by reanalysis (*Hornedon West* 1326) by association with neighbouring Horndon-on-the-Hill (PNEss 158–9).



Figure 62: A plashed hedge of ash, hazel, and hawthorn, Gloucestershire (J. Treacher, January 2021)

Thornley Du ((*æt*) *Ðornhlawa* 1071×80) is OE *þorn-hlāw*, ‘thorn-tree hill’, although later forms resemble *þorn-lēah* (*Thorniley* c.1280, *Thornle* 1377) (Watts 2002, 124) (see similar confusion 2.67.3: Sawley Db). *Thornlau Hundred* He (*Thornlav*, *Tornelavves hd’*, *Tornelavs hd’* 1086) is another *þorn-hlāw* name that presumably indicated a hill or mound growing with thorn-trees where the hundred court once

gathered (Anderson 1934, 166). This can also be said of Thorn Hill Fm Do (*Tornehelle* 1086, *Thornhill'* 1212), Thornhill Hundred W (*Thornehelle hundred* 1086) and Thornhill YW (*Torni*(*l*) 1086, *Thornhill* 1196), which derive from OE *þorn-hyll*, 'thorn-tree hill' (PNDo ii 152; PNW 281; PNYW ii 210–11).

Thorner YW (*Torneure* 1086, *Thornoure* 1174) is OE *þorn-ofer*, 'thorn-tree ridge' (Watts 2004, 609), while Thorncombe D (*Tornecoma* 1086, *Tornecumb*(*a*) 1140) is OE *þorn-cumb* (PND ii 648), 'thorn-tree valley'. Thorngate Hundred Ha (*Tornegatehdr'* 1158, *Toringatahdr'* 1168, *Thorngatehundredum* 1188) was named in association with a meeting-place known OE *þorn-geat*, 'thorn-tree gate', probably with reference to a natural gap or pass in the hills, although the location of this site is not known (Anderson 1939a, 190).

There are four potential OE *þorn-ēg*, 'thorn island', major names. Thorney C (*þornige* c.960(c.1200), (*on*) *þornege* 1049 ASC, (*of*) *þorneie* 1066 ASC c.1150, *Thorneia* 1086) was originally *Ancarig* (*igland*) 656(c.1150), from OE *ancor*, *ancra* 'hermit, recluse, anchorite', but from the tenth century is recorded as *þorn-ēg* (*Ancraig* (*nunc… Dornig*) 973(14th) S792) (PNC 280). Tradition has it that the island was inhabited by a community of anchorites but then lay abandoned for many years and became overgrown with thorns. It was purchased in the tenth century by St Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, who established a monastery there (Salzman 1948, 210–11). *Thorney* Mx (*Torneia* 785(13th), *Torneie* 969(c.1100)) was also an early name for the site of Westminster Abbey (PNMx 165), which could suggest a connection between the establishment of monastic sites and the presence of thorn-trees. It may simply be because the land was covered in scrub and chosen because it was easy to clear; however, the significance of thorn-trees in the Christian mythos (Hooke 2010, 37; 44) should not perhaps be dismissed. West Thorney Sx (*þorneg* 1052(c.1100), *Tornei* 1086), has a similar pre-DB spelling to an eleventh-century Thorney C attestation (*þornege* 1049) and shows typical AN influence in DB. It was known as West Thorney in contrast with East Wittering by the thirteenth century (*Westthorneye* 1291) (PNSx i 62). Thorney So (*Torelie* 1086, *Thorne* 1316) is grouped with other *þorn-ēg* names by Ekwall (1960, 467). The few early spellings are not definitive, but the landscape is supportive of an *ēg* generic (LPN 42).

OE *þorn* is not particularly common with elements that denote waterways or bodies of water and there are only five major names of this type. Tarbock La (*Torboc* 1086, *Thorboc* 1243) is probably OE *þorn-brōc*, 'thorn brook', with dissimilatory loss of the <r> of *brōc*, although alternatively the ON pers.n. *Þor* has also been suggested (Watts 2004, 600). Ekwall (1922, 113) observes that *tor* 'hill' is not possible as 'the highest point of the township does not reach much over 50 feet'. Thornford Do (*ðornford*, *Torneford* 903) looks to be OE *þorn-ford*, 'thorn ford'. According to PNDo (iii 376–7) the site of the original ford where thorn-trees grew may have been where Bembury Lane crosses the River Yeo to the north of the current settlement (2022 OS: ST 60328 13797).

Farmington Gl (*Tormentone* 1086, *Thormerton* 1236) and Tormarton Gl (*Tormentone* 1086, *Thoremareton* 1216) are etymologically uncertain. Both are first attested with AN *T-* forms and have spellings with *Th-* from the thirteenth century. They could derive from OE *þorn-mere*, 'thorn pool', with the later addition of OE *tūn*, or perhaps *þorn* with the pre-existing place-name Marton, OE *mere-tūn*, 'pond settlement' (Ekwall 1960, 477). PNGl (iii 56) suggests these could be (*ge*)*mære-tūn* and (*ge*)*mære* is recurrent with *þorn* in charter bounds (2.72.2 Woodmansterne Sr); however, LPN (22) observes that until recently there was a pond at Tormarton and probably a pond at Bottam Copse, half a mile below Farmington village, which could support a *mere* etymology. Farmington has later dialectal development to F- (*Tormarton*(*a*) *als. Farmyngton* 1566) (PNGl i 172–3).

Withernsea YE (*Witfornes*, *Widfornessei* 1086) has the OE generic *sǣ* 'lake'. According to PNYE (27) there was once a lake in the parish that was referred to in the thirteenth century as *lacus vocat' Wythornse Mar*(*re*) but has since disappeared. The specific looks to be a pre-existing place-name *Withorn*, which is also independently recorded (*Withorn*, *Wythorn* 1180) and derives either from OE *with-þorn*, '(settlement) by the thorn(s)', OE *hwīt-þorn* 'white thorn' or ON *við-þorn*, 'near/beside the thorn-tree' (see 2.72.3 Withernwick).

Three *þorn* major names may refer to an enclosure of thorn-trees (see also 2.72.3.1: *þorn-tūn*): these are Thorney Nt (*Torneshaie* 1086) and Thornhaugh Nth (*Thornhawe* 1189), from OE *þorn-haga* (Watts 2004, 610), 'thorn-tree enclosure/hedge', and Thornage Nf (*Tornedis* 1086, *Tornedich* 1181) from OE *þorn-edisc* (PNNf iii 144),

‘enclosed pasture where thorn-trees grow’. These were perhaps places where deer or livestock were corralled within a thorny hedge: either a plashed hedge (*Fig.62*) or a ‘dead hedge’, both of which were commonly constructed using thorn (see 2.39.1.1 *haga-lēah*).

There are five *þorn* major names with a woodland-related generic, including *lēah* names. Thorngrave Hundred W (*Thornegraue*, *Thornegraua hundred* 1086) derives from OE *þorn-grāf*, ‘thorn-grove’, and PNW (78) suggests this meeting-place was the site of Thorngrave in Castle Coomb. Thorngrafton Nb (*Thorgrafton* 1175, *Thorngraffton* 1298) is also *þorn-grāf*, with the probable addition of OE *tūn* to an earlier place-name and what Watts (2002, 196) recognises as a ‘pseudo-genitival *-s* in some forms’ (*Thorgraveston* c.1150, *Thoringraston* 1175).

2.72.4.1 *þorn-lēah*

There are three major names deriving from OE *þorn-lēah*, ‘thorn-tree open woodland’. Thorley Hrt (*Torlei* 1086), Thorley Wt (*Torlei* 1086), and Thorley Li (*Turlai* 1086, *Thorleia* 12th) all show early loss of medial *-n-* between *-r-* and *-l-*: the thirteenth-century forms of Thorley Hrt (*Thorneley* 1212, *Thornle* 1291) give good evidence for loss of /n/ in this position (PNHrt 204). The compound *þorn-lēah* likely referred to a natural or man-made clearing or a more sparsely-treed area of woodland, which had become overgrown with thorn-trees. These were probably hawthorn or blackthorn, which are often found growing in clearings and along woodland margins (see 2.40; *Fig.43*).

As a simplex name:

> Owthorne YE (*T*(*h*)*orne* 1086) PNYE 28; Thorne YW (*Torne* 1086) PNYW i 2; Thorne St Margaret So (*Torne* 1086) Watts 2004, 609; Thornfalcon So (*Torne* 1086) Watts 2004, 610; Thorngumbald YE (*Torn*(*e*) 1086) PNYE 38

As the generic element:

> Althorne Ess (*Aledhorn* 1198) PNEss 208 (**æled**); Capesthorne Ch (*Copestor* 1086) PNCh i 73 (**pers.n**); Cawthorn YN (*Caltorn*(*e*), *Caltorna* 1086) PNYN 78 (**cald**); Cawthorne YW (*Caltorn*(*e*) 1086) PNYW i 323 (**cald**); *Celfledetorn Hundred* Gl (*Celfledetorn*(*e*),

Celfle(*o*)*de*, *Ceolflede hd'*) Anderson 1939a 17 (**pers.n.**); *Chechemetorn Hundred* Gl (*Chechemetorn hund'*, *Hund' Cicimethorne*, *Hund' de Cicemethorne* 1084) Anderson 1939a, 159 (**p.n., hǣme**); Copthorne Hundred Sr (*Copededorne*, *Copedorne* 1086) PNSr 67–8 (**coppede**); Crathorne YN (*Gratorne* (sic), *Cratorne* 1086) PNYN 174 (**krá**); Cropthorne Wo (*Cropponþorn*, *Croppeþorne* 780(11th)) PNWo 119 (**pers.n./ cropp**(**a**)/**crop**); Cutetorn Hundred He (*Cl'tethorn*, *Cvtestorn*, *Cvtestornes hd'*, *C'histestornes* 1086) Anderson 1934 165 (**cutte**); Elthorne Hundred Mx (*Helet*(*h*)*orne* 1086) PNMx 31 (**pers.n.**); Eythorne K (*Heagyðe ðorne* 805×7) Watts 2004, 222 (**pers.n.**); Fretherne Gl (*Fridorne* 1086) PNGl ii 178 (**frið**); Glapthorn Nth (*Glapt*(*h*)*orn* 1185) PNNth 203 (**pers.n.**); Godderthorn Hundred Do (*Goderonestona hundret* 1086) PNDo iv 467 (**pers.n.**); Hardingstone Nth (*Hardingestorp* 1086, *Hardighestorn* 1145) PNNth 147 (**pers.n.**); Kelstern Li (*Cheilestorne*, *Chelestorne* 1086) Cameron 1998, 72 (**pers.n.**); Langthorne YN (*Langetorp*, *Langethorn*(*e*) 1086) PNYN 238 (**lang**); Mosterton Do (*Mortestorne* 1086) PNDo iv 308 (**pers.n.**); Nachededorn Hundred Brk (*Nachededorn*(*e*) *hd'* 1086) Anderson 1939b 215 (**nacod**); Paythorne YW (*Pathorme*, *Pathorp* 1086) PNYW vi 174 (**pers.n.**); Pickthorn Sa (*Pichetorne* 1086) PNSa i 234 (**pīc**); Pitstone Bk (*Pincenestorne*, *Pincelestorne* 1086) PNBk 99 (**pers.n.**); Poston Sa (*Possetorn*(*e*) 1086) PNSa i 239; PNSa viii 226, 368 (**pers.n.**); Rostherne Ch (*Rodestorne* 1086) PNCh ii 56 (**pers.n.**); Rowthorn Db (*Rugetorn* 1086) PNDb ii 169 (**rūh**); Scothern Li (*Scothorn* 1067) PNLi vii 104 (**pers.n**); Sigglesthorne YE (*Siglestone*, *Siglestorne* 1086) PNYE 68 (**pers.n.**); Souldern O (*Suleþorne*, *Sulthorna* 1152) PNO i 235 (**sulh**); Spelthorne Hundred Mx (*Spelet*(*h*)*orne* 1086) PNMx 11 (**spell**); Spennithorne YN (*Speningetorp* 1086) PNYN 253 (**spenning**); Tedstone Delamere and Tedstone Wafre He (*Tedesthorne* 1086; *Tetistorp* 1086) Watts 2004, 603 (**pers.n.**); Woodmansterne Sr (*Odemerestor* 1086) PNSr 56 (**pers.n./**(**ge**)**mære**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Thornborough YW (*Torn*(*e*)*burne* 1086, *Torneburg'* 1243) PNYW v 13 (**burh**); Thornbury D (*Torneberia* 1086) PND i 169 (**burh**); Thornbury Hundred Gl (*to þornbyrig* 896(1560)) PNGl iii 14 (**burh**); Thornbury He (*Torneberie* 1086) Watts 2004, 609 (**burh**); Thornham K (*Turneham* 1086) Wallenberg 1934, 233 (**hām**); Thornham Nf (*Tornham* 1086) Watts 2004, 610 (**hām**); Thornham Magna and Parva Sf (*Thornham*, *Marthorham* (sic)1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 139 (**hām**); Withernwick YE (*Withforneuuinc*, *Widforneuuinc*, *Witforneuuinc* 1086) PNYE 69 (**wið**/**hwīt**, **wīc**)

With **tūn**:

> Bishop Thornton YW (*þorntune* 1030) PNYW v 184–6; Tarlton Gl (*Torentune*, *Tornentone* 1086) PNGl i 161; Thorington Hall Sf (*Torintuna* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 138; Thornton Bk (*Terintone* 1086) PNBk 64; Thornton La (*Torentun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 118; Thornton La (*Torentun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 157; Thornton Nb (*Thorneton'* 1183) Watts 2004, 610; Thornton YE (*Tortetun*, *Tornetun* 1086) PNYE 184; Thornton YW (*Torentune*, *Torenton* 1086) PNYW iii 271; Thornton Bridge YN (*Torenton*(*e*) 1086) PNYN 24; Thornton Curtis Li (*Torentune*, *Torentone* 1086) PNLi ii 279; Thornton Dale YN (*Torentun*(*e*), *Torentona* 1086) PNYN 88; Thornton Fm Do ((*æt*) *þorntune*, (*at*) *þorntune* 958(15th) S656) PNDo iii 171; Thornton Horncastle Li (*Torintune* 1086) Cameron 1998, 126; Thornton Hough Ch (*Torintone* 1086) PNCh iv 230; Thornton in Craven YW (*Torentun*(*e*) 1086) PNYW vi 32; Thornton in Lonsdale YW (*Tornetun* 1086) PNYW vi 250; Thornton le Beans YN (*Gri*(*s*)*torentun* 1086) PNYN 208; Thornton le Clay YN (*Torentun*(*e*) 1086) PNYN 39; Thornton le Fen Li (*Torntuna* 1163) Cameron 1998, 126; Thornton le Moor Li (*Torentun*, *Torentune*, *Torentone* 1086) PNLi iii 163; Thornton le Moor YN (*Torentona* 1114) PNYN 209; Thornton le Moors Ch (*Torentune* 1086) PNCh iii 258; Thornton le Street YN (*Torentun* 1086) PNYN 205; Thornton on the Hill YN

(*Torenton* 1167) PNYN 192; Thornton Riseborough YN (*Tornitun*, *Tornentun* 1086) PNYN 77; Thornton Rust YN (*Torentun*, *Toretun* 1086) PNYN 268; Thornton Steward YN (*Tornenton*(*e*), *Tornentune* 1086) PNYN 248; Thornton Watlass YN (*Torreton*, *Torretun*, *Wadles* 1086) PNYN 235

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Farmington Gl (*Tormentone* 1086) PNGl i 172–3 (**mere**); Horndon Ess (*Torindunam*, *Torinduna* 1086) PNEss 158 (**dūn**); Tarbock La (*Torboc* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 113 (**brōc**); Thornage Nf (*Tornedis* 1086) PNNf iii 144 (**edisc**); Thornborough Bk (*Torneberge* 1086) PNBk 56 (**berg**); Thornbrough YN (*Thorn*(*e*)*bergh*, *Thorn*(*e*)*berge* 1185) PNYN 200 (**berg**); Thorncombe D (*Tornecoma* 1086) PND ii 648 (**cumb**); Thorndon Sf (*Tornduna, Torentuna* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 138 (**dūn**); Thorner YW (*Torneure* 1086) PNYW iv 103 (**ofer**); Thorney C (*þornige* c.960(c.1200)) PNC 280 (**ēg**); *Thorney* Mx (*Torneia* 785(13th) PNMx 165 (**ēg**); Thorney Nt (*Torneshaie* 1086) PNNt 207 (**haga**); Thorney So (*Torelie* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 467 (**ēg**); Thornford Do (*ðornford*, *Torneford* 903) PNDo iii 376 (**ford**); Thorngate Hundred Ha (*Tornegatehdr'* 1158) Anderson 1939a 190 (**geat**); Thorngrave Hundred W (*Thornegraue*, *Thornegraua hundred* 1086) PNW 78 (**grāf**); Thorngrafton Nb (*Thorgraveston* c.1150) 1920, 196 (**grāf**); Thornhaugh Nth (*Thornhawe* 1189) PNNth 243 (**haga**); Thornhill YW (*Torni*(*l*) 1086) PNYW ii 210–11 (**hyll**); Thorn Hill Fm Do (*Tornehelle* 1086) PNDo ii 152 (**hyll**); Thornhill Hundred W (*Thornehelle hundred* 1086) PNW 281 (**hyll**); Thornlau Hundred He (*Thornlav*, *Tornelavves hd'*, *Tornelavs hd'* 1086) Anderson 1934 166 (**hlāw**); Thornley Du (*Thornhlawa* 1071×80) Watts 2002, 124 (**hlāw**); Tormarton Gl (*Tormentone* 1086) PNGl iii 56 (**mere**); West Thorney Sx (*þorneg* 1052(c.1100)) PNSx i 62 (**ēg**); Withernsea YE (*Witfornes*, *Widfornessei* 1086) PNYE 26 (**wið/hwīt**, **sǣ**)

With **lēah**:

Thorley Hrt (*Torlei* 1086) PNHrt 204; Thorley Wt (*Torlei* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 467; Thorley Li (*Turlai* 1086) Cameron 1998, 125

2.73 þyrne OE f. (ON *þyrnir*) 'thorn-bush'

A feminine i-mutated form of OE **þorn** (see 2.72). Most *þyrne* 'thorn-bush' major names are found in the Danelaw area (*Fig.41*) (EPNE ii 222), suggesting probable influence from the ON cognate *þyrnir* on the English toponymicon. There are also, however, two *þyrne* major names in the south-west: Horethorne So (2.73.2) and Turnworth Do (2.73.3) and many uses of *þyrne* in OE charter bounds in the south. ON *þyrnir* is frequently attested in ON prose from as early as the twelfth century and according to the ONP (*þyrnir*, sb.) can be glossed as 'thorn' and 'thorn-bush'. It also appears in the compound *hagþyrnir* 'hawthorn' (ONP: *hagþyrnir*) and as the adjectival construction *svartan þyrni* 'black thorn' (ONP: *þyrnir*).

It is unclear whether in place-names *þyrne* had a meaning entirely distinct from *þorn* but there do seem to have been differences in the way these words were used. There are 20 major names with *þyrne* (*þyrnir*) attested by the end of the twelfth century and 104 *þorn* major names. In OE glossaries *þyrne* is glossed as Lat. *spina* 'thorn', but also as Lat. *dumus* 'thorn-bush' (BosworthToller: þyrne, n. f.). In early medieval charters it is compounded with *bremel* 'bramble' (S492, S605, S690, S766; also, once in an OE copy of Exodus (DOE: brēmel-þyrne, n.) and *brer* 'briar; a thorny bush or shrub' (S80, S1599), which are generally small shrub-like plants. This contrasts *þorn*, which, although compounded twice with *bremel* in charter bounds (S856, S748), was more often described as a free-standing tree like hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*): there are seven **hagu-þorn** (see 2.40) major names and only one **hagu-þyrne** (see 2.41). There are more references to *blæc þyrne* 'blackthorn' than *blæc þorn* in charters (see 2.20 ***blæc-þorn**), despite the more recurrent use of *þorn* in general (LangScape gives 158 charters with *þorn* and 22 with *þyrne*). Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) can reach a height of around 2 metres and blackthorn up to 7 metres, while common hawthorn regularly grows to 15 metres (Johnson and More 2004, 284). It is also worth noting that the OE adjectives *lytel* 'little' and *smæl* 'small' occur with both *þyrne* (S80, S566, S1599) and *þorn* (S1208, S623) in charter bounds, but descriptions such

as *brad* ‘broad’ (S1599, S564), *lang* ‘tall’ (S772, S892, S496) and *micel* ‘great’ (S402, S361, S365, S360, S550, S858) are used solely of *þorn*.

2.73.1 *þyrne* as a simplex name:

There are four simplex major names from *þyrne*, all first attested in the eleventh century. Thirn YN (*Thirn*(*e*) 1086) and Thurne Nf (*Ðirne* 1044) appear to derive from OE *þyrne* ‘thorn-bush’, although it is possible ON *þyrnir* influenced their development (PNYN 23; PNNf ii 42–3). Thornholme YE (*Thirnon*, *Tirnu’* 1086; *Tirnum* 1190) and Thurnham La (*Tiernun* 1086, *Thurnum* 1160) have early forms that suggest dat. pl. *þyrnum*, which is identical in both OE and ON (PNYE 90; Ekwall 1992, 171).

2.73.2 *þyrne* as the generic element:

Of the 20 *þyrne* major names in England, half have *þyrne* as the generic element, which contrasts the 33 major names that have a *þorn* generic (31.73% of *þorn*). Thorn-related elements in hundred and wapentake names have a closer correlation with three (15.00%) *þyrne* named meeting-places and 13 (12.50%) *þorn*.

Five major names have a pers.n. specific and a probable *þyrne* generic. Aswardhurn Wapentake Li (*Asuuardetierne* 1086, *Haswertherne* 1130, *Aswardehirnewap’* 1175) appears to be ON pers.n. *Asvaðr*, ‘Asvaðr’s thorn-bush’. Anderson (1934, 60) suggests the meeting-place was named after the same man as the settlement of Aswarby in the south-west of the wapentake. Chawston Bd (*Chauelestorne*, *Calnestorne* 1086; *Caluesterne* 1167; *Chaluesterne* 1227) has forms preserving gen. *-s* that suggest OE *cealf* ‘calf’, or as proposed in PNBd&Hu (65), an OE pers.n. **Cealf*, which may also be present in the name Chauson Wo (PNWo 307). *Witbrictesherne Hundred* Ess (*Witbrictesherna*, *Wibrictesherna* 1086) has the gen. sg. form of the OE pers.n. *Wihtbeorht*, ‘Wihtbeorht's thorn-bush’. As there are no definitive <th> forms PNEss (208) proposes the alternative OE *hyrne* ‘corner’; however, Anderson (1939b 48) notes that Aswardhurn Li and Eyhorne Hundred K (see 2.72.2) also have generics spelt with *h*-. Winster Db (*Winsterne* 1086) appears to be OE *Wine-þyrne*, ‘Wine’s thorn-bush’ (PNDb i 177–9), while Sewstern Li (*Sewesten* 1086) is probably OE *Sæwīg-þyrne*, ‘Sæwīg’s thorn-bush’ (PNLe ii 58). Neither has medieval forms spelt <th> so a *þyrne* etymology is not definite as most *þyrne* names show some reassertion of <h> by the thirteenth century. This has led

Watts (2004, 538) to suggest the alternative generic ON *tjǫrn* ‘tarn, small lake’; however, this is an element that principally occurs in Cumbria and Lancashire (EPNE ii 80) and neither of these sites has a topography particularly suggestive of a *tjǫrn*.

Two major names compound *þyrne* with a specific that refers to the location of the thorn-bush. Bythorn Hu (*Bierne* 1086; *Bitherne*, *Bytherne* 1127) derives from OE *bī-þyrne* (PNBd&Hu 236). VEPN (i 94) notes that ‘by, near’ tends to be used elliptically in place-names, which would give the meaning ‘place near the thorn-bush’ or, when considering German parallels, ‘encircling thorn-hedge’. Examples of thorn names with an element denoting enclosure are common (see 2.73.3 Turnworth Do; and 2.72.2 Spennithorne YN; 2.73 *þorn-tūn*; 2.74 Thorney Nt, Thornhaugh Nth). Caistron Nb is first attested as simplex *Cers* 1160, from ME *ker*, deriving from ON *kjarr* ‘marsh’ (Watts 2004, 109). It is later recorded as *Kersten* 1184 and *Kerst*(*h*)*irn*, *Crestern*(*e*), and *Castern*(*e*) 13th, with generic OE *þyrne* (ME *thirn*), ‘marsh thorn-bush’.

The final three major names with generic *þyrne* have a specific that describes the appearance of the thorn-bush. Stathern Le is also attested in DB (*Stachedirne* 1086) and probably derives from OE *staca-þyrne*, ‘stake thorn-bush’. It has been proposed that this compound could have denoted a ‘boundary thorn’, as *staca* has sometimes been used in place-names to indicate a boundary post (PNLe ii 260–1; Watts 2004, 572–3). Horethorne Hundred So (*Haretone*, *Harturna hund’* 1084; *Harethurnhdr’* 1170) is one of only two *þyrne* major names in the south-west and the third *þyrne* name to denote the location of a hundred meeting place. It appears to be OE *hār* ‘hoar, grey’, with early attestations suggesting a reduced form of the weak oblique adj. ending of *haran*, (Watts 2004, 126). This is possibly a reference to the bark of the thorn, which may have seemed grey due to lichen growth and is a common feature of older thorns. Kitson (1993, 38: Tab.6) lists five other trees qualified as *hār*, including apple (see 2.3 **apuldor**), elm, hazel, maple, and withy. The meeting place was probably near Charlton Horethorne, which stands on Horethorne Down in the north-west of the hundred (Anderson 1939a, 57). Early spellings of Lighthorne Wa (*Listecorne* 1086; *Litthethurne* 1235; *Liththurn*(*e*) 1242) suggest OE *lēoht-þyrne*, ‘the light or bright thorn-bush’ (PNWa 255), with probable scribal confusion of <c> for <t> in the DB form. Again, *lēoht* may have referred to the colour of lichen or moss on the bark, or perhaps to a particular abundance of blossom like that produced by

Crataegus monogyna '*Biflora*', the Glastonbury thorn, which flowers twice a year (Johnson and More 2004, 284)

2.73.3 *þyrne* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There are five major names with *þyrne* as the specific in a habitative compound. Turnworth Do is the most southerly *þyrne* major name and appears to demonstrate interchange between the specific *þorn*, perhaps gen. pl. *þorna* (*Torneworde* 1086, *Torneworth*(*e*) 1280) and *þyrne* (*Turnewordam* 1204, *Turnewurth*(*'*) 1234, *Turnewurþe* 1255, *Turneworth*(*'*) 1268) (PNDo ii 254; Watts 2004, 631). Probable AN substitution of *þ* can likely be attributed to the early possession of this settlement by the Norman de Lincoln family (PNDo ii 254). Thrintoft YN (*T*(*h*)*irnetoft*(*e*), *Tirnetoste* 1086; *Thirntoft* 12th) has early attestations that suggest an etymology from OE *þyrne* or ON *þyrnir* and OE/ON *toft*, 'thorn-bush messuage' (Watts 2004, 613). The modern form, Thrin-, can be attributed to 'common local metathesis' (PNYN 276). The generic elements *worð* 'enclosure' and *toft* 'curtilage, messuage' could suggest these were places surrounded by thorn-bushes, with thorns used as a means of demarcating property or corralling livestock (see also 2.73.2 Bythorn Hu; 2.72.2 Spennithorne YN; 2.72.3.1 *þorn-tūn*; 2.72.4 Thorney Nt, Thornhaugh Nth).

2.73.3.1 *þyrne-bȳ*:

There are two *þyrne* major names with the ON-derived generic *bȳ*, 'thorn-bush farm'. Thornby Nth (*Torneberie* 1086, *Thirnebi* c.1160, *Turnebi* 1175, *Thyrneby* 1261) has twelfth- and thirteenth-century spellings consistent with OE *þyrne* (*þyrnir*) (PNNth 74 5). Watts (2004, 609) proposes that the anomalous DB form is OE *þorn-byrig* 'thorn fortification' (see 2.72.3), with later replacement by ON *þyrnir-bȳ*, 'thorn-bush farm'; which seems prudent as the majority of forms are spelt *-i-*, *-u-*, or *-y-*. Thurnby Le (*Thorneby* 1228, *Turnebi* 1156, *Thurneby* 1208, *Thyrneby* 1247) also shows possible interchange with *þorn* but most forms suggest *þyrnir-bȳ*. PNLe (iv 278; 281) proposes that the adjoining parish name Bushby (*Buszebia* 1175, *Bucebi* 1176), from OE *busc* or ON *buskr*, supports the suggestion that this was an area of little exploited scrubland until the period of Scandinavian settlement.

2.73.3.2 *þyrne-tūn*:

Thurton Nf (*Tortuna* 1086, *Thermtona* c.1150, *Thurnton* 1302) looks to be OE *þyrne-tūn*, with influence in DB from the more recurrent OE *þorn-tūn* (2.72.3.1). Some later attestations like the 1248 spelling *Thuriton* possibly show the influence of OE ***þyrning** (see 2.74) 'place where thorn-bushes grow', or an unattested OE adj. **þyrnig* 'thorny' (Watts 2004, 616). This name and possibly those in *þyrne-bȳ*, likely had a similar meaning to *þorn-tūn*. As there are no major name examples of *þorn-tūn* south of Lincolnshire, use of *þyrne* could have been a regional distinction; however, further investigation would be necessary to confirm this.

2.73.4 *þyrne* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Thurnscoe YW is the only *þyrne* major name with a topographical generic, probably ON *skógr* 'wood'. The forms of this name are varied: they demonstrate AN influence (*Ternusc*(*h*) 1086; *Thirnescoh*, *Ternesco* 1090), metathesis (*Trinescho* 1135), and possible later interchange with *þorn* (*Thornescogh* 1380) (PNYW i 91). Thorn-trees and bushes do not tend to predominate in woodland as they require sunlight to thrive and are often over-shaded by larger species. Thurnscoe was thus likely a small scrub woodland, rather than a wood with a large dense canopy. Of the entire corpus of thorn-species major names (see *Fig.1*) only 12 (8.45%) have a woodland-related generic and with the exception of Thurnscoe and Thorngrave W (see 2.72.4), all are *lēah* compounds, suggestive of an area of open woodland where there was enough light for thorn to grow as a prominent feature (*Fig.43*).

As a simplex name:

> Thirn YN (*Thirn*(*e*) 1086) PNYN 235; Thornholme YE (*Thirnon*, *Tirnu'* 1086) PNYE 90; Thurne Nf (*Ðirne* 1044) PNNf ii 42; Thurnham La (*Tiernun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 171

As the generic element:

> *Aswardhun Wapentake* Li (*Asuuardetierne* 1086) Cameron 1998, 5 (**pers.n.**); Bythorn Hu (*Bierne* 1086) PNBd&Hu 236 (**bī**); Caistron Nb (*Kersten* 1184) Watts 2004, 109 (**kers**); Chawston Bd (*Chauelestorne*, *Calnestorne* 1086) PNBd&Hu 65 (**pers.n.**) Horethorne Hundred So (*Hareturna* 1184) Watts 2004, 126 (**hār**); Lighthorne Wa (*Listecorne*

(sic) 1086) PNWa 255 (**lēoht**); Sewstern Le (*Sewesten* 1086) PNLe ii 58 (**pers.n.**); Stathern Le (*Stachedirne* 1086) PNLe ii 260 (**staca**); Winster Db (*Winsterne* 1086) PNDb i 177 (**pers.n.**); *Witbrictesherne Hundred* Ess (*Witbrictesherna*, *Wibrictesherna* 1086) PNEss 207 (**pers.n**)

As the specific in a habitative compound:

Thrintoft YN (*T*(*h*)*irnetoft*(*e*), *Tirnetoste* 1086) PNYN 276 (**toft**/**topt**); Turnworth Do (*Torneworde* 1086) PNDo ii 254 (**worð**)

With **bȳ**:

Thornby Nth (*Torneberie* 1086) PNNth 74; Thurnby Le (*Turnebi* 1156) PNLe iv 278

With **tūn**:

Thurton Nf (*Tortuna* 1086) Watts 2004, 616

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Thurnscoe YW (*Ternusc*(*h*) 1086) PNYW i 91 (**skógr**)

2.74 *þyrning OE 'place where thorn-bushes grow'

A derivative of OE **þyrne** 'thorn-bush' (see. 2.73) and *-ing* (EPNE ii 223) that is unattested outside of place-names. There are two simplex names with this element (*Fig.41*) that likely indicated a 'place growing with thorns' (Watts 2004, 615), perhaps a thorn-brake or thicket.

2.74.1 **þyrning* as a simplex name

Thurning Nf (*Tyrninga*, *Tirninga*, *Turninga* 1086; *T*(*h*)*erning* 1196; *Thirning* 1244) shows early vowel variation and loss of *Th-* in an AN context. Medieval attestations of Thurning Nth (*Torninge* 1086, *Thorney* 12th) show interchange with OE **þorn** (see 2.72), but *þyrne*-derived forms are more recurrent (*Thirninge* c.1150, *Thurning* 1175, *Turnig* 1207) (see 2.73.3 Turnworth Do for parallel example).

As a simplex name:

> Thurning Nf (*Tyrninga*, *Tirninga*, *Turninga* 1086) Watts 2004, 615; Thurning Nth (*Torninge* 1086) PNNth 221

2.75 víðir ON m. ‘willow, withy (a tree of the *Salix* genus)’

2.75.1 *víðir* as the specific in a topographical compound:

This element is attested in ON literature (ONP: sb. m.) and might be the specific in the major name Witherslack We (*Witherslake*(*e*), *Wytherslak*(*e*) 1189; *Whytherslak* 1249), which derives either from *víðir* (gen. sg. *víðjar*) ‘willow’, or ON *viðr* (gen. sg. *viðar*) ‘wood’, with generic ON *slakki* ‘shallow valley, hollow’ (PNWe i 77–8; Watts 2004, 527). The settlement of Witherslack sits above the valley of the River Winster, with a large, wooded slope to the east and woodland to the south. It is also an area suited to riparian *Salix* species, with well-draining loam soil and an extensive floodplain along the course of the river. As there are no other examples of *viðr* as a qualifier, this name may favour an etymology from *víðir*, which is possibly also attested in the minor name Withgill YW (*Withikill* 1226, *Wythichil* 1260) (PNYW vi 197–8).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Witherslack We (*Witherslake*(*e*), *Wytherslak*(*e*) 1189) PNWe i 77–8 (**slakki**)

2.76 *wācor OE ‘willow twig, wicker, osier (a tree of the *Salix* genus)’

A word that is probably related to Old Swedish *vīker* and ME *wiker*, *wyker* (MED: wiker, n.); EPNE (ii 234) also notes a possible connection with OE *gewīcan* ‘to give way, yield’, and *wāc* ‘weak’, this latter perhaps recognising the flexible property of willow withies. There are two major names attested by 1200 with *****wācor* as a possible specific element.

**2.76.1 ***wācor* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Wackerfield Du (*Wacarfeld* c.1040(12th), *Wakerfeld’* 1283) might be OE *****wācor-feld*, ‘open land growing with willows’; however, this could instead be the OE adj. *wacor* ‘watchful, watching’, used substantively to describe ‘open land with a look-out’, or gen. pl. *wacra*, ‘open land of the watchful ones’ (Watts 2002, 131). Another

possibility is OE *wacu* ‘open land of the annual wake or festival (Watts 2004, 643). The topography and geology at this site are not strongly indicative of willows but the possiblity cannot be ruled out as *Salix* species grow in a variety of environments.

2.76.1.1 **wācor-lēah*

Wakerley Nth (*Wacherlei* 1086, *Wacherlai* 1162) overlooks a crossing of the River Welland and could derive from gen. pl. *wacra* with OE *lēah*, ‘open woodland of the watchful ones’, with possible later influence from the common adj. *wacor* ‘watchful’ (PNNth 172–3) (see 2.76.1 Wackerfield). Alternatively, the first element could be **wācor*, which may give more sense in a woodland context. OE *lēah* is the most common topographical generic to compound with a tree-species specific and is recurrent with other *Salix* species elements (see 2.67.3.1 **salh**; 2.78.3.1 ***wilig**; 2.80.2.1 **wiðig**). Wakerley sits on sand-based soil, just beyond the extent of the clay-rich floodplain of the river valley, which suggests willow is ecologically possible.

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Wackerfield Du (*Wacarfeld* c.1040(12th)) Watts 2002, 131 (**feld**)

With **lēah**:

Wakerley Nth (*Wacherlei* 1086) PNNth 172–3

2.77 wice OE m. ‘elm, possibly wych-elm’

A word of uncertain origin that could be related to the Germanic base of OE *wīcan*, OHG *wīhhan*, with the sense ‘to give way’, possibly in relation to the pliable branches of wych-elm (OED: wych, n.). Yet, species designation is unclear. It cannot be assumed *wice* was always an indicator of wych-elm (*Ulmus glabra*) as there is no record of scientific categorisation of elm species until the eighteenth century (Rackham 2020, 266). In ModE dialect *witch* is recorded as being ‘a tree with pliant branches’ (PNDu i 260) or ‘a young elm’ (EDD: witch, sb.2), which recalls the possible Germanic origin of this word but does not confirm taxonomic identification as wych-elm. Further to this, OE *wice* was associated in OE with rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and witch-beam (EDD: witch, sb.1) or witch-tree (OED: wice, n. C.2) is a ModE dialect word for both elm and rowan. ModE *rowan* appears to have arisen through adoption of ON **raun* and is not attested in English until the fifteenth century

(MED: raun-trę̄, n.) (see 1.3.3 Rainford La). At this time rowan was also called *quicken tree* (OED: quicken, n.1), likely deriving from OE *cwic-bēam*. In OE glossaries Lat. *cariscus* is glossed seven times as *cwic-bēam* and of these, three times synonymously with OE *uuice*, *wice*, *wic* (DOE: cwic-bēam, n.). It has been proposed that *cariscus* comes from Lat. *carica* 'fig', thus *cwic-bēam* may have been a mistaken form of *fic-bēam* 'fig-tree' (ibid). There is very little similarity between rowan and wych-elm as species, so confusion between them seems unlikely. The association of *wice* and *cwic* may therefore have been due to their phonological similarity.

Wych-elm has characteristics that differentiate it from other elm species: it is non-clonal and does not usually reproduce by suckering (Johnson and More 2004, 242), and it is naturally more abundant in the north and west of England, usually in upland areas (Rackham 2003, 275). However, wych-elm does bear a strong superficial similarity to other elm species and like other elms is predominantly a woodland tree. It is therefore unclear whether any consistent distinction would have been made by medieval peoples.

Only six *wice* major names are attested by 1200 (*Fig.38*) and there are 18 potential references to *wice* in OE charter bounds (LangScape). There are 10 relatively secure occurrences in Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire and four ambiguous accounts of *wice* in Wiltshire and Worcestershire that could instead be OE *wīc* 'dwelling, farm'. This compares with only four secure examples of *wice* in the east: in Middlesex, Surrey, and Sussex. The largely south-westerly distribution of these charter attestations likely reflects the availability of charter evidence but could in part be due to the preferred natural habitat of wych-elm in the west of England. A comparative examination of *elm* in charter bounds is not helpful as it appears in only five charter attestations as the name of three estates: Elmley Lovett (S118) and Elmley Castle (S1342, S1597) in Hartlebury Wo, and Elmsted K (S168, S1617) (see 2.29 *elm* for discussion of these names). OE *elm* is more common in major names where it occurs 19 times, but there appears to have been no regional preference for its use beyond the absence of any elm-tree major names in the Midlands and north-west (*Fig.38*).

2.77.1 *wice* as the specific in a habitative compound:

There is only one habitative *wice* major name attested by 1200. Whitsbury W (now in Ha) (*Wiccheberia* c.1130, *Wiccheberia* 1132) looks to derive from OE *wice* and dat. sg. *byrig* from *burh*, '(wych-)elm fortification' (Watts 2004, 675). The *burh* has been identified as Whitsbury Castle Ditches Iron Age hillfort (PNW 224) (2022 OS: SU 12796 19671), which is part of the wider prehistoric landscape of hillforts, long barrows, and monuments surrounding Salisbury.

2.77.2 *wice* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Four of the five topographical *wice* major names discussed here appear to have a generic associated with the riparian landscape.[45] Great and Little Wishford W (*Wicheford* 1086) were originally one estate with a name deriving from OE *wice-ford*, '(wych-)elm ford' (PNW 230–1). Similar early forms can be seen for Whichford Wa (*Wicford* 1086, *Wicheford*(*a*) 1130) and in the many DB variations of Witchford Hundred C (*Wiceford*(*e*), *Wicceford*, *Wiccheforð*, *Wicheford*(*a*), *Wicheforð*, *Wicford*, *Wichforda*, *Wieceforda*, *Wichdford* 1086). Ekwall (1960 512 3) suggests that occasional earlier *Wh*- spellings of Whichford (*Whichford* 1263, *Whiccesford* 1305, *Whucheford* 1327) could point to an alternative etymology from the folk-name *Hwicce*, 'the ford leading to Hwicce'; however, in light of a majority of forms in *W*- (Watts 2004, 671) and two parallel examples in Great Wishford and Witchford, an elm etymology seems more likely and the <h> is probably intrusive (PNWa 301–2).

Great Wishford W (*Wykford Majori* 1190) and Little Wishford in South Newton W (*Parva Whicheford* 1316) lie on either side of the River Wylye. This flood-prone environment may once have resembled the principal habitat of elm on the European continent, where elm shows 'a clear preference for water-logged and nutrient-rich soils, distributed principally near rivers and streams or on floodplains' (EAFTS, 186). Rackham (2003, 280) observes that although we lack direct proof, there is no doubt British river gravels and fenlands were once a chief habitat for elm species (see 2.29.3 Elmore Gl).

[45] This is interesting as no *elm* major names are compounded with a water-related element. With such a small data set it is unclear if this says something about the use of *wice* or the elm species it may have indicated. A future study that includes minor names would no doubt be beneficial in this case.

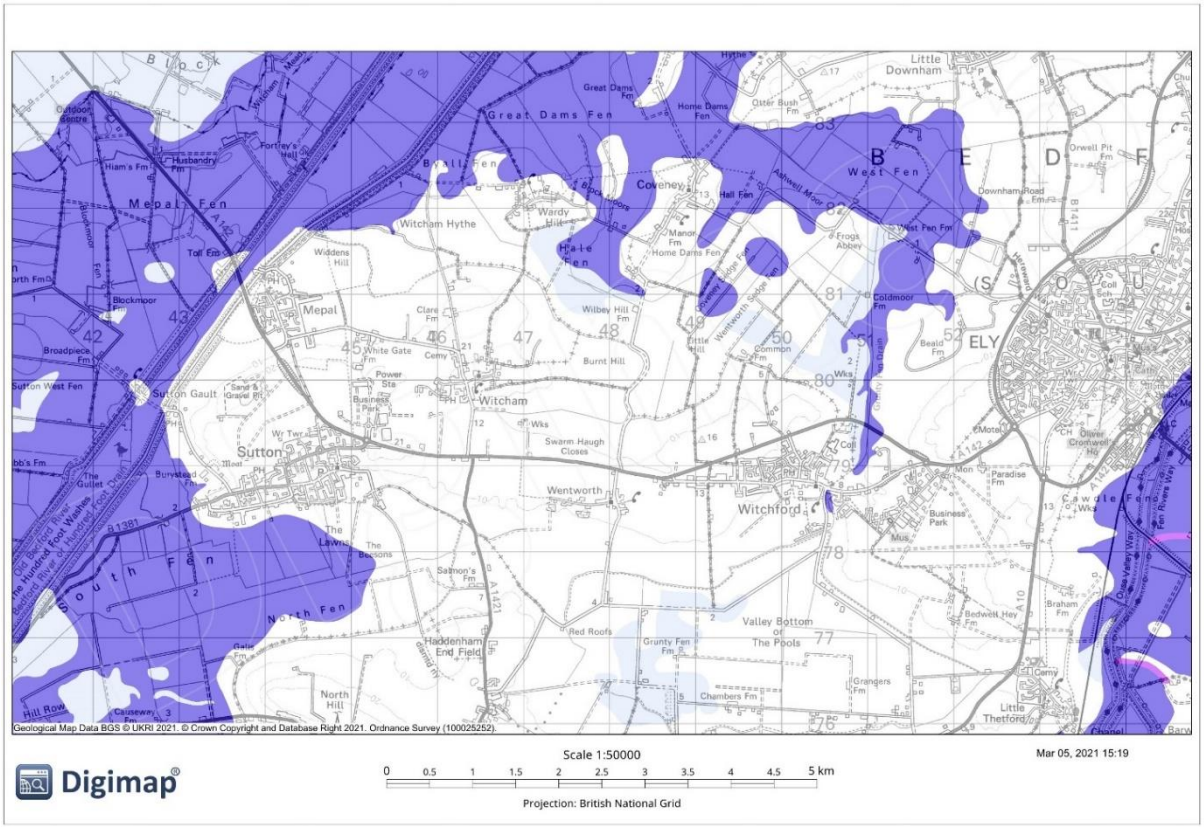


Figure 63: OS Geological Indicators of Flooding (1:50 000) of Witcham and Witchford on raised land in the Cambridgeshire Fens: flood-prone areas in blue

Witcham C is recorded in a tenth-century charter as *wic hamme* 970(12th) (S780), which is diagnostic of OE *hamm*; preserving as it does the double consonant, which is often reduced to *-m* in later records and thus subject to confusion with OE *hām*. In this fenland context the name probably referred to an area of land raised above the marsh and populated by elm-trees. LPN (50) notes that Witcham 'occupies a promontory jutting into the Bedford Levels' and, with neighbouring Witchford, sits on the area of raised land that is the Isle of Ely (*Fig.72*). This environment, even more so perhaps than Wishford W, resembles the preferred riparian habitat of elm found in Continental Europe.

2.77.2.1 *wice-lēah*:

Wicklewood Nf (*Wickelewuda* 1086, *Wicklewuda* 1168, *Wicklewode* 1242) was probably originally a *wice-lēah* compound (Ekwall 1960, 517), '(wych-)elm open woodland' (see 2.29.3.1 *elm-lēah* for parallel examples). Watts (2004, 678) suggests the pleonastic addition of OE *wudu* to this name; however, it need not be considered a

redundant addition if *lēah* was no longer an appropriate way to describe this site and the sparsely-treed 'open woodland' had succumbed to denser vegetation.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Whitsbury W (*Wiccheberia* 1132) PNW 224 (**burh**)

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Great Wishford W (*Wicheford* 1086) PNW 230 (**ford**) Whichford Wa (*Wicford* 1086) PNWa 301 (**ford**); Witcham C (*Wichamme* 970(12th)) PNC 244 (**hamm**); Witchford C (*Wiceford*(*e*), *Wicceford*, *Wiccheforð*, *Wicheford*(*a*), *Wicheforð*, *Wicford*, *Wichforda*, *Wieceforda*, *Wichdford* 1086) PNC 245 (**ford**)

With **lēah**:

> Wicklewood Nf (Wickelewuda 1086) Watts 2004, 678

2.78 *wilig OE f. (Anglian), *welig* OE (WSax) f. 'willow (a tree of the *Salix* genus)'

OE *welig* has its root in Germanic *walg-*, *welg-* and is found on independent record in OE glossaries and medical texts (OED: willow, n.). In charter bounds and place-names it is less common than the variant form **wilig* and is securely attested in only two major names (see 2.78.1 Welwyn Hrt; 2.78.3 Welford Bd), to the possible 27 of **wilig*. There was an *ealdan welig* 'old willow' in the bounds of a tenement at Winchester Ha (S1560); a *greatan welig* at both Abingdon Brk (S605) and Beyworth Brk (S590); and at Badby, Dodford, and Everdon Nth (S495) there was a *wiðig wylles*, 'withy well', (see 2.80 **wiðig**) and an old mill *þær þa welegas standað*, 'where the willows stand'.

According to EPNE (ii 267), place-names with the specific OE *welig* are found only in Hertfordshire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire, while **wilig* names are largely restricted to the Midland counties (*Fig.64*). This distribution suggests **wilig* was principally an Anglian form, although this is not always straightforward, with**wilig* replacing post-Conquest spellings in *Wel-* (see 2.78.3.2: Willington Bd) and appearing in charter bounds in the south from an early date: there are eleventh-century attestations of a *wili stream*, 'willow stream', at Ditchampton W (S1010) and a *wilig byrig*, 'willow fortification', at Norton Hrt (S916).

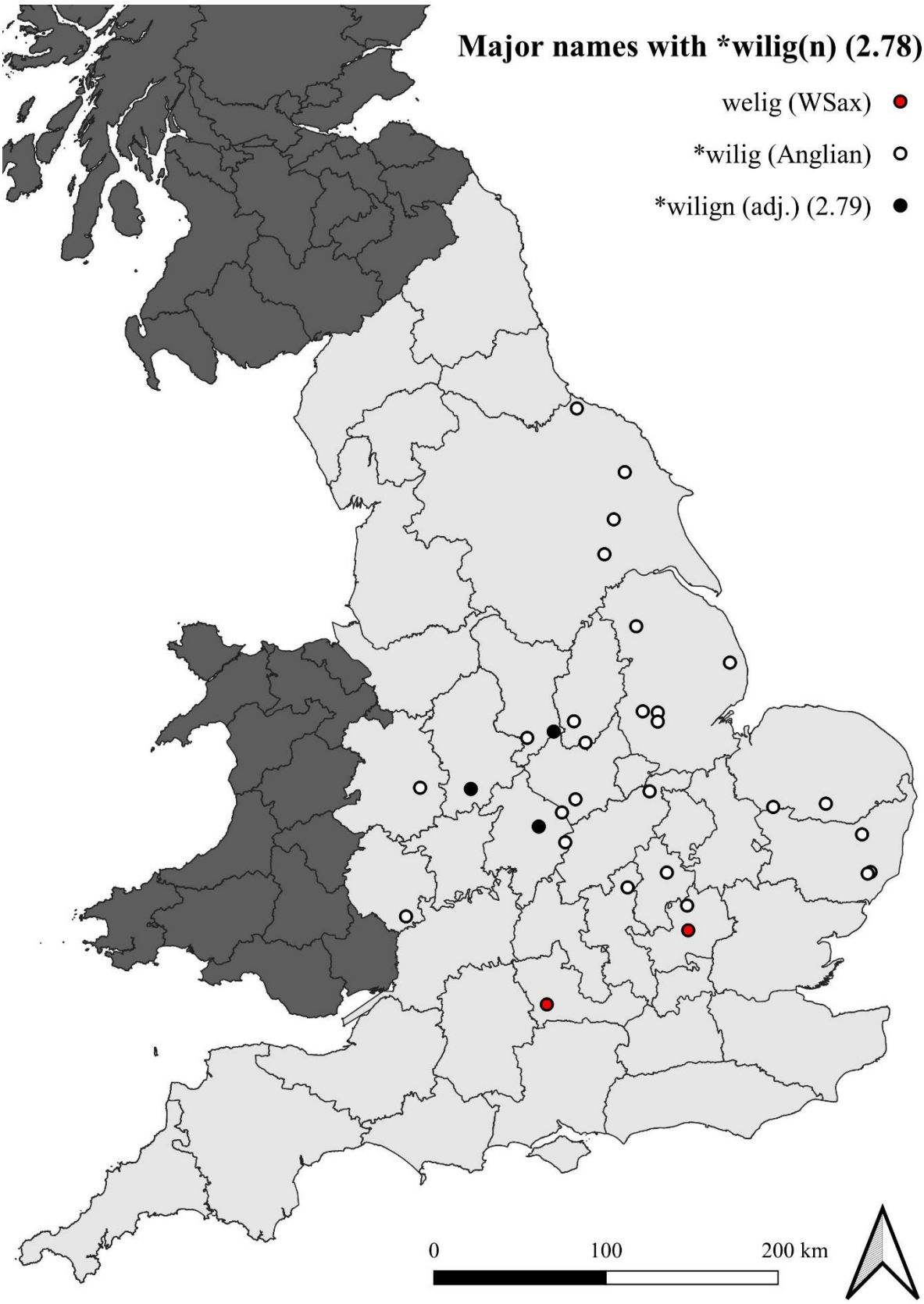


Figure 64: Distribution of **wilig* (WSax dialect *welig*) and **wilign* major names attested by 1200

2.78.1 **wilig* as a simplex name:

Welwyn Hrt ((*ad*) *Welingum* 944–6(13th) S1497, (*on*) *Welugun* 11th) has early forms that suggest simplex dat. pl. *weligum* '(place at) the willows'. PNHrt (144) proposes that these forms were influenced by other names with an *-ingum* termination. The earliest attestations of Willen Bk (*Wyle*, *Wily* 1189), Willian Hrt (*Wilie* 1086, *Wilia* 1189), and Willey Hundred Bd (*Wilge*, *Wilga* 1086; *Wilie* 1166–7) suggest simplex **wilig*, perhaps replacing an earlier *welig*, '(place at) the willow(s)'. There are possible dat. pl. (**wiligum*) forms for Willen Bk (*Wylien*(*e*) 1235, *Wylyen*(*e*) 1262) (PNBk 26) and Willian Hrt (*Wilian* 1212, *Wylien* 13th), although these could also be due to the influence of OE ***wilign** 'willow copse' (see 2.79) (Watts 2004, 680). If **wilig* was intended singularly then it perhaps indicated one of the larger *Salix* species like white willow (*Salix alba*), which can grow up to 30 metres (Rotherham 2022, 2504), or goat willow (*Salix caprea*) that reaches heights of 22 metres (Johnson and More 2004, 168–70).

2.78.2 **wilig* as the specific in a habitative compound:

Of the 35 habitative major names with a *Salix* specific in this corpus, 17 (48.57%) are compounded with **wilig* (*welig*). Willitoft YE (*Wilgetot* 1086, *Wilegetoft* 1192) derives from **wilig* and ON/OE *topt*, 'willow field/curtilage' (PNYE 242; Watts 2004, 682). The settlement is situated on an area of flat clay-rich land between the River Derwent and the River Foulness, which makes this an unsurprising location for a willow name.

2.78.2.1 **wilig-bȳ*:

The compound **wilig-bȳ*, 'willow farm', is the root of eight major names in the Midlands. This could be a hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian place-name or a possible Scandinavianised form of the OE compound **wilig-tūn* (2.78.2.2). Unfortunately, only one of these names (Willoughby Wa) is attested pre-DB, by which time the spelling of this compound may have been standardised. Ekwall (1960, 520), Cameron (1998, 139–40), Watts (2004, 862), and PNLe (v 234) favour a Scandinavianised **wilig-tūn*, which it could be argued is preferable as there is no ON equivalent for **wilig* or an ON pers.n. with which it could be confused. Perhaps more likely,

however, is the possibility that these are Anglo-Scandinavian names that developed at a time and place where the toponymicon drew on both the OE and ON lexicon. In other words, they did not arise through the alteration of pre-existing OE names by ON-speaking settlers but are instead the legacy of an integrated population speaking a dialect comprising both OE and ON elements several generations after initial Scandinavian settlement.

It is possible some of these names derive from or have been influenced by **wilig-bēag*, 'circle of willow-trees' (Watts 2004, 682; PNLe v 234), as is perhaps the case for Wilby Nf (*Wilgeby*, *Willebeih* 1086) and Willoughby Wa (*Wiliabyg* 956, *Wilebei* 1086). Both have similar early forms to Wilby Sf (*Wilebey*, *Wilebi* 1086: see 2.78.3). In contrast, the earliest attestations of the six remaining Willoughby names are consistent with a *bȳ* generic: Willoughby Li (*Wilgebi* 1086), Scott Willoughby Li (*Wilgebi* 1086), Silk Willoughby Li (*Wilgebi* 1086), Willoughby Waterleys Le (*Wilebi* 1086), Willoughby on the Wolds Nt (*Willebi*, *Wilgebi* 1086), and West Willoughby Li (*Wlheb'* 1185, *Willigby* late 12th).

Potentially, AN scribal practice and a lack of earlier records for more northerly counties could have obscured other potential **wilig-bēag* names. The interchange of phonologically similar elements is more likely to be seen in counties bordering the Danelaw boundary, rather than in areas of dense Scandinavian settlement where ON linguistic influence is strongest. In Suffolk, where there are only three confirmed *bȳ* names (Neal 2023, 81–2) and much weaker ON influence on the local dialect, it is unsurprising that the original *bēag* etymology survives in early forms; yet, in a county such as Lincolnshire, which has 236 *bȳ* names (ibid), the preservation of an original *bēag* is much less likely. It is interesting to note that **wilig* is found with no other ON generic elements, which could suggest that like *āc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* compounds (see 3.5; 3.7) this compound had a specialised meaning indicating a place where willows were farmed. There does not seem to be any topographical consistency with Willoughby names, beyond a general preference for moist clay-soils and the presence of surface water in some form (streams, field-drains, springs, etc.) within the rough vicinity of the settlement.

2.78.2.2 **wilig-tūn*:

The remaining eight habitative **wilig* major names are *tūn* compounds and were probably equivalent in meaning to **wilig-bȳ* names. Willington Bd (*Welitone* 1086) may originally have been *welig-tūn*, for although all other records are spelt *Wi-* or *Wy*, early replacement of *Wel-* was common in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire (EPNE ii 266–7; see 2.78.1 Welwyn Hrt). Later forms either have intrusive <n> (*Wylinton*, *Wilinton* 1220; *Wylyton*, *Wylington* 1276) or arose through the influence of OE **wilign* (see 2.79) or the OE adj. *wiligen*.

Names spelt Wilton are likely the condensed form of **wilig-tūn*. Examples of this include Wilton Nf (*Wiltuna*, *Wiltona* 1086) and Wilton He (*Wiltone* 1086, *Wiltun* 1156) (Watts 2004, 683; PNHe 2009, 54). For three Yorkshire names the alternative OE *wild* has been suggested (PNYE 175; PNYN 90): Bishop Wilton YE (*Widton*, *Wiltone* 1086; *Waletona* (sic) 1141–4; *Wilton*(*a*), *Wylton*(*a*) 1125–35), Wilton in Thornton Dale YN (*Wiltun*(*e*) 1086; *Wilton*(*am*), *Wylton*(*am*) 1167), and Wilton in Ormesby YN (*Widtune*, *Wiltune* 1086; *Wiltune* 1155–65); however this argument rests on the strength of probable anomalous DB forms with *-d-*. All other attestations are with *-l-* and conform to the outcomes of a **wilig* specific.

Some early spellings of Willoughton Li (*Wilchetone* 1086, *Wilgatuna* 1115, *Wilghetone* 1199) suggest the use of gen. pl. **wiliga* (Watts 2004, 682). PNLi (vi 212) observes that although comparative *Willington* forms are not consistent (*Willington* 1200, *Willingthon* 1233), they may indicate an alternative spelling of the name, again perhaps due to the influence of **wilign*. Willington Db (*Willetune* 1086) is similar with probable later influence from **wilign* (*Wil*(*l*)*intun*(*e*), *Wil*(*l*)*inton*(*a*) c.1100; *Wilenton*(*a*) 1114).

Each of these settlements lies within the vicinity of a floodplain or fenland, although the settled area itself is built on drier land. Willington Db and Bd border the floodplains of the Rivers Trent and Great Ouse respectively; Wilton He lies beside the River Wye; Wilton in Thornton Dale YN is on the cusp of the River Derwent floodplain; Bishop Wilton Beck runs through Bishop Wilton; and Wilton Nf sits on the well-draining sand-rich soil of the Brecks bordering Hockwold Fens. The exceptions are Willoughton Li and Wilton in Ormesby YN, which are beside a

watercourse or fenland, but both lie within a landscape of moist clay-based soils that may have provided conditions suitable for *Salix* species (see 2.67.3 Sawcliffe Fm Li).

2.78.3 **wilig* as the specific in a topographical compound:

The earliest attestations of Willybrook Hundred Nth (*Wilebroc* 1076; *Wilebroc*, *Wilibroc* 1086; *Willebroc*(*h*) 1179 suggest OE **wilig-brōc*, 'willow brook'. The hundred court was apparently held at King's Cliff, where the river is still named Willow Brook (PNNth 198). Wilby Sf (*Wilebey*, *Wilebi* 1086; *Willebeye* 1254; *Wilebegh* 1346) appears to preserve dat. sg. *bēage*, 'circle of willow-trees' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016 154) and is one of two possible examples of a tree-species major name with a *bēag* generic (see also 2.68.2.1 Selby YW). Although the earliest attestations of this name are similar to early forms of some **wilig-bȳ*, 'willow farm', names (see 2.78.2.1: Wilby Nf and Willoughby Wa), medieval spellings suggesting *bēag* are persistent (Watts 2004, 680).

Four **wilig* names have a *ford* generic. Wilford Square Sf in Woodbridge parish is recorded in DB and the twelfth century simply as *Wileforde* (Ekwall 1960, 519). Welford Brk (*Weliford* 821(12th) S183; *Wælingford* 821(13th); (*æt*) *Welig forda*, (*to*) *Weligforda* 949 S552; (*æt*) *Weligforda* 956(12th) S622) is OE *welig-ford*, 'willow ford'. It sits beside the River Lambourne and the once medieval church (Historic England: 1117225) is built adjacent to land that is liable to flood (1880s OS: SU 41133 73144). The location of the original ford is unclear as many roads cross the river but was likely in the vicinity of the church, which is mentioned in DB (Page and Ditchfield 1924, 116–25). Wilford Hundred Sf (*Wileford*(*a*), *Wilesfordn*, *Wile fort*, *Uuilleforda*, *Willeforde* 1086) has the same compound, but with Anglian **wilig*. The original site of the ford is probably where Wilford Bridge now crosses the River Debden between Melton and Bromeswell (Anderson 1934, 91; Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 154–5). Wilford Nt (*Wilesford* 1086, *Wilesford*' 1168, *Wileford* c.1190, 1227; *Willeford* c.1240) has some early forms with what looks to be genitive -*s*. PNNt (251) suggests this could indicate the OE pers.n. *Willa*; however, Ekwall (1960, 519) supports a **wilig* etymology and Watts (2004, 680) proposes either **wilig* or OE *wīle* 'a weel, a basket, a fish-trap'. A willow name may be preferable considering the recurrence of this compound and the riparian habitat of this settlement beside the flood-prone River Trent where willows grow in abundance to this day.

2.78.3.1 **wilig-lēah*:

The first recorded form of Willey Sa (*Wilit* 1086, *Welileia* 1120, *Wililega* c.1180) is likely an anomalous DB spelling, while the second perhaps shows earlier the influence of *welig* with later replacement by **wilig*. The earliest attestations of Willey Wa (*Welei* 1086, *Wilee* 1130, *Wilega* 1179, *Willeie* 1230) are consistent with a *welig*/**wilig* compound. PNWa (121) suggests this name could instead derive from *weoh-lēah*, 'denoting a wood or grove containing a heathen temple or place of worship', probably due to the similarity of some of its later medieval forms with the early-attested minor name Willey Sr (*Welegh* 1290, *Wiligh* 1305), which is first recorded as *weo léage* in a tenth-century charter (S382). The same was claimed of Weeley Ess (*Wiligelea* 11th, *Wileia* 1086, *Welega* 1166, *Wigelai* 1181) (PNEss 355–6) but the eleventh century form *Wiligelea* is a transparent example of origin from **wilig* (Ekwall 1960, 503). Gelling (1973, 124) notes that early spellings with a double <ll> are also more indicative of a **wilig-lēah* etymology than *weoh*. Later-medieval minor names with the same modern spelling and etymology are attested in Nottinghamshire (*Haia de Willeg'* 1212) and Surrey (*Wille*, *Wyllee* 1316), but Willey D appears to derive from the OE pers.n. *Wīga* (*Wythelgh'* 1242, *Wygelege* 1244) and Willey C from **wilig-hȳð*, 'willow landing place' (*Wyliethe*, *Wylyethe* 1240).

As a simplex name:

> Welwyn Hrt (*Welingum* 944–6(13th)) PNHrt 144; Willen Bk (*Wyle*, *Wily* 1189) PNBk 26; Willian Hrt (*Wilie* 1086) PNHrt 147; Willey Hundred Bd (*Wilge*, *Wilga* 1086) PNBd&Hu 25

As the specific in a habitative compound:

> Willitoft YE (*Wilgetot* 1086) PNYE 242 (**topt**)

With **bȳ**:

> Scott Willoughby Li (*Wilgebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 139–40; Silk Willoughby Li (*Wilgebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 139–40; West Willoughby Li (*Wlheb'* 1185) Cameron 1998, 139; Wilby Nf (*Wilgeby*, *Willebeih* 1086) Watts 2004, 680; Willoughby Li (*Wilgebi* 1086) Cameron 1998, 139–40; Willoughby Wa (*Williabyg* 956) PNWa 148–

9; Willoughby on the Wolds Nt (*Willebi* 1086) PNNt 258–9; Willoughby Waterleys Le (*Wilebi* 1086) PNLe v 234

With **tūn**:

Bishop Wilton YE (*Widton*, *Wiltone* 1086) PNYE 175; Willington Bd (*Welitone* 1086) PNBd&Hu 99; Willington Db (*Willetune* 1086) PNDb ii 513; Willoughton Li (*Wilgatuna* 1115) PNLi vi 212; Wilton He (*Wiltone* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 521; Wilton Nf (*Wilituna* 1086) Watts 2004, 683; Wilton (Thornton Dale) YN (*Wiltun*(*e*) 1086) PNYN 90; Wilton (Ormesby) YN (*Widtune*, *Wiltune* 1086) PNYN 156

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Welford Be (*Weligforda* 949 S552) PNBrk i 272–3 (**ford**); Wilby Sf (*Wilebey*, *Wilebi* 1086) Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 154 (**bēag**); Wilford Hundred Sf (*Wileford*(*a*), *Wilesfordn*, *Wile fort*, *Uuilleforda*, *Willeforde* 1086) Anderson 1934, 92 (**ford**); Wilford Nt (*Wilesford* 1086, *Wileford* c.1190) PNNt 251 (**ford**); Wilford Square Sf (*Wileforde* 1086) Ekwall 1960, 519 (**ford**); Willybrook Hundred Nth (*Wilebroc*(*e*) 1076) PNNth 198 (**brōc**)

With **lēah**:

Willey Sa (*Wilit* 1086) PNSa 316–7; Willey Wa (*Welei* 1086) PNWa 121

2.79 *wilign ‘willow (a tree of the *Salix* genus), willow copse’

A collective noun deriving from OE **wilig* (see 2.78 **welig**). PNWa (190) draws a parallel between the construction of this word and the relationship between OE *ifign* and OE *ifig* ‘ivy’ (DOE: ifig, ifign, n.). There are three major names with a possible **wilign* specific, although this element also appears to have influenced some later medieval forms of Willington Bd (*Wylinton*, *Wilinton* 1220; *Wylyton*, *Wylington* 1276), Willington Db (*Wil*(*l*)*intun*(*e*), *Wil*(*l*)*inton*(*a*) c.1100; *Wilenton*(*a*) 1114), and Willoughton Li (*Willington* 1200, *Willingthon* 1233) (see 2.78.2.2).

2.79.1 **wilign* as a simplex name:

Church Wilne Db (*Wilne*, *Wiln*(*a*) 1096; *Wille* c.1150) has early forms with *-n-* that either represent **wilign* 'willow copse' or the dat. pl. **wiligum* '(at the) willows' (Watts 2004, 682; 680) (see 2.78.1 Welwyn Hrt).

2.79.2 **wilign* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Willenhall Wa (*Wilenhala* late 12th, *Wilenhale* 1221) appears to be either **wilign* or the OE adj. **wiligen* with OE *halh* (Watts 2004, 680). It is not possible to distinguish **wiligen* from **wilign* in ME forms (EPNE ii 267), so it is unclear whether this was the 'willow copse corner/nook' from **wilign*, or the 'nook growing with willow trees' from **wiligen*. Ekwall (1960, 519) presents a possible alternative from the OE pers.n. *Willa* (gen. sg. *Willan*); however, Willenhall sits on a 1 km stretch of land between the River Sowe and River Avon that would well-suit a *Salix* etymology.

For Willenhall, Watts (2004, 680) and Horovitz (2005, 578) propose a pers.n. *Willa* etymology for Willenhall St (*Willanhalch* 732(15th) S86, S87; *Willenhale* 996(17th) S1380; *Winehale*, *Winehala* 1086; *Wilinhale* c.1100; *Willenhal* 1166; *Wulenhale* c.1227; *Wylenhale*, *Walenhull* 1286) as some of the early attestations have <ll>. While this is possible, it should be noted that the medieval spellings are not consistent and that the two early charters survive only in fifteenth- and seventeenth-century copies. They are generally thought to be based on authentic OE material (eSawyer), but it is conceivable that these forms better reflect those of later centuries (*Willenhale* c.1310, *Willnall alias Willenhall* 1596). The soil at Willenhale is clay-based and it lies beside the course of the River Thame, which is once again a landscape well suited to *Salix* growth.

As a simplex name:

Church Wilne Db (*Wilne*, *Wiln*(*a*) 1096) PNDb ii 456

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Willenhall Wa (*Wilenhala* late 12th) PNWa 190 (**halh**); Willenhall St (*Willanhalch* 732(15th) S86, S87) Horovitz 2005, 578 (**halh**)

2.80 wīðig OE m. ‘withy (a tree of the *Salix* genus)’

This cognate of OHG *wîda* and ON *víðir* (OED: withy, n.) is the third most common willow-related element in major names, with 18 possible attestations (*Fig.65*). In charter bounds it is attested in 54 charters (LangScape: wiþig) where it generally occurs as a free-standing tree of notable size or description, most often with the OE adj. *hār* ‘hoar’ (S690, S847, S896, S911, S969, S1314, S1380), which could point to this being grey sallow (*Salix cinerea*), with its grey bark and silvery leaves (Johnson and More 2004, 169), or as Hooke (2010, 227) suggests, the whitebeam or ‘hoar withy’.[46] In charters *wīðig* also compounds with *blæc* ‘black’ or *blāc* ‘bright, pale’ (S353, S1165), *grete* ‘great’ (S1165, S1582), and *brād* ‘broad’ (S1584), the latter two suggesting a large tree like the white willow (*Salix alba*), which can grow up to 30 metres tall (Rotherham 2022, 2504). It is also commonly associated with river-related elements such as *brōc* ‘brook’ (S60, S850, S1463, S1598), *ford* (S114, S550), *mere* ‘pool’ (S78, S108, S136, S645, S1272, S1306), *wella* ‘spring’ (S495, S977, S1565), and it is recurrent with OE *bedd* ‘bed’ (S573, S590, S605, S1580, S1587), indicative perhaps of an area where willow withies were cultivated as coppice. *Salix* are a preferred coppice species as they grow relatively quickly, and coppiced *Salix* wood is common in extant medieval buildings (Rackham 2003, 465).

Major names with a *wīðig* specific are almost exclusively topographical: 15 topographical compounds to three habitative. This contrasts the related element OE ***wīðign** (see 2.81) ‘withy, withy copse’, which occurs in major names most often with a habitative generic. EPNE (ii 271) notes that for attestations in ME it can be difficult to distinguish between *wīðig*, OE *wīd* ‘wide’, and OE *wiððe* ‘tie, thong, osier or twig used as a band’, except for when sporadic forms with *withi-* are preserved. A common example of this confusion can be seen in the compounds *wīd-cumb* ‘wide valley’ and *wīðig-cumb* ‘withy valley’ (see 2.80.2).

[46] OE *hār-wīðig* also occurs in the place-name Hoarwithy He (*La Horewythy* 13th) (Ekwall 1960, 243).

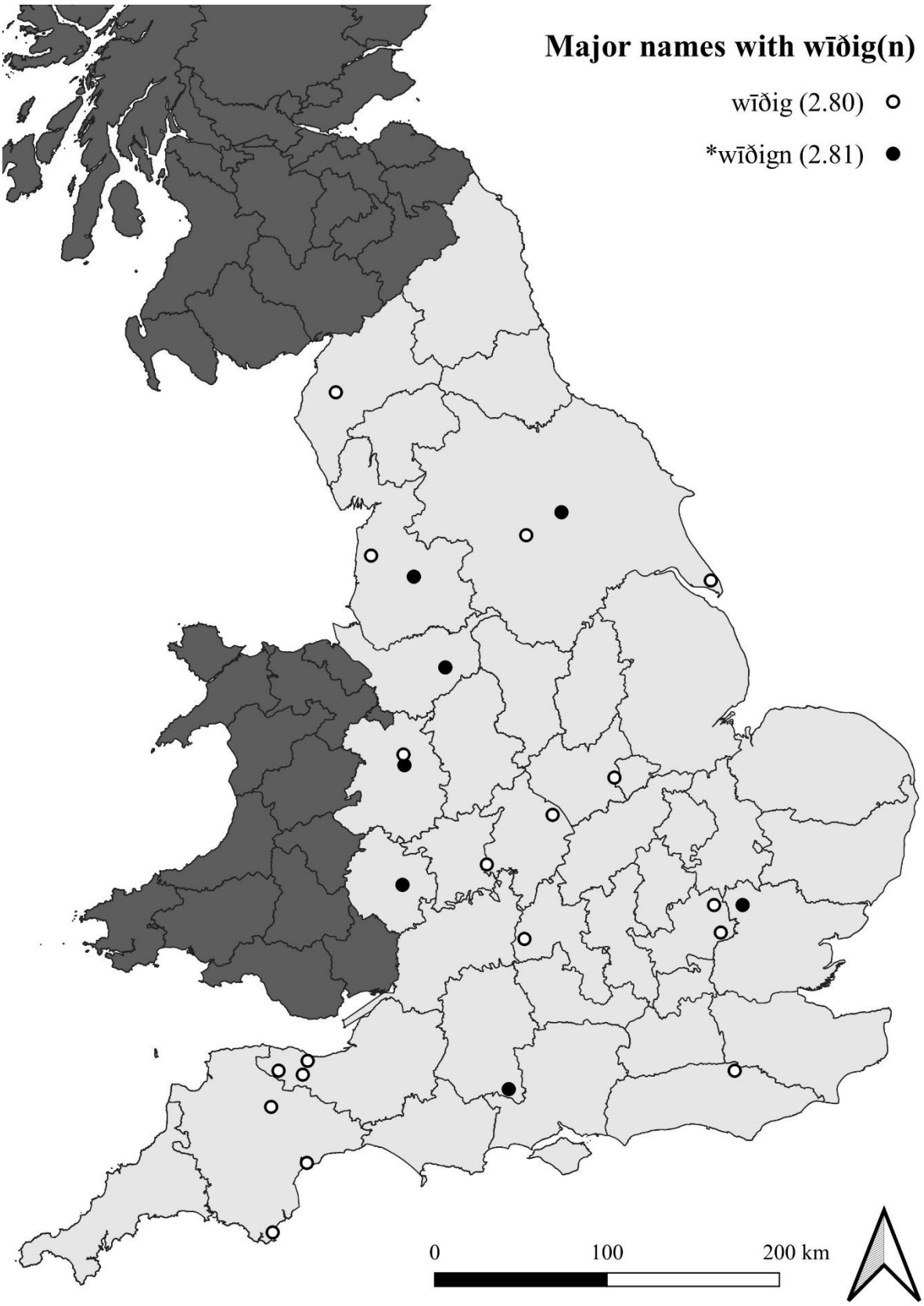


Figure 65: Distribution of *wīðig* and **wīðign* major names attested by 1200

2.80.1 *wīðig* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.80.1.1 *wīðig-tūn*

Weeton YW (*Widetone*, *Widitun* 1086; *Wython* 1138–50; *Witheton*, *Wytheton* 1170–80; *Withiton* 1226) has early forms identical to **wīðign-tūn*, 'withy copse farm/settlement', major names (see 2.81.1.1); however, it has no attestations with medial *-n-* to suggest **wīðign*. Repeated medieval spellings in *With-* also lessen the likelihood of OE *wīd* 'wide'. The present form of Weeton can be attributed to shortening of the original long *-ī-* vowel in compound, with later ME lengthening to *-ē-* and loss of *-th-* (PNYW v 51–2). Weeton YE (*Wideton* 1086, *Witheton* 1314) and Weeton La (*Widetun* 1086, *Witheton* 1249) are small settlements that provide further evidence of a *wīðig-tūn* name type in the north of England (PNYE 23; Ekwall 1922, 153). The recurrence of this compound alongside **wīðign-tūn* (see 2.81.1.1), suggests these may have been 'functional' *tūn* names, indicating places where willow-trees were farmed perhaps as coppice wood.

2.80.2 *wīðig* as the specific in a topographical compound

There are five river-related major names from three *wīðig* compounds that are also attested in charter bounds: *brōc* 'brook' (S60, S850, S1463, S1598), *ford* (S114, S550), *pōl* 'pool' (S645). Widford O (*Widiforde* 1086, *Wythiford'* 1232) has attestations with both medial *-d-* and *-th-*, giving *wīðig* (PNO ii 384), but Widford Hrt (*Wideford*(*e*) 1086; *Wydeford*(*e*), *Widiford* 1205) only has *-d-* forms. Watts (2004, 678) suggests that the specific is unlikely to be *wīd* as the usual compound for a 'wide ford' is *brād-ford*; however, this does remain a formal possibility. The medieval village of Widford O lies immediately east of the modern settlement, just above the River Windrush valley where a bridge crosses the river. Similarly, Widford Hrt is sits above the River Ash valley, although it is at a higher elevation than Widford O and further from the river. Several footbridges now cross the river below the village and the original location of the ford is unclear.

For Great and Little Wytheford Sa, PNSa (i 332) notes that the expected DB spelling for *wīðig* names is *Wide-*, which is true of the two manors of Little Wytheford (*Wideford* 1086) but not Great Wytheford (*Wicford* 1086); however, there is 'no systematic differentiation in later sources' (*Withiforde* 1155–62, *Wiford* 1199, *Wytheford'* 1242). Great and Little Wytheford now lie on either side of the River

Roden slightly beyond the river valley. In the nineteenth century, the bridge that crossed the river near Great Wytheford was at a place called *Wytheford Ford* (1880s OS: SJ 56963 18852).

Withybrook Wa (*Wythibroc* 12th, *Widebroch* 12th, *Widebroc* 1190, *Withibroc* 1205) has attestations that suggest *OE wīðig-brōc*. PNWa (121) cites a seventeenth-century account that gives a willow-etymology for this name and confirms the existence of willows bordering the stream. Withypool So (*Widepolle* 1086, *Widipol* 1185) has a twelfth-century attestation with a second medial *-i-*, that could suggest *wīðig*, although under the OE inflectional system of the south-west could also be *wīdan*. The settlement sits on the north bank of the River Barle, where it converges with the smaller river Pennycombe Water. Here the generic *pōl* may have referred to an area where water pooled, perhaps at the confluence of these watercoursex, or as EPNE (ii 68) suggests, to a 'stream or rivulet', perhaps a reference to branching watercourses on the floodplain. In the nineteenth century there were three weirs that begin on the south bank below the town where the river is redirected through a network of channels (1880s OS: SS 84659 35473). It is unclear whether this is an entirely manmade feature or exploitation of the natural characteristics of the river.

Major names with a *wīðig* element are the only *Salix* names to compound with a 'valley' generic. As valleys generally have watercourses and *wīðig* is also common with river-related generic elements, it is possible *wīðig* was used primarily of those species found most often in the riparian zone rather than of woodland trees (see 2.67.3 **salh**, 2.76.1 ***wācor**, 2.78.3 ***wilig**). The first of these, Wythop Cu (*Wizope* 1195, *Wythorpe* 1260) from OE *wīðig-hop*, 'withy valley', has forms showing twelfth-century AN realisation of *-ð-* as /z/ (PNCu ii 457) and thirteenth-century confusion with OE/ON *þorp*. Wyddial Hrt (*Widihale* 1086, *Widahale* c.1180) is OE *wīðig* with dat. *hale* from *halh* 'nook of land'. The topography suggests this name derives from the shallow valley where the land slopes gently towards the River Rib, south-west of the modern settlement.

Widdicombe Ho D, Withycombe So, and Withycombe Raleigh D, are probable *wīðig-cumb*, 'withy valley', compounds. Widdicombe Ho D (*Wodiacom*(*m*)*a* 1086, *Wydecumb'* 1242, *Wythecumb* 1249) has a corrupt DB form but other attestations support a *wīðig* etymology (PND i 333). Withycombe So (*Hwithicumb* 1065(c.1500)

S1042, *Widicumbe* 1086, *Withicumbe* 1225) has diagnostic early forms in *wīðig* with typical DB *Wid-*. Early forms of Withycombe Raleigh (*Widecoma* 1086, *Widecumbe* 1238) are spelt *Wid-*; however, later attestations consistently suggest *wīðig* (*Wythycomƀ*, *Wythicomƀ* 1334; *Withycomƀ* 1340). Place-names from *wīðig-cumb* are often difficult to distinguish from OE *wīd-cumb*, 'wide valley', names. LPN (108) identifies seven examples of *wīd-cumb* in place-names, all with recurrent forms in *Wid-*: Whitcombe Do (*Widecome* 939 S391), Whitcombe Wt (*Witecome* 1086, *Wydecoumb* 1287–90), Whitcombe W (*Widecome* 1086), Widdecombe in the Moor D (*Widecumb*(*a*) 1270), Witcombe Gl (*Wydecombe* 1220), Widcombe So (*Widecume* c.1100, *Widecumbe* 1236) and North and South Widcombe So (*Widecomb* 1330) (Ekwall 1960, 517).

From the thirteenth century Withyham Sx has spellings consistently suggestive of *wīðig-hamm* (*Wideham* 1095, *Wythyhamme* 1266, *Wydyhamme* 1271), which PNSx (ii 370) explains as 'withy enclosure' or that *hamm* referred to the land between the two streams at this site: Mill Brook and King's Standing Gill. The settlement is on a hill above the floodplain and Dodgson (1973, 28) suggests that the *hamm* could refer either to the raised ground jutting into the floodplain, or the floodplain itself surrounded by higher ground. This latter suggestion is favoured by LPN (50) and would probably best suit the ecological preferences of willow as a riparian species.

For Withcote Le (*Wicoc*, *Wicote* 1086; *Withcoc* 1199; *Witcoc* 1209), PNLe (ii 283) notes later confusion with *cot* 'cottage' and suggests the generic was OE *cocc*, meaning a 'hillock growing with willows', perhaps reference to the small round hill at the base of which lies a pond and the modern settlement (2022 OS: SK 79757 05278). Watts (2004, 527) proposes the alternative meaning 'a clump (of trees)', which is certainly also a possiblity. Further evidence for *Salix* species in the area comes from the neighbouring Sauvey Castle Le (*Saluéé* 1211, *Salvee* 1229), which is either *salh-weg*, 'road through the willows' or *salh-ēg* 'willow land surrounded by water' (PNLe ii 283).



Figure 66: OS 2023 (1:50 000) map of Withyham Sussex, showing the surrounding hills, valleys, and watercourses

Witheridge Hundred D has early forms that alternate between spellings with *Wi-*/*Wy-* (*Witric* 1084, *Wiriga*, *Wirig*' 1086, *Witherigge* 1175) and *We-* (*Wetrige* 1084, *Wetrige* 1167, *Weđeringe* 1168). PND (ii 376) prefers OE *weðer-hrycg*, with gen. pl. *weðra*, 'ridge of the wethers/sheep', but Anderson (1939a, 79) states that 'considering the preponderance of forms in *i*', this is likely to be *wīðig*. The village of Witherage, where the hundred court was likely held, sits beside the Little River Dart where *Salix* species may have grown. The recurrence of meeting-places named in relation to trees could support a *wīðig* etymology (see 2.1.2 **āc**; 2.72 **þorn**), although these tend to be with a tree-name as the generic element rather than the specific (excepting Hasler Do).

2.80.2.1 *wīðig-lēah*

Weethley Wa (*Withelea* 714(16th) S1250, *Withelega* 1086, *Wiðelega* 1175) and Withiel Florey So (*Wiðiglea* 737(12th) S254, *Withiglea* 961(10th) S697) look to be OE *wīðig-lēah*, 'withy open woodland', names. The first attested form of Weethley is in a sixteenth-century copy of an earlier document that is likely spurious (eSawyer), but

the DB form and subsequent attestations support a *wīðig-lēah* etymology. These settlements are not situated in a recognisable riparian landscape – Withiel Florey lies in a dry valley in the Brendon Hills district of Somerset and Weethley sits on a shallow-gradient hill – suggesting these may have been a different species of *Salix* than those of river-related *wīðig* names. The open woodland landscape of a *lēah* would favour species like goat willow (*Salix caprea*) that thrives as an understorey tree in damp habitats and in open woodland areas with full sun (EAFTS 170). It is a species that also prefers calcareous soils like those found at Weethley Wood to the west of Weethley (2022 OS: SP 04760 56264). The mention of *Salix* species with a *lēah* generic could indicate coppice woodland, as *Salix* was a popular coppice species in the medieval period.

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

Weeton La (*Widetun* 1086) Ekwall 1922, 153; Weeton YE (*Wideton* 1086) PNYE 23; Weeton YW (*Widetone*, *Widitun* 1086) PNYW v 51–2

As the specific in a topographical compound:

Widdicombe Ho D (*Wodiacom*(*m*)*a* 1086, *Wythecumb* 1249) PND i 333 (**cumb**); Widford Hrt (*Wideford*(*e*) 1086) PNHrt 210 (**ford**); Widford O (*Widiforde* 1086) PNO ii 384 (**ford**); Withcote Le (*Wicoc*, *Wicote* 1086) PNLe ii 282 (**cocc**); Witheridge Hundred D (*Witric*, *Wetrige* 1084) PND ii 376 (**hrycg**); Withybrook Wa (*Wythibroc* 12th) PNWa 121 (**brōc**); Withycombe So (*Hwithicumb* 1065(c.1500) S1042) Watts 2004, 691 (**cumb**); Withycombe Raleigh D (*Widecoma* 1086) PND ii 600 (**cumb**); Withyham Sx (*Wideham* 1095) PNSx ii 370 (**hamm**); Withypool So (*Widepolle* 1086) Watts 2004, 691 (**pōl**); Wyddial Hrt (*Widihale* 1086) PNHrt 188 (**halh**); Wytheford, Great and Little Sa (*Wideford*, *Wicford* 1086) PNSa i 332 (**ford**); Wythop Cu (*Wizope* 1195) PNCu ii 457 (**hop**)

With **lēah**:

Weethley Wa (*Withelea* 714(16th) S1250) PNWa 227; Withiel Florey So (*Wiðiglea* 737(12th) S254) Watts 2004, 691

2.81 *wīðign OE ‘withies (a tree of the *Salix* genus), withy copse’

A possible collective noun deriving from OE **wīðig** ‘withy, willow copse’ (see 2.80) and surviving as WMids dialect *withen* ‘willow, common osier’ (EDD: within, sb.). It is difficult to distinguish from the OE adj. **wīðigen*, ‘growing with withies’, but as EPNE (ii 271) notes, adjectives rarely occur with OE *tūn*, which is the generic element with the majority of prospective **wīðign* major names discussed here.

2.81.1 **wīðign* as the specific in a habitative compound:

2.81.1.1 **wīðign-tūn*:

Widdington Ess (*Widintunā* 1086; *Withitone*, *Withitun* 1123) and Withington He (*Widintvne* 1086; *Wit*(*h*)*inton*(*e*), *Wyt*(*h*)*inton*(*e*) 1228–1355) have DB forms with *-in-* indicating the compound **wīðign-tūn* (PNEss 545; Coplestone-Crow 2009, 230). The eleventh-century spellings of Widdington YW (*Widetone*, *Widetona* 1086; *Witintun* 1160; *Withington*, *Wythington*, *Wythyngton* 1198) and Withington Fm W (*Widetone* 1086; *Widintona*, *Widentona* 1209) suggest OE *wīðig-tūn*; however, from the twelfth- and thirteenth-centuries forms with *-in-* and *-ing-* indicate either the interchange with **wīðign* or an original **wīðign-tūn* compound. Withington Sa has an unusual DB form (*Wientone* 1086), but attestations from the twelfth century have both medial *-n-* and *-th-*, again suggesting **wīðign* (*Widintona* c.1155, *Withentunie* c.1160–72, *Wythington* 1271–2) (PNSa i 318–9). Lower and Old Withington Ch were probably originally one estate that is attested from the twelfth century, with forms that once again indicate a **wīðign-tūn* etymology (*Widinton*, *Widenton* 1185; *Withinton*, *Withenton* 1210) (PNCh 88–9; 92–3).

Coates (2012, 220) suggests that *wīðig*(*n*)*-tūn* names have a ‘strikingly northern’ distribution ‘with one outlier in Essex’; however, with the inclusion of probable **wīðign-tūn* names in Herefordshire and Wiltshire, the distribution no longer appears so northerly biased (*Fig.65*). The topography at these sites is similar and typical of a habitat in which *Salix* species could be found. They are adjacent to floodplains or watercourses, with soil that is generally damp and clay-rich, although the actual

settlements sit on drier loam or sand-based soil. There is some similarity between the topography at **wīðign-tūn* settlements and the more recurrent **wilig-bȳ* named sites (see 2.78.2.1; 2.78.2.2), although **wīðign-tūn* settlements tend to be in areas with moister soils and closer to watercourses that experience seasonal flooding. It is possible **wīðign-tūn* was a functional *tūn* name, used to indicate riparian areas where *Salix* species were farmed as an abundant and natural resource (see 3.7 for more detail).

2.81.2 **wīðign* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Withnell La (*Withinhull* 1160; *Whithenhull*, *Whythen*(*e*)*hull*, *Withenhull* 1246) lies in a narrow valley south of Pike Lowe, which is a prominent hill that gave rise to the generic OE *hyll* (Ekwall 1922, 132; Watts 2004, 691). Twelfth- and thirteenth-century attestations suggest the specific **wīðign*, 'withy, willow copse hill' or the OE adj. **wīðigen*, 'hill growing with withies'. The River Goit skirts the modern settlement on the north side of Withnell hill and was likely a habitat well-suited to *Salix* species; however, Withnell moor at the top of the hill comprises poorly-draining clay-rich soil that perhaps provided a non-riparian upland habitat for a suitable species like goat willow or grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) (Rotherham 2022, 2498).

As the specific in a habitative compound:

With **tūn**:

> Widdington Ess (*Widintunā* 1086) PNEss 545; Widdington YW (*Widetone*, *Widetona* 1086) PNYW v 7; Witherington Fm W (*Widetone* 1086) PNW 397; Withington He (*Widintvne* 1086) Watts 2004, 691; Withington Sa (*Wientone* 1086; *Widintona* c.1155) PNSa vi 318; Withington, Lower and Old Ch (*Widinton*, *Widenton* 1185) PNCh i 88

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Withnell La (*Withinhull* 1160) Ekwall 1922, 132 (**hyll**)

2.82 *ylmen OE adj. 'growing with elm-trees, made of elm'

A proposed but otherwise unattested OE adjective and parallel form to OE ***elmen** 'growing with elm-trees' (see 2.31), which derives from OE **elm** 'elm' (see 2.29).

2.82.1 **ylmen* as the specific in a topographical compound:

Ilmington Wa is first attested in a tenth-century charter as *Ylman dunes gemære* 978(11th) (S1337), in the eleventh century as (*æt*) *Ylmandune* 1000 and with later medieval *I-* spellings (*Ilmedona* 1168, *Imeldona* 1178). PNWa (304–5) suggests these forms represent the lost adj. **ylmen*, from OE *ulm* 'elm', which is evidenced by a single attestation of the compound *ulm-trēow* (BosworthToller: ulm-treów, n.). Watts (2004, 330) appears to prefer an etymology from **ylme*, perhaps with an oblique *-an* ending to explain the earliest forms. See *elm-dūn* (2.29.3; *Fig.38*).

As the specific in a topographical compound:

> Ilmington Wa (*Ylman dunes gemære* 978(11th) S1337) PNWa 304 (**dūn)**

3. Chapter Three: The toponymy of timber

3.1 Introduction

Wood was an essential component of the early medieval built environment. Large timber planks and beams were vital for the construction of buildings, ships, and bridges, and smaller wooden staves had a variety of uses, including but not limited to tool handles, hurdles, fencing, weapons, and fuel. Few extant wooden buildings survive from this period and our knowledge of the tree-species used to create wooden structures is largely limited to the information provided by archaeological surveys, where conditions have allowed for the survival of organic material. While archaeology is invaluable to understanding the appearance of wooden buildings and the species preferred for their construction, the picture is often incomplete, and limited to the locations and contexts of excavation sites. Early medieval records describing how timber trees were selected, cultivated, and felled are rare, as are references to the cultivation of woodland for the purposes of timber production. It was not until after the Norman conquest that woodland was systematically recorded as a commodity and the details of woodland management techniques and ownership begin to regularly appear in legal documents.

Place-names and charter bounds often provide oblique references to how woodland was managed, and which tree-species were the most important sources of wood. Past scholarship has considered the significance of these sources when exploring the early medieval built and wooded environments, including but not limited to Bintley and Shapland (2013), Blair (2007, 2018), Coates (2012), Gelling (1984), and Hooke (2010, 2011) (see 1.2.3.1: The toponymy of timber: research context), but there is still much room to explore what place-names can tell us about timber.

This chapter examines place-name compounds that provide compelling evidence of timber production and trade, particularly those with the OE element *timber* 'timber' and the recurrent compound OE *āc-tūn* 'oak farm/settlement', which has previously been a subject of onomastic interest (see 1.2.3.1: Gelling 1992 123–4; PNSa i 1–7; Watts 2004, 2–3; Coates 2012 1.2.3.1) but only tentative suggestions have been made as to the significance of these names as timber-producing settlements. This study builds upon this past discussion and takes an interdisciplinary approach by considering how climate and geology may have influenced cultivation of timber

woodlands and also by addressing the themes of functionality and accessibility to and from these sites for the purposes of trade. Of particular interest is the proximity of *āc-tūn* settlements to economic centres and places of specialised industry, which can tell us something about the ownership and perceived value of timber woodland during the period.

3.2 Identifying early medieval woodland management techniques

The OE word *timber* appears to have had a variety of meanings. Much like the common contemporary sense of the word, it described wooden material used in construction, especially wood that had been trimmed or shaped for purpose (OED: timber, n.1) but also sometimes appears to have indicated a building, structure, or house (Gardiner 2012, 231; Shapland 2013, 27), presumably because most of these were made of wood. Indeed, the typical OE verb (*ge*)*timbran* or (*ge*)*timbrian*, 'to construct' or 'to erect', literally meant 'to timber', regardless of the building material used (Howe 2008, 49).

Smaller wood was usually produced through the process of coppicing, which involves cutting a tree at its base to stimulate new growth from the stump (Rotherham 2022, 2503), resulting in shoots of an easily workable size that are generally straight and flexible (*Fig.67*). Pollarding is a similar practice, but the trunk of the tree is cut higher up to keep young shoots beyond the reach of grazing livestock and deer (Rackham 2003, 3–5). The word coppice, which can refer both to the product and the process of coppicing (OED: coppice, n.; coppice, v.2.1), derives from ME *copīs*, itself a derivative of OFr *copëiz* (MED: copīs, n.). However, the HTE makes it clear that there appears to have been no specific word for coppice or coppicing in OE.

The following discussion examines various words found in place-names and charter bounds that appear to have indirectly referred to coppice and pollard wood. It is important to note that because OE *timber* had a range of meanings it is possible it also referred to wooden material produced through the process of coppicing or pollarding. For the purposes of this study the words timber and coppice will be used in their modern senses to refer to large and small wooden material respectively, with the acknowledgement that this distinction may not best reflect the early medieval use of these words.

The technique of coppicing was widely used in early medieval England. Many native species can form a viable coppice stool: including alder, ash, aspen, birch, elm, hazel, lime, maple, oak, and species of the *Salix* genus. Archaeological evidence suggests woodland has been coppiced in Europe for thousands of years. An early medieval English example comes from the excavation of two weirs found beside the River Trent at Colwick Nt, both made of hurdles that used hazel, alder, and *Salix* poles (Hooke 2007, 49–50). Roman records state that woodland known as *silva caedua* (Lat. *caedere* 'to cut') or *silva minutia*, was cut annually for firewood and stakes (Grocock 2010, 24–5). This latter term appears in DB in opposition to *silva pastilis* 'wood pasture', and although *silva minutia* woods were generally smaller than *silva pastilis*, they took up more land overall suggesting this was a more important kind of woodland (Rackham 1990, 54, 119; Peterken 1993, 24).



Figure 67: A coppice stool and the poles produced by coppicing at Bradfield Wood, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2019)

References to coppice woodland are likely made in place-names and charter bounds. OE *stapol* 'post, pillar' and OE **stæf* 'staff, stave, pole' in compound with woodland-related generics like *lēah* 'open woodland' (Stapeley Ch, Stapley Ha; Staveley Db, La, YW), *grāf* 'grove' (Staplegrove So), and *hyrst* 'copse' (Staffhurst Sr), may have indicated coppice sites. Coppice may also be described in the OE compounds

stapol-tūn and *stæfer-tūn*, for which Baker (2013, 90) notes at least eighteen examples: including Stapleton (Cu, Gl, Le, So, YN, YW) and Staverton (D, Gl, Nth, Sf). These are possibly examples of 'functional' *tūn* names (see 1.2.3); denoting settlements where coppicing was the primary activity. OE *stocc* 'tree-trunk, stump' is also recurrent with *lēah* (Stockleigh D and Stockley Du, W) and *tūn* (Stockton Ch, Du, He, Nf, Sa, W, Wo, YN; Stoughton Le, Sr, Sx; Staughton Bd) and *stocc* perhaps referred to the coppice stool from which stems were cut on a rotational cycle. EPNE (ii 156) suggests *stocc-tūn* could have meant 'an enclosure or farm made of stocks' or that some may derive from OE *stoc* 'place, religious place, secondary settlement'. While formally possible, the importance and ubiquity of coppice wood weighs in favour of 'stump' in the most cases.

It is likely that coppice woodland was often protected from livestock and deer by means of enclosure. Rackham (1990, 45) notes 93 instances in charter bounds of the words *wyrtruma* 'plant strength' and *wyrtwala* 'plant wall', which appear to have been linear features on the edge of woodland. These are likely early evidence of woodbanks, which were a common enclosing feature of medieval woodland. Banham and Faith (2014, 202) suggest the *wyrtruma* noted in the tenth-century bounds of Chieveley Brk (S558) could have enclosed the woodland for the purpose of coppicing. At least 12 charters mention a *wyrtruma* in relation to woodland or were adjacent to a *lēah* 'open woodland', *grāf* 'grove', or *sceaga* 'small wood, copse'. The proximity of a woodbank and a *lēah* is a convincing suggestion of coppice woodland, as the process of coppicing involves cutting back vegetation on a regular cycle; thus reducing the canopy cover and creating a temporary clearing. Grocock (2010, 36) notes from personal experience that the process of coppicing is much easier in young regularly managed woods with space between stools, rather than older overgrown woodland.

From the twelfth century most coppice woodland appears to have been the property of private landowners, likely a response to the increase in population and changes in land ownership (Williamson et al. 2017, 23–4). An example of legal protections afforded to coppice woodland in the medieval period comes from the inquests held in 1282 and 1326 for damage done to coppice stools by charcoal burners in the Forest of Dean that had impeded new growth and thus economic interests (Foard 2001, 56). Concern for the management and legal protection of woodland resources is poorly represented in

the early medieval period, but it is possible the presence of *wyrtruma* could be an indication of protected coppice woodland.

The word pollard is not attested until the sixteenth century and relates to ME *poll* 'to remove the head, top' (OED: poll, v.II.2.a). OE *coppede* 'having the top cut off, polled; or perhaps rising to a top or head' was an adjective used to describe pollarded trees (DOE: coppede, adj.). In place-names it also sometimes referred to buildings, with the sense of these having a peaked roof (EPNE i 107). Charters provide early evidence of *coppede* trees: like the *coppedan ac*, 'copped oak' at Stoke by Hurstbourne Ha (S359) and the two *coppedan ðorne*, 'copped thorn', examples at Alwalton Hu (S566) and Battersea Sr (S645). Medieval and later-attested place-names also refer to pollarded trees, such as Copdock Sf (*Coppedoc* 1195) another 'copped oak' (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 36); Cowbeach Sx (*Coppetebeche* 1261: PNSx ii 481) from *coppede-bēce*, 'copped beech', Coppa Dolla D (*Coppadaller* 1660: PND ii 522) from *coppede-alor*, 'copped alder', and the 'copped thorn' names: Copthorne Hundred Sr (*Copededorne*, *Copedorne* 1086: PNSr 67), Copthorne Wood Hrt (*Copthornfeld* 1433: PNHrt 83), and *Coppethornhull* 1349 in Lyddington Ru (PNRu 279). There are also references to pollarded woodland at Coppet Hill He (*Coppyngwode* 1372, *Coppodewoode* 1413: Coplestone-Crow 2009, 105) from *coppede-wudu*, Copster La (*the Coppedhyrst* 1422: PNLa 51) and Copthurst YW (*Coppedhirst* 1307: PNYW ii 236) from *coppede-hyrst*, and possibly Copgrove YW (*Copegrave* 1086, *Coppegraua*, *Coppegrave* 1166: PNYW v 90) from *coppede-grāf*. Although pollards are now generally thought of as hedgerow and parkland trees they were once a common sight in woodland, the legacy of which can be seen at sites like High Beech in Epping Forest with its ancient beech pollards (*Fig.25*).[47]

[47] Kitson (1995, 95–7) has suggested that *heafod stocc* in charters could refer to places where trees have been pollarded, i.e. a stump cut at head height. There are only thirteen examples, and these are geographically limited, mainly to Berkshire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire, with some outliers in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Somerset. Kitson suggests this could be due to it being a regionally specific dialect term for pollard; however, Reynolds (2009, 224) prefers an etymology indicating a place where the heads of criminals were displayed after execution.

It cannot be assumed that a 'copped' or 'polled' tree was always a pollard by modern standards,[48] as it is unclear how much of the tree was cut and it is possible some of these would now be thought of coppice stools. For beech, pollarding can be assumed as this is not a tree that fares well when coppiced, but the distinction is not so clear for a species like alder, which takes well to both forms of management. The production of staves will be referred to from here on as coppicing, with the acknowledgement that the means of producing this wood may not have conformed to modern expectations of the practice.

3.3 Evidence of timber in the historical and material records

Prior to historical accounts of oak plantations in the sixteenth century, there is no definitive evidence that trees were planted for timber in England (Farjon 2017, 24). This suggests that the acquisition of timber would have required the exploitation of a naturally occurring resource, but it does not mean medieval woodlands were uncultivated. Even without active planting of trees it is possible the management of timber and coppice woods included the removal of unwanted trees or shrubs, which could in effect have created largely single-species woodland (Peterken 1993, 21–22); this, coupled with the extraction of trees for use as timber, may have created an environment not that different from the deciduous plantations of later centuries. A probable lack of planting emphasises the importance of considering natural distributions of tree-species when thinking about centres of timber production, as the qualities of some trees and the properties of their wood appear to have been particularly prized in the early medieval period. To identify the species that were most valued we must turn to the historical and material records.

Documentary evidence of the rights to, and management of timber woodland is rare from the early medieval period. One example is provided by a ninth-century charter concerning Seckley in Wolverley Wo, which grants the removal of firewood, the right to pasture 70 pigs, and *huncuique anno unum roberum ad ædificium*, 'each year one oak for building' (S212). Another is a tenth-century charter that provided *ælc geare fiftig foðra and an hund of þæs cinges acholte*, 'each year one hundred and fifty fothers from the king's oak wood', to the bishop of Rochester (S885). Later records of

[48] Traditionally pollards are cut above the browsing line at about 3 metres in height (Rotherham 2022, 2503).

timber production are more frequent, corresponding with an increase in record keeping and administrative control of land from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thirteenth-century accounts for Exeter Cathedral record that the timber for building work came from Chudleigh, about 14 km south-west. Simpson (1998, 42) suggests that the timber was likely sawn and worked in situ to make transporting it easier, as was the case in later centuries. It could be significant that Chudleigh is a *lēah* place-name and although records of this as a wood-producing site are not contemporary with the first attestations of the name (*Ceddelegam* c.1150, *Cedele* 1161), it seems reasonable to suggest woodland management took place there.

Trade records and estate accounts document the sale and purchase of timber at markets in the later medieval period. A timber market at Ipswich Sf was recorded from the fourteenth century (*le Timbermarket* 1327–8, *Timber Market* 1674) and the thirteenth-century account rolls of the sacrist for Ely Cathedral note that most building materials 'were purchased from other landowners or on the open market at local fairs' (Simpson 1998, 42). Additionally, the oak timbers used to build the fourteenth-century octagonal lantern were imported from the Baltic region. The trade in Baltic oak began in the thirteenth century due to the excellent quality of this timber and the ease with which it could be worked (Rackham 2003, 462).

Archaeological evidence suggests that domestic structures were built of wood, although where there was a lack of appropriate timber available, some were made of earth sod and on rare occasion of stone (Gardiner 2012, 231; Shapland 2013, 22; Blair 2018, 84–5). Many ecclesiastical buildings were also initially made of timber, although extant evidence for these is rare (see Greensted church below; *Fig.71*), as rebuilding in stone was common in the later Anglo-Saxon period (Christie et al. 1979, 107; Shapland 2013, 30). Blair (2018, 404) suggests the legacy of ecclesiastical woodworking can be observed in the architecture of some eleventh-century stone churches, particularly All Saint's church in Earls Barton Nth and St Peter's church in Barton-upon-Humber Li, where decorative 'panelling, arches and saltire crosses in low-relief strip work' evoke timber framing (*Fig.68*).



Figure 68: The Anglo-Saxon tower at All Saints' church, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (J. Treacher, April 2022)

Of all native tree species used for their timber, oak (*Quercus robur* and *Quercus petraea*) is the most commonly found in the historical and archaeological records. Rackham (1990, 24–5) notes that 'in practice, timbers are surprisingly interchangeable: there are few uses for which a particular species is really necessary', yet oak has consistently been the 'commonest and most expensive timber tree' for over a thousand years. He states that of all the timbers he has analysed in extant medieval buildings, ninety-five percent are oak, although he does note that this 'is biased by the greater durability of oak and its preponderance in churches and other very visible structures' (Rackham 2003, 459). Oak is a remarkably durable and long-lived tree and produces wood with similar qualities. It weathers well, is resistant to liquids, and is generally slow to decay due to tannins and other substances in the wood. Oak is particularly appreciated for its straight grain in modern carpentry (Eaton

et al. 2016, 161), a characteristic presumably also much valued by medieval woodsmen. Selecting wood with a straight grain was important in early medieval England, as most structural timbers would have been cleaved and hewn with an axe, which would split the timber along the grain; knots in the wood may therefore have rendered the timber unusable (Goodburn et al. 1993, 84; Gardiner 2012, 233).

Survival of early medieval timber is uncommon and complete timbers from which tree-species can be identified tend most often to be found at waterlogged anoxic sites. The excavation of a ninth-century settlement at Westgate Street in Gloucester found that structural timbers, such as beams, stakes, and planks, were generally made of oak with one plank made of ash (Heighway et al. 1979, 165; 197) and oak appears to have been the 'chief structural wood used for all substantial timbers' at Coppergate in York (Hooke 2010, 159). The timber arcade found at Vintner's Place on the London waterfront was made of well-preserved oak posts and planks, with ash (and perhaps willow) pegs. Preservation was so good that archaeologists were able to suggest the timbers derived from woodland in south-east England, that the main post was cut from a medium-sized oak standard about 80–100 years old and that the trees were felled between 956 and 979 CE (Goodburn 1993, 78–91). Other excavations of rural settlements in the London area from the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period (ca. 500–800 CE) have identified finds made of oak, elm, alder, and possibly willow or poplar, although oak is overwhelmingly the most common. Of thirty samples of wood unearthed, twenty-four (80%) have been identified as belonging to the *Quercus* genus (Cowie and Blackmore 2008 212–14).

St Andrew's church at Greensted Ess provides a rare surviving example of an early medieval timber structure (*Fig.69*): dendro-dated to 1063–c.1100 (Tyers 1996). The north, west, and south walls of the nave comprise thirty-five original split-log oak planks, curved on the outside and bevelled flat on the inside and originally sunk into the ground in the 'earth-fast' style (Christie et al. 1979, 102). Although there are later and more complete in situ examples of medieval timber structures – Great Coxwell tithe barn with its thirteenth-century timber roof (*Fig.70*), the oak-framed early fourteenth-century spire of Salisbury Cathedral and the late fourteenth-century oak hammer-beam roof of Westminster Hall – St Andrew's stands as an exceptional testament of early medieval timber construction techniques and provides tangible evidence for the importance and durability of oak as a building material in early

medieval England. Gardiner (2021, 37) has argued that stave construction may have been rarely used because of the quantities and careful preparation of timber that was required, although he acknowledges that this may be biased by the poor survival of timber structures. Toponymic evidence provides further potential examples of this type of construction in the south-east. The name Stockenchurch Bk (*Stockenechurch* c.1200) derives from OE *stoccen-circe*, 'church made of posts', and two tenth-century charters concerning land in Middlesex describe the *ealde stoccene sancta andreas cyrciean*, 'old post-built St Andrew's church' (S670; S1450), which was dedicated to the same saint as the church at Greensted. Considering the labour-intensive process and possible expense of stave construction it is perhaps unsurprising that these few English examples are ecclesiastical in context.



Figure 69: A view of the north wall and part of the west wall of Greensted Church, Essex, showing the curved outer side of the split-log oak planks (J. Treacher, July 2021)

Other uses of timber were in the infrastructure that helped to shape, exploit, and cross the waterways that laced the landscape. Due to its durability and resistance to rot, oak

was a favoured species for the creation of structures that were partially or entirely submerged in water. Sharpened oak stakes were used to secure the sides of a mid-tenth-century canal that connected Glastonbury Abbey to the River Brue (Bond 2014, 177; Hollinrake 2014, 237), and Hooke (2014, 49–50) discusses the composition of two pre-Conquest weirs discovered beside the River Trent at Colwick in Nottinghamshire, which used oak posts with interconnecting hurdles of willow, alder, and hazel. Timber bridges and wooden causeways are well-evidenced in the archaeological record and where they have been uncovered seem primarily to have been constructed of oak wood. Harrison (2004, 102–3) details the discovery of two early medieval 'timber girder' oak bridges at Brigham YE and Norwich Nf and a 'Laftwork Caisson' bridge with wooden box piers made of oak timber at Hemington Le.



Figure 70: The thirteenth-century roof timbers of Great Cowell Barn, Wiltshire (J. Treacher, March 2022)

Early medieval charters and place-names can also shed some light on the wooden infrastructure used for crossing waterways. It is not clear from this evidence which tree-species were used for building bridges or marking river crossings, but it is possible through comparison with archaeological evidence to glean some understanding of the construction techniques that were employed and how wood may have been selected for purpose. OE *bēam* is the root of Modern English beam. It was a general word for 'tree' but could also indicate a 'piece of timber' or 'post' and, in a riparian setting, simplex OE *bēam* could mean 'bridge' (VEPN i 63). The earliest example of a 'Beam Bridge' compound is from the fourteenth century, but simplex uses of OE *bēam* or ME *bem* appear earlier, with 'bridge' added later by way of explanation (Baker 2013, 84). These were likely to have been the simplest type of bridge, with the trunk of one or perhaps a few large standard trees placed over a river to provide a relatively crude means of crossing.

Another type is the *stocc bricge*, 'log bridge', found in a tenth-century charter for Selsey Sx (S403) and recurrent in place-names throughout the country (Stockbridge Cu, Do, Gl, Sx, W, We, YW). This was presumably a crossing made either from vertically sunk or horizontally laid logs, again probably produced through the felling of timber trees. In contrast, a *þel bricge*, 'plank bridge', a type frequently attested in charters (S230, S405, S535, S872, S877, S890, S951) and in the three Thelbridge names in Devon (PND i 119; ii 395, 412), suggests a more complex construction. Harrison (2004, 105) proposes that these were causeway bridges, like the one discovered at Ravning Enge near Jelling in Denmark, which consisted of oak posts supporting a plank-built causeway. These types of bridge may have been necessary for crossing larger watercourses, where the length of a single trunk would not suffice. Baker (2013, 84) suggests that the three charter references to a *brydenan bricge*, 'plank bridge', (S60, S609, S1598) probably took a similar form. Then there is the less commonly referenced *stapol bricge*, 'post bridge', that appears in two tenth-century charters (S360, S591) and was perhaps a river crossing marked by posts or poles, most likely produced through coppicing or pollarding. It is possible that a bridge of this type took a similar form to the eighth-century Mersea Island causeway in Essex, which consisted of as many as 3,000–5,000 oak piles driven into the estuary bed that were packed between with dirt and grit to make a roadway (Harrison 2004, 104). It is also feasible that the recurrent place-name compound Stapleford (Ca, Ch,

Ess, Hrt, Le, Nt, W), defined as 'ford marked by post(s)' (Ekwall 1960, 439; Watts 2004, 572), was a similar type of construction, with posts marking the route of the crossing.

A vital woodland industry in the medieval period was charcoal production, which would burn at higher temperatures than raw wood and was the main source of fuel in the salt, pottery, and metal working industries. Important salt-producing sites like Droitwich and Nantwich used large quantities of charcoal, probably produced from surrounding woodlands, to boil and evaporate the naturally occurring salt-water at these locations (Hooke 2010, 141). According to Rackham (2010, 101), many of these 'industrial woods' were important enough to be recorded in Domesday Book. An example of this is seen in the Domesday Book entry for Bromsgrove in Worcestershire, which was required to provide three-hundred cart-loads of wood every year to the salt-works at Droitwich. The pottery industry was also a voracious consumer of wood. Excavations at Tipping Street in Stafford, Barnett's Mead in Sussex, and Clacket Lane in Surrey have unearthed an abundance of charcoal from early medieval pottery kilns. Analysis has revealed that well-seasoned oak was the preferred fuel for these kilns, and it has been suggested that these branch-sized pieces were perhaps a by-product of timber manufacturing (Dodd et al. 2014, 78–79).

Iron bloomeries were usually located in places with ready access to iron ore and wood for charcoal, as transporting both was difficult and cost inefficient (Sapoznik 2016, 44). In Domesday Book it is recorded that the estates of Corby and Gretton within Rockingham Forest had iron bloomeries (*ferrarii*) in 1066 and possessed large areas of taxable woodland (*silva*). Brigstock parish in Rockingham Forest also appears to have had a large tract of woodland in Domesday Book that belonged to the Crown. The radiocarbon dates of charcoal found in burning pits at Brigstock Great Park suggest this was a site of iron production from as early as the twelfth century (Foard 2001, 86). All charcoal samples from the site were from well-carbonised oak, that was produced in controlled conditions with a diameter of 50–100 mm and is suggestive of coppice management (ibid, 87).

The name Brigstock may also imply that this was a coppice site. It is first attested in the eleventh century (*Brikstok* 11th, *Bricstoc* 1086, *Brichestoch* 1095–1100) with forms that look to be variations of either OE *birce-stoc*(*c*), 'birch stump', with early r-

metathesis, or OE *brycg-stoc*, 'bridge settlement' (Watts 2004, 87). PNNth (159) favours a *birce* etymology and compares the early forms of Brigstock with the development of Brick Mere in Ramsey Hu (*Birchemere* 1146, *Birkemare* 1248–57), which displays *birce* forms with later r-metathesis (*Brichmerpoles* c.1350). Birch is a common woodland tree, it coppices well and is often a primary component of oak woodland (Peterken 1993, 141). It is also a pioneer species of open land and known to succeed the clearing and precede the regeneration of other species such as oak and ash. As discussed above, oak appears to have been a coppice species at this site from at least the twelfth century and the name Brigstock could indicate that oak and birch coppice existed here centuries before the archaeological evidence suggests. Many of the minor names in Brigstock parish allude to woodland management; two of the earliest attested may refer to the coppice industry: Stubby Stiles (*Stubbyngstighele* 1337), with OE *stigel*, 'stile/steep ascent by the place that has been stubbed' (PNNth 160), and Cherry Lap (*Schelleye* 13th; *Schelleylappe*, *Shenelelappe* c.1300), which probably contains the OE compound *sciene-lēah*, 'bright clearing' (cf. Shenley Bk, Hrt), indicative perhaps of coppice woodland. Two later names confirm the presence of coppice here in the seventeenth century: *Treshams Coppice* 1642 and *Royal Coppice* 1651.

3.4 Timber place-names in early medieval England

The element OE *timber* (ON *timbr*) is recurrent in English place-names attested during the medieval period (by 1500). There are sixteen names with *timber* as the specific element and five with a *timber* generic (*Fig.71*). Five of these appear to have indicated places with timber-built structures. Newtimber Sx (*Nitimbre* 960(1291) S687, *Niuembre* 1086) looks to derive from the OE compound *niwe-timber* (PNSx ii 286), presumably with *timber* giving the sense 'building' and indicating a recently built timber structure; for although *niwe* could denote recently acquired land, it is most often found with words for dwellings, such as OE *ærn* 'house, building', OE *bōðl* 'dwelling, house', OE *castel* 'castle', OE *hall* 'hall, manor house' and OE *hūs* 'house' (EPNE ii 51). There are two other examples of this compound in Sussex: Nyetimber (*Nitimbre* 1275, *Niwetimbr'* 1279) in Pagham parish and Nyetimber Fm (*Nitinbreha*(*m*) 1086, *Niutimbre* 1283) in West Chiltington (PNSx i 95, 175); and a lost *Newtimber* Ha (*Neutibrige* 1086) in Warblington parish (Coates 1989, 123).

Headform	County	First attestation	Generic element	Reference
Birchtimber Hill	Cu	*Birktymbre* 1339	ON *timbr*	PNCu i 105
Newtimber (lost)	Ha	*Neutibrige* 1086	OE *timber*	Coates 1989, 123
Newtimber	Sx	*Nitimbre* 960(1291) S687	OE *timber*	PNSx ii 286
Nyetimber	Sx	*Nitimbre* 1275	OE *timber*	PNSx i 95
Nyetimber Fm	Sx	*Nitinbreha*(*m*) 1086	OE *timber*	PNSx i 175
Timberdine Fm	Wo	*Timberden, Tymberden, Timberdene* 1150	OE *denu*	PNWo 163
Timberhanger	Wo	*Timbrehangre* 1086	OE *hangar*	PNWo 344
Timber Hill	Sr	*Tymberhulle* 14th	OE *hyll*	PNSr 114
Timberhulle	Dd	*Timberhulle* 1330	OE *hyll*	PNDb ii 294
Timberhurste	Do	*Timberhurste* 14th	OE *hyrst*	PNDo iii 274
Timberlake	Wo	*Tymberlacke* 1316	OE *lacu*	PNWo 40
Timberland	Li	*Timberlunt*, *Timbrelund* 1086	ON *lundr*	Cameron 1998, 128
Timberley	Sx	*Tymberle* 1415	OE *lēah*	PNSx i 125
Timberscombe	So	*Timbrecūbe* 1086; *Timbrescumba* 1176	OE *cumb*	Ekwall 1960, 474
Timberwood Hill	Le	*Tymberwod*(*e*) 1280(1451)	OE *wudu*	PNLe vii 58
Timber Wood	Sa	*Timbirwod'*, *Timberwod* 1271–2	OE *wudu*	PNSa iii 245
Timperley	Ch	*Timperleie* 1211–25	OE *lēah*	PNCh ii 31
Timsbury	Ha	*Timbreberie* 1086; *Timberbury* 1252	OE *burh*	Coates 1989, 163
Timsbury	So	*Temesbare*, *Timesberie* 1086	OE *burh*	PNSa
Tymberyerde	St	*Tymberyerde* 1487	OE *geard*	PNSt i 152
Tymburhale	St	*Tymburhale* 1305	OE *halh*	Horovitz 2005, 550

Figure 71: Table of 'timber' place-names attested by 1500

These names are all situated around the South Downs in southern Hampshire and Sussex, suggesting they were perhaps a localised name-type.

Timsbury Ha (*Timbreberie* 1086, *Timberbury* 1252) derives from OE *timber burh*, 'timber fortified site'. Coates (1989, 163) expresses uncertainty about the meaning of Timsbury, stating that the topography is not typical of a prehistoric hillfort and only an archaeological investigation might be able to clarify whether this was a 'fort', a 'manor house', a '(place) built of timber', or a site 'marked with a timber building'. Baker (2013, 89–90) suggests that the first element of Timsbury may have described 'the material of construction of a burh or "stronghold"' and that although timber palisades were probably ubiquitous at fortified Anglo-Saxon sites, Timsbury was perhaps situated in an area where burh generally referred to 'pre-historic earthworks or Roman walled towns'. These few references to timber buildings in place-names are probably due to the prevalence of timber as a building material, which would render pointless its recognition as a defining characteristic, except perhaps where it contrasted a neighbouring stone or earth-built structure.

There are six woodland-related generic elements that compound with *timber* in eight place-names (*Fig.71*). These names were probably given to places where good timber trees could be found, and it is possible these were sites managed for the purposes of timber production. Timsbury So (*Temesbare* 1086, *Timberbarewe* 1200) derives from OE *timber-bearu*, 'timber small wood/grove' (Ekwall 1960, 474; Parsons and Styles 1997, 66). Watts (2004, 618) suggests that the site of an 'unrecorded camp' a mile east may account for the confusion with burh in Domesday Book (*Timesberie* 1086). Comparable examples of *bearu* with a specific element indicating a woodland resource are Shebbear D (*Sceft beara* 1050–73), with OE *sceaft* 'shaft', possibly reference to coppice woodland, and perhaps also the compound *hæsel-bearu* in Haselbury Bryan Do and Haselbury Plucknett So, which may have been places where hazel was coppiced.

Timberley Sx (*Tymberle* 1415) and Timperley Ch (*Timperleie* 1211) have the generic OE *lēah* 'open woodland'. These could have been clearings or areas of sparsely-treed woodland that were brought about naturally or by design, or perhaps open agricultural land left fallow that was claimed by pioneer species forming secondary woodland. A

lēah could have provided the space for cutting and trimming staves as well as the light for rapid regrowth. It is possible *timber-lēah* sites were places where both timber and coppice wood were produced in mixed management woodland, with timber trees left to grow among coppice stools. This appears to have been a common silvicultural practice in medieval England (Rackham 1990, 63) and continues to this day (*Fig.72*).

Birchtimber Cu (*Birktymbre* 1339) is unusual as it is the only medieval timber name that compounds with a tree-species element. This looks to be an Anglo-Scandinavian name, with origin in or influence from ON *birki* 'place growing with birch', and possible replacement of earlier OE *birce* (Fellows-Jensen 1985, 104). It is unlikely *timber* here referred to a building made of birch wood, as this was not a species usually used for structural purposes. If instead *timber* is intended in the general sense of wooden material, it is possible this was a coppice site, as birch coppices well and is common in the region. Peterken (1993, 171) notes that it is difficult to establish a tradition of birch woodland in Britain as it is usually a 'transitory phase' that follows the felling of species like oak, ash, or lime. Perhaps this was originally a mixed timber woodland where the pioneering birch had become dominant in the wake of felled trees.

There appear to be no *timber* place-names with a *tūn* generic. Shapland (2013, 27) suggests this is because the universality of wooden buildings would render pointless the use of a compound that means 'farm or settlement made of timber'; however, considering the importance of timber as a resource, this does not account for the absence of timber-tūn names meaning 'settlement where timber is produced, worked, or traded'. Given that early medieval people appear to have been intimately familiar with the properties and value of different types of wood, it is likely that other compounds, like those denoting a particular species of timber tree, were used to indicate sites where timber was produced. This suggestion is explored in greater detail below (see 3.5).

In some names, the element OE *wudu* 'wood' may also have indicated sites where timber could be had, rather than 'wood(land)'. Baker (2013, 89) suggests that *wudu* settlement-names generally referred to woodland either spatially or functionally. An example of the latter type may be the OE compound *wudu-tūn*, which is recurrent in medieval place-names: Wotton (Bk, Gl, Sr), Wootton (Bd, Brk, Do), or Witton (Nf,

Nth, YN) from the earlier OE *widu*. As *tūn* is an element that was rarely applied to settlements within woodland, *wudu-tūn* names should perhaps be considered to have been 'functional' (see 1.2.3), with a specialized purpose, in this instance maybe for the production and management of timber (Gelling and Cole 2000, 258; Williamson et al. 2013, 220). The OE compound *wudu-hām*, 'wood village/estate' in the name Woodham (Ess, Sr) may have had a similar meaning, with *hām*, instead of *tūn* as the latter was a less common element in the south-east (Watts 2004, lxii). It is also probable that some *wudu* names were indicative of woodland used for a specific purpose; for example, those qualified by a tree-species known to be a particularly desirable source of wood like Ashwood (Nth, St) and Hazelwood (Db, Sx, YW), or with a qualifying element denoting worked timber or coppice like Timber Wood Sa (*Timbirwod'*, *Timberwod* 1271), Borthwood Wt (*Bordovrde* 1086, *Bordwode* c.1222) from OE *bord* 'board', and Sparwood Sx (Sparwode 1314) from OE *spær* 'spar, spear, rafter'.



Figure 72: Potential timber trees left standing in a recently coppiced area of Chalkney Wood, Suffolk (J. Treacher, April 2019)

3.5 Timber production at *āc-tūn* settlements

Oak was most important timber species in medieval England, but there are no examples of an OE *āc-timber*, 'oak timber', compound in place-names. It has been suggested that the recurrent OE compound *āc-tūn*, literally 'oak farm/settlement', is an example of a 'functional' *tūn* name (see 1.2.3) that indicated sites where oak timber was produced. In PNSa (i 1–4), Gelling tentatively suggests the Shropshire examples could have been places that 'had special functions in the processing or distribution of oak timber'; she notes that as timber is a cumbersome material and difficult to transport in its raw form, it is likely the shaping of timber was done in situ. Coates (2012, 220) expands upon Gelling's suggestion and considers whether the compound *āc-tūn* may have been applied to settlements with 'a specialized function within the broader economy', proposing that the Shropshire examples were at least of local significance and perhaps provide some evidence of regional commercial interests (see 1.2.3.1 for more in-depth discussion of past scholarship).

There are 26 *āc-tūn* names in England that are first recorded during the medieval period (by 1500). The general modern spelling for *āc-tūn* is Acton, but some examples like Aikton Cu (*Aiketona* c.1200, *Ayketun* c.1204), Akton in Spofforth YW (*Aykton* 1218, *Eketon* 1242), and Eckton in Otley YW (*Ectune* 1030(11th), *Eketon* 1280) show the influence of ON *eik* (EPNE i 149; Watts 2004, 4). The distribution of these names is largely north-westerly. Shropshire is the county with the most *āc-tūn* names, eight in total, then Cheshire and Yorkshire with five, Worcestershire and Lancashire with two, and one each in Cumberland, Gloucestershire, Middlesex, and Staffordshire. Although use of the place-name element *tūn* generally tended to favour a more westerly distribution, with fewer examples in the south-east (Watts 2004, lxii; Gelling 2010, 129), this does not explain the regional specificity of *āc-tūn* names. When compared with other tree-species *tūn* names, which are spread much wider, it is clear the *āc-tūn* distribution is significant (Fig.73). Even when compared with *æsc-tūn* names, which are also more common in the west, it is apparent the distribution of *āc-tūn* names is much more sharply defined (*Fig.78.*).

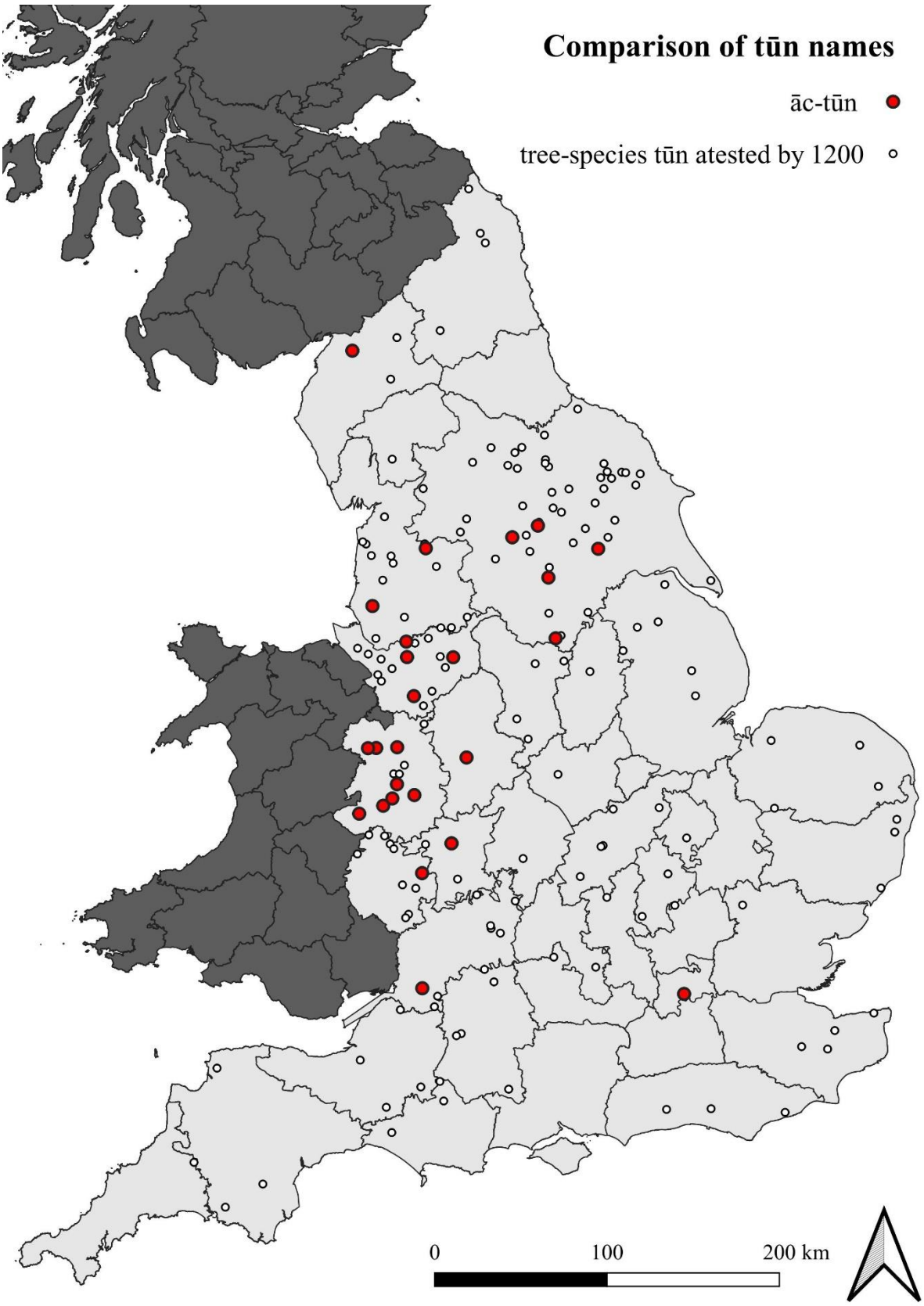


Figure 73: The comparative distribution of *āc-tūn* names and all other *tūn* major names attested by 1200 with a tree-species specific

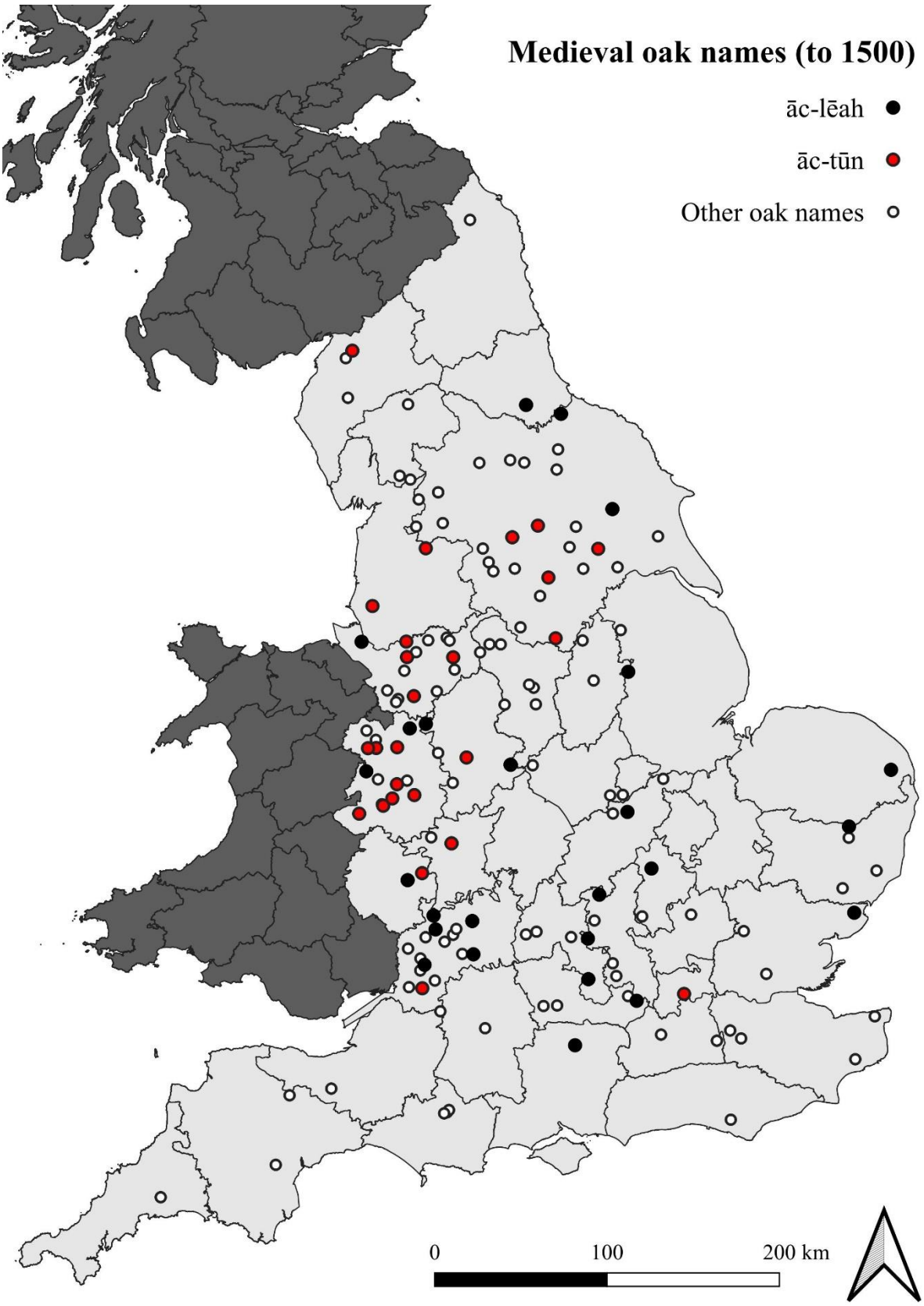


Figure 74: The distribution of *āc-tūn* and *āc-lēah* names attested by 1500

It is not possible to attribute the distribution of *āc-tūn* settlements merely to the presence of oak in the landscape, as comparison with the general distribution of medieval oak names demonstrates that oak was a common species throughout England. The compound *āc-tūn* accounts for around 16.77% of the corpus of 155 medieval oak names attested by 1500. OE *āc-lēah*, 'oak open woodland', also has 26 names accounting for 16.77% of the corpus (see *8.2*). While the frequency of these compounds is similar, their distribution is noticeably different (*Fig.74*). Although *āc-lēah* sites are more common in southern counties, they do occur in the north and in areas where *āc-tūn* names proliferate; thus, their distribution cannot simply be attributed to regional differences in terminology and instead suggests that they represented characteristically distinct types of site. It appears that use of the compound *āc-tūn* was not simply motivated by regional linguistic trends, or by the climatic or ecological preferences of oak, but that a variety of cultural, linguistic, and ecological influences were at play.

It is notable that unlike other tree-species, oak has no Anglo-Scandinavian equivalent to *āc-tūn* names. ON *bȳ*, like OE *tūn*, is a common place-name element that indicated a 'settlement' or 'village'. It is associated with Scandinavian settlement and the introduction of ON to the English toponymicon and is therefore most common in Yorkshire, the east Midlands, and East Anglia (VEPN ii 104). As a generic element, *bȳ* is found in compound with words for apple (OE *æppel*, ON *epli*), ash (OE *æsc*, ON *askr*), lime (OE/ON *lind*), thorn (OE *þyrne*), and willow (OE *salh*, OE **wilig*), but not OE *āc* or ON *eik*. In general, oak place-names are common throughout England (*Fig.74*), with a number found in the East Midlands and Yorkshire, so the absence of *āc-bȳ* names does not appear to be due to a lack of recognition of this species in the region.

It is possible the compound *āc-tūn* developed as a lexical word in OE – potentially in the north-west where it is most recurrent – and was used for general reference to a common feature. A parallel example of this is perhaps the compound *æppel-tūn*, which appears in OE literature and place-names to have been a non-species specific word for 'orchard' (see 1.2.3.2; 4.4). A lexicalized *āc-tūn*, with the implied meaning 'site where oak is farmed', may have been a term synonymous with the production of prolific and good quality oak timber or coppice wood, and as an early medieval toponym was perhaps a label given to sites where this resource was managed and

worked. This could explain the frequency with which *āc-tūn* was used in place-names, the rare variation of spelling in early and modern forms, and possibly the absence of *āc*(*eik*)-*bȳ* place-names in the Anglo-Scandinavian context of the north and east of England.

Differing ecological conditions may have affected the quality or usefulness of oak timber in north-west when compared with other parts of the country, which could explain the focus on a timber-producing industry in this region. If this is the case, we should expect *āc-tūn* sites to have been locations with environmental characteristics well-suited to the growth of oakwood. Except for Acton Mx, the majority of *āc-tūn* settlements are situated in what Rackham (2010, 72) calls the Oak-Hazel province, which largely corresponds with the extent of paleozoic geology in the north and west of England. This is an area traditionally dominated by oakwood, which is woodland where the majority species of both standard trees and underwood is oak. The proliferation of this woodland type has led to the popular title 'western oakwoods' (Peterken 1993, 141). These oakwoods thrive on the acidic, less fertile soils of the region, which result from higher rates of rainfall and the subsequent leaching of soil nutrients: an environment well-suited to oak but more hostile to less hardy species (Rackham 2010, 286). Higher rainfall, along with inter-species competition for light and nutrients, could have encouraged the swift upward trajectory of oaks, producing straight stemmed trees with few knots and shakes. It is possible, therefore, that oak in this region was particularly valued as a timber tree, producing good quality wood that was easy to split along the grain and shape to purpose. Farjon (2017, 60; 65) notes that in the east of England the growth of oak-trees is generally slower with narrower annual increment rings. This may have resulted in oak woods less suited to the production of structural timber and perhaps explains why places named as oak timber producing sites are more commonly seen in the west.

Oakwoods are 'an extreme woodland type, very sharply defined in terms of soil' and are usually found on acidic well-drained sand or loess soils with a low clay content (Rackham 2003, 285). When examined on a case-by-case basis *āc-tūn* sites do tend towards sandier and more acidic soils: around 56% are situated on sand-based soil, with the rest on loam and none in a clay-rich environment (*Fig.75*). These figures can be compared with the soil conditions of oak-named sites in general and with the next most common compound *āc-lēah*, both of which appear to have a more varied

tolerance of soil types than *āc-tūn* settlements, with more examples on loam and clay-based soils and a lower percentage of sites found on sand. The geology at these settlements also tends to have a more varied acidity, with some lime-rich alkaline soils and a lower percentage of very acidic soils than *āc-tūn*.

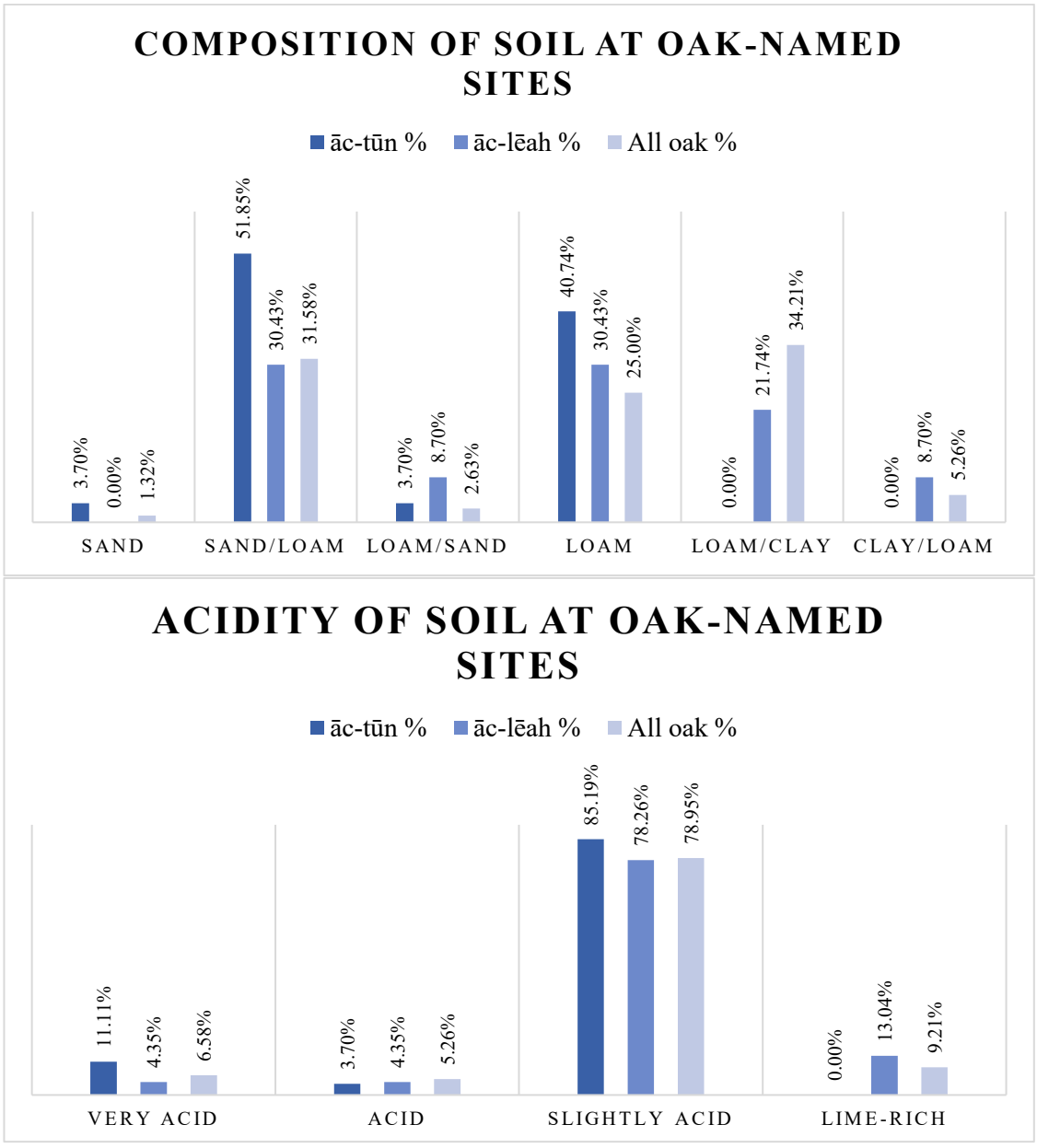


Figure 75: A breakdown of soil composition and acidity at *āc-tūn* named sites compared with *āc-lēah* and oak names in general

3.6 *āc-tūn* settlements and the early medieval economy

Due to its bulk and weight, the felling and transportation of large quantities of timber must have required technical skill and detailed knowledge of the surrounding landscape. If *āc-tūn* settlements were indeed places of timber production and possibly sites where timber was worked for particular building projects or for trade, we should expect them to have been well connected to estate centres or places of commerce. It is therefore necessary to consider the significance of *āc-tūn* sites within the wider economic landscape.

Domesday Book can provide insight into the size and administrative importance of some of these *āc-tūn* settlements. Of the 14 *āc-tūn*s recorded, some, like Acton Ch (48 households) were relatively large: according to the Hull Domesday Project this placed Acton Ch within the largest 20% of estates. However, most appear to have been small settlements, managed by a tenant lord and possibly part of a network of administration, perhaps under the control of monastic or royal interests. Gelling (1992, 124) notes for the eight Shropshire examples that only three became parishes (Acton Burnell, Acton Round, and Acton Scott) and that in DB the land area of these estates was small. She suggests this was due to the earlier division of large composite estates that resulted in smaller units such as these.

Evidence for the dependent nature of these settlements comes from examining centres of commerce in the medieval period. Only Acton Mx and Acton Burnell Sa are recorded as having held an officially chartered market, but seven Acton minor names were within a parish that was granted the right to hold a market by the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries (Letters 2013). Acton Beauchamp Wo is recorded in a tenth-century charter that grants the restoration of privileges and land to Pershore Abbey (S786), this included three hides of land at Acton Beauchamp, ten hides at Pirton – OE *pirige-tūn* ‘pear orchard’ (see 2.62.3.1) – and sites for vats and furnaces at Middlewich, Netherwich, and Witton in Droitwich. Each represents the Abbey’s access to places established to protect and exploit valuable resources, in this instance timber, fruit-trees, and salt. The minor name The Woottons (*la Wotton* 1316; OE *wudu-tūn*, ‘wood farm’) in Acton Beauchamp parish, is also suggestive of the management of woodland in this area.

Aketon YW (*Ayketun*, *Ayketon* 12th) also appears to have been established as part of a support network for a larger estate, in this case the parish of Spofforth. According to DB, Spofforth was held by the tenant-in-chief and lord William Percy in 1086, who also held the land at Plompton (*Plontone* 1086), a township in the same parish that was named for its *plūme-tūn*, 'plum orchard' (see 2.63.1.1). The early-attested site of Stockeld (*Stochild*(*e*), *Stokhild*(*e*) 1166) in Spofforth, from OE *stocc-helde*, 'tree-stump slope', further contributes to an understanding of the diverse silvicultural practices of this manor.

It is important when examining the significance of *āc-tūn* sites, to consider the connection between *āc-tūn*s and industries that required large quantities of charcoal. This connection is particularly evident in three cases. The parish of Iron Acton Gl was first recorded simply as *Actvne* 1086, but later gained an affix that referred to the iron works established at this site (*Iren*(*e*) *Acton*(*e*) 1248). PNGl (iii 1–2) notes that 'great quantities of iron-cinders' were found in several places within the parish and suggests iron production may eventually have ceased when the woodland resources of the area were depleted, and charcoal could no longer be produced locally. It is unclear when these timber and iron industries developed at Iron Acton. There is no reference to iron in the DB account of the estate, although iron rods (*virgas ferrias*) are mentioned in the record of land and resources held by King William at Gloucester. It is possible the founding of iron bloomeries at Acton can be attributed to a well-established system of managed woodland that was later deemed suitable for charcoal production.

Acton Ch lies approximately 2 kms north-east of Nantwich, which in the twelfth century was a chapelry of Acton (Baggs et al. 1980, 150) and was mentioned under the DB entry for Acton simply as *Wich* 1086, from OE *wīc* 'building, farm, a collection of buildings for a particular purpose'. It was a place famed as a centre of salt production, well-known for the surpassing excellence and whiteness of its salt (PNCh iii 31). It is possible that the management of woodland at Acton contributed to the production of charcoal, which would have been required in large quantities for boiling salt water at Nantwich. This supply of wood may have come from oak coppice or was perhaps the waste wood produced from felled and shaped timber; it is possible both methods were used in a mixed purpose woodland. The ready availability of timber could also have facilitated the trade of salt, for as Blair (2014, 14) suggests, it

is possible log rafts were used to transport salt along waterways and were subsequently broken up for sale as timber when they reached their destination.

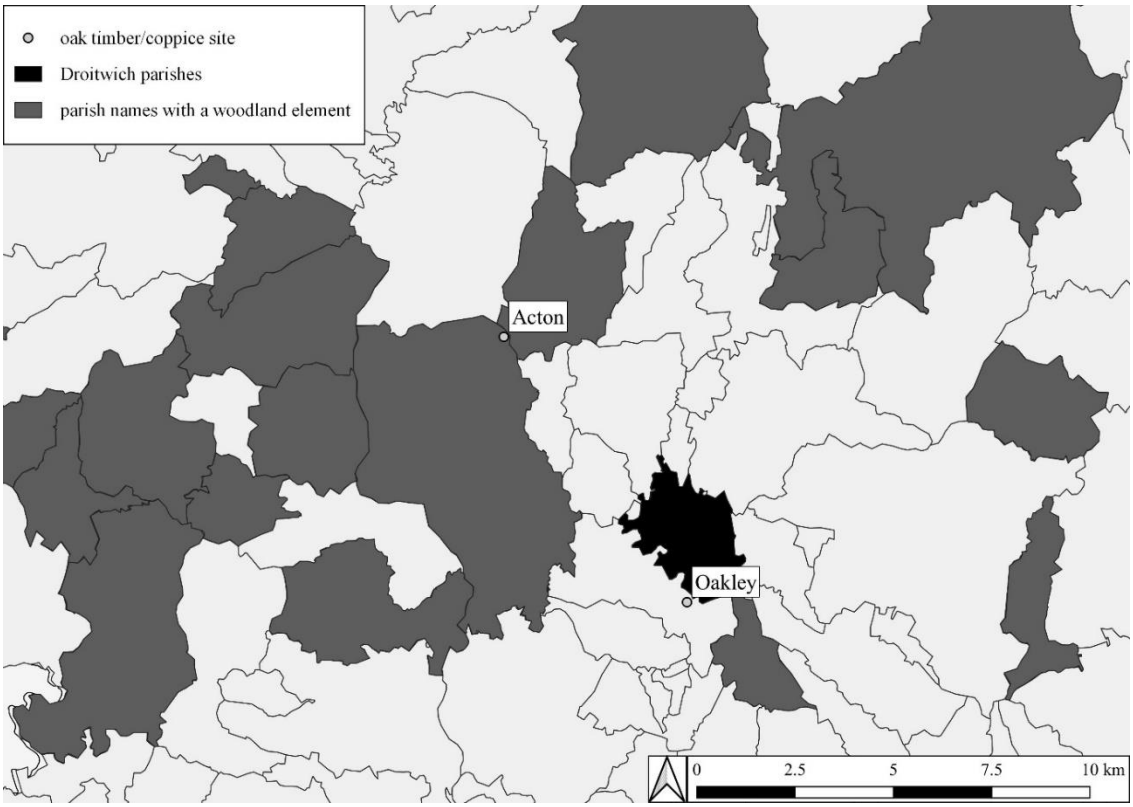


Figure 76: Place-names surrounding Droitwich, Worcestershire, that are suggestive of woodland industry

Acton Wo (*Acton* 1175, *Akton* 1275) is roughly 6 kms north-west of the major salt-producing site of Droitwich, straddling the parishes of Ombersley and Elmley Lovett. In DB, Elmley Lovett was held by Ralph of Tosny, who owned four salt houses at Droitwich, while Ombersley was held by Evesham Abbey, which had one salt house. Acton may have been established as a charcoal-producing site to support the salt industry for one or both of these estates. Hooke (2011, 159) suggests that the woods around Bromsgrove Wo (see 2.23.4) must 'certainly have been managed in some way to supply the saltworks at Droitwich with which Bromsgrove was linked in Domesday Book' and by examining the wider area around Droitwich, it becomes apparent that many of the surrounding place-names refer to woodland that could have been employed in the industry of salt production (*Fig.76*). Managed woodland is suggested not only by the neighbouring parishes of Ombersley (*Ambreslege* 706(12th) S54, *Ambresl*(*e*)*ie* 714(16th) S1250) – 'Ambre's open woodland' (PNWo 268) or 'open woodland of the bunting' from OE *amer* (Watts 2004, 451) – and Elmley Lovett

(*Ælmeleia* 1086) with its reference to elm-trees (see 2.29.3.1), but in the large group of other *lēah* names in this region, including Oakley[49] (*Akelege*, *Acele* 1255) at Salwarpe in Droitwich. There are also the parishes of Bromsgrove, 'broom grove', Grafton Manor and Grafton Flyford, 'grove farm' (PNWo 347; 200), Stockton on Teme to the west, from OE *stocc-tūn*, 'stock farm' (PNWo 80), and Stoke and Bradley parish (*Bradanlæh* c.730(11th), *Bradeley et Stokke* 1376) (PNWo 166), the latter indicating a 'broad clearing' later associated with a managed woodland producing 'stocks'. All are suggestive of an area where managed woodland was well-established and where it is possible coppicing for charcoal was a key industry in supporting the manufacture and trade of salt. There are also two references in charter bounds to a *col-ford* 'charcoal ford' (S1596) that crossed the River Salwarpe and was likely facilitated the carriage of charcoal to Droitwich (Hooke 1990, 397–99; Hooke 2011, 159).

The most cost-effective way to transport heavy low-value goods over long distances was by river or along the coast (Gardiner 2014, 90) and it is likely waterways were often the means by which timber was transported from its site of production to locations where it was used or traded. Although not all *āc-tūn* sites lie beside a large navigable river, some appear to have been part of a river network that would have provided access to centralised commercial settlements. Aughton La (*Achetun* 1086) sits beside the River Lune that flows directly to Lancaster 9 kms south-west, which was originally a Roman settlement and home to an early medieval monastery and a Norman castle (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 4–5). Aighton La (*Actun* 1086) lies at the confluence of three rivers; the River Calder connects it to the monastic site at Whalley and the River Ribble to the large eleventh-century settlement of Preston, to which Aighton was appurtenant under the authority of Earl Tostig in 1066 (Farrer and Brownbill 1912, 2). Aughton YE (*Actun* 1086) is on the oak-named River Derwent[50] that joins the Ouse 12 km south and eventually the Humber estuary from whence goods could be traded along the coast. Acton Trussell St (*Actun* 1002(11th)) sits beside the River Penk, which joins the River Sow at Stafford 5 kms directly north. Stafford was an important DB manor and an early medieval religious site (Baugh et al. 1970,

[49] Hooke (1990, 399) suggests the name of the *āc wudu* mentioned in the bounds of Salwarpe (S1596), survives in the name Oakley.

[50] Deriving from Brit **deruā* 'oak', meaning 'oak river, river where oaks grow' (Ekwall 1928, 123).

136), with a place-name deriving from the OE compound *stæð-ford*, 'ford by a *stæð* or landing place' (Horovitz 2005, 506), suggesting this was a location of trade by both river and road. Acton Bridge Ch (*pons de Actona* 13th) in Weaverham parish (*Wivreham* 1086) lies beside the River Weaver that flows north-west to Runcorn, which was first mentioned as a fortified site in the year 915 (ASC), and which was probably originally positioned at the strategic narrow point of the river estuary (PNCh iii 193), allowing for the control of trade and river traffic. Another probable site of managed woodland in this area is Stockham in Runcorn parish; first recorded as an assart in the late twelfth century (*Stoccum* 12th century, *Stockum* 1288), this name appears to derive from the dative plural of *stocc* 'at the tree stocks' (PNCh ii 179–80), implying it was originally a site of managed woodland before it was repurposed for agricultural use.

It is difficult to evaluate the early medieval road network, as we have no comprehensive map or description of the form it took. It is possible some Roman roads were still in use well into the medieval period, although it is unclear if the course of even major routeways such as Ermine Street and Watling Street were followed directly, or whether parallel routes were established (Harrison 2004, 50–54).[51] Where place-names appear to have referred to Roman roads, like those deriving from OE *strǣt-tūn*, 'farm by the Roman road/paved road', it can be assumed these were recognised routeways. Cole (2012, 244) has found no correlation between *āc-tūn* settlements and Roman roads, stating that there is a 'high probability the distribution of the *āc-tūn*s with respect to routes is random' as less than 8% are within 1 mile of a known routeway; however, she does acknowledge that this assessment is impeded by the limitations of our knowledge of medieval road systems.

Two *āc-tūn* sites in Shropshire are less than 1 km from the route of the Roman road Watling Street (RR6b) that runs from Wroxeter in the north to Leintwardine in the south. These settlements, Acton Burnell (*Actune*, *Æctune* 1086) and Acton Scott (*Actune* 1086), are separated by approximately 16 km of road, along which lie the parishes of All Stretton, Church Stretton, and Little Stretton (all of which relate to the eleventh-century manor of *Stratun*(*e*) 1086), suggesting this routeway was still in use in the early medieval period. Another example is Agden Ch, a township in the parish

[51] See Chapter Four for further discussion on the continuity of Roman road use.

of Bowdon and Rostherne, through which passes Chester Road, a stretch of Roman road that reached from Manchester to Northwich and eventually Chester (RR7a). The nearby Stretford (*Stretford* 1212), from OE *strǣt-ford*, 'Roman road ford' (PNLa 32), now in Greater Manchester, suggests this was a recognised roadway and established river-crossing in the early medieval period. While some *āc-tūn* sites like these appear to have had had ready access to well-established major routeways along which timber could have been transported, for others the connection is not so clearly apparent. It is possible, however, that they existed within a network of small tracks and paths of local significance that could also have facilitated the movement of timber.

Assessing *āc-tūn* settlements within their immediate environment and within the broader medieval economy is not straightforward, but the evidence explored above suggests they were generally situated in areas best placed to exploit the wooded landscape. These specialized timber farms were established where oak woodland is likely to have been naturally abundant and where the climate and geology encouraged the growth of relatively fast-growing and straight standard trees. Silviculture may have further prioritised the growth of standard oaks though a process of undergrowth clearance and selective felling, and it is possible the cultivation of oak coppice and timber trees in mixed management woodland took place at these sites.

The majority of *āc-tūn*s are not recorded until the Domesday survey or after. They appear largely to have been small dependent settlements, possibly established to support the onsite habitation of woodsmen, who would have managed and protected the site and worked to produce structural timber or charcoal. This work was most likely commissioned by local secular or religious authorities and the timber would then either have been used within the community or transported via waterways and roads to larger estates and commercial centres to satisfy tax levies or to be sold for profit on the open market. Some *āc-tūn* sites may have been created to support particular industries or building projects, while others likely arose organically where good oak timber was abundant and accessible.

3.7 Other sites of timber and coppice production: ash and willow

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) was also an important source of timber and coppice in early medieval England. Like oak it can grow rapidly on a wide variety of soils, usually reaching a height of between 20–45 metres within a few hundred years (EAFTS 98).

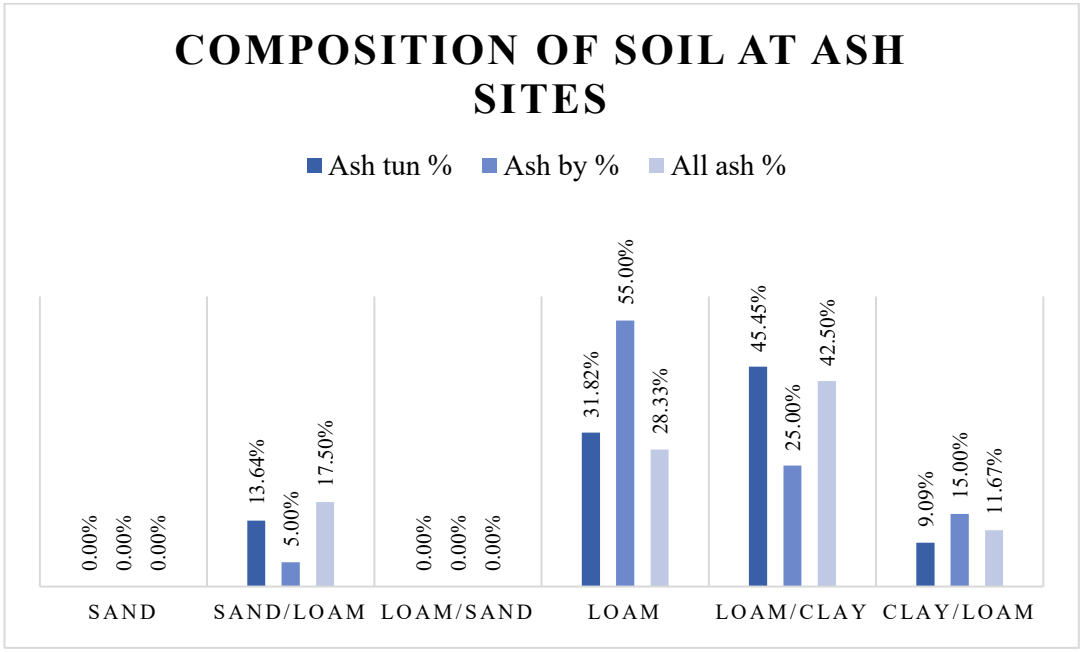
Ash wood is tough, but also flexible and resistant to shock and splintering under pressure, which makes it suitable for structural timber, but also for wheel spokes, ladders, and tool and weapon handles (Watts 2004, 22; EAFTS 99). Ash wood is not as weather-resistant or durable as oak, but if kept dry is capable of lasting hundreds of years in a structural context (Rackham 2010, 227–8). Archaeological evidence suggests it was used less often as a structural timber than oak but in regions where oakwood was not as common it was a popular alternative. Samples of charcoal found at the excavation of a late seventh-century structure at Upper Ribblesdale in Yorkshire were predominantly ash wood, with some alder, hazel, and hawthorn (or blackthorn). The excavators have suggested that ash and alder would have been the best choice to build the roof frame and possibly the walls of the structure, as the pollen record demonstrates that woodland cover was limited, and large timbers were in short supply (Johnson and Russ 2014, 92). In sparsely-treed upland areas like the Yorkshire Dales it is likely that the taller, girthier ash was preferred as a structural timber to underwood species like hazel, alder, and hawthorn.

Ash is historically one of the three most common trees of coppice woodland, alongside hazel and *Salix* species (Williamson et al. 2017, 124). Rackham (2003, 465) determined that in Essex and East Anglia ash coppice was the third most commonly found species in the wattle of extant medieval buildings, after willow and hazel. The natural distribution of ash coincides largely with that of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), which means it is found throughout the British Isles (EAFTS 98). It thrives as a timber tree on fertile, well-drained soils but also grows elsewhere in less optimal conditions as a poorer quality tree (Rackham 2003, 206; Hooke 2010, 203). Ash is tolerant of seasonal waterlogging, so grows well beside rivers and in areas where flooding reduces competition with other less water-tolerant species (EAFTS 99). It is predominantly found in mixed-species woodland, often with maple and hazel and does not form single-species stands as readily as oak but may still dominate a woodland area when the geology is favourable.

There are 22 *æsc-tūn* place-names in England (see *8.1*), which account for 10.57% of the corpus of medieval ash names attested by 1500 (see *8.2*). It is likely this was a compound with a similar meaning to *āc-tūn*, denoting a place where a particular ash was cultivated as timber or coppice wood and where that wood was shaped for purpose. The percentage of *æsc-tūn* names within the ash corpus is notably lower than

that of *āc-tūn*, which accounts for 17.31% of the oak corpus; however, there are also 20 *æsc-bȳ* major names (see *8.1*), which were likely a similar if not identical type of settlement, meaning that a comparable 20.19%% of all ash names may have been places where ash wood was cultivated and worked. When the geology of *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* settlements is compared it is clear both tend to exist in areas where the soil was favourable for ash growth: preferring sites with more alkaline loam-based or clay-rich soils than those where *āc-tūn* settlements are generally found (*Fig.77*).

There is a distinct difference in the distribution of *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* names, the former found almost exclusively in the west of England, excepting two examples in Northamptonshire and one in Sussex, while the latter is found in the East Midlands, Norfolk, and Suffolk, with one outlying example in Westmorland (*Fig.78*). These distribution patterns suggest that use of these compounds was linguistically motivated, with *bȳ* names confined to a region of England where this element is heavily concentrated, rather than indicating settlements with a different primary function. The spread of *æsc-tūn*, although distinctly westerly, is not as sharply defined as *āc-tūn* and it is interesting that there are no examples of the compound *æsc-tūn* in Shropshire where *āc-tūn* names are most common. Only a few examples of ash names border the county at all, perhaps due to the dominance of oakwood in this region and the resulting medieval focus on this species. In contrast, there is a notable absence of oak names in Lincolnshire, suggesting the environment was less supportive of prolific oak-dominated woodland. Ash, which is more tolerant of a wider variety of soils, is much more frequently represented and Lincolnshire is the county with the largest number of *æsc-bȳ* names.



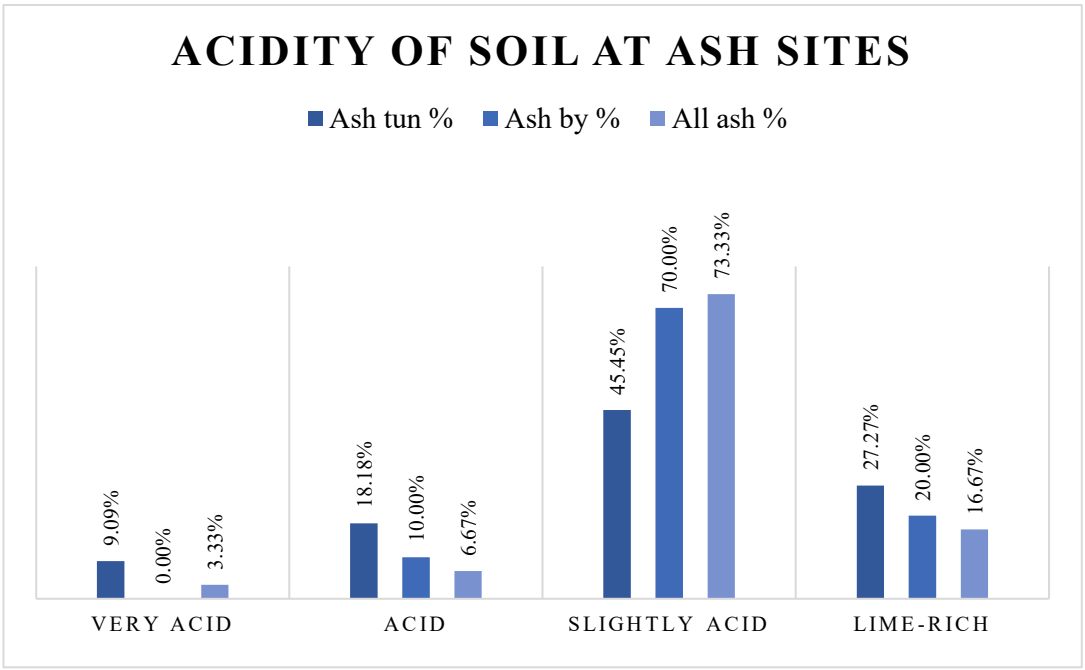


Figure 77: A breakdown of soil composition and acidity for *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* named sites compared with ash names in general

There are no *æsc-bȳ* minor names and all are attested by the end of the twelfth century, with the majority (90%) first recorded in DB. A significant number of *æsc-tūn* settlements are also recorded in DB (64%), with some attested earlier in charter bounds: two examples in Wiltshire, two in Gloucestershire, and one in Northamptonshire (see *8.1*). In DB these settlements vary greatly in size, the largest being Steeple Ashton W with 78 households and West Ashby Li with 73, while the

smallest are Ashby Nf with 5 households and Ashton Gl with 8. It is difficult to compare the size of settlements in DB, as the record is notoriously unstandardized and incomplete; however, it is worth noting that proportionally fewer *āc-tūn* settlements appear in DB (54%) and most are small sites, the largest being Acton Ch, which is recorded as having 48 households in 1086. Sites named *āc-tūn* were often dependent settlements within a larger DB estate, but this appears not to have been the case so consistently for *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* sites. Most were the central settlement within a parish by the eleventh century and four of these estates held their own chartered market by the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Ashby Nf, Ashby de la Zouch, Ashton under Lyne La, Steeple Ashton W: Letters 2013).

Unlike what is seen for *āc-tūn* names, there is no clear connection between sites producing ash wood and the salt and iron industries; however, the importance of possible coppice woodland at some of these locations is illustrated by the inclusion of *silva minutia* in the DB records for Lincolnshire. Examples include Ashby Li which had 3 acres of *silva minutia* in 1086; West Ashby Li that had 6 acres; and Ashby cum Fenby Li with 5, 6 and 9.5 acres belonging to three different lords. There are no *āc-tūn* or *æsc-tūn* settlements in Lincolnshire, so the potential for coppice woodland at these sites cannot be assessed; however, there does appear to have been *silva minutia* at three of the four Willoughby sites in Lincolnshire. Silk Willoughby and Scott Willoughby had 12 and 28 acres respectively, while Willoughby had 60 acres and 120 acres.

Salix-species (sallows, willows, and withies) compound often with the elements *tūn* and *bȳ*. There are eight *wilig-bȳ* major names (see 2.78.2.2) and one probable *selja-bȳ*, which, apart from West Willoughby (*Wlheb'* 1185, *Willigby* late 12th), are all attested by the end of the eleventh century. *Salix tūn* names have more variation, with possible specific elements that include OE *salh*, OE **sele*, OE *wilig*, OE *wīðig*, and OE *wīðign*. There are 25 *Salix tūn* names, with the majority (72%) attested in DB. There are a comparable number of *Salix tūn* and *āc-tūn* names attested by 1500 and *Salix tūn* and *bȳ* names together account for a similar percentage 22.67 of *Salix* names attested by 1500 (see *8.2*).

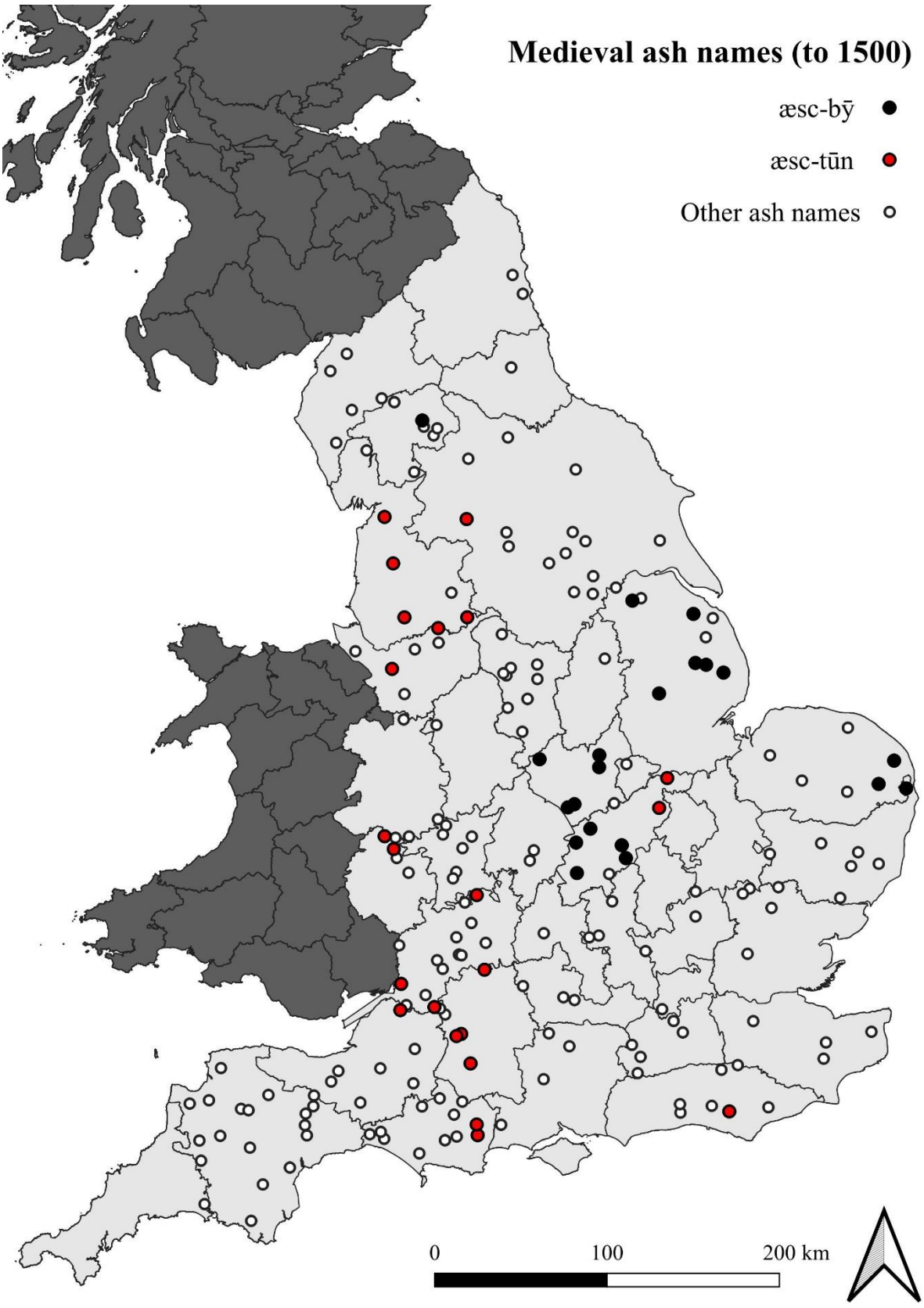


Figure 78: The distribution of *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* names attested by 1500

Salix tūn names are more widespread than *āc-tūn* or *æsc-tūn* names, occurring often in the west and in the Midlands, but also in the south-east and East Anglia. Like *æsc-bȳ* names, *Salix bȳ*s have a distribution that fits the expected pattern of the element *bȳ*, occurring most often in the East Midlands, particularly in Lincolnshire (*Fig.79*). These sites tend to proliferate on clay-rich soils with variable acidity and a high percentage of soil moisture in areas with impeded drainage (*Fig.80*). This is unsurprising as *Salix* species are typically riparian trees that thrive in wetland environments and the majority of *Salix tūn* and *bȳ* settlements are indeed situated beside a watercourse. *Salix* species were arguably a more common genus in the landscape of early medieval England, as the amount of surface water was generally higher in the medieval period until the advent of large-scale land reclamation (Hooke 2010, 230; Rotherham 2022, 2498). This may explain the presence of a potential willow site at places like Wilby Nf where the soil moisture is relatively low and there is no adjacent water source.

When coppiced, *Salix*-species will produce extremely pliable shoots that are suitable for wattle work, fencing, thatching, furniture, and basket weaving. These shoots grow very fast and are often an appropriate length and thickness for harvest within seven to eight years, meaning the rotation cycle for *Salix* coppice is among the fastest of any native species. *Salix* was the species found most often in Rackham's analysis of medieval wattle in East Anglia and Essex, accounting for 30% of all coppiced wood in extant medieval buildings. It has been uncovered in archaeological excavations of buildings (see 3.3) and often in the construction of early medieval weirs and fish traps (Hooke 2007, 49–50), as it can survive relatively well when submerged for long periods in water. It is probable that coppicing was the primary industry at *Salix tūn* and *bȳ* sites and, considering the quantities of *silva minutia* recorded in DB for some of the Lincolnshire Willougbhys, these areas of managed woodland were sometimes extensive.

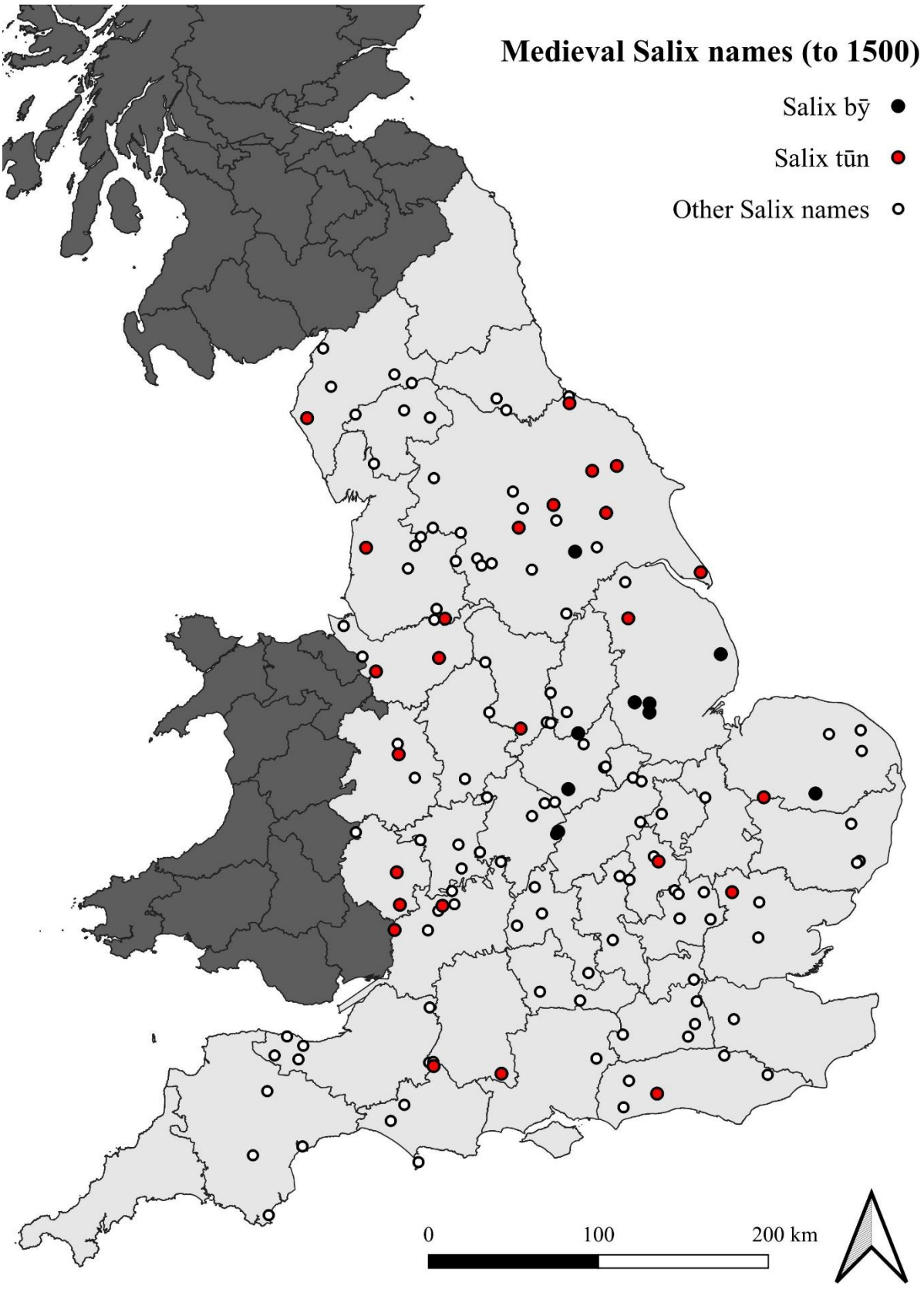


Figure 79: The distribution of *Salix tūn* and *Salix bȳ* names attested by 1500

Recurrent *Salix lēah* compounds were also perhaps sites where coppicing took place. There are 14 *Salix* names with a *lēah* generic that were first attested by 1500, this is 9.33% of the *Salix* corpus (see *8.2*). They are among the earliest attested *Salix* place-names, with Weethley Wa (*Withelea* 714(16th) S1250) and Withiel Florey So (*Wiðiglea* 737(12th) S254, S443) both recorded as *wīðig-lēah* from the eighth century. Place-names deriving from *æsc-lēah* are also numerous (16 names) but they are less significant within the corpus of ash names (7.69%) (see *8.2*). The most common tree element to compound with *lēah* is OE *āc*. As mentioned above, there are 26 *āc-lēah* names, 16 of which are major names first attested by the twelfth century (see 2.1.4.1). These account for 16.77% of the oak corpus, making this the most common oak compound alongside *āc-tūn* (see *8.2*). Although many of these sites were likely managed as coppice woodland, it is also possible some had different functions, especially *āc-lēah* sites, which could instead have been places of pannage or wood-pasture. This was perhaps the case at Eagle Li, which in DB is recorded as having 14 acres of *silva* 'woodland', but for which there is no mention of *silva minutia* and for Akeley and Oakley in Buckinghamshire, which in DB had large swathes of woodland suitable for 800 and 200 pigs respectively. The use of swine render as a measure of taxable woodland perhaps suggests that pannage was traditionally more important than the production of oak timber in this region.

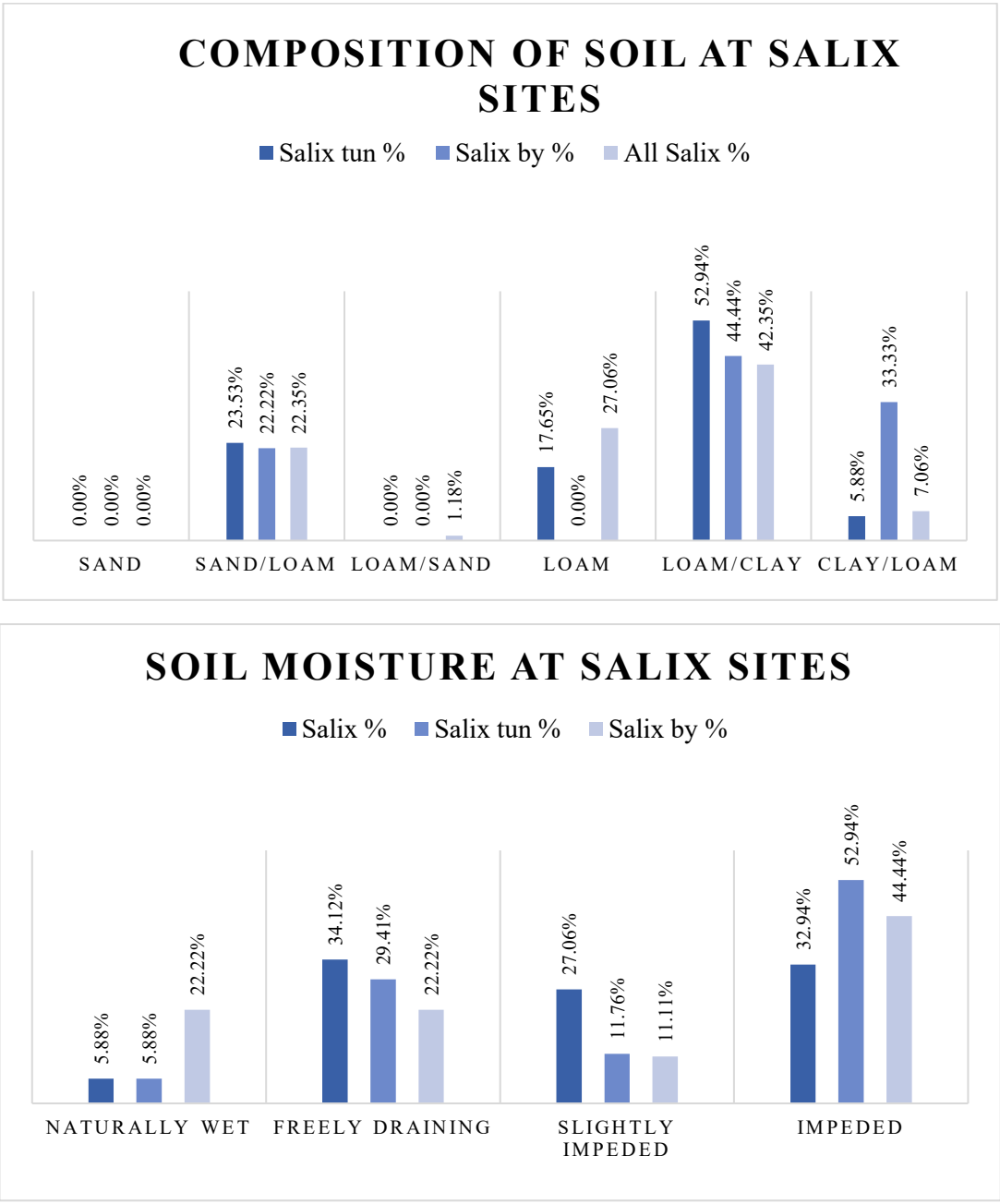


Figure 80: A breakdown of soil composition and soil moisture for *Salix tūn* and *Salix bȳ* named sites compared with *Salix* names in general

3.8 Conclusion

The place-name element *timber* is recurrent in English place-names but perhaps not as common as might be expected of the woodland-reliant culture of early medieval England. This can be explained by the proliferation of other technical words used to describe wood products in place-names and a toponymic focus on the tree-species most preferred in woodland industry. The distribution of potential timber producing

sites represented by particular place-name compounds is likely to have been influenced by the availability of suitable tree-species within areas of accessible woodland. Recurrent use of the habitative generic element *tūn* (and *bȳ*), with possible indicators of coppice wood **stæf*, *stapol*, *stocc*, and common timber and coppice species like oak (*āc*), ash (*æsc*), and *Salix* (*salh*, **sele*, **wilig*, *wīðig*(*n*)) suggests these were not only established locations of silviculture, as perhaps seen at sites with woodland generics like *lēah* and *grāf*, but that they also encompassed purpose-built dwellings and functional buildings, that allowed for more effective exploitation of the wooded environment.

By the eleventh century, these settlements varied in size and importance, with some performing as administrative centres and places of trade, while others were much smaller dependent sites that reflected the commercial interests of, sometimes quite distant, secular, and ecclesiastical estates. Proximity to sites of commerce and centres of administration would have been important for the trade of timber and although the methods by which timber was transported are largely unknown, connectivity via roads and rivers was presumably a primary concern. Although there appears to be little correlation between the known trading routes of early medieval England and probable timber producing sites, it is possible a network of small tracks and paths of local significance connected them to more established routes. Alternatively, if the wood produced was not intended for trade on the market, it may have been used to benefit local estates as a building material, or as a source of fuel for local industry.

As oak was the dominant timber wood of the medieval period it is unsurprising that *āc-tūn* names are common in the north-west and west of England where oak woodland was particularly abundant. It seems reasonable to suggest that the many *āc-tūn* settlements in Shropshire were founded at a time when a particular industry (or industries) was ascendant in the region and local administrative powers focused their efforts on the production of oak timber and/or coppice. The densest concentration of sites that produced oak timber or coppice wood also appears to have had some correlation with centres of salt and iron production. The complementary timber and salt industries likely contributed to the density of *āc-tūn* names in this region, with oak wood being used to make charcoal. The importance of oak as a species of charcoal manufacturing is supported by archaeological excavations of iron smelting sites and early medieval potteries.

With more detailed examination of individual sites with a timber or coppice-related name, it may also be possible to identify other settlements that were established in reaction to the industrial demand for good-quality charcoal. Toponyms suggest the landscape around the major salt-producing centre of Droitwich comprised large areas of heavily managed woodland, with sites that could have produced coppice wood for the charcoal industry. A more in-depth interdisciplinary analysis could potentially reveal much more about the importance of oak charcoal in the salt industry in early medieval England.

Where oak names are scarce, like in Lincolnshire, we see instead a concentration of *æsc-bȳ* and *Salix bȳ* settlements, suggesting these species were favoured for wood production in this area. The *bȳ* generic reflects the Anglo-Scandinavian lexicon in this region and the absence of *āc-bȳ* names may reflect a lack of oak-dominant woodland and good quality oak timber trees in the east of England, where lower levels of rainfall result in slower oak growth. An increased understanding of the archaeology of this region would greatly help to shed light on whether structural oak timber was less common here, or whether it was imported from elsewhere, perhaps in a manner analogous to the importing of good quality structural oak timbers from the Baltic in the later medieval period.

The recurrence of compounds with a *tūn* generic and a tree-species specific contributes not only to our understanding of the potential timber and coppice industries of early medieval England, but also to the body of scholarship concerned with 'functional' *tūn* names (see 1.2.3). As with the compound OE *æppel-tūn*, which is glossed independently of place-names and appears to have meant 'orchard' (see 4.4), other tree *tūn* names may have been lexical words with a particular rather than general meaning; in this case identifying places of specialised woodland industry. Oak, ash, and *Salix* were the species most often found in medieval timber buildings and are known to be some of the most common coppice species from the medieval period. It therefore stands to reason that the locations at which these species were harvested and worked would be recognised in the toponymic landscape in a manner that allowed for common understanding of their function.

4. Chapter Four: Orchard place-names

4.1 Introduction

Knowledge of fruit-tree cultivation in early medieval England is limited. There is little direct evidence of the methods that were employed to produce a fruit crop or the appearance of sites where fruit-tree cultivation took place. The early medieval perception of an orchard was potentially quite different from that of a modern orchard and the distinction between orchards and gardens appears not to have been straightforward. Most of the explicit references to orchard sites in OE literature come from monastic texts, and while these are valuable, it is not clear how this information reflected wider secular interests in fruit production.

Recurrent place-name compounds that may have indicated orchard sites suggest there were a variety of ways to refer to places of fruit-tree cultivation and hint at the different motives that may have led to the establishment of these sites. Some orchards appear to have been places of subsistence farming, set up to produce food for the local estate or community, while others were established with a horticultural motive, where a surplus fruit crop was cultivated as a saleable commodity. The possibility of this can be examined toponymically by looking at medieval *orceard* 'orchard' place-names and comparing these with the corpus of fruit-tree place-names with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic. These names are examined initially with consideration of their location and geology, as climate and soil type likely had a bearing on the suitability of these sites as places of effective fruit production. Then they are considered within the context of their administrative environment, with particular focus on their proximity to known trade routes and centres of commerce where the sale of surplus fruit may have taken place.

This chapter aims to shed some light on the variety of fruit species that were available in different regions and the preoccupation of the communities that cultivated them, either directly as a food source, or as a commodity produced for monetary gain. Place-names are a largely untapped source of evidence for early medieval orchards and the present discussion builds on previous scholarship where the historical evidence has been explored in greater detail (see 1.2.3.2: Hooke 2010; Banham 2014; Barnes and Williamson 2021) and aims to encourage further consideration of the topic in a multidisciplinary context. For the sake of simplicity, the range of fruit-tree (and

orceard) names that could possibly have indicated fruit-producing sites with a possible horticultural function (e.g. *æppel-tūn*, *æppel-bȳ*, *pirige-tūn*, etc.) are often referred to throughout this chapter as 'orchard' names.

4.2 Evidence for orchards in early medieval England

It is not entirely clear when cultivated fruit-trees were introduced to England. For some species, such as the European apple (*Malus domestica*) and common pear (*Pyrus communis*), it was likely during the Roman period (Johnson and More 2004, 306; Witcher 2013, 8). Archaeology provides evidence of the probable naturalisation of imported Roman plant-species and cultivation methods. Van der Veen (2008, 12) suggests that domesticated fruit crops, such as apples, pears, and plums, were available in areas of Roman occupation, although distinguishing cultivated from wild varieties is difficult. With the introduction of cultivated trees must also have come the specialised knowledge necessary to establish an orchard and maintain a healthy crop, as fruit-trees are not reliably self-fertile (Bricknell 2012, 444). Productive fruit-trees, meaning those that regularly bear palatable fruit, must be propagated through the specialised processes of grafting or budding, which use existing rootstock to stimulate new growth. It is not clear exactly when and where this technique was developed but it appears to have been used in the west in Ancient Greece and domesticated fruit-trees are common in classical sources (Zohary et al. 2012, 138). It is likely that when the earliest cultivated fruit-tree species were brought to Britain they were grafted onto the root-stock of their unpalatable native equivalents, such as crab-apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*) (Sterry 2007, 206; 212). The earliest distribution of domesticated species would thus largely have corresponded to the natural distribution of their wild equivalents and must initially have dictated where the earliest orchards were established.

It is possible, although perhaps unlikely in light of the above evidence, that some wild species were tended for fruit production in an orchard or garden setting, perhaps when access to domesticated varieties or knowledge of grafting was lacking. The common name for the crab-apple (*Malus sylvestri*) appears in place-names from the early fourteenth century (Crabadon D (*Crabbeton* 1306): PND 300), but is not attested in a literary context until the fifteenth century (MED: crab(be, n.2). The OED (crab, n.2: etymology) suggests the word *crab* may be a southern perversion of Scots *scrab*,

scrabbe, which appears to relate to Swedish dialect *skrabba* 'fruit of the wild apple-tree'. There are probable earlier references to the wild crab-apple in Anglo-Saxon medical texts, where the OE compounds *sur-æppel* 'sour apple' and *wudusuræppel* 'wood sour apple' are identified in contrast with *milisc æppel* 'sweet apple' and *surswete æppel* 'semi-sweet apple' (DOE: æppel, n.1). This suggests there was an acknowledged distinction between the sour woodland-residing crab-apple and more palatable cultivated varieties.

Mentions of single apple-trees are common in charter bounds. There are five uses of *æppel-trēow* (S142, S659, S879, S955, S1549) but the more usual term is *apuldor*, which appears in 37 charters (LangScape). Four of these describe the *apuldor* as *suran* 'sour' (S255, S380, S442, S1546b) and only one notes a *swete*, 'sweet', apple-tree (S486), suggesting that crab-apples were seen more often as a freestanding tree in the landscape than cultivated varieties. The 'sweet apple-tree' stood in the bounds of four hides of land beside the river Nadder, given in 956 (or 959) by King Eadwig to his kinsman Ælfheah. The bounds begin at the *pyrgean* 'pear-tree' where the *port herepæþ* 'market/town highway' leaves the river and circles back around past the *swete apuldre* 'sweet apple-tree' to the highway once again. This land has been identified as the south-west part of the parish of Wilton, which was an important religious centre and the royal seat of Wessex during the ninth century (Crittall and Pugh 1955, 1–34; Crittall 1962, 7–8). It is perhaps significant that the only mention of a sweet, probably cultivated, apple-tree in charter bounds was associated with an important religious site. The relationship between fruit cultivation and monasteries will be explored in greater depth below.

The literary record of early medieval England demonstrates that fruit-trees were a desirable commodity and an important source of food (Banham 2004, 43–53); however, there is little evidence of how these trees were cultivated and what fruit-producing sites may have looked like. OE *orceard* (*ortgeard*, *orcyrd*, *ordeard*) is a word that appears to have been used more broadly than it is in the modern day, to encompass an enclosed garden that could contain a range of trees, herbs, and vegetables. Throughout the medieval period, as arboriculture developed and gardens became more specialised, the word came to specify an area of land kept principally for the cultivation of fruit-trees. The earlier and more general meaning 'enclosed garden' is clear in the etymology of *orceard*, which is suggested to be a compound of

Latin *hortus* ‘garden’ and OE *geard* ‘enclosure’, with a parallel formation in Gothic *aurti-gards* ‘garden’; although an entirely Germanic origin is also possible when the first element is compared with Gothic *aurtja* ‘gardener’ and OHG *orzōn* (OED, orchard, n.1: etymology).

Early medieval charters provide examples of *orceard* names in the bounds of estates in Wiltshire and Worcestershire, where the enclosed nature of these sites is emphasised. An *orceard* at Bentley in Holt estate Wo (S1395) is described among a list of resources leased by Bishop Lyfing to Æthelric that also included access to meadow land and salt works. This is described in the text as the *hagan on porte ðæt is se ordceard æt mærdice* ‘enclosure in town which is the orchard at the boundary ditch’, presenting an *orceard* as a type of enclosed space. The bounds of Bengeworth Wo (S1590) state that there was an *orceard* at Cropthorne, opposite which was the *pyri hamm*. These features both lay within the bounds described, which included a stretch of the River Avon, suggesting *pyri hamm* can perhaps be translated as ‘pear-tree land hemmed in by water or marsh’. The sense ‘water meadow’ is unlikely as fruit-trees do not tend to thrive in waterlogged conditions (Barnes and Williamson 2021, 21). It is also possible the alternative form of *hamm*, ‘cultivated plot/enclosure’, was here intended, indicating an artificial enclosure rather than a natural one. LPN (52) provides another possible example with this meaning in Worcestershire, Feckenham Wo (*Feccanhom* 804), and notes that although most *hamm* names probably had a watery meaning, this alternative sense is evidenced in later OE literature, like the *wyrtigan hamme*, ‘garden plot’, mentioned in Ælfric’s *Lives of the Saints* c.1000, that is roughly contemporary with the date of this ‘orchard’ charter.

Although early *orceard* sites were not exclusively connected with fruit-trees, early medieval literature suggests there was a strong association between use of the word *orceard* and apples. The treatise *De Temporibus* (Cockayne 2012 iii 253) notes an *orcerdas mid æpplum áfyllede* ‘orchard filled with apples’. There is also a significant connection between the OE compound *æppel-tūn* and *orceard*. These terms are equated in the *Old English Pastoral Care* (Banham 2014, 39), likely because *æppel-tūn*, literally ‘apple enclosure/farm’, also indicated an enclosed cultivated space with fruit trees. Other compounds with *tūn*, such as *lēac-tūn* ‘herb garden’ and *wyrt--tūn* ‘vegetable garden’, and the plant names *tuncærse* ‘garden cress’ and *tunnæp*

'garden turnip', emphasise the link between a cultivated enclosure and the plants that were grown within these spaces.

While the term *orceard* was sometimes associated with apple-trees, and perhaps most *orceard* sites did have fruit-trees, it is also a term differentiated from *æppel-tūn* in OE literature. *Orceard* and *æppel-tūn* were defined separately in *Ælfric's Glossary* (Banham 2014, 39), with Latin *hortus* 'garden' glossed as *orceard* and Latin *pomerium*, from *pomum* 'fruit, apple', glossed as *æppel-tūn*, suggesting that where fruit-trees dominated the specificity of the compound *æppel-tūn* was preferred over the broader potential of *orceard*. The DOE (æppel-hūs, n) provides an example of Lat. *pomerium* glossed as *æppel-hūs* 'fruit store-house', which suggests a *pomerium* and thus perhaps an *æppel-tūn*, was a location at which fruit was stored as well as grown. The *Liber Eliensis* uses both *hortos* and *pomeria* to describe cultivated land surrounding the church at Ely, the founding of which was declared among the greatest achievements of the first abbot Byrhtnoth (c.970) (Fairweather 2005, 150). Although these terms are not glossed with OE equivalents, it is significant that, at least in an eleventh century ecclesiastical context, there was thought to be a difference between these two types of cultivated site. There is also mention of a *pomerium* in DB where it is stated that 'the king granted to William Peverel 10 acres of land for making an orchard' (Williams and Martin 1992, 757). This was not an insubstantial amount of land and demonstrates how large an orchard could be expected to be.

4.3 OE *orceard* in place-names and charter bounds

Place-names are a rich source of evidence for *orceard* sites in the medieval landscape. There are at least 15 examples of *orceard* place-names attested by 1500 (*Fig.81*), although most have later medieval attestations, which make it difficult to ascertain whether they have an OE or ME origin (ME *orcheard*, *orchard*) (see *8.3*). The densest concentration of *orceard* sites is in the traditional 'orchard counties' of the south-west (Barnes and Williamson 2021, 15): Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. Only three *orceard* settlements are mentioned as early as DB and of these only Orchard in Church Knowle Do (*Horcerd* 1086; (*Le*, *La*) *Orchard*(*e*) 1291) is recorded as a simplex name (PNDo i 90). Although attested as two adjacent settlements from the fourteenth century (*Westorchard in Purbyk* 1398, *Est Orchard* 1399), in DB it is recorded as a very small settlement of only two households, held by

the Abbey of St Mary at Cranbourne. Page (1908, 109) notes there was a *virgultum* 'orchard' at Orchard recorded in DB, which is a word that relates to ME *verger* 'garden, orchard', itself a borrowing of OFr *verger* (Lat. *viridiārium*) (OED: verger, n.1). Another example of a *virgultum* is mentioned in the DB account of land held at Exeter by the Count of Mortain, who was said to own a church, a house, and an orchard that once belonged to King Edward in 1066.

The other two DB examples of *orceard* are compound names. Orcheton D (*Orcartona* 1086, *Orcherdton'* 1242, *Orchardton* 1303) in Modbury parish looks to derive from the OE compound *orceard-tūn*. The generic *tūn*, with an intended meaning 'enclosure', could be pleonastic, where the sense of this being an enclosed and cultivated space was emphasised; alternatively, and perhaps more likely it indicated a 'farmstead' associated with an *orceard* site. In contrast, Orchardleigh So (*Horcealei* 1086) has the generic element OE *lēah*, suggesting the *orceard* was in an area of open woodland; although it is possible this was originally a simplex name and the encroachment of woodland on a pre-existing *orceard* site led to the later addition of *lēah*. DB does state that there were 6 leagues and 2 furlongs of woodland attached to the estate under the ownership of Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances. From an ecological perspective it is possible this was an 'orchard open woodland', as native fruit-tree species like crab-apple and wild pear grow well in clearings and on woodland margins, and the presence of wild rootstock may have facilitated the cultivation of domestic fruit varieties. It is possible that place-names with a fruit-tree specific and *lēah*, like *æppel-lēah* 'apple open woodland' (Apley L, Sa), could have been sites where apples were harvested, but *orceard* more clearly indicates this was a place of cultivation. Comparable agricultural uses of *lēah* sites are demonstrated in toponymic compounds like OE *butere-lēah*, 'butter open woodland' (Bitterley Sa; Butterleigh D; Butterley Ch, Db, He), and OE *hwǣte-lēah* 'wheat open woodland' (Wheatley Ess, La, Nt, O, YW), which suggest these were places of livestock husbandry and crop production. Perhaps more significant though is the recurrent compound OE *hnutu-lēah*, 'nut open woodland' (Notley Bk, Ess, Hrt; Nutley D, Ha, Sx: see 5.4.1), which may have indicated sites where nut-trees were managed and nuts were harvested.

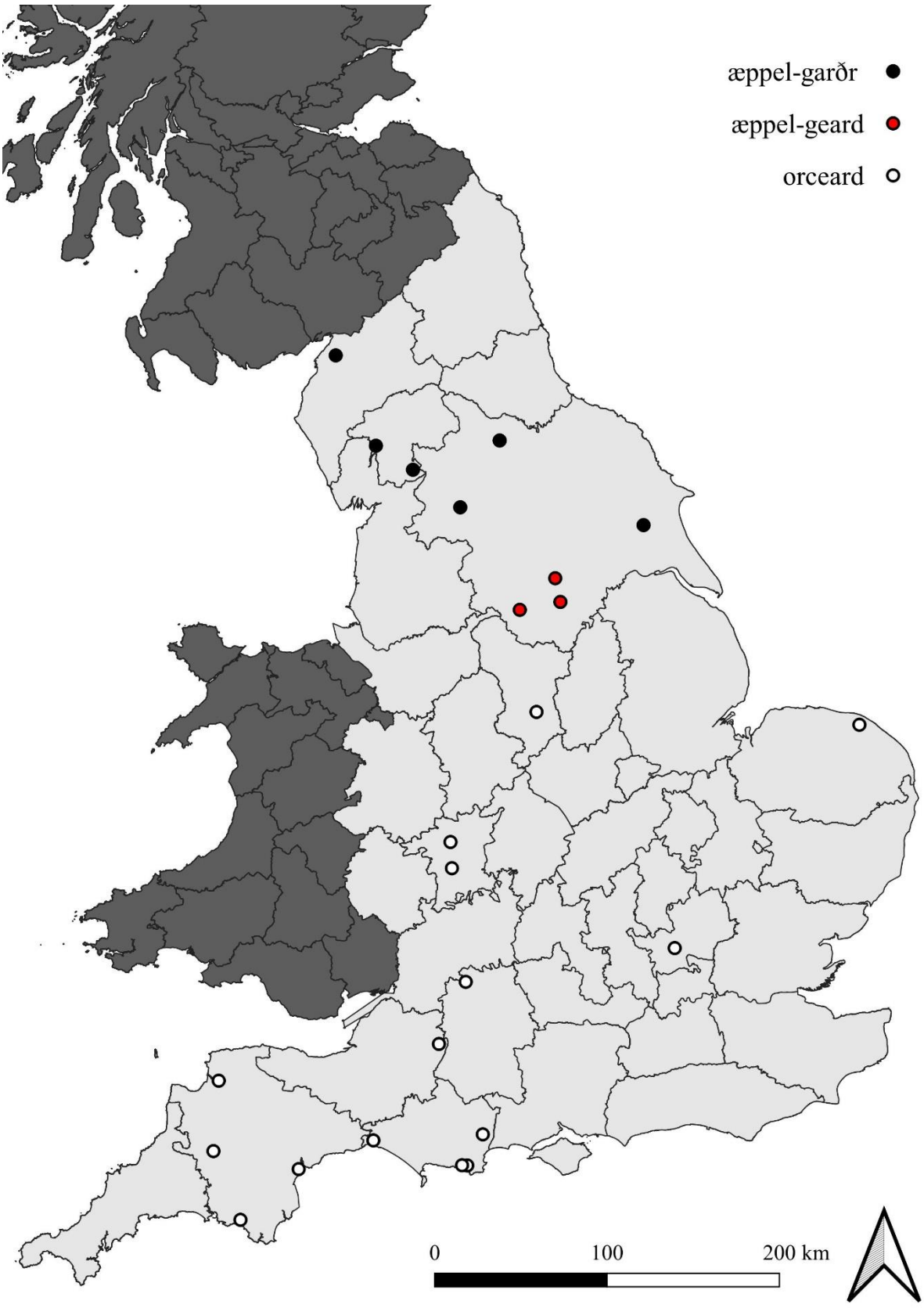


Figure 81: The distribution of *orceard*, *æppel-geard*, and *æppel-garðr* names attested by 1500

Old Orchard Do is first attested as *gardin' voc'* (*le*) *Oldeorchard* 1374 (PNDo ii 6), from OFr *gardin*, *jardin*, which, like ME *verger* and *orceard*, indicated a cultivated plot of land that was usually enclosed (MED: gardin, n.). It is not clear what exactly was intended by the use of the ME adj. *olde* 'old' and whether this signified a derelict and unused space, or whether it was a well-established site with a long history of cultivation. Fruit-trees are some of the shortest-lived native tree-species, apple and pear trees have an average life-span of 100 years and plum trees around 80 years, so these would not have needed to be very old sites to earn the appellation. Despite the relatively short life-span of fruit-trees, sustained maintenance of orchard sites can greatly increase the productivity and longevity of individuals of these species (Barnes and Williamson 2021, 5–6). An 'old' orchard, even one that had fallen into disuse and become unproductive and overgrown, may still have been recognisable as a cultivated site. Old fruit-trees, especially those that have been pollarded, grafted, or pruned into shape, are particularly notable for their wizened appearance and many become hollow and cracked, or collapse entirely in their later years. This compound is also apparent in a variant form of Norchard in Hartlebury parish Wo, which is first attested as *atte Norchard* 1327, with misdivision of *atten orceard*, 'at the orchard/garden', but also as *Oldeorchard* 1332 (PNWo 244). An earlier example can be seen in the tenth-century bounds of the estate at Frustfield W (S766) where there was an *ealden orcheard*, 'old orchard'. It is worth noting that although this charter is generally regarded as an authentic tenth-century record and the adjective is OE *eald*, the form *orcheard* is an early ME spelling (OED: orchard, n.: forms) that is perhaps more reflective of the thirteenth-century copy date of this manuscript.

There are two *orceard* names that give some indication of the type of fruit that may have grown at these sites. The earliest attestation of Orchard Farm in Roughton parish Nf (*Appelyerd* 1330: PNNf iii 33), suggests that at some point there was a change from the OE compound *æppel-geard*, 'apple yard/enclosure' to ME or ModE *orchard*. Other examples of this compound are Appleyard in Thurlstone YW (*Apelyard* 1297) (PNYW i 341) and Mapple Yard in Hooton Pagnell YW (*Appelyerd'* 1208) (PNYW i 88), and three field-names: *Appulyerde* 1368 in Tanshelf YW (PNYW ii 84), *Appleyard Streete* 1649 in South Repps Nf (PNNf iii 32), and *Appleyards* 1838 in Aylsham Nf (PNNf iii 52). These demonstrate that the distribution of *æppel-geard* names was exclusively north-easterly, contrasting the use of *orceard* in the south-

west. In this instance, as *orchard* became the standard term for a 'fruit-tree enclosure' it appears to have superseded a previous name, which would presumably only have happened if there was continuity of fruit production at this site. In contrast, the species specificity of the name Cherry Orchard Wo is probably a much later addition, as the only medieval attestation of this name is *Shirreves Orchard* 1327, 'sheriff's garden/orchard' (PNWo 162). It is, however, possible that cherries were grown here in the medieval period and that the site was also known for its cherry crop, as cherry-tree cultivation is documented from at least the thirteenth century in England (see 2.63 *plūme*).

The connection between medieval orchards and early medieval ecclesiastical sources is explored by Banham (2014, 24), who questions whether the strong association between orchards and monasteries was truly reflective of the distribution of orchards and church interest in orchard cultivation, or whether it was predominantly because monastic record keeping left an unrepresentative impression of the dominance of the Church in the establishment of orchards. If orchards were indeed predominantly connected with Church land, it is also necessary to consider whether ecclesiastical sources can be regarded as representative of early medieval horticultural practices as a whole, or whether they should only be considered as representative of monastic attitudes to cultivation. Place-name and charter evidence suggests there may have been a connection between ecclesiastical administration and the development of *orceard* names.

Charters provide some of the earliest evidence of church ownership. The *orceard* at Bentley in Holt Wo (S1395) was leased to a man called Ælfric by bishop Lyfing and the *ealdan orcheard* at Frustfield W (S766) was held by Wilton Abbey. As discussed above, the place-name Orchardleigh So was listed under the ownership of Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances in DB and Orchard in Church Knowle Do, with its *virgultum*, was owned by the Abbey of Cranborne. The farm Orchards Do (*Orchard* 1422) lay in the parish of Whitchurch Canonicorum, a name that provides two references to its ecclesiastical history, and from the thirteenth century was appropriated to the canons of the cathedral of Sarum and Wells (PNDo iv 439). Orchard Ho (*le Orcheyerde* 1446) was part of the monastic complex at St Albans Hrt and it is possible Orchard Fm in Malmesbury W, originally *Orchardbrigge* 1341, was also part of the monastic compound of Malmesbury Abbey. These charter records are important not only for

comprehending the use of this word as a naming element, but also to better understand the development of *orceard* sites in contrast with other places of fruit-tree cultivation.

4.4 Fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* names

4.4.1 Introduction and distribution

The compound *æppel-tūn* is recorded not only as an 'orchard' word in OE literature but is also recurrent in early medieval place-names. Although the meaning 'farm with an apple-tree' cannot be excluded from consideration of individual *æppel-tūn* names, the literary evidence suggests that this term was generally understood to mean 'orchard'. There are 15 *æppel-tūn* major and minor names in England that are attested by 1500. The earliest recorded are Appleton Brk ((*æt*) *æppeltune* 942(c.1240) S480) and Appleton Roebuck YW (*Æppeltune* c.972 S1453), which both appear in tenth-century charters, while the latest-attested are the minor names Appleton Dale Nt (*Hapuldon Dale* 14th), Appleton Fm K (*de Appelton'* 1261–2), Appleton Plantation Ca (*Appelton* 1424), and Perry Appleton Ess (*Beriapelton* 1336). Most often, however, *æppel-tūn* names first appear in DB: Appleton Thorn Ch (*Epletune* 1086), Appleton Manor K (*Apletone* 1086), Appleton Nf (*Appletuna* 1086), Appleton le Moors YN (*Apeltun* 1086), Appleton le Street YN (*Apletun*, *Apeltun* 1086), Appleton Wiske YN (*Ap*(*p*)*elton*(*a*), *Apletune* 1086), and East & West Appleton YN (*Apleton*, *Apelton* 1086) (see *8.3*).

There are five uses of the compound *æppel-bȳ* in place-names attested by 1500 (see *8.3*). The generic element *bȳ* appears to have been an equivalent settlement term to OE *tūn* in English place-names, indicating a 'farmstead, village, settlement' (EPNE i 66; VEPN ii 104). It is thus probable that *æppel-bȳ* settlements had a similar, if not identical function to *æppel-tūn* sites. In some cases, it is possible these names display a Scandinavianised form of *æppel-tūn*, with *bȳ* replacing an earlier *tūn* element; alternatively, they could have been hybrid names that arose after the integration of ON lexical elements into the English toponymicon (see 2.7.1.2). Either way, it is probable that *æppel-bȳ* also meant 'orchard' in an Anglo-Scandinavian cultural context.

The following discussion will focus largely on the significance of fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* settlements within the medieval agrarian landscape, but interesting comparisons can be made with other 'orchard' names: *orceard*, *æppel-geard*, and *æppel-garðr*. The distribution of each of these name types varies (*Fig.81*), with medieval *orceard* sites found predominantly in the south-west of England. *Orceard* place-names do not intersect with *æppel-geard* and *æppel-garðr* names, which are exclusively found in the north and north-east, implying that the way 'orchards' were referred to was regionally determined. None of the *æppel-geard* and *æppel-garðr* examples are major names and none are recorded before the twelfth century, which means these could have been part of a later phase of naming. Applegarth in particular, with generic ON *garðr* 'enclosure',[52] could not have existed prior to the development of an integrated Anglo-Scandinavian dialect; however, as early records for minor names in the north of England are rare, it is also possible these sites were contemporary with southern *orceard*s and simply reflect a difference in dialect.

Place-names with *æppel-tūn* have a majority distribution in the Midlands and northern counties, although there are also examples in Berkshire, Essex, and Kent (*Fig.82*). Names from *æppel-geard* and *æppel-garðr* intersect with the densest concentration of *æppel-tūn* names in the north-east, suggesting these may have been different types of 'orchard' site. The toponymic difference is the generic element, which for *æppel-tūn* perhaps implied not only 'apple enclosure/orchard', as seen in OE literature, but could also have indicated a 'farmstead/settlement' where people lived. For *æppel-geard* and *æppel-garðr*, however, the implication seems to have been an 'apple enclosure' attached to a larger settlement, and like *orceard*s, these names have less of a sense of being habitative sites.[53]

[52] Found also in the ON compounds *urta-garðr*, 'garden', *vín-garðr*, 'vineyard', and a variety of animal names that denoted the species kept at the site (EPNE i 195).

[53] It is worth noting that in Old Icelandic literature ON *garðr* could also mean 'farm, homestead' (ONP: garðr, sb.m.) and this could therefore make an interesting parallel with OE *tūn*, which appears to have had the alternative (older) sense 'enclosure' (EPNE ii 188–9). However, evidence for the habitative development of *garðr* in an Anglo-Scandinavian context is much less strong than for *tūn* and this element generally appears to have referred to small plots of land attached to larger estates (EPNE i 195).

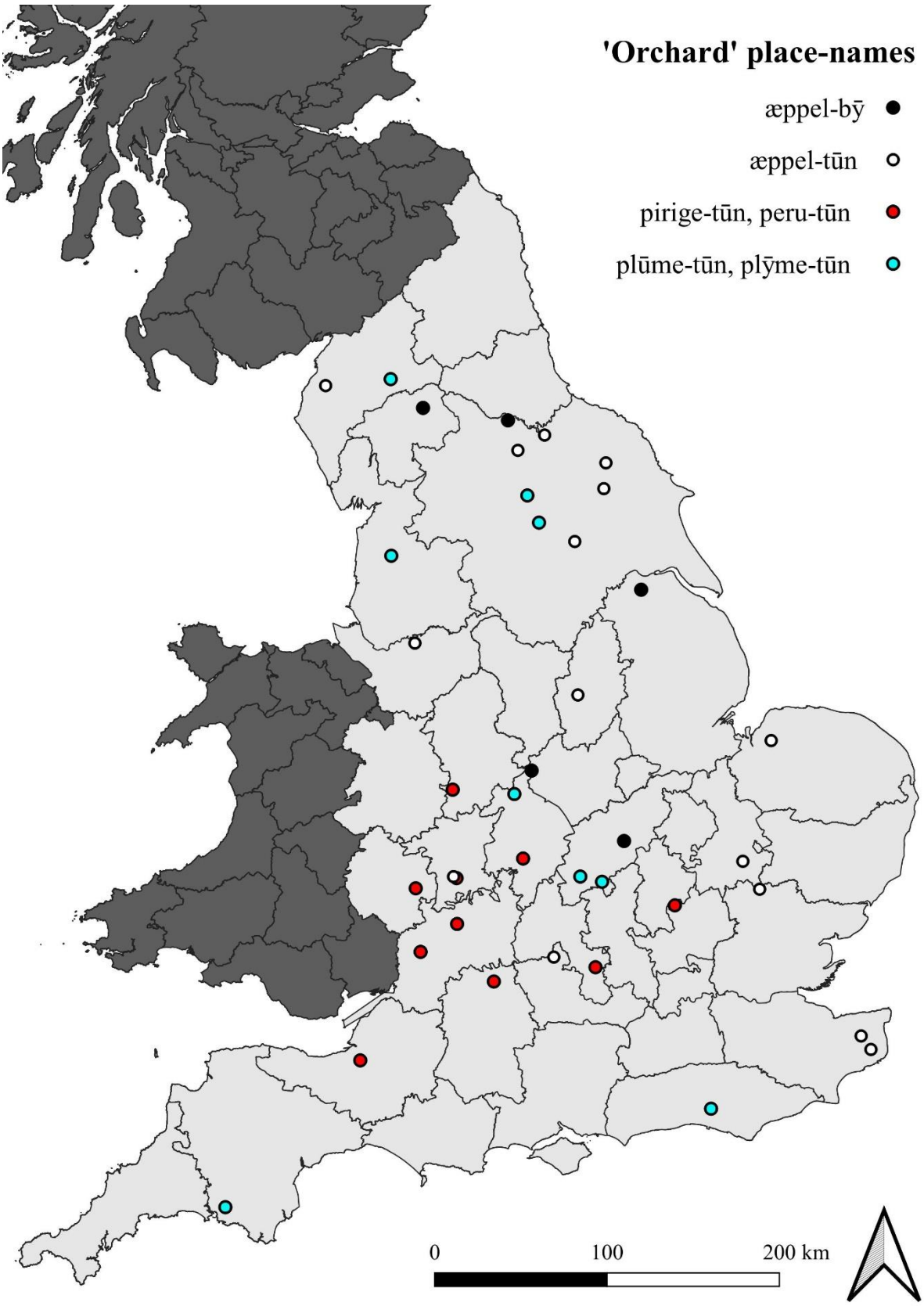


Figure 82: The distribution of fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* names attested by 1500

Other fruit-tree elements are also recurrent with the generic *tūn*: representing orchards with a different majority species than apple. Elements indicating the presence of pear-trees, OE *peru* 'pear' (see 2.61) and OE *pirige* 'pear-tree' (see 2.62), and plum-trees OE *plūme*, *plȳme* 'plum' (see 2.63; 2.65) are particularly recurrent. There are at least seven *pirige-tūn* names, four possible *peru-tūn* names, eight *plūme-tūn* names, and one *plȳme-tūn* attested by 1500. Although these compounds are not recorded in OE literature like *æppel-tūn*, the frequency with which they occur in place-names suggests they were commonly understood in the early medieval vernacular and probably had the general meaning 'orchard', rather than a farm with an individual pear or plum-tree.

While the fruit elements for *pirige-tūn*, *peru-tūn*, and *plume*(*plȳme*)*-tūn* names can be taken to indicate that the majority crop was either pears or plums, it cannot necessarily be said that *æppel-tūn* and *æppel-bȳ* names always indicated apples, as there seems to have been some flexibility in the early medieval use of this word. In Anglo-Saxon glossaries, OE *æppel* can be seen in the compounds *brembelæppel*, 'bramble apple', possibly a blackberry; *eorðæpla* 'earth apple', presumably a root vegetable (OED: apple, n.I.2.a); *palmtreowa æppla* 'date'; and the *affricaniscan æppla,* which glosses Latin *mala punica*, the 'Punic apple' or 'pomegranate' (DOE, æppel, n.2.a.i; 2.a.iv). These attestations suggest the word *æppel* was used to identify a variety of fruits and vegetables, especially those that resembled an apple in shape. The same can be seen for the use of *epli* in ON texts, which also appears to have been used of a variety of fruits (ONP: epli, sb. n.1), perhaps including pear for which there is no apparent ON word. The natural limit of wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*) includes southern Denmark, but the species is not native to the rest of Scandinavia, unlike wild apple, which grows naturally in southern Norway and Sweden (Zohary et al. 2012, 137–9). This lack of word for pear in ON may have had some bearing on the absence of early medieval pear place-names in the north of England, where the influence of ON on the English toponymicon was strongest; however, the main limiting factor was likely the climate.



Figure 83: The comparative distribution of pear 'orchard' names and other pear place-names

Pear *tūn* names are exclusively found in the south-west and west of England (*Fig.83*), suggesting pear orchards were a largely regional feature of the early medieval landscape. Pear names are not exclusive to this region in general and those with different generic elements can also be found in the east, like Parham Hundred Sf (*Pereham*, *Pereham* c.1075) and in the south-east, like Pirbright Sr (*Perifrith* 1166), Pyrford Sr (*æt Pyrianforda* 956(c.1250)), and Parham Sx (*Perham* 959(11th)). The favourable climate of southern England is the most obvious contributing factor when considering pear 'orchard' distribution. Native, wild, and naturalised domestic apple, pear, and plum species require a chilling period to break bud dormancy in the winter months, which means the tree is then able to flower in spring and produce fruit in the summer (Zohary et al. 2012, 135; 138). The chilling period for good fruit production varies by species, with apple and plum requiring more time at lower temperatures than pear. Pear also tends to flower on average two weeks earlier than apple, which makes it more susceptible to late frosts and more likely to be affected by the shorter growing season of northern counties (Bricknell 2012, 444). The south-west counties, where pear 'orchard' place-names are most densely concentrated, later became known as the 'orchard counties' due to the favourable climate and geology that allowed for prolific fruit growth in this region. The west of England tends to be warmer and wetter than the east, which has a climate more like the continent, with colder winters and warmer summers that are more prone to drought (Barnes and Williamson 2021, 21).

Fruit-trees do not thrive in waterlogged conditions and are thus uncommon on heavy clays, but neither do they fare well on chalky or sandy soils that are prone to nutrient leaching and periods of summer drought. The optimum conditions for a good fruit harvest are loams and light clay soils that overlay a freely draining substrate (Bricknell 2012, 616). It is therefore important to compare the soil conditions at these 'orchard' sites to assess the probability that these were places of fruit-tree cultivation. Although the exact location of the potential orchards is unknown, there is a clear link between regions with loam-rich soil and the distribution of fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* sites: 74% are situated on fertile loam or loam-clay soil and 18% on sand-loam soil (*Fig.84*). In contrast, other fruit-tree names that are attested in DB but have a different generic element do not have such a clear preference for fertile clays and loams, with 50% lying on less-fertile sand-loam soil, suggesting these were less optimal sites for the establishment of an orchard.

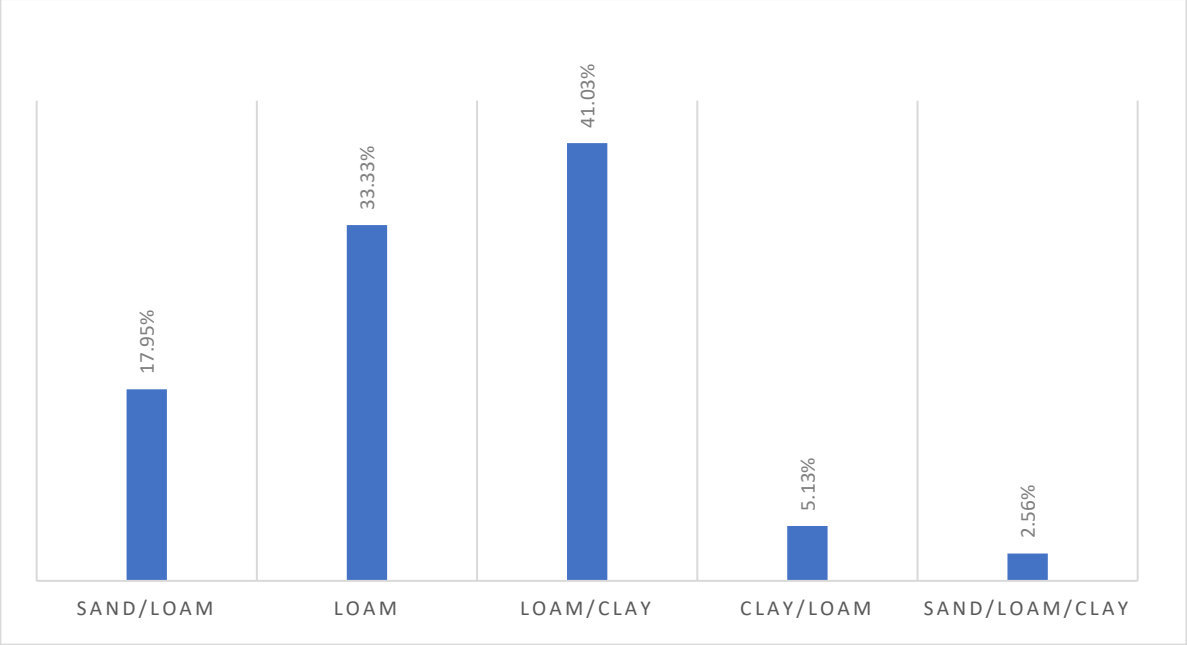


Figure 84: The percentages of different soil types at fruit-tree *tūn and bȳ* settlements

4.4.2 'Orchards' as sites of horticulture

'Orchard' place-names with a fruit-tree specific and a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic can expand our understanding of horticultural fruit production in early medieval England. Medieval horticulture was performed largely for the sale of surplus production at nearby markets (Van der Veen 2016, 814). The practice of owning profitable land with a commercial output many miles distant was common for monastic communities and royal households in the early medieval period. Some monasteries appear to have generated an income by selling produce to local rural communities and at larger markets in urban settlements. Banham (2014, 46) suggests that in the eleventh century, the four gardens held in Cambridge by the Abbot of Ely were more likely to have produced crops that were sold in the town, rather than provisioning the abbey directly.

It is possible that smaller sites, like the *orceard*s, *æppel-garðr*s, and *æppel-geard*s discussed above, were established to provide for an estate where the environmental conditions were favourable. The same is feasible for fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* 'orchards'; however, these appear often to have been parish settlements and relatively large sites of centralised local authority, where communities were more likely to have pursued their own commercial interests. In his discussion of 'agricultural' *tūn* names, Coates (2012, 227) interprets the possible meanings of *tūn* compounds, suggesting some had

a specialized function and were '"organized for" purposes involving what is denoted by the first element' and that these names implied a 'formalized network of economic exchange and responsibilities' rather than simply 'subsistence-oriented agriculture'. If Coates is correct, then an *æppel-tūn* 'apple orchard, fruit-tree orchard' or *pirige-tūn* 'pear orchard' compound would suggest a settlement established for the organized purpose of horticultural fruit production and the size and wealth of these settlements should perhaps be expected to reflect the annual income a surplus fruit harvest would bring. A disparity should perhaps then be seen when comparing 'orchard' settlements with other fruit-named places that were more subsistence based, or simply named topographically in relation to a tree(s) of that particular species. The following discussion demonstrates the importance of analysing and comparing the size and wealth of early-attested 'orchard' settlements, as this can help to establish their position within the early medieval administrative and commercial landscape.

Domesday Book is the earliest and most comprehensive record we have for many of these 'orchard' settlements.[54] There is mention in DB of 25 'orchards' sites: nine *æppel-tūn*s, seven *pirige-tūn*s, four *plūme-tūn*s, three *æppel-bȳ*s, two potential *peru-tūn*s, and one example of a *plȳme-tūn*. These account for 65% of the total corpus of fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* place-names. DB regularly provides a record of the number of households that comprised each settlement in 1086, which gives some insight into the size and thus the relative influence and commercial reach of these communities. When the number of households is calculated by species for 'orchard' sites, the mean number is 40 households for pear, 35 for plum, and 18 for apple.

Tax units in DB can be examined to give some suggestion of the wealth of the estates in question. The mean annual coin tax for pear *tūn*-named sites is 14 pounds; for plum *tūn*s 10 pounds, 18 shillings, and 9 pence; for *æppel-bȳ*s 8 pounds and 3 shillings; and for *æppel-tūn* settlements 7 pounds, 7 shillings, and 2 pence. Pear compounds are once again the most notable, suggesting settlement size and wealth tended to scale proportionately. The range of tax for pear 'orchard' settlements at its lowest end was 2 pounds and 10 shillings per annum at Pirton Wo and increased up to 30 pounds at Pyrton O. In contrast, *æppel-tūn* settlements show a range from as low as 5 shillings at East and West Appleton YN to 17 pounds and 11 shillings at Appleton Nf.

[54] Data analysed here is taken from OpenDomesday.

Comparison with other fruit-tree named sites demonstrates that not all settlements named for a particular species were equally as wealthy. There are at least 21 other fruit-tree place-names recorded in DB with an apple, pear, or plum element. The average rate of tax for these settlements was generally much lower: 8 pounds, 12 shillings, and 9 pence for pear-named sites; 6 pounds, 16 shillings, and 3 pence for plum settlements; and 6 pounds, 1 shilling, and 3 pence for apple. As with 'orchard' settlements, pear-named sites were the wealthiest by rate of annual tax, but non 'orchard' settlements appear to have generally had a significantly lower average annual income.

The account of ploughlands in DB was also considered to be a fiscal record, probably representative of another provision of annual tax and a different means of assessing the value of the land (Roffe 2007, 207; Holt 2014, 233–6). Ploughlands were the measure of land that could be ploughed by an eight-oxen team over the course of a year; however, it should be noted that the measure of ploughlands may have differed by region and was likely dependent not only on custom but also on the local geology (Hull Domesday Book Project: weights and measures). The mean record of ploughlands for pear 'orchard' sites was a considerable 18.6, for plum 10.5, and for apple 9.1, once again decreasing by species to match the annual tax and settlement size. This differs significantly from the comparable corpus of other fruit-tree names, that had an average of 8 ploughlands for pear settlements, 4.5 for apple, and 4.25 for plum. The mean here is less than half the average record of ploughlands at 'orchard' settlements, again highlighting the difference between 'orchard' and non-'orchard' fruit toponyms.

Although some of the corpus of comparable fruit-tree place-names have topographical generics, like Apley Li and West Parley Do (OE *lēah*), and Appleford Brk and Pyrford Sr (OE *ford*), there is also a significant proportion with habitative generics. These are worth analysing more closely to rule out the possibility that the disparity in size and wealth illustrated above is related to generic type. The habitative generics *hām* (Parham Sf, Sx), *stede* (*Aplestede* Ha; Great Plumstead Nf; Plumstead K, Nf), and *wīc* (Appletreewick YW) each compound with fruit-tree elements. Plumstead K (*Plumstede*, *Plumesstede* 1086) was held by Bishop Odo of Bayeux and by the Abbey of St Augustine in Canterbury. It had a large population of 43 households and was valued at 20 pounds per annum. Parham Sf (*Pereham* 1086) and Parham Sx (*Perham*

1086) are possible examples of the OE compound *peru-hām* (see 2.61.1) and are again reasonably sized settlements, with 34 and 16 households respectively. When compared with the largest and most affluent plum and pear-tree 'orchards' however, there is a notable difference in size and wealth, especially for pear place-names. Plumpton Sx (*Plumtone* 1086) was held by William de Warenne at the time of DB and had a population size of 65 households with a tax valuation of 25 pounds a year. Pirton Hrt (*Pieritone* 1086) belonged to Ralph de Limésy and comprised of 77 households with an average annual tax valuation of 20 pounds, while Pyrton O (*Pirigtune* 987(11th), *Peritone* 1086) under the tenancy of Earl Hugh of Chester had 56 households and was expected to pay 30 pounds in tax. It is interesting to note that Appletreewick (*Apletreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*eltreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*iltreu*, *Ap*(*p*)*iltr*(*e*) 1086) is the only habitative 'apple-tree' settlement recorded in DB. Unfortunately, only the name is recorded and there is no account of the size or wealth of the community.

When comparing 'orchard' sites by species, it is possible to suggest that the differences in population size and wealth in DB can be explained by both the value of the commodity they produced and the relative wealth of the regions in which these names are most common. The biggest disparity in wealth can be seen between apple 'orchards', particularly *æppel-tūn* settlements, and pear 'orchards'. Apple-trees were common throughout England, but place-names suggest that pear-trees did not generally grow in northern counties (*Fig.82*), where the growing season was shorter and the climate less favourable. This could explain not only the concentration of apple 'orchards' in Yorkshire, but also the regional exclusivity of pear 'orchards', which were perhaps a rarer commodity than apples and therefore a more desirable crop. The wealth of 'orchard' settlements was probably influenced by the value of the crop they produced, thus we see that pear 'orchards' were wealthier than apple 'orchards'; however, it is also important to consider the general differences in size and wealth of settlements in the north and south of England in the eleventh century. The largest *æppel-tūn* settlements according to DB were Appleton Nf and Appleton O, which were three times as large as the next largest: Appleton Roebuck YW. DB was produced after the Norman Conquest and the harrying of the north, which laid waste to productive land and reduced the size and value of many prosperous estates. It is a sometimes-incomplete record, especially for northern counties, for which details are often lacking; information on taxation and population size is missing for five of the

nine *æppel-tūn* sites in DB and for Eppleby YN. It is therefore possible that the eleventh-century picture we are given through the DB account is not as representative of 'orchard' settlements in earlier centuries.

4.4.3 The commercial viability of 'orchards'

Surplus fruit production would have required a larger commitment of labour and skill than subsistence farming and as fruit was a highly perishable commodity it would have been advantageous for an 'orchard' to be situated within reasonable distance of a market or fair. This section will consider the proximity of 'orchard' settlements to early medieval centres of commerce, to assess how viable it is that these were sites of surplus production and how they may have contributed to the wider commercial landscape of early medieval England.

A much later example of the reliance of an 'orchard' settlement upon local markets can be seen in an eighteenth-century account of the pear harvest at Perton in Tettenhall parish St (Pitt 1791, 89, cited in Shaw 1801; Horovitz 2005, 436–7), which is a 'pear orchard' name first attested in DB (*Pertone* 1086). The Tettenhall pear was cultivated in the parish, and it is noted that the average annual crop was many thousands of bushels more than what the population could consume. Pears are generally fit to be eaten for about a month after they ripen, and during harvest the neighbouring markets had such a plentiful supply it is reported that it was hardly worth the cost of picking. While this is not an early medieval account, it establishes a tradition of horticulture at Perton, with probable continuity of use as a pear 'orchard' site at least from the eleventh century. It also suggests that there was a benefit to travelling beyond the parish or immediate community to sell fruit at harvest time, as targeting a market population not already well-supplied with pears would have been more profitable.

Making preserves and alcohol may have counteracted the issue of perishability and lessened the immediate need to secure a sale. Producing and selling alcohol could also have increased profit margins. Apples, pears, and plums were some of the principal ingredients in alcoholic beverages like *æppel-wīn*, *līð* and *bēor*. The first two can be loosely translated as cider (DOE, æppel-wīn, n.; Clark Hall 1966, 9; 220), but the definition of *bēor* is less straightforward. It appears to have been a non-grape fruit-based drink, often made with honey and with a strong alcohol content, possibly the

most potent alcoholic beverage generally available in the period; it was expensive to buy, at 22 pennies more than the established weight of water (Fell 1972, 84), and therefore potentially profitable to produce from a surplus crop.

A benefit of market trade was that it gave people 'greater opportunity and surer knowledge' of the transactions they were undertaking (Britnell 1978, 195). It was important for a sale to be made in the open with witnesses to see it, thus, markets provided commercial security, along with the opportunity to peruse a wide variety of goods. They are likely to have developed in areas where people regularly gathered, primarily at sites of administrative and religious significance, and provided a fixed location where the populations of neighbouring and distant communities could come together to trade (Sawyer 1981, 155–6). Although there are some early records of markets in DB, a far greater number are noted from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: the result of improvements in record-keeping and the granting of market charters as part of the increased centralisation of economic interests. It is unclear whether administrative powers exercised licensing rights over markets and fairs pre-conquest, but it is likely many existed before they first appear in the written record and that charters simply provided 'the legal framework to what were already long-standing events' (Epstein 1994, 469).

Although it is difficult to assess exactly when markets or fairs first arose, it is reasonable to assume they did so in reaction to the varying economic and agricultural characteristics of an area. The success of early medieval towns was largely dependent upon market forces and the opportunities that arose through trade (Taylor 1979, 96). Horticultural orchards were likely established with long-term economic interest in mind and would have benefitted from close proximity to large commercial or administrative centres. Over time, some 'orchard' settlements appear to have gained enough wealth and influence to have themselves become the location of a market or fair. Appleby We and Plympton D were recorded as boroughs in 1179 and 1194 respectively, while Appleby Li had a chartered market and fair from at least 1267 (Letters 2013). Although these are the only three definitive examples of an 'orchard' settlement with a market, 80% of pear *tūn*s, 60% of *æppel-bȳ*s, 56% of plum *tūn*s, and 29% of *æppel-tūn*s became parish towns and may have played host to an early unchartered market. This is particularly significant when compared with other potential 'orchard' sites like *æppel-garðr*, *æppel-geard*, and *orceard*, which excepting

Orchardleigh So, were not parish names but smaller dependent sites: suggesting fruit production at these locations may have been on a smaller scale and intended to support only the local community.

It is possible, however, that some smaller settlements could have been established as places of horticultural production to benefit a larger estate or parish that did have its own market. Appleton Plantation Ca (*Appelton* 1424) is on the outskirts of the parish town of Great Wilbraham, which held a market and fair first officiated in 1281. Pirton and Parton are both early-attested sites in the parish of Churchdown Gl, which had a chartered fair from at least 1252. The proximity of these sites (<1 km apart) and the confusion in some of their early forms suggest these names may have developed to refer to different parts of the same fruit-producing estate. Pirton (*Piriton*, *Pyryton* 1180; *Periton* 1220; *Pyryton iuxta Chirchedon* 1281) looks to derive from the compound *pirige-tūn*, 'pear-tree orchard', while Parton (*Pertuun*, *Perton'* 1222; *Parthon* 1291, *Parton* 1305) may suggest an etymology from *peru-tūn*, 'pear orchard', but some early attestations, especially those with <e>, are hard to differentiate. PNGl (ii, 122) notes that there was also a field in Churchdown parish known as *Red perry* 1775, implying a continued association with pear-trees in this area.

East and West Appleton YN are again two small adjacent settlements that were originally a single estate first attested in DB (*Apleton*, *Apelton* 1086). East and West Appleton were townships in the parish of Catterick, which was first established as the site of the Roman camp and river crossing at the junction of Dere Street (RR8b & 8c) and the River Swale (PNYN 242). Both Appleton and Catterick were held by Count Alan of Brittany in 1086, although they appear to have been in separate hands in 1066. The parish of Catterick occupied land in three wapentakes, was an important crossing place of the River Swale, and the site of an early Anglo-Saxon church (Page 1914, 303). Although there is no officially recorded market at Catterick, it is likely trade took place here from the time of Roman occupation. East Appleton is less than 1 km from Dere Street and 3.5 km south of the fifteenth-century Catterick Bridge, making Catterick an accessible and convenient location for the sale of surplus produce.

It could be that domesticated apple-trees were originally introduced to lands surrounding Roman fortifications during the time of Roman occupation and that some continuity of use led to their development as orchards in the early medieval period. There is evidence that local agricultural efforts were aimed at supporting a stationed Roman garrison (Dark 2000, 128) and often neighbouring defended settlements known as *vici*, developed in response to military interests in agricultural output and trade (Smith and Fulford 2019, 140). There does seem to be a correlation in the north of England between known Roman sites and 'apple orchard' settlements. As discussed, East and West Appleton are a possible example. Another is Eppleby YN, which lies 4 km south-west of Piercebridge (see 2.60.1): the location of another Roman river crossing with a bridge and fort. Other examples are Appleton Hall in Bridekirk Cu, 2 km north-east of Derventio Roman Fort at Papcastle and Appleton le Street, which lies on the course of a Roman road (RR814) that connects it to Derventio Roman Fort at Norton-on-Derwent 5.6 km west. It is not, however, possible to substantiate a true continuity of cultivation at any of these sites.

In DB five *tūn* and *bȳ* 'orchards' were, at least in part, under monastic ownership. These include the Abbey of Burton-upon-Trent that owned land at Appleby Magna and Parva Db, the Abbey of Coventry that held Wasperton, the Abbey of Westminster that held Pirton Wo, Peterborough Abbey that held Appleby Li, and Malmesbury Abbey that was the sole land-owner of Purton W in DB and the principal administrator of Purton manor for the four centuries preceding (Bainbridge 2011, 244–85). An eighth-century charter, the authenticity of which has divided scholarly opinion (eSawyer), states that King Ecgfrith returned 30 hides of land at Purton (*Piertean* 796(14th) S149) to the monks of Malmesbury Abbey, which had previously been seized by King Offa, for the sum of 2000 silver shillings. The fruit produced at these 'orchard' settlements could have directly benefitted monastic communities by supplementing the diet of the monks, being used in the production of alcohol, or sold as surplus at markets.

Worcester has long been known as a city of orchards and a place where pear-tree species are prized and propagated. The county coat of arms for Worcestershire is a pear-tree on a hill and the city crest depicts three Worcester Black Pears (Page and Willis-Bund 1924, 390 fn.140), which, tradition has it are a variety that has been associated with Worcestershire since at least the fifteenth century when they appeared

on the banner of the Worcestershire Bowmen at the Battle of Agincourt.[55] Charter and place-name references to fruit growing sites around Worcester prove that this relationship with fruit cultivation is long-standing and generally linked to ecclesiastical interests. Three early place-names indicate 'orchard' sites in the land surrounding Worcester (*Fig.85*). Cherry Orchard Wo in the parish of St Peters-without-Worcester is an *orceard* place-name that appears originally to have been known as *Shirreves Orchard* 1327, 'sheriff's garden, orchard' (see 4.3). Napleton Wo is situated on the course of the Roman road from Birmingham to Gloucester (RR180), which connects it to Worcester 6 km to the north and Pirton Wo is less than 2 km south-east of Napleton. Much of the city of Worcester and the surrounding land was owned by the church and under Benedictine control from as early as the eighth century. Most of the land comprising Pershore Hundred, south of the city, originally belonged to the abbey of Pershore. This land was then divided in the eleventh century and given to Westminster Abbey. In DB Pirton is recorded as belonging to Westminster, which also had a subject priory at Great Malvern, 9 km to the west (Willis-Bund and Page 1971, 1–2; 93).

There are four charters that record fruit-trees in the land surrounding Worcester (*Fig.85*). The most obvious reference to fruit cultivation is the *orceard* at Bentley in Holt Wo, now Bentley Fm, approximately 7 km north-west of the city centre, that appears in an eleventh-century grant of land made by Bishop Lyfing (S1395; Hooke 1990, 366). Two charters from the tenth- and eleventh-centuries detail the bounds of Perry in the parish of St Martins-without-Worcester, which derives from *pirian* 'pear-tree' (S1327, S1385) and survives in the name Perry Wood (Hooke 1990, 286). The manor is also attested in DB (*Pyrya*, *Pirya*, *Pirie* 1086), where it is listed under the ownership of the bishop of Worcester, and from the fourteenth century was known as *Pirywode* 1370, suggesting that by this time the manor no longer survived (PNWo 161). The final charter reference to fruit-trees is to the *haran apel treo*, 'hoar apple-tree' (S142), in the bounds of Wick Episcopi Wo, given by King Offa in the eighth century as a grant of land to bishop Milred.

[55] An early example of this is found in *The Battaile of Agincourt* by Michael Drayton (1627), where the banner of Worcestershire is described as 'Worster a Peare-Tree laden with the Fruit'.

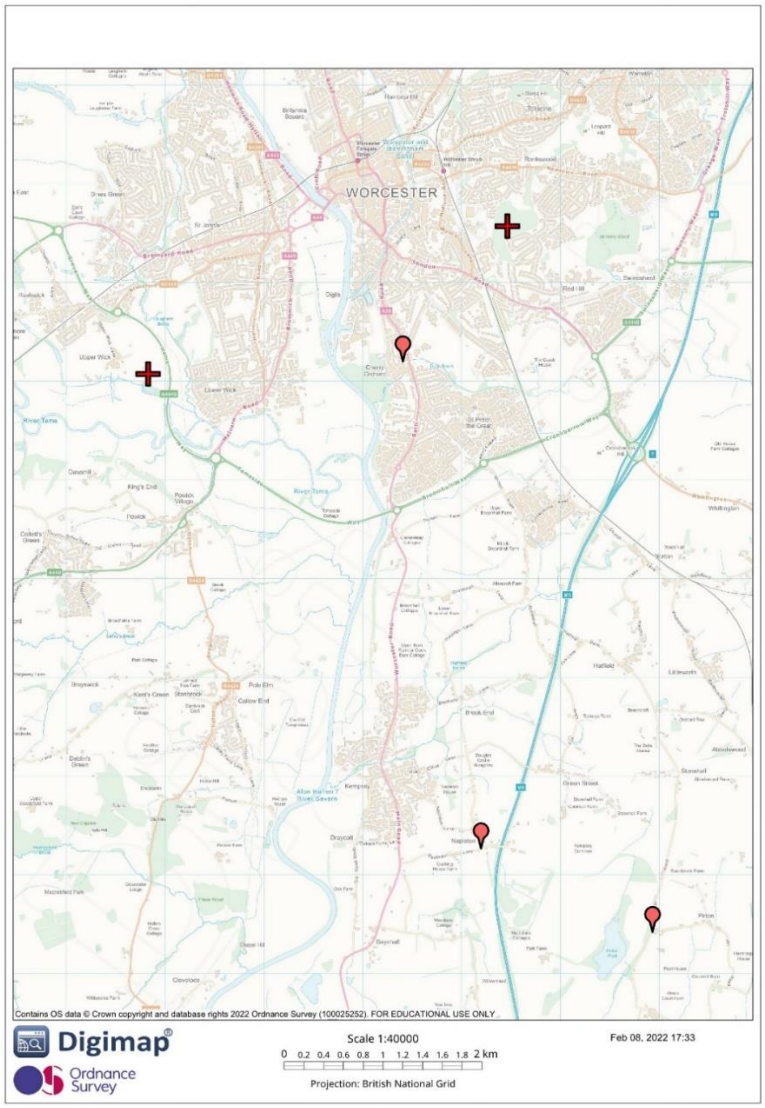


Figure 85: 2022 OS (1:40 000) map of the orchard sites in and around Worcester: Napleton, Pirton, Cherry Orchard, and charter references for Perry Wood (St Martin's-without-Worcester) and Wick Episcopi

The significance of monastic ownership of fruit-tree 'orchard' settlements should perhaps not be overstated. Five *tūn* 'orchards' were also held by the Crown in 1086 – Appleton le Street YN, Appleton Wiske YN, Purton Gl, Plympton D, and Woodplumpton L – and five other fruit-tree named sites were also held by monasteries in DB – Appleford Bk, Great and Little Parndon Ess, Parham Sx, Plymstock D, Pyrford Sr – suggesting the connection between *tūn* and *bȳ* 'orchards' and monasteries was not unusual within the wider context of monastic ownership. This does not, however, minimise the importance of the examples discussed above

when considering the motivation for and benefits of fruit production at individual sites.

When thinking about the importance of market proximity, it is also necessary to examine the distance between 'orchard' settlements and known assembly sites, which as regular meeting places might also have been locations of commercial activity (Baker 2014b, 1499). Assembly sites would have been well connected by roads and would presumably have had the infrastructure necessary to support a large influx of people. Shire courts dealt with the most serious matters of justice and bureaucracy twice a year, while the hundred courts generally met once a month and addressed more minor issues; these were also the location at which the Danegeld was collected on behalf of the crown (Britnell 1978, 190). It is very likely trade took place wherever there were large gatherings of people (Baker 2014b, 1500) and it is probable that assembly sites were particularly attractive to traders, not only for the number of people in attendance, but as Jones (1993, 673) suggests, because a bureaucratic presence would have ensured that commercial transactions were duly witnessed, and the price of saleable goods could be increased.

Three *pirige-tūn* settlements were the location of a hundred meeting-place. In 1084, Puriton So was the assembly site for *Locheslege* hundred and because it was the only manor in the hundred that did not belong to the abbot of Glastonbury, became a free manor and itself the name of a hundred by 1212 (*hundredum de Piritona*) (Anderson 1939a, 51). A chartered market was held at Puriton from c.1159 (Letters 2013), but its status as a hundred meeting-place suggests this was a location of trade prior to this date. Pyrton O is 9.5 km from the nearest recorded market, held at Crowland Gifford O from 1155, but was first attested as a manor with a church in the tenth century (*Pirigtune* 987(11th) S1354) and was recorded as the site of the hundred assembly in DB (*Peritone*, *Peritune hund'* 1086) (Anderson 1939a, 219). Purton W was probably the site of the Staple Hundred meeting-place (*Staple*, *Stapla hundred* 1086), as there are three possible mentions of a *stapol* name in the parish (PNW 34): *Stapol Cross Way* 1631, *Steeple Piece* 1840 and in the early medieval bounds of Purton an entry that either reads *lawe* (possibly *hlaw*) *stapele* 'tumulus post' or *le westapele* 'the west post' (S1586). The same charter contains two references to apple-trees: *illo loco per le appeldore* 'that place by the apple-tree' and *usque in appeldore sele wyke*. The exact meaning of the latter is unclear, but it could be translated as 'to the farm of apple-tree

hall'. Although these references are not direct evidence of horticulture, they do further highlight the importance of fruit-trees in the parish.

Appleby Magna and Parva Db appear originally to have been a single *æppel-bȳ* settlement ((*æt*) *Æppebbyg*, *Æppelby* c.1002; *Appelbi* 1004) but were recorded as separate estates in DB: where Appleby Magna was held by the Abbey of Burton (*Apleby* 1086) and Appleby Parva by Henry de Ferrers (*Apleberie* 1086). No Man's Heath (*Nomonheth* 1483, *Normans Heath* 1625, *No Mans Heath* 1835) is less than 2 km from Appleby Magna, on the boundary of the four counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Warwickshire (PNLe vi 10). Land that straddled county boundaries was sometimes used as neutral ground for legal assemblies involving several communities and the lost field-name *Spellow* c.1450, deriving from the OE compound *spell-hlāw*, 'speech mound, hill', suggests there was an assembly site here (PNLe vi 21). The *hlāw* in question probably referred to the ridge north of the village that lies beside the course of a salt-way between Nantwich and Farndon (*Salters Lane* 1842, *Salt Street* 1887), which formed the boundary between Appleby and Austrey Wa (PNLe vi 11). A meeting-place on a well-established trading route with visitors from the four surrounding counties would have provided ample opportunity for the sale of surplus fruit during harvest season.

4.4.4 Trade and travel: rivers and roads

When examining the commercial landscape of early medieval England, it is essential to consider the routeways that connected trading centres, along which goods were transported with relative ease and security. If fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* settlements were indeed 'orchards' that produced a surplus of perishable goods, they must have been established close to pre-existing routeways that allowed for easy travel by land or water; thus, enabling access to the local market, or the transport of fruit to other commercial centres.

There is little direct documentary evidence for the early medieval use of rivers for transport and trade, but as Hooke (2007, 37) states, 'the circumstantial evidence is overwhelming'. Successful trade via waterways would have been reliant upon the navigability of a river or coastline but assessing the use of these waterways is difficult as the course and characteristics of the riparian and littoral landscapes has changed, sometimes significantly, over the past millennium. What may once have been a

reliable river route, might now be inaccessible or impractical in relation to the trading settlements it once connected. Extant place-names and archaeological excavations can provide evidence of ports and early forms of river management that hint at the original course and function of a river, but there is still much that is unclear, and discussion of the following examples should be understood within the context of this uncertainty.

The River Thames was one of the most well-documented waterways in medieval England. It served as a trading route for a large area and allowed for the transport of goods up and down its course for thousands of years. Appleton Brk sits between the Thames and the A338, which largely follows the course of an old Roman road that ran between Wantage and Oxford (RR164). A tenth-century charter that grants land at *Ærmundeslea* and the vill of Appleton to Athelstan mentions both the Thames (*temese*) and *þære stræte* 'the street/Roman road' (S480). By the eleventh century, Appleton was a prosperous settlement and, according to DB, had a substantial income, a large population, and the most valuable fishery in the county (Page and Ditchfield 1924, 335). It was connected by river and road to Oxford, 7 km to the north-west, which was recorded as a fortified town in the Burghal Hidage and by the tenth century had developed to become a thriving commercial and civic centre, with markets, urban industry, and a royal mint (Blair 1994, 152–3). River travel has the benefit of speed and lessens the difficulty of transporting heavy goods, but there is a large meander in the stretch of the Thames between Appleton and Oxford that would have increased the length of a journey by boat. It is possible in this instance that the more direct course via road was preferred, for as Cole (2007, 70) observes, roads may have been traversed to cut out difficult or unnecessary stretches of water. The seasonal conditions of a routeway likely also influenced a journey. Bad weather could have rendered a road impassable, and flooding may have made a river inaccessible. The Thames, in particular, is recorded as having had a strong seasonal pattern of use and river travel appears to have been safer and more expedient in winter when water levels were higher (Blair 2007, 12). At harvest time, from late summer to early autumn when a fruit crop was brought in, it is unlikely flooding would have been a common problem, but the choice of route for the transport of a fruit crop may have changed on an annual basis.

Purton Gl is another 'orchard' settlement that appears to have been well-connected by river and road. It lies beside the River Severn, which connects it to Gloucester and the Bristol Channel and is 1 km from the course of a major Roman road that ran adjacent to the river all the way to Gloucester (RR60aa). Purton is recorded in DB under a list of properties in Bledisloe Hundred that were held by the king in 1086. It lies within the parish of Lydney, 3 km south-west, which was owned by the Bishop of Hereford and by Pershore Abbey in 1066 and was easily accessible by river and road. Seasonal and tidal considerations must have been made when planning a journey on or alongside the Severn, but these land and river routes would have ensured there was no shortage of trading opportunities.

Coastal trade may also have had an influence on the development of horticultural 'orchards'. Appleton Manor K is an 'orchard' settlement within easy distance of the large port of Dover, 5 km to the south, that was perhaps reachable via the course of the Roman road that runs from Richborough to Dover (RR100). It is possible that the development of a horticultural site at Appleton Manor was influenced by the trading opportunities at Dover, which was first attested as a significant port from as early as the fourth century (Watts 2004, 192).

Plympton D (*Plymentun* 904(13th) S380) lies on the course of the River Plym[56] and was a major commercial, administrative, and ecclesiastical site in the early medieval period, giving its name to the hundred by the late eleventh century (*Plintona* 1084). Plympton was a port town until the river became too silted up and trade moved south to Sutton (*Sutona* 1086), which had been renamed Plymouth (*Plymmue* 1230) by the thirteenth century. The successful development of an 'orchard' site here and the subsequent growth of the town was likely due to the established trading opportunities presented by the river and possibly also by the Ridgeway, a land route to Exeter attested by the thirteenth century (*Ryggeweystrete* 1281, *Ryggeweye juxta Plympton* 1302), which like other ridgeway roads – the Ridgeway (*hrycwæg* 856(12th) S317) and the Icknield Way (*Icenhilde weg* 903(c.1200) S369) – can probably claim much greater antiquity (Taylor 1979, 183; 185).

The network of roads, tracks and pathways that were used during the early medieval period is now largely lost to us. Hindle (2015, 42) estimates that around 40% of

[56] The river name is likely a back-formation from Plympton (PND i 251–2).

Roman routeways were still in use during the fourteenth century and it is likely that the course of most modern major roads in England were already established by the eleventh century (Taylor 1979, 110), many with a Roman or prehistoric origin. A royal charter issued by William I extended the king's peace over four main roads: Watling Street, Ermine Street, the Fosse Way, and the Icknield Way (Baker and Brookes 2013a, 142). These roadways were largely Roman-built, although some stretches, especially of the Icknield Way, were established much earlier. It should be acknowledged that the extent to which these roads were maintained as the Romans had created them is not clear and it is likely deviations occurred over time. Environmental pressures, such as flooding and general disrepair, may have presented a major hindrance that could have led to the abandonment of a road and the necessity of connecting newly established settlements may have fundamentally altered the course of some routes (Margary 1973, 23; Harrison 2004, 50–4). Although they do not give us the full picture, Roman roads provide us with a good starting point for consideration of trading routes in the early medieval period.

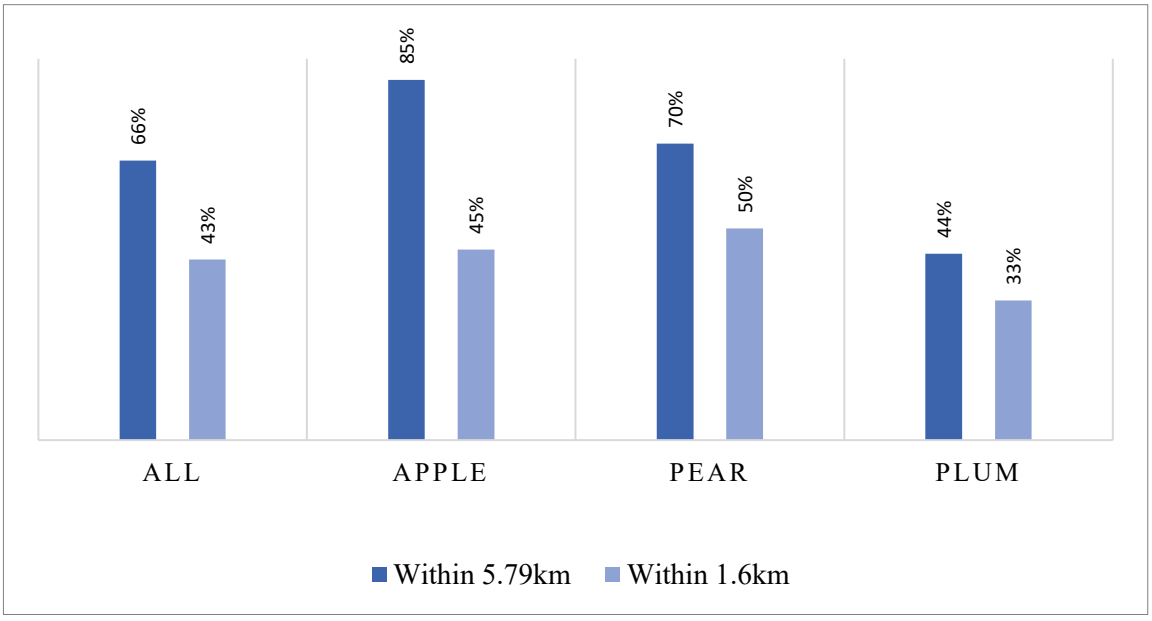


Figure 86: The proximity of 'orchard' settlements to known Roman roads

Keith Briggs, in his study of the relationship between Roman roads and early medieval settlements, calculated that no distance in England can be more than 42 km from a known Roman road and that 80% of random points are less than 9.86 km away (Briggs 2009, 53). It is therefore possible to isolate statistically significant place-name compounds that show a more than a random distribution pattern in relation to these

routeways. As a point of comparison, Briggs estimated the average distance of known Roman villas from Roman roads and determined that 80% are less than 5.79 km away, confirming that villas are strongly biased towards Roman routeways. An earlier study by Margaret Gelling (1967, 87; 97) investigated the significance of *wīc-hām* settlements and discovered that 24 of the 28 *wīc-hām*s (86%) are within 1.6 km of a known Roman road. This suggests that the connection with these routeways was essential to understanding this type of name and led to the discovery of a probable association with Roman settlements, giving the etymology 'village associated with a Romano-British *vicus*'.

Using these two studies as a point of comparison, it is possible to suggest that 'orchard' settlements also had a statistically significant proximity to Roman routeways. The mean distance from a known Roman road to a fruit-tree *tūn* or *bȳ* 'orchard' is 4.20 km; 66% are within 5.79 km and 43% are within the 1.6 km distance observed for *wīchām* settlements (*Fig.86*). When examined by species, apple-producing sites have the strongest correlation with Roman roads, situated on average only 3.8 km from a known routeway, with 85% within 5.79 km and 42% within 1.6 km. This is followed by pear *tūn* settlements that are an average of 4.2 km away with 70% within 5.79 km and 50% with 1.6 km, while the mean distance for plum is 4.5 km with 44% within 5.79 km and 33% within 1.6 km (*Fig.87*).

Roman roads are generally biased towards areas of low altitude on fertile agricultural land, in regions that were typically better suited to habitation. These are also prime conditions for fruit-tree growth, which can in part explain the correlation between Roman roads and 'orchard' sites. However, comparison with other fruit-tree named settlements suggests that this cannot be the only explanation. When the corpus of fruit-tree names without a *tūn* or *bȳ* element is plotted in relation to Roman roads it is clear there is no significant correlation (*Fig.88*), with only 21% within 5.79 km and 12% within 1.6 km (*Fig.97*). When examined by species pear-named settlements have the closest relationship with Roman roads, with a mean distance of 6.6 km, but this is possibly because pear names proliferate in the south where Roman settlement and infrastructure is most evident. Plum has a mean distance of 16 km and apple 16.5 km, which is over four times the average distance of *æppel-tūn* and *æppel-bȳ* sites. If this is further broken down to include only fruit-tree names with a habitative generic there is still no correlation. The mean distance is 12 km, with the closest being Parham Sx

(3.8 km) and the furthest Plumstead Nf (14.8 km), suggesting that the relationship between ‘orchard’ settlements and Roman roads was not simply a bias towards habitative names.

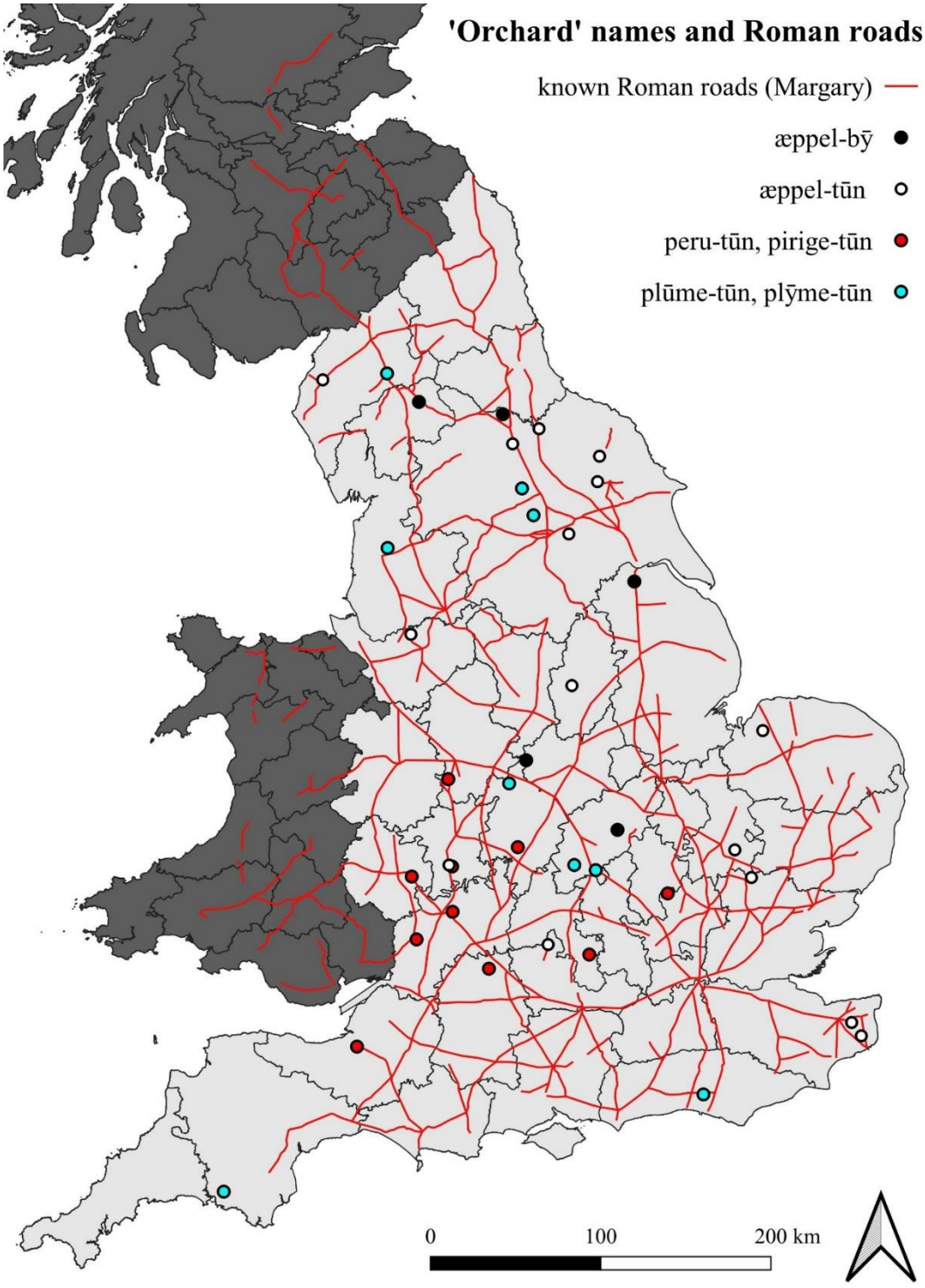


Figure 87: The distribution of ‘orchard’ names in relation to the course of known Roman roads

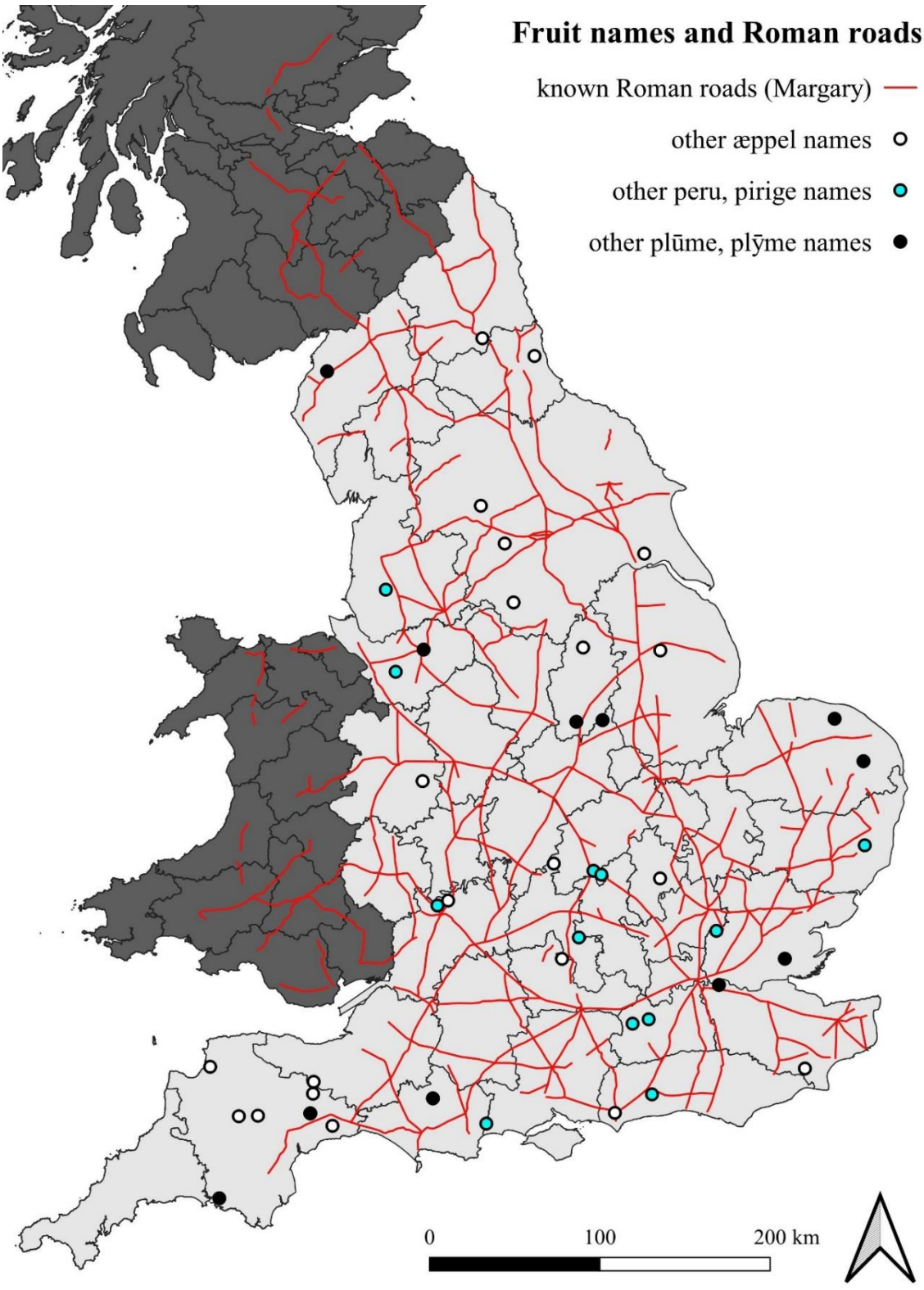


Figure 88: The distribution of other fruit-tree names in relation to the course of known Roman roads

To reduce the probability that the relationship between 'orchard' settlements and Roman roads was solely due to the element *tūn*, comparison can be made with the

extensive corpus of *āc-tūn* place-names, which appear to have been sites where oak timber or coppice was produced (see 3.6). The mean distance between *āc-tūn*s and known Roman roads is 11 km, with only 35% within 5.79 km and 8% within 1.6 km (*Fig.89*). Wood produced at *āc-tūn* settlements was likely also transported from these sites to markets and places of industry; however, the primary function of *āc-tūn*s necessitated they be established in heavily wooded areas, especially in the north-west where oak woodland was prolific (see 3.5). It is likely that regions with dense natural woodland had fewer major routeways, especially if there were not many major settlements and trading sites in the area. It is possible that when *āc-tūn*s were established in the early medieval period, routeways also developed to enable the transport of timber to the course of older trading routes, or nearby settlements. The founding of 'orchards' appears to have been less restricted by region and horticultural sites would ideally have been situated so inhabitants could best exploit the commercial opportunities presented by nearby market towns and estate centres. The native wild fruit-trees initially required as rootstock for introduced domestic species were widespread throughout England, generally preferring the loam-rich agricultural lowlands where Roman roads are common and where these routeways were perhaps more likely to still be in use.

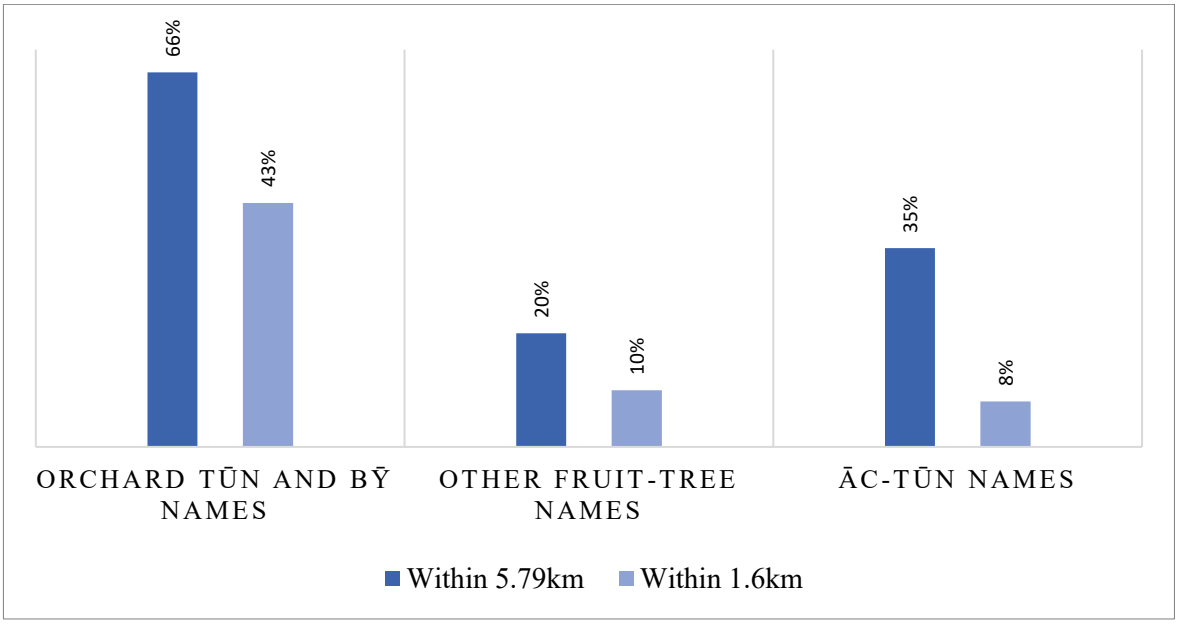


Figure 89: The proximity of 'orchard', other fruit-tree, and *āc-tūn* settlements to known Roman roads

It is interesting to note that *orceard* place-names have no particular correlation with known Roman roads, with a mean distance of 20.8 km, 27% within 5.79 km and only Orchard House in St Albans is within 1.6 km. This average distance is influenced, however, by the four examples in Devon: a county for which information on Roman roads has until recently been scarce. This study makes use of the Roman roads recorded by Margary (1973) but the emergence of new data for Devon[57] could favourably influence the correlation with *orceard* sites. Charter evidence also suggests some *orceard* sites were well connected by popular routeways and these serve to emphasise the limitation of solely considering known Roman roads. An *ealdan orcheard* in the bounds of Frustfield estate in Wiltshire sat beside a *herpæð* 'military highway' (S766) and another Wiltshire *orceard* at Liddington lay between a *herepade* 'military highway' and a *tobrokene strat* 'broken-up/dilapidated street' (S459), the latter implying a paved road, possibly Roman, that had fallen into disrepair.

Eight apple 'orchard' sites are within 1.6 km of a known Roman road. Among these can be counted Napleton Wo and East and West Appleton YN (analysed above). Appleton Wiske YN is less than 1 km from the course of the road from Barmby to Durham (RR80a). The well demarcated stretch that crossed the River Wiske at Appleton is now partially known as Blind Lane (2023 OS: NZ 38119 04296). There is an *æppel-garðr* minor name in the parish of Appleton Wiske, suggesting an 'apple enclosure' was recognised at this site under a different name and possibly at a later date. It appears as Applegarth Farm in the 1890s OS map (NZ 40213 03225) and in the most recent OS survey, but in 1850 the same site bore the name Maple Carr. The early attested *æppel-geard* name in Hooton Pagnell, Mapple Yard (*Appelyerd'* 1208, *ye Appleyard* 1724), demonstrates a similar late adoption of forms with M, which PNYW (i 88) suggests may be the result of misdivision of the definite article ME *attem*.

Appleton Hall Cu is a minor name in Bridekirk parish. It sits between two Roman roads (RR75, RR751) that met at Derventio Roman Fort at Papcastle. The road from

[57] Ongoing efforts using LiDAR data and GIS mapping are allowing for the extension of known Roman roads in Devon and the discovery of previously unknown routes (Rippon and Gould 2021; Parcero-Oubina, et al. 2023). Once firmer conclusions have been drawn it may be possible to map *orceard* settlements in relation to these newly discovered routeways.

Carlisle to Egremont (RR75) is less than 1 km from the modern settlement of Bridekirk. It is possible the foundation of the 'orchard' was related to the church of St Bridget that gave rise to the name Bridekirk. Appleton le Street YN lies on the course of a possible Roman road (RR814) between Malton to Hovingham. There has been some debate in recent years as to whether this road is of Roman origin, but it seems likely when considering the straight course of the 'street' and the presence not only of a Roman fort at Malton (Derventio Roman Fort) but also the discovery of an important Roman site at Hovingham (Haken 2018). Appleton Thorn Ch is beside a recently discovered Roman road that follows a stretch of raised ground, known as the Cheshire North Ridge Roman Road (RR70aa) (Ratledge & Buckley 2018). This meets King Street 1.6 km west at Stretton Ch (*Stretton*(*a*) 1259: OE *strǣt-tūn*), which was a Roman-built road that ran from Wilderspool to Chesterton (RR70a). King Street was a trading route that continued down past two of the major inland salt-producing centres at Northwich (10 km south-east) and Middlewich (18 km south-east).

Early medieval toponymic evidence for Roman roads is not definitive. While OE *strǣt* is often indicative of a Roman routeway this is not always the case, as this compound was sometimes used to indicate later-built roads, or possibly Roman roads that were no longer in use but remained a recognisable landscape feature with the remains of paving, agger, and drainage ditches (Taylor 1979, 94; Baker and Brooks 2013, 144). Stretton en le Field Le (*Streitun*, *Stretone* 1086) directly north of Appleton Magna, is a *strǣt-tūn* compound, 'farm near the street', but there is no trace of a Roman road in this area. It is possible the name referred to the nearby Salt Street that runs past No Man's Heath (see 4.4.3).

Appleby We is beside the major Roman road between Scotch Corner and Penrith (RR82), and along the road just north of Appleby is evidence of a Roman fortlet (Haken 2018). Appleby had a Norman castle and was a borough from 1179 (Letters 2013). It was clearly a well-connected settlement linked north and south not only by road (now the A66), but also by the River Eden, which flows south-east to north-west. Appleby Li lies on the course of a known Roman routeway that connected Lincoln to the River Humber at Winteringham (RR2d). There was a chartered market at Winteringham from the early fourteenth century (Letters 2013), but it is likely the settlement benefitted from trading opportunities presented by estuary and road from a much earlier date. Appleby lies in an area of slightly raised loam-clay soil, surrounded

by sandy soils to the south, the estuary to the north, and slow-draining clay-based soils with a series of *kjarr* 'marsh' names to the east (Roxby Carrs, Appleby Carrs, Bonby Carrs). The favourable geology and easy travel access via an established routeway likely explain why an orchard was established at this site. Appleby is listed under three landholders in DB, including the Abbey of St Peters at Peterborough.

Five pear *tūn* settlements are within 1.6 km of a known Roman road, including Pirton Wo (see 4.4.3; *Fig.85*). Pirton Hrt and Pyrton O are 1.5 km and 1.6 km from the originally prehistoric and later Roman routeway, known as the Icknield Way. Both 'orchards' are situated on the well-draining loam-clay soil on chalk bedrock that characterises the ridgeway geology of this region. They are the two largest and wealthiest pear *tūn* settlements by population size and taxation in DB. Puriton So is at the termination of a Roman road that begins at Ilchester (*Lindinis* Roman town) to the south-east. The routeway follows the southern length of the Polden Hills and Puriton sits on better-draining loamier soil in the waterlogged and clay-rich surrounds of the Somerset Levels. Ashperton He is on the Roman road that runs south-east to Dymock and on to Gloucester through the Vale of Leadon (RR610). It is 2.5 km south of Stretton Grandison (*Stratune* 1086), where this known stretch of road appears to begin. Dymock, 11 km south-east, was recorded as a borough with a chartered market from the early thirteenth century (Letters 2013).

Of the three plum *tūn* settlements within 1.6 km of a Roman road, two lie on the course of the road itself. Plumpton End Nth is situated on a stretch of Watling Street between Towcester and St Albans (RR1e). Towcester (*Lactodorum* Roman town) is 3 km along the road to the north-west and Old Stratford (*Westratford* 1278: OE *strǣt-ford*) is 6 km south-east. Plumpton End is in the parish of Paulerspury, which was one of two adjacent *pirige* 'pear-tree' parishes in Clayley Hundred (see 2.62.1). The Plumpton named settlements of the estate of Plumpton Wall Cu stretch for about 2 km along the course of the Roman Way, which was the route from Penrith to Carlisle (RR7e). There is a Roman fortlet directly south of the settlement and Voreda Roman Fort 1.2 km to the north. Penrith, 5 km to the south, is not attested until the twelfth century (*Penred* 1167, *Penereth* c.1185) and appears to have developed as an important town under royal initiative from the 1220s (Letters 2013). It is likely this was an early trading site as it is here the road crosses the River Eamont at Eamont Bridge (*ponte* (*de*) *Amot* 1279), which is referred to in the ASC 926 D as *þære stowe*

þe genemned is æt Eamotum, 'the place that is called Eamotum', with reference to the confluence of the Eamont and the Lowther (PNCu i 12). Plumpton Sx is 1.6 km directly south of the town of Streat (*Estrat* 1086: OE *strǣt*) which lies on a Roman road that met the London to Lewes Way at Barcombe Mills in the east and Stane Street at Hardham in the west (RR140).

4.5 Conclusion

There are several toponymic compounds that appear to have indicated sites of fruit-tree cultivation in early medieval England. Names deriving from *orceard*, *æppel-garðr*, and *appel-geard* names seem to have referred to smaller sites, probably established as part of larger estates. These were almost exclusively minor names and many are not attested until after the twelfth century. For *orceard* names this makes it particularly difficult to establish when they were founded, as this word is hard to distinguish from ME *orcheard*, *orchard*. In OE literature there is a distinctly monastic focus to discussion of orchards and cultivated trees, which is also reflected in the place-name and charter evidence for *orceard* sites in the early medieval period.

Fruit-tree names with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic were generally larger settlements. Two thirds are attested as DB manors and 71% were major names with the majority acting as the locus of a parish. They were larger wealthier settlements that paid more tax than other fruit-tree named sites. The generic elements *tūn* and *bȳ* suggest not only that these were enclosures where fruit production took place, but that these may have been specialised horticultural sites where a surplus fruit-crop was produced with an intention of sale beyond the immediate community. This likely helped to establish them as wealthy settlements with larger populations than other fruit-tree named sites.

Fruit-tree *tūn* or *bȳ* settlements are generally located in regions that are geologically favourable for the cultivation of fruit-trees, situated as they are principally in lowland areas on fertile well-draining soils. Their distribution is reflective of the natural climatic preferences of fruit-tree species: with pear 'orchards' found almost exclusively in the traditional orchard regions of the south-west, where the warmer and wetter climate is better suited to pear cultivation. Pear 'orchard' settlements in the south-west were generally the wealthiest 'orchard' estates, which may reflect the rarity and importance of cultivated pears as a food source; as Banham (2004, 43) states, the 'desirability of fruit can only have been increased by its limited

availability'. Apple 'orchards', by contrast, are more common in northern counties: likely because this was the majority fruit-tree species of this region and was thus worthy of note. In the south, apple-trees were also common but perhaps less noteworthy compared with other available fruit varieties. As OE *æppel* and ON *epli* are words that could be used to indicate fruit other than the 'apple' it is possible some of these 'orchards' were mixed-species sites.

Not only were these 'orchard' sites situated in areas favourable for fruit production they were also well-connected within the commercial environment of early medieval England. Those that were held as part of a monastic or royal estate appear not only to have produced fruit that may have directly benefitted monastic or secular communities but may also have provided an income through the sale of a surplus fruit crop. One of the principal examples of a fruit-producing region with secular and monastic interests was Worcester, which has a variety of place-name and charters that refer to both *orceard* and fruit *tūn* sites, extending the known history of orchards at Worcester back to the early medieval period.

Several 'orchard' sites hosted their own market or fair and those that did not were within a reasonable distance of known commercial centres or gathering places. These sites were also generally within close proximity to potential trading routes that would have allowed the transport of goods. In particular, there is an interesting correlation between known Roman roads and fruit-tree *tūn* and *bȳ* settlements, which suggest these sites were founded in areas with an established travel network. There is also a potential connection between the introduction of cultivated fruit-trees to Britain by the Romans and the presence of early medieval orchards. Domesticated fruit-tree species, or even old orchard sites, may already have existed in the landscape, which could have aided the establishment of new orchards through the process of grafting and careful management.

This case-study provides only an introduction to the significance of toponymic evidence for orchard sites in early medieval England and more research could be done on the topic of horticultural fruit production during this time. This topic would benefit in particular from a more multidisciplinary approach than has been attempted here, with examination of localised archaeological finds and a more in-depth look at the development of commercial centres in relation to orchard toponyms. Further

consideration of specific examples of settlements like Worcester, where there appears to be a wealth of evidence for fruit production, would likely prove to be a rich source for understanding how ecclesiastical and secular interests in fruit cultivation developed.

5. Chapter Five: OE *hnutu* and nut-tree place-names

5.1 Introduction

OE *hnutu* is the specific element in at least 42 place-names in England that are attested by the end of the fifteenth century. To assess the meaning of *hnutu* in toponyms, this chapter begins by examines the etymological development of this word and how it has previously been understood in place-name scholarship (5.2). It then considers which nut-bearing species existed in the early medieval landscape and whether these could have been referred to as *hnutu* (5.2.1–4). An interdisciplinary approach is taken that considers the historical, archaeological, and ecological contexts that support and refute the inclusion of these species as possible *hnutu* names.

The corpus of *hnutu* place-names is examined as a whole (5.3) and then categorised by generic element so that the distribution of different types of *hnutu* compound can be compared (5.4). A more detailed analysis of individual names is included in this section that considers the climatic and geological contexts of these sites: this can be a determining factor when analysing the species a *hnutu* name may have represented and the reason nuts were noted at particular locations. Repeated comparisons are made with the corpus of OE *hæsel* 'hazel' place-names, as these serve to demonstrate that while *hnutu* often appears to have indicated hazel, this may not always have been the case and other species like walnut and sweet chestnut are also possible.

The recurrent compound *hnutu-lēah*, 'nut open woodland', is of particular interest in this section (5.4.1.1) and by examining the system of silviculture that existed in the early medieval sweet chestnut groves of Northern Italy, it is possible to draw comparisons with how *hnutu-lēah* sites may have functioned. These appear not only to have been places well-suited to nut-tree growth, but semi-natural environments where nuts may have been cultivated as an edible resource, which makes an interesting point of comparison with the early medieval 'orchard' settlements explored in chapter four (see 4.4).

The broad aim of this chapter is not to designate a particular species identification to all *hnutu* place-names, but to recognise the variety of species and contexts to which this element could be applied. Little is known of nut-tree cultivation in early medieval

England, but *hnutu* place-names help to shed some light on the potential importance of nut-producing sites and how the palatability of certain nut-tree species may have helped to shape the ecology of the early medieval landscape.

5.2 Nut-trees in early-medieval England

OE *hnutu*, cognate with OHG *hnuz*, *nuz* and ON *hnot*, developed as nom. sg. and acc. sg. *hnutu* (gen. pl. *hnuta* and dat. pl. *hnutum*) and as i-mutated *hnyte* in other case forms (OED: nut, n.1: etymology). There is some development in the way this word is glossed in place-names over time: the earliest sources tending to be more literal, while some more modern scholarship offers potential species identification. EPNE (i 254) translates *hnutu* as 'a nut' but suggests that in a place-name context it probably also meant 'a nut-bearing tree'; Ekwall (1960, 345) glosses Notley Bk and Ess as 'nut wood' and *hnutu* in names where it qualifies the generic as meaning 'where nuts grew' (346); while Watts (2004, 445–6) and Mills (2011, 350) define all uses of *hnutu* as meaning 'nut-tree'. Among the Survey volumes *hnutu* is generally glossed simply as 'nut': according to PNSx, Nuthurst Sx was the 'nut wood' (i 231) and Nutley Sx the 'nut-tree clearing' (ii 350); Black and White Notley Ess is called the 'nut lēah' by PNEss (293); PNHrt (183–4) gives 'nut hamstede' for Nuthampstead Hrt; in PNNt (149) Nuthall Nt is 'corner of land where nuts grew'; and in PND (ii 601) Nutwell Court is 'nut spring, i.e. one near which these grew'. Some county dictionaries are equally circumspect when discussing *hnutu* names, giving 'the farmstead in or near the nut-tree pasture or nut-tree wood' for Nettlestone Wt (Mills 1996, 74) and 'the nut-tree place' for The Nussteads Sf (Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 103).

An early source suggesting a species designation is PNSr (302), which calls Nutfield Sr an 'open space with nut trees or hazels'. Generally, however, discussion of the possible species *hnutu* could refer to comes in later scholarship, beginning with Gelling (1984) who lists Notley names under *lēah* compounds with a tree-species specific, although no suggestion of the species is given. Coates (1989, 125) presents the possibility that Nutley Ha is a *hnutu* name 'perhaps implying hazel'. In LPN, Gelling and Cole (2000) are more confident in their identification of this element and suggest that Notley Bk and Ess are 'indirect references' to hazel (240), that Nutwith YN 'in which "nut" may be OE or ON, implies hazels' (253), and that Nutshaw La refers 'by implication to hazels' (247). In her section on 'Other Trees Noted in

Charters and Early Place-Names', Hooke (2010, 254) suggests that 'references to nut-trees (OE *hnutu*, *hnutbēam*) are probably also to hazel, although Richard Coates (pers. comm.) has suggested that some may be to walnut, *Juglans regia*'.

Although 'nut' or 'nut-tree' is no doubt an accurate gloss of *hnutu* in place-names, this study is concerned with understanding which species *hnutu* could have indicated and whether hazel is indeed the most likely option in most cases. There are five native or naturalised tree-species that grow in England with edible nuts: hazel (*Corylus avellana*), oak (*Quercus robur*, *Quercus petraea*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), and walnut (*Juglans regia*). Hazel, oak, and beech are native to the British Isles, while sweet chestnut and walnut are species that were introduced to the landscape. In the discussion that follows beech and oak are addressed together, as the principal use of their fruits was as a source of mast for pigs.

5.2.1 Common hazel (*Corylus avellana*)

There are 29 hazel-related major names and 75 hazel-related minor names so far identified in England (see 2.42 *hasl*; 2.43 *hæsel*; 2.44 **hæslen*; 2.45 **hæsler*; 2.46 **hæsling*; 2.47 *hesli* for major names attested by 1200). Hazel is mentioned frequently in OE literature, but it is rare that hazelnut is specified and there appear to be no direct references to hazelnuts in toponyms. Literary examples of hazelnut can be found in OE glossaries of Latin terms, where *avellana* 'hazel' is glossed as *hæselhnutu* but also simply as *hnutu* (DOE: hæsel-hnutu, n.; hnutu, n.1a). This demonstrates that at least in the literary language of early medieval England, both *hnutu* and *hæselhnutu* could be used to refer to the fruit of the hazel.

5.2.2 Pedunculate and sessile oak (*Quercus robur*, *Quercus petraea*); common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

Oak is the fourth most common tree-species referred to in English major names, with 76 examples first attested by the end of the twelfth century (see 2.1 *āc*, 2.5 *æcen*, 2.6 *æcern*, 2.27 *eik*; *Fig.1*) and many other references in minor names and early medieval charter bounds. Beech is less recurrent, with a possible 15 major names attested by 1200 and, according to Hooke (2010, 202) there are 19 charter attestations with a beech element. This is likely in part due to the natural climatic limit of beech, which largely restricted its growth to the south of England (see 2.15 *bēce*; 2.21 *bōc*).

The fruits of oak and beech are edible, but less palatable than hazelnuts, walnuts, and sweet chestnuts. It has been suggested that only the very poor would have eaten acorns and beechnuts, and then only during times of dire need as a famine food (Banham 2004, 52). Acorns are rich in tannins and can cause stomach complaints if eaten raw; however, *acmeluwes* 'acorn dust/meal' is recorded as an ingredient used to bulk flour when grain was in short supply (Hagen 1998, 14). The OE medical text, *Peri didaxeon*, prescribes the use of acorn as part of a remedy for a respiratory complaint (fol.19a: Cockayne 2012 ii 50), and a preventative remedy for pregnancy warns against eating too many *hnyte oþþe æceran oþþe ænige niwe bleda*, 'nuts or acorns or any fresh fruit' (fol.40b: Cockayne 2012 iii 145). While this provides evidence that acorns may have been consumed alongside other nuts, Hagen (1998, 135) suggests that a woman eating such a diet may have been scavenging 'because supplies of the staple foods were not available' and the warning is thus a reaction to birth defects that could be caused by malnutrition. It is worth noting that here *hnyte* 'nuts' and *æceran* 'acorns' are listed separately, implying that a conscious distinction was made between them. The same can be seen in the *Old English Heptateuch* (DOE: hnutu, n.1), where *æcyrnu* and *hnyte* are also listed separately. It seems that in the OE literary corpus there was thought to be a difference between nuts and acorns, although the same cannot be said with confidence for the word beechnut, which according to the OED (beech, n.C.1.), is not attested until the eighteenth century.

Probably the most often recorded use of acorns and beechnuts was as a source of fodder for domestic swine. Hooke states that the pasturing of herds of swine was one of the most important uses of woodland regions in the early medieval period and stresses that acorns and beech-mast were particularly important during the late summer and early autumn to fatten livestock before the winter months (Hooke 1998, 142–4; 2010, 138–64; 2011, 148–9). The word commonly used to describe this resource was OE *mæst* 'mast', which is defined as 'the fruit of beech, oak, chestnut, and other woodland trees, esp. when fallen and used as food for pigs' (OED: mast, n.2.1.a.). Beech-mast in particular is recorded from the sixteenth century (OED: beech-mast, n.). ModE *pannage*, an alternative word for mast and a term that expressed the right to pasture pigs in woodland, is of Norman French origin (OED: pannage, n.1a). An OE equivalent appears to have been *æfesa* (DOE: æf-esa, æf-ese, n.), which is evidenced in a writ of King Edward that grants the rights of mast and

æuesan at Chalkhill to the monks of Westminster (S1121). Neither *mæst* nor *æuesan* feature in the medieval toponymicon but OE *æcern* 'acorn' appears in field-names, such as *Echerne medowe* 1309 St and *Acherne Wong* 1550 Le, and in the major name Accrington La (*Akarinton* 1194) (see 2.6), which was probably a place of pannage similar to sites indicated by the recurrent place-name Swinton, OE *swīn-tūn*, 'pig farm' (Ekwall 1922, 90).

The specific terminology used to describe the fruit of oak and beech trees, and the taxonomic distinction made between *hnutu* and *æcern* in OE texts, suggests it is unlikely *hnutu* would have been used to refer to acorns and beechnuts, although perhaps not impossible in individual cases.

5.2.3 Common walnut (*Juglans regia*)

The OED (walnut, n.1: etymology) suggests a continental Germanic origin for this word, stemming from **walχo-z* (OHG *walah*, equivalent to OE *wealh* 'welshman, foreigner') and indicating nuts from a foreign land rather than a native species. The sole eleventh-century glossary attestation of OE *walhhnutu* is the earliest record of the word in any language (OED: ibid), but it is not clear when exactly it first became part of the OE lexicon. Lat. *juglans* 'walnut' was also glossed simply as OE *hnutu* 'nut' (DOE: hnutu, n.1b) and similarly in Low-German speaking countries the word descending from Lat. *nux* 'nut', when used without qualification, came to represent the walnut, so it is possible some references to walnut are hidden in OE *hnutu* (OED: ibid).

Common walnut is not native to England but has long been cultivated and is a semi-naturalised species in southern counties (Johnson and More 2004, 178). Rackham (2003, 339) suggests it has survived solely through cultivation and is likely to have persisted throughout the early medieval period only in gardens. The *Plan of St Gall* lists walnut as part of the ideal Benedictine monastery garden in early ninth-century Francia (Hagen 1998, 120) and although this is not direct evidence for early medieval England, contact with monastic houses in France could have resulted in the introduction of walnut to England as a cultivar in monastic settings. It is, therefore, conceivable that some *hnutu* names could have been dependent sites belonging to monasteries or manors that were named in relation to cultivated walnut-trees.

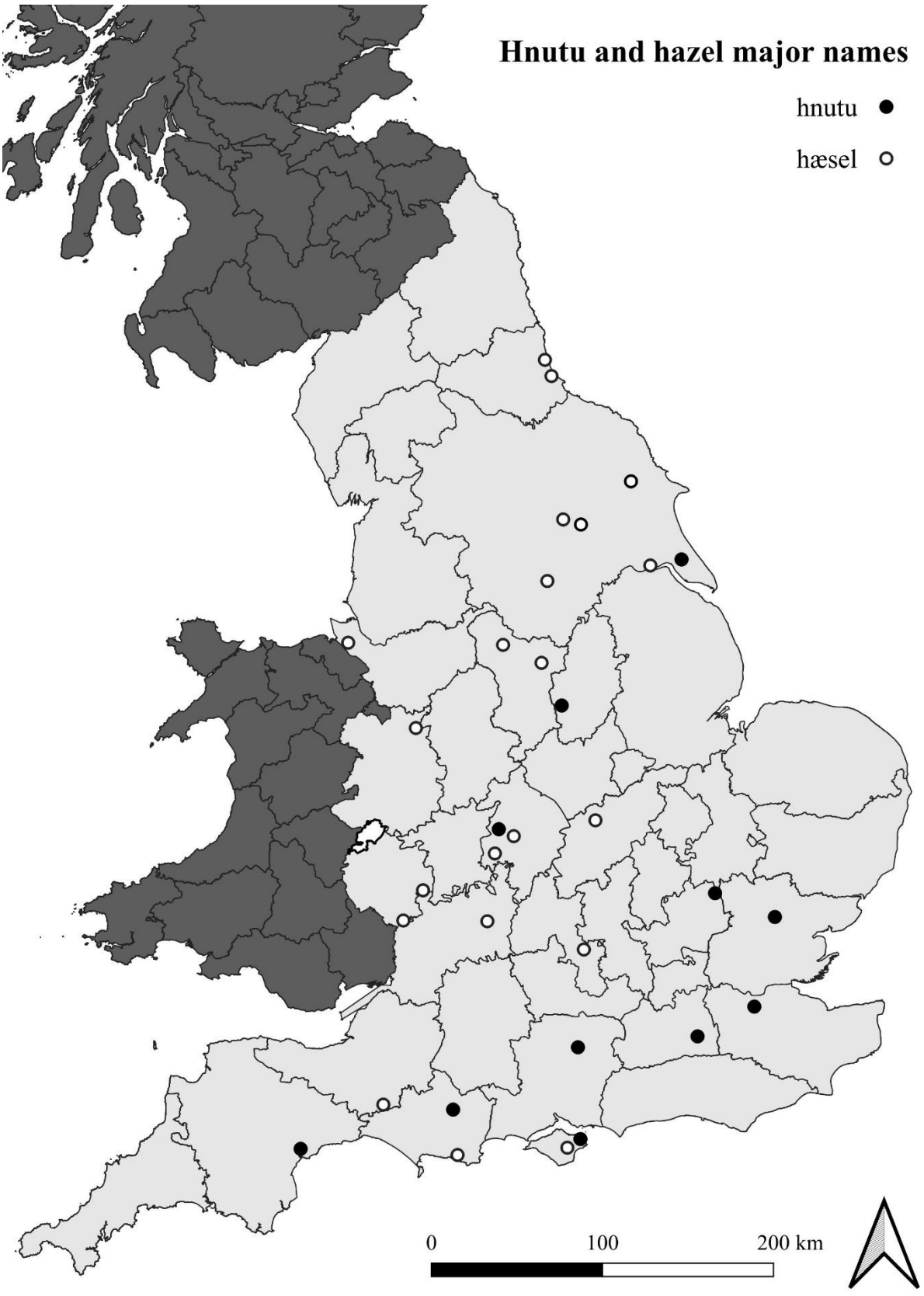


Figure 90: The distribution of *hnutu* and 'hazel' (*hæsel*, **hæsling*) major names attested by 1200

5.2.4 Sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*)

Sweet chestnut has 'developed a natural ecology' (Rackham 2003, 339), which means that it grows wild without human interference and can be identified with particular woodland habitats: primarily those on acidic soils. It is not clear when sweet chestnut was brought to Britain, but recent research refutes the antiquarian theory that the tree was introduced by the Romans. This has been achieved through re-examination of purported sweet-chestnut remains, dendrochronology, and genotype mapping (Jarman et al. 2019a; 2019b). Currently, the earliest evidence that sweet chestnut was growing in Britain comes from the twelfth century, albeit in small, geologically localised quantities (Jarman et al. 2017, 101).

It is unclear when the word for chestnut was borrowed into West Germanic languages, only that a probable Germanic **kastinna*, **kastinja* (OHG *chestinna*) appears to derive from Latin *castanea* (OED: chesteine, chesten, n.: etymology). OE glossaries from as early as the eighth century use variations of OE *cistenbeam*/*cistelbeam*/*cistbeam* 'chestnut tree' to gloss Latin *castanea* (DOE). The word *cystel* is used once as an alternative for *cystbeam* in an OE glossary and in the OE *Leechbook* (DOE: cistel, n.2), which discusses the properties of *Dracontea* 'dragon-wort' (possibly *Artemisia dracunculus*: Van Arsdall 2002, 122): it is described as *weredre* 'sweet' and *on swæcce swylce grene cysten* 'in flavour like green chestnut'. The use of colour terms in OE texts is often not straightforward, but *grene* was perhaps a reference to the unripe husk of the chestnut. The modern name sweet chestnut first appears in the nineteenth century and was used to differentiate from the more recently introduced 'bitter [and] inedible' horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) (OED: sweet chestnut, n.). When it is not compounded with *bēam* 'tree' in OE, it thus appears that *cystel* was used to describe both the tree and its fruit, as was also the case with other fruit-bearing trees, such as apple and pear (see 2.7 *æppel*; 2.61 *peru*).

5.3 The *hnutu* place-name corpus

There are eleven major names first attested by the end of the twelfth century with the specific element *hnutu* (*Fig.90*).[58] Nurstead K (*Notestede* 1086) derives from the compound *hnutu-stede*, 'nut place' (Wallenberg 1934, 107), and Nuthampstead Hrt (*Nothamsteda*, *Nuthamestede* 12th) has the generic OE *hām-stede* (PNHrt 183–4), 'nut homestead'. Three have woodland-related topographical generics: Nutley Ha (*Noclei* 1086: Ekwall 1960, 346) and Black and White Notley Ess (*Hnutulea* 998 S1522: PNEss 293), from the OE compound *hnutu-lēah*, 'nut open woodland', and Nuthurst Wa (*Hnuthyrste* 704(1000) S64: PNWa 66), from OE *hnutu-hyrst*, 'nut wooded-hill'. Nuthall Nt (*Nutehale* 1086) compounds with OE *halh*, likely indicating the shallow valley where the village sits (PNNt 149; Watts 2004, 446) and Nuthill YE (*Not*(*h*)*ele* 1086) with OE *hyll*, 'nut hill' (PNYE 33–4). Nutford Do (*Nortforde* 1086, *Nutford*(*e*) c.1191–7: PNDo ii 112) has the generic OE *ford* and Nutwell Court D (*Hnutwille* 1072) is a compound of *hnutu-wiella*, 'nut spring' (PND ii 601). Nutfield Sr (*Notfelle* 1086), has the generic OE *feld* (PNSr 302), 'nut open land', and Nettlestone Wt is first attested as *Hoteleston*(*e*) 1086 and later as *Notel*(*e*)*ston*(*e*) 1269: meaning '*tūn* at or called *Nuteles*', from either *hnutu-lēas*, gen. sg. of *lēah* 'open woodland' or *lǣs* 'pasture' (Mills 1996, 74; Watts 2004, 432).

Other names appear initially to have a nut-related element, but this seems less likely on closer examination. Nursling Ha is first attested c.800 as *Nhutschelle*. This was the name of the monastic estate where St Boniface became a monk (Watts 2004, 446). In this form it appears to be a simplex name, *hnutusciell* 'nut-shell', which Ekwall (1960, 346) suggests is a 'jocular' reference to it being a tiny place. A later charter records the form *Nu*(*h*)*tscillingæ* 877 (S1277), which has the place-name forming suffix OE *-ing* (Coates 1989, 124). Unfortunately, the location of Nursling monastery and the original settlement site is uncertain, although it is known that the southern and western boundaries bordered the River Test (S1277). As *hnutusciell* may have been used figuratively and there is no definitive evidence that this is indeed a *hnutu* name, it has not been included in the following discussion. Coates (2012, 220) suggests that

[58] These names were initially collected in keeping with the parameters for Chapter Two: the Corpus Analysis of major names attested by 1200. They are analysed here before the inclusion of other major and minor names as a point of comparison with the Corpus Analysis section of this thesis.

Notgrove parish Gl could be a *hnutu* name and that its proximity to Hazleton Gl may be significant; however, all early forms are spelt *Nat-* (*ad Natangrafum* 716–43(11th) S99; *Nategraua*, *Nategrava*, *Nategrave* 1086; *Nattegraue*, *Nattegrave* 1230), probably resulting from OE *næt* 'wet' (weak dat. *natan*), or the OE pers.n. **Nata* (PNGl i 175; Watts 2004, 445). Attestations with *Nut-* (*Nutgrave* 1285) and *Not-* (*Notgrove* 1535) are not recorded until the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively. As these early forms of Notgrove cannot be reconciled with a *hnutu* specific and there are no comparable early forms from *hnutu* names, Notgrove will not be included in the nut corpus.

The distribution of *hnutu* major names is largely southerly and may account for the lack of hazel major names attested by 1200 in the south-east (*Fig.90*). It is possible that in this area there was an early regional preference for the use of *hnutu* in place of *hæsel* as an indicator of hazel-trees; however, the absence of hazel names in the south-east is not so evident when minor names and major names first attested after the twelfth century are included. Extending the date of inclusion until the end of the medieval period (1500) ensures that northern counties are better represented. It also allows for the inclusion of minor names, which are usually first attested in later records. With these additional criteria the corpus can be increased by 31 names (see *8.4*).

With these additions to the corpus there are still no *hnutu* names in counties north of Yorkshire and the largest concentration remains in the south; however, the general distribution of *hnutu* names is much wider and less distinct (*Fig.91*). This change in distribution may be attributable to differences in contemporary naming practices, or it could be the result of chronological changes in the use of *hnutu* (ME *note*) in toponyms. It is possible that the reasons for the use of *hnutu* in naming were not consistent throughout the medieval period; for example, the gradual introduction and popularisation of nut-producing species like the filbert or the sweet-chestnut could have influenced the spread of this term in the later medieval period. Differences in the cultivation and farming of nuts and an increase in general horticultural knowledge may also have resulted in a change in approach to naming *hnutu* sites.

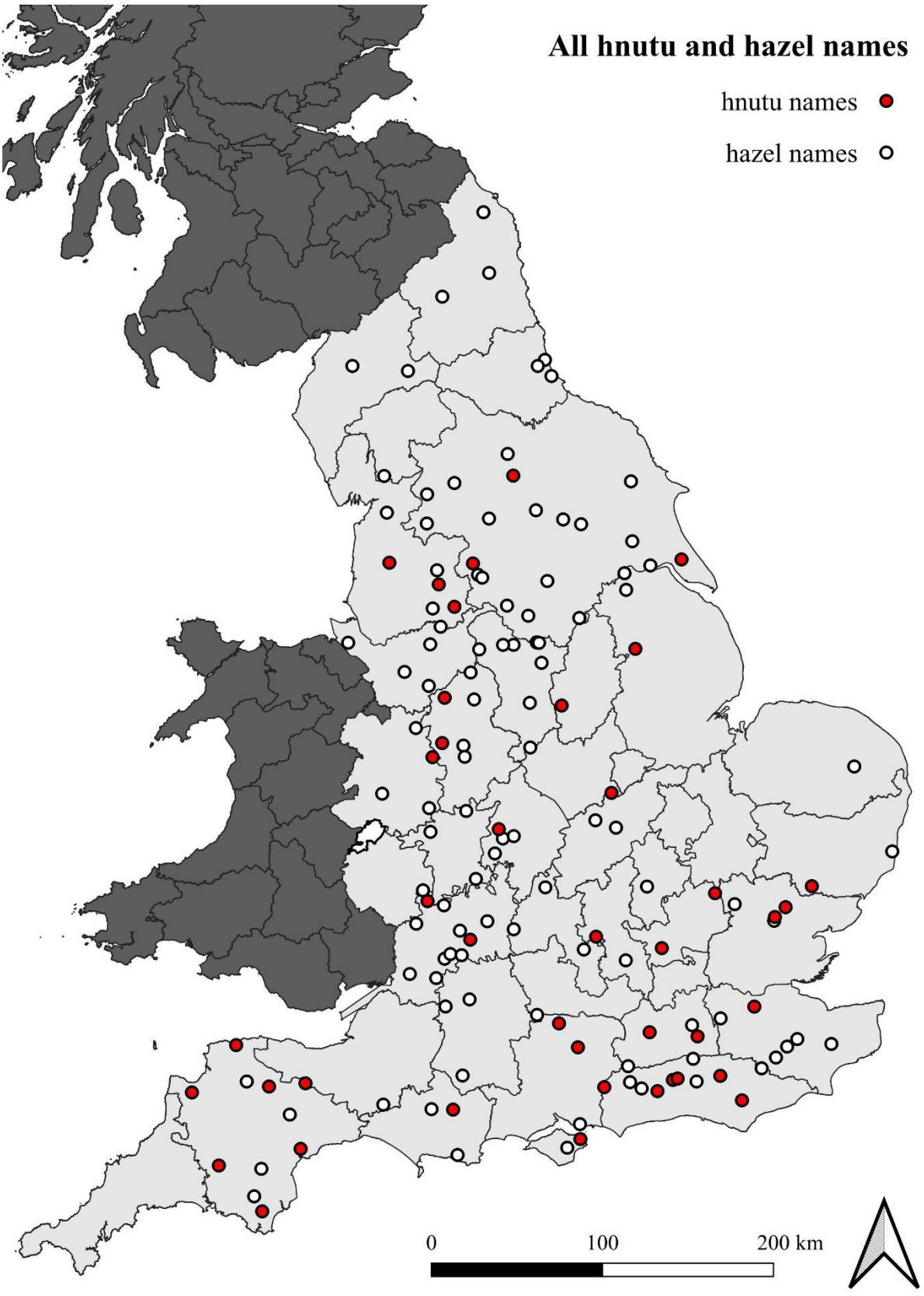


Figure 91: The distribution of place-names attested by 1500 with a *hnutu* or hazel-related specific element

If *hnutu* also indicated non-native species, then the more southerly distribution of early-attested major names could be due to a closer connection with the continent, both in physical proximity and similarity of climate. Banham (2014, 48) points out the importance of considering connections with monastic sites on the continent when examining early medieval horticulture: 'when new knowledge about horticulture, new techniques and perhaps new plants were coming to England … the European continent was the part of the Anglo-Saxons' world from which new things and ideas were likely to come.' Recent research has discovered that ancient sweet chestnut woodland in England occurs only in the south and consists of 'a single overall genepool … predominantly related to particular sites in France, Spain, Portugal and Italy' (Jarman et al. 2019a, 7). Thus, some of these *hnutu* names, particularly those in the south-east, may have indicated sites where cultivars such as sweet chestnut, or the Frankish filbert (*Corylus maxima*) – first recorded in English from the thirteenth century (MED: filbert, n.1a) – were grown.

For both native and non-native species the possible limiting impact of climate is also worth considering and the concentration of *hnutu* names in the south may have been the product of a warmer climate in southern regions that produced a higher nut yield. Longer summers in the south of England result in an extended growing season more favourable for hazelnuts, which grow best in a moderate climate with higher temperatures in the spring and summer months (EAFTS 86). Sweet chestnut and walnut also prefer a warm, temperate climate, and are less hardy than hazel. Sweet chestnut is particularly sensitive to late frosts and flowers later than most native species, it requires a minimum rainfall of between 600–800mm and a yearly mean temperature range of 8–15°C (EAFTS 78), meaning it would thrive best in the south where winters tend to be mild and wet. This likely explains the early semi-naturalised growth of sweet chestnut in Gloucestershire and South Wales in the twelfth century, where it is recorded that tax was paid through the provision of sweet chestnuts at Goldcliff Priory near Caerleon and Flaxley Abbey Gl (Jarman et al 2019b, 50). These sites must have cultivated mature trees with a crop that was regular and prolific enough to establish a system of taxation.

5.4 Analysis of *hnutu* place-name corpus

Of the 42 names with the element OE *hnutu* (see *8.4*), only five (11.90 %) have a habitative generic, compared with 35 topographical *hnutu* compounds. Of these, 16 (38.09 %) are woodland or vegetation-related, six refer to a valley (14.29 %), six have generics denoting a hill (14.29 %), four have a water-related generic (9.52 %), and the final five are compounds that relate to an area of land (11.90 %): ON *deill* 'a portion of land', OE *feld* 'open land', OE (*ge*)*hæg* 'enclosure', and two with OE *hamm*, likely referring to an 'enclosure' or 'meadow'.

5.4.1 Woodland-related *hnutu* compounds

5.4.1.1 *hnutu-lēah* compounds

There are five woodland-related generics that compound with *hnutu*: OE *hyrst* 'wooded-hill', OE *lēah* 'open woodland', OE *sceaga* 'small wood', OE *wudu* 'wood' and ON *viðr* 'wood, tree'. The most recurrent is *hnutu-lēah* with three major names: Notley Ess (*Hnutulea* 998 S1522), Nutley Ha (*Noclei* 1086), and Nettlestone Wt (*Hoteleston*(*e*) 1086), and four minor names: Notley Bk (*Nutele* 1210), Notley Hrt (*Notteley*(*e*) 1287), Nutley D (*Nutlegh* 1238), and Nutley Sx (*Nutleg*, *Nutlye* 1249). Unlike other woodland-related *hnutu* compounds, *hnutu-lēah* names are exclusively found in the south of England (*Fig.92*).

OE *lēah* is a complicated element to define and it may have had a variety of meanings in different contexts. What is generally accepted is that a *lēah* indicated a lighter area within a wooded landscape and it is here glossed as 'open woodland' (see 1.2.3.3). A *lēah* site would thus be favourable both for hazel, which is sensitive to over-shading from taller trees (Rackham 2003, 207) and for sweet chestnut, which is a light-loving tree, especially during early growth (EAFTS 79). Wager (2017, 116) suggests that *lēah* place-names need not have been indicative of dwellings, a proposition first made by Gelling (1974), and that the words compounded with *lēah* are integral to understanding what the site was used for.

When considering the importance of pannage in the early medieval period, the most obvious explanation of a *hnutu-lēah* would be a 'nut wood-pasture'. Direct references to mast and pannage have not been recognised in place-names (5.2.2) but appear often in charters where it was important to record land for swine. One example of this can

perhaps be seen in a tenth-century charter concerning land at West Meon Ha (S417), where mention is made of a *hnut leage bære*, probably 'nut wood-pasture', as OE compounds containing *bær* are most often equated with Latin *pascua* 'pasture' and *pascua porcorum* 'swine pasture' (EPNE i 16).

Of the eleven *hnutu* place-names that are recorded in DB, four mention woodland for swine (Notley Ess, Nurstead K, Nutbourne Sx, and Nutfield Sr) and only one of these is a *hnutu-lēah*.[59] The original location of the *hnutu-lēah* that gave rise to the name Notley Ess is uncertain, as the manor was divided and held by separate families by the thirteenth century (PNEss 294). There are seven records for Notley in DB, with details of land use and numbers of livestock. Woodland for a total of 430 pigs is mentioned, although only 60 pigs were recorded in 1086. Ploughlands, meadow, pasture, and wood-pasture are listed, along with horses, cattle, sheep, and beehives, serving to demonstrate the varied land use and farming practices of this estate by the eleventh century. The minor name Hazleton Wood (*Haselden' boscus* 1250), which lies within the parish roughly equidistant from the settlements of Black and White Notley, probably provides evidence of the type of nut that gave rise to the parish name. In light of this, it is worth considering whether hazelnuts would have been considered a valuable enough source of food for human consumption and whether they might not have been used for pannage, especially when relatively inedible alternatives like oak and beech mast were prolific alternatives.

Another function of Anglo-Saxon 'nut open woodland' is perhaps demonstrated by a woodland type that was common in early medieval Italy, where sweet chestnut groves were an integral part of the agricultural economy. Squatriti (2013) explores these sites in detail and suggests a sylvo-pastoral model of management, in which cows, sheep, and goats were grazed in groves to suppress vegetation and add to the fertility of the soil. During the harvest season livestock were removed from the groves and chestnuts could be collected with relative ease from the cropped grass. He notes that these sites were important for producing honey and wax, for which sweet chestnut pollen is

[59] It is not possible to know how many pigs a swine render actually represented as this was not a standardized measure and may chiefly have been a 'relic of traditional rights' rather than a reflection of swine numbers (Banham and Faith 2014, 208). It is also worth noting this measurement may have varied by region (Hooke 2011, 153); however, rough comparisons can be drawn.

particularly valued, and that the open nature of the groves would have made it possible to grow ‘rustic grain’, such as rye.

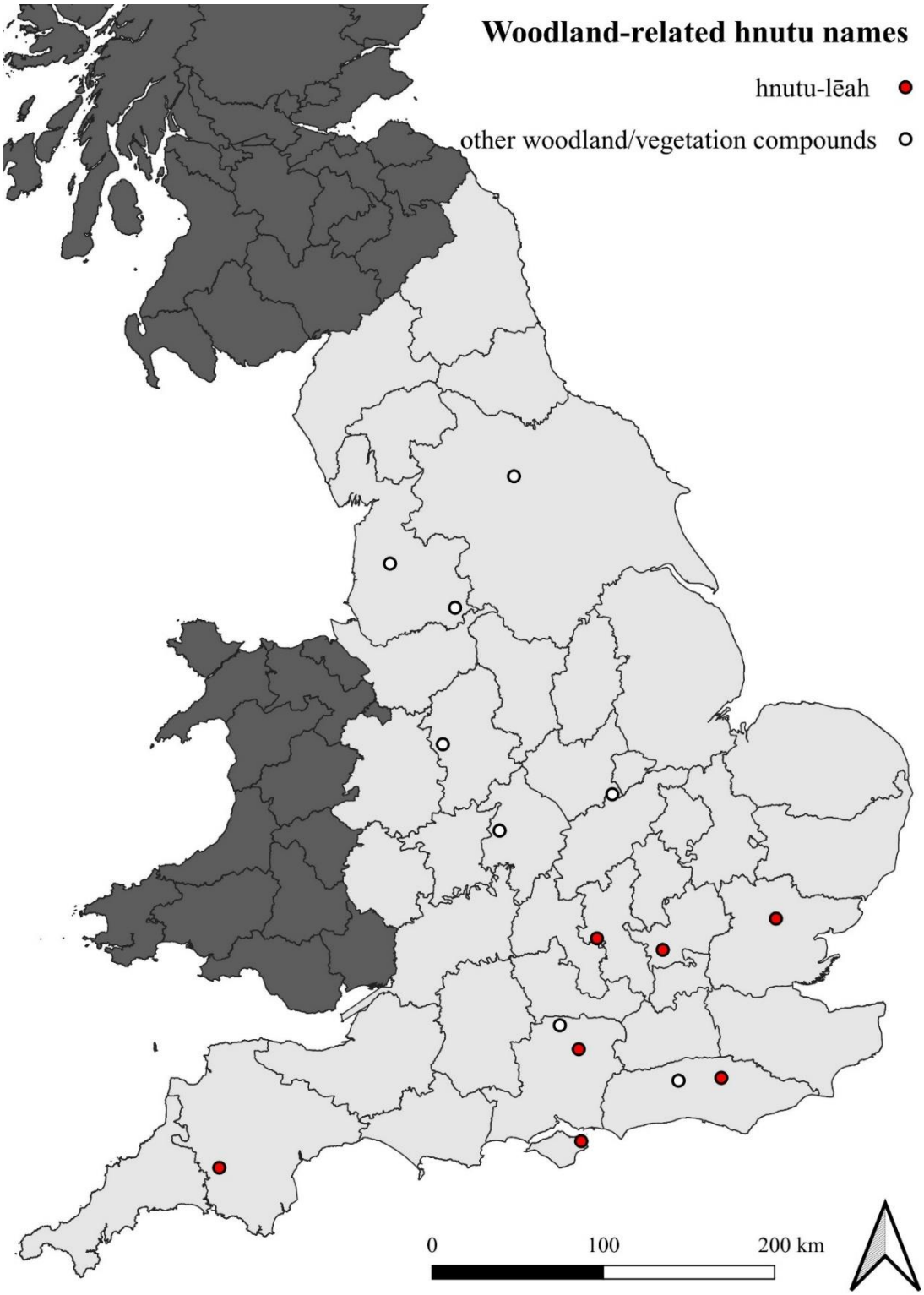


Figure 92: The distribution of *hnutu-lēah* and other *hnutu* woodland/vegetation place-names

Banham and Faith (2014, 219) stress the importance of arable farming in woodland areas and propose that even those sites named for a particular resource may have had a variety of uses. While *lēah* could have indicated wood-pasture, this is not a universally satisfactory explanation as some *lēah*s appear to have been cultivated (Williamson 2013, 222; Wager 2017, 118). LPN (240–1) lists several examples of *lēah* names, 'thought to refer obliquely to high-quality pasture', like OE *butere-lēah*, 'butter open woodland' (Bitterley Sa, Butterleigh D, and Butterley Ch, Db, He), while other recurrent *lēah* names suggest the cultivation of crops (Barley He, Flaxley Gl, Lindley YW, Wheatley Ess, La, Nt, O, YW), and Beeleigh Ess and Beoley Wo refer to bees. The qualifying elements of these names express only one characteristic, but it is likely *lēah*s were diverse areas with a variety of uses, perhaps named only for their most enduring or important economic asset. Thus, a *hnutu-lēah* was likely to have been a site where the nut harvest was considered to be the most valuable asset, but like the contemporary nut groves of northern Italy, the open woodland could also have been used to graze animals, grow crops, and perhaps even keep bees. Squatriti (2013, 76) notes that sweet chestnut groves are 'unusually detrimental to pig pasturage' and that the pork-producing oak landscape of the Romans evolved into a countryside of sweet chestnut groves and dairy pasture. Unlike areas of oak and beech woodland where mast was abundant, groves and woodland given over to the growth of palatable nut cultivars would have had to largely exclude pigs if the crop was intended for human consumption.

It is significant that there are no definitive examples of a *hnutu-tūn* compound. There is one possible occurrence in the minor name Nutton D (*Nottone* 1330), but without earlier attestations this is uncertain and may instead be the OE pers.n *Hnotta* (PND i 107), or, like Notton YW (*Notone*, *Nortone* 1086; *Nocton* 1186-1259), OE *hnoc* 'wether sheep' (PNYW i 283). Coates (2012, 219) suggests that the absence of *hnutu-tūn* names could be chronological and that *hnutu*-farm names were formed before 'the general or prototypical term [*tūn*] was … used'. However, perhaps it is more likely that the process of cultivating nut-trees and the environment in which they grew may not have suited the generally accepted meaning of a *tūn*, which appears to have indicated sites of more intensive and advanced agricultural practice; OE *lēah* sites, by contrast, seem to have been locations with a varied economy more suited to subsistence farming (Coates 2012, 227–8; Faith 2012, 240). This contrast with

agricultural *tūn* compounds is probably most obvious when comparison is made with 'orchard' place-names, such *æppel-tūn*, which tend to have indicated settlement where fruit-trees were cultivated (see 4.4). The cultivation of fruit-trees is a laborious process involving knowledge of grafting, pruning, and careful storage or processing of the fruit after harvest. There is no clear evidence that *hnutu-lēah* had a comparable lexical sense in OE, or that nuts were farmed in a similarly labour-intensive manner in the early medieval period.

There are, in contrast, four names attested by 1500 with a probable 'hazel' specific and a *tūn* generic: Hesselton in Finghall YN (*Heselton'* 1137) from OE *hæsel* (PNYN 247); Heslerton YE (*Esrelton, Haslintonis, Heslerton(e)* 1086) and Heslington YE (*Haslinton*, *Eslinton* 1086) from OE **hæsling* (see 2.46.1.1); and Haslington Ch from OE **hæslen* (*Hasillinton* early 13th) (PNCh iii 12). While it is possible these were locations where hazels were allowed to mature into fruit-bearing trees, it is equally if not more likely, these were sites where coppicing took place, as hazel was an important coppice species in medieval England and *tūn* is a compound often seen with tree-species that denoted wood production (see 3.5–7).

5.4.1.2 *hnutu-lēah*: geology and distribution

If *hnutu-lēah* was used to indicate locations where nut-trees were cultivated in groves, then the geology at these sites must have been well-suited to purpose. Pure hazel-wood is defined by Rackham (2003, 214) as woodland that is three-quarters hazel and is usually found at 'infertile, very acidic sites with a high proportion of sand or loess'. Rackham (2010, 277) and Peterken (1993, 131) acknowledge that hazel is not confined to this type of geology and grows well on fertile nutrient-rich and calcareous soils; yet the density of hazel on these sites is generally less than that of pure hazel-wood and is thus potentially less likely to have given rise to a nut name. By the thirteenth century sweet chestnut had 'developed a natural ecology' in England, meaning it no longer relied upon human intervention to self-propagate (Rackham 2003, 339). It is particularly fond of acidic, well-drained and nutritionally poor soils and in 90% of European chestnut forests it is the dominant species (EAFTS 78–9). Walnut is also usually found in pure stands or as an individual tree, as it is 'highly sensitive to competition' (Rackham 2003, 339), but it prefers 'deep and rich' loam-based soils with a neutral to alkaline pH (EAFTS 103). The natural distribution of

walnut is unclear due to its long history of cultivation and its probable survival through the medieval period only in gardens and monasteries. Of the seven *hnutu-lēah* sites, four (57%) are situated on sand-loam soil, two on loam-based soil and one on a mixed loam-sand-clay soil (*Fig.93*). The geology at all of these sites is generally acidic, with little to no trace of calcium carbonate. It is possible, therefore, that these were the locations of pure hazel or sweet chestnut stands, but unlikely that walnut-trees were cultivated there.

There is a marked difference between the geology at *hnutu-lēah* sites and that which is found at *hæsel-lēah* sites: with only 29% of *hnutu-lēah*s situated on clay soils compared with 60% of *hæsel-lēah*s (*Fig.93*). There are nine *hæsel-lēah* settlements, the majority of which cluster in the west of England. Six of these are situated on loam-clay soil, while Great and Little Haseley O, Haseley Wa, and Heasley Manor Wt (see 2.43.4.1) occupy less fertile sand-loam soil. The loam-clay dominance at these *hæsel-lēah*s does not fit the ecological preference of pure hazelwood and these may have been areas of open woodland where hazel could be found, but not necessarily sites where hazel was cultivated. Hazel can be sensitive to extensive over-shading and while it is able to exist in the shade of larger woodland trees, its growth-rate is much reduced under dense canopy (Rackham 2003, 207). An open space in a woodland area would have allowed hazel to grow unhindered by over-shading foliage. It is possible the value of hazelnuts as an edible resource that contributed to its recognition in these woodland areas, but as with hazel *tūn* compounds, it is perhaps more likely that *hæsel-lēah* was used to indicate a place where coppice wood was produced (see 3.2).

The regional distribution of *hnutu-lēah* is significant and there is a potential correlation with naturalised sweet chestnut distribution. Sweet chestnut woods are ‘abundant in south-east England and in coastal districts from Essex to Kent’ (Rackham 2010, 287), which largely corresponds to the spread of *hnutu* major names (*Fig.90*) and almost exclusively that of *hnutu-lēah* sites (*Fig.92*), with the exception of Nutley D. It is also significant that the compound *hæsel-lēah* does not appear to intersect with *hnutu-lēah* and there are no *hæsel-lēah* names in the south-east. This could be because these *hnutu* names indicated sweet chestnut but may alternatively have been the result of a regional preference for the use of *hnutu* to refer to hazelnuts. Hazel does appear in other woodland-related compounds in the south-east, but apart from Hazel Hall K (*Haselholte* 975: Wallenberg 1931, 293) none are attested before

the thirteenth century and could represent a later phase of naming: Hazelden K (*Hasilden'* 1256: Wallenberg 1934, 322), Hazelwood Fm Sr (*Haselwode*, *Eselwode* 1279: PNSr 291), Hazelwood in Boughton K (*de Heselwode* 1332: Wallenberg 1934, 205), and Hazelwood Fm in Wilmington K (*Hasylwood* 1528: Wallenberg 1934, 35).

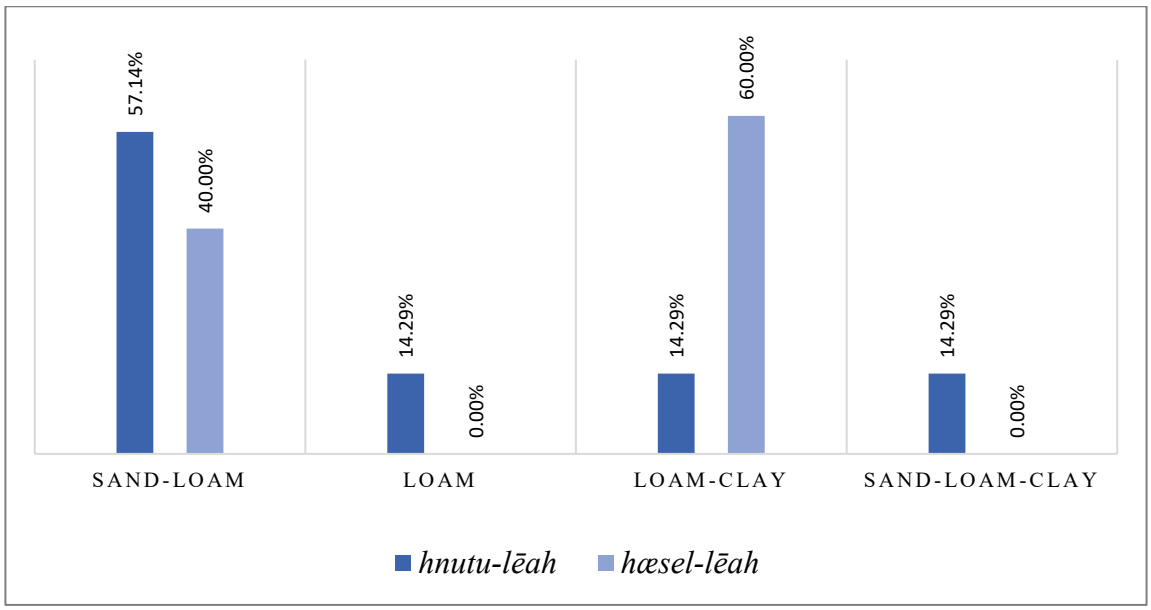


Figure 93: Graph showing the soil composition at *hnutu-lēah* and *hæsel-lēah* sites

Both hazel and sweet chestnut woodland prefer acidic sand-based soils, and both yield a better nut harvest in a more temperate climate. As these locations could have sustained the growth of both species, it is even possible *hnutu-lēah* names were indicative of mixed-nut woodland: sites at which both sweet chestnuts and hazelnuts grew. As there is a word in OE for the nuts of both the hazel (*hæselhnutu*) and the sweet chestnut (*cystel*) and these were not employed when naming *lēah* sites, it could be that species distinction was not important, and instead a palatable and prolific nut harvest is what gave rise to the name. However, although OE *cystel* features in glossaries and medical texts, it is important to consider whether the language of these documents was typical of the common spoken language of early medieval England. The corpus of OE literature that survives is largely a product of the south-west and the dialect of OE spoken in Wessex. It contains a vocabulary used by literate and presumably learned members of society and may not have been wholly representative of the vernacular. It is conceivable that most people did not use *cystel* in everyday speech, especially if sweet chestnut was a relatively recent post-Roman introduction

to Britain and was not prolific in the landscape. In the absence of a specific name for sweet chestnuts, they may simply have been referred to as *hnutu*.

5.4.1.3 *hnutu-hyrst* compounds

The second most recurrent woodland-related *hnutu* compound is OE *hnutu-hyrst*. There are three *hnutu-hyrst* names: Nuthurst La (*Nuthurste* 1322), Nuthurst Sx (*Nothurst* 1228), and Nuthurst Wa, which is the earliest attested *hnutu* place-name, appearing as *Hnuthyrste* in eighth- and ninth-century charters (S64; S1278). EPNE (i 277) glosses *hyrst* as 'a copse, a wood, a wooded eminence', while LPN (234) suggests it is best rendered as 'wooded hill', having as it does both the sense 'hillock' and 'wood' in different contexts. When compounded with *hnutu* it has been glossed simply as 'nut wood' (PNSx 231; PNWa 66), but also 'hill where nuts grew' (Ekwall 1960, 346) and 'the nut-tree wooded hill' (Watts 2004, 446).

As with *hnutu-lēah* names, the specific element likely referred to a resource that could be found in the landscape and identification of the particular tree-species was not the primary focus. The nuts growing at the sites in Warwickshire and Lancashire, however, are unlikely to have been anything but hazel due to the climatic limitations faced by sweet chestnut and walnut trees. The geology at each of these three sites is varied, but generally comprises low-alkaline mixed-loam soils. These are not optimum conditions for pure hazelwood (Rackham 2003, 214; see above 5.4.1.2), but would not have prevented hazel-tree growth.

5.4.1.4 Other woodland/vegetation-related *hnutu* compounds

The generic ON **buskr* may lie behind the ME spelling of Nut Bush Le (*notebuske* late 13th). Its location in Leicestershire supports the possibility of an ON compound, but there are problems with distinguishing this element from its cognate OE *busc*, which appears to have pre-Scandinavian independent origins (VEPN ii 94; 97). If the generic was ON then the specific in this instance may have been ON *hnot* 'nut'; however, this could also be an example of a Scandinavianised OE *hnutu-busc*. PNLe (iv 188) convincingly suggests this name arose through observance of 'an erstwhile patch of nut-bearing shrubs such as hazel'. Hazel often appears as a low-lying shrub and generally makes up the understorey layer when it grows in mixed woodland. Nut Bush lies on the exposed slope of a hill above the village of Medbourne, where the soil is acidic and sand-rich: providing good conditions for single-species hazel

woodland. Other potential examples of ON **buskr* or Scandinavianised *busc* with a hazel qualifier occur in the thirteenth-century field-names *Heselbusk*, found in Nottinghamshire (PNNt 277) and Yorkshire (PNYW vii 165).

Nutbeam Farm in Duntisbourne Abbots Gl (*Nutbeame* 1220) derives from OE *hnutu-bēam*, 'the nut-tree' (PNGl i 72). The field-names Nut Beans Ess and *Nut Binns* Hrt also appear to be *hnutu-bēam* names and although they have no medieval attestation are probably, like Nutbeam Farm, of early medieval origin (Cavill 2018, 304). The compound *hnutbēam* is found in OE glossaries and medica texts (DOE: hnut-bēam, n.; OED: nutbeam, n.) but the use of *bēam* 'tree' in ME is rare and it would not be expected in late-formed names (VEPN I 63). Kitson (1995, 78–9) suggests that the distribution of OE *bēam* is distinct to the south and south-east in the later Anglo-Saxon period and that OE *trēow* 'tree' was the more common and enduring choice.

While a prolific nut-yield or the presence of a large, or in some way distinct, nut-producing tree may have been enough to give rise to the name Nutbeam, it is worth considering whether this was an uncommon species of nut-tree, perhaps one for which there was not yet a name in the vernacular. Although it is not possible to definitively identify the species from the geology of the site, the alkaline loam-clay soil at this location would allow for the growth of walnut. This being a single tree may also encourage its identification as walnut, which grows best individually or in small widely spaced groups (EAFTS 103). In the eleventh century, Duntisbourne Leer in the same parish, also known as *Duntesb*(*o*)*urn*(*e*) *Notebem* 1275, was held by the Benedictine Abbey of Lyre in Normandy and perhaps benefitted from the introduction of cultivated foreign nut-tree species, such as walnut, from sister monasteries on the continent.

Nuthanger Farm Ha (*Notehangre* 1281) derives from the OE compound *hnutu-hangra*, 'nut sloping-wood'. The geology here is not optimal for the growth of pure hazelwood or sweet chestnut woodland, comprised as it is of loam-clay soil with varying acidity levels; however, this would not prevent the growth of either species in mixed woodland. While a *hangra* may not have been a wood that had 'a great deal of economic value' (LPN 234), the nuts that could be found at this site were notable enough to give rise to the name. This may have been as an edible resource for human consumption or perhaps as pannage for swine.

Nutshaw Hall La (*de Noteschaw* 1285) is a minor name with generic OE *sceaga* (Ekwall 1922, 136), which was sometimes used to refer to a 'strip of wood' (LPN 245) and most likely here referenced a small area of woodland where hazelnuts could be found. The soil is loam-clay based with low levels of calcium carbonate, once again not optimal for pure hazelwood. There are several thirteenth- and fourteenth-century deeds that mention the *de Noteschaw* family and it is not certain whether the family was named in relation to their principal residence (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 65–7), or whether the family name gave rise to the place-name. The landscape has been much altered by the urban sprawl of Preston and it is not possible to locate the site of Nutshaw Hall.

Nutwith Cote YN (*Notewiht* c.1190; *Nuttewith*, *Nutewyth* 1198) could be ON *viðr* 'wood' with OE *hnutu* or ON *hnot* (PNYN 230), although the <o> form may be due to the influence of ME *nŏte* (MED, n.1). LPN (253) states that 'nut' here implies hazels, which is the most logical conclusion given the northerly location of this site. The acidic sand-based soil suggests the presence of pure hazelwood, which may have produced a regular hazelnut crop. ON *viðr* is not a common element with tree-related specifics and only compounds with ash in Askwith YW (*Ascvid* 1086).

Nut Wood St (*Nutiwude* 1206) is a minor name two kilometres north-west of Gnossall that appears to derive from the OE compound *hnutu-wudu*, 'nut wood' (Horovitz 2005, 415). As with Nutwith Cote, the location of this name climatically limits species identification to hazel. There is still a wood at this location (2023 OS: SJ8154822496).

5.4.2 Habitative *hnutu* compounds

Hnutu compounds with a habitative generic are predominantly found in the south-east like the woodland-related compounds discussed above. There are three settlements with OE *stede* in the south-east: the parish of Nurstead K (*Notestede* 1086) and the minor names Nursted Ha (*Nutstede* 1204) and The Nussteads Sf (*Hnutstede* 11th S1486). These *hnutu-stede* names have been glossed as 'place where nuts grew' (Ekwall 1960, 346), and as 'nut-tree place' (Coates 1989, 125; Watts 2004, 446; Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 103). As with woodland-related *hnutu* names it is likely *hnutu* was here intended to denote a place where nuts could be had, rather than a particular tree-species. Although the literal translation of Nuthampstead Hrt

(*Nothamsteda*, *Nuthamestede* 12th) is 'nut homestead', the interpretation 'homestead where nuts grew' (PNHrt 183; Ekwall 1960, 346) perhaps best represents the original intention behind this name.

The other two habitative *hnutu* compounds are both minor names first attested in the fourteenth century: Nutborough St from OE *burh* 'fortification' and Nutton D, a possible *hnutu-tūn* name. The overall absence of *hnutu-tūn* names, with perhaps this one exception, is unusual when considered in contrast with other fruit-bearing trees, such as apple, pear, and plum (see 4.4). This is possibly due to the combined effect of better nut-harvests in the south and *tūn* being less common in the south-east than other parts of the country (Gelling 2010, 129). It could be that *stede* functioned for *hnutu* names as *tūn* did for fruit-bearing trees in the west. However, as discussed for *lēah* names above (5.4.1.1.), *tūn* may simply not have been an appropriate word for sites where nut-trees were cultivated.

The geology of places with habitative *hnutu* names is less favourable for pure hazelwood and sweet chestnut growth than *hnutu-lēah* sites (5.4.1.2; *Fig.93*), the soils are richer in clay and settlements with higher calcium carbonate levels are 20% more frequent. This could suggest that these were not places of silviculture where nuts were harvested for human consumption, but perhaps, places of pannage, or sites where nuts could be opportunistically acquired. The DB entry for Nurstead K records a relatively small settlement of eight households with woodland for three swine, while Polstead Sf, the parish within which lies The Nussteads, was a large settlement with woodland for 80 swine.

5.4.3 Other topographical *hnutu* compounds

There are four *hnutu* minor names with a water-related generic. Nutwell Court D (*Hnutwille* 1072) is glossed by PND (ii 601) as 'nut spring'. Nutford Do (*Nortforde* 1086) refers to a crossing place of the River Stour where nuts could be found (PNDo ii 112). There are two Sussex place-names deriving from OE *hnutu-burna*, 'nut stream': Nutbourne in the parish of Westbourne Sx (*Neoburna* 1179) and Nutbourn in Billingshurst Sx parish (*Notburne* 1288). The *hnutu-burna* in Westbourne might refer to Ham Brook, which is forded and bridged at the modern settlement site, but the *hnutu-burna* at Billingshurst is harder to identify as there does not appear to be a modern settlement associated with this name. Nutbourne in Pulborough parish is 7 km

south of Billingshurst, yet this name in its earliest forms is *Nordborne* 1086 and *Nordburne* 1095, 'north stream', perhaps with later corruption due to folk etymology (PNSx i 154). These names (Billingshurst selected as the closest location for Nutbourn) are all located in some of the southernmost counties of England. They exhibit a variety of low-alkaline loam-based soils and it seems less likely than for *hnutu-lēah*s that the harvest of nuts at these sites was managed or the rights of access controlled.

There are six names with a hill generic. Three have the generic OE *hyll* 'hill': Nuthill YE (*Not*(*h*)*ele* 1086: PNYE 33–4), Nuthill Farm Sr (*Nuthille* 1205: PNSr 150), and Nutty Hills Sa (*Nuthull* 1208: PNSa vi 181). Nutknowle Farm Sx (*Noteknoll* 1327: PNSx i 221) has the generic OE *cnoll* 'knoll; small, rounded hill' and Nuttall Wood La (*Noteho* 1256, *de Notehogh* 1318: Ekwall 1922, 63–4) derives from OE *hōh* 'heel-shaped hill'. There is no discernible pattern in the geological profile for these names and it is doubtful that these were sites of intentional nut-tree cultivation.

There are six names with a valley-related generic. Four Nutcombe place-names in Devon have the OE compound *hnutu-cumb*, indicating a 'short, broad valley' where nuts could be found (LPN 103): Nutcombe in Combe Martin (*Nodcomb* 1330, *Notecombe* 1473: PND i 37), Nutcombe in Clayhanger (*Notcomb*(*e*) 1244: PND ii 533), Nutcombe in East Allington (*Notcomb* 1330: PND i 314), and Nutcombe in Rose Ash (*Nuttcumb* 1283: PND ii 393). Nut Clough YW is first attested in the thirteenth century and apparently derives from OE *clōh* 'ravine' (PNYW iii 190), indicating a much steeper valley than those in Devon. Nuthall Nt is attested in DB (*Nutehale* 1086) with generic OE *halh* (PNNt 149), 'the nook of land where nuts grow', which refers to the shallow valley at this site (Watts 2004, 446).

With the exception of Nut Clough YW, the geology at these sites is loam-based and apart from at Nuthall Nt the soils are generally acidic. This does not suggest prime conditions for pure hazelwood but does not exclude the possibility of hazel in mixed woodland. About 1 km south-west of Nuthall Nt is a settlement called Swingate in the parish of Strelley Nt. According to PNNt (125) the earliest attestation for this name is the 1825 OS map; however, it may derive from OE *swīn* or ON *svín* 'swine' with OE *geat* 'hole, gap, gateway' or ON *gata* 'road'. Strelley (*Straleia, Sraelie* 1086; *Stratlea*, *Stratlega* 1168) is OE *strǣt-lēah* 'road open woodland', possibly with reference to the

same road that is recorded at Swingate, However, it is worth noting that in the North Midlands ME *geat* or *gata* had the alternative meaning 'right of pasturage' or 'a right of access to pasturage land' (OED: gate, n.2,8; EPNE i 196). The names Swingate and Nuthall may therefore point to an area where pannage was a notable feature.

There are another five *hnutu* place-names with a variety of generic elements. Nutham House Gl (*Noteham* 1216: PNGl iii 183) and Nutham Barn Sx (*Nutham* 1261: PNSx i 228) look to derive from OE *hnutu-hamm*. Nutham House is situated on a low ridge overlooking the valley of the River Leadon and LPN (50) observes that 'many minor names in the Somerset Levels contain *hamm* used of low ridges'. Nutham Barn is more likely to have the sense 'land hemmed in by marsh' (LPN 50) as the site is amidst an area of field drains with an alder-copse bordering the river immediately to the east. The geology here is slow draining and clay-loam based, which does not provide optimum conditions for hazel or sweet chestnut woodland; however, hazel may still have grown here in sufficient quantities to identify this as a nut-producing site.

Nunty's Farm Ess (*Noteheye* 1285) has the generic OE (*ge*)*hæg* 'a fence, an enclosure' (PNEss 397–8), which perhaps indicated an enclosed area that was hedged by hazels, or an area of nut-producing woodland that was enclosed, possibly to exclude livestock. Halstead Ess, 3 km north, had extensive woodland pasture in DB, enough for 206 pigs, and the neighbouring settlement of Stisted Ess, 3 km south-west, had wood-pasture for 800 pigs. It is possible that Nunty's Farm, the 'nut enclosure', was part of a larger area of managed woodland that was used as wood-pasture. PNEss (398) details a thirteenth-century reference to seasonal nut-gathering that took place in the manorial woods of *Oldefrith* and *Nonethey* (1289) at Pattiswick, which clearly referred to Nunty's wood (*Nuntheywode* 1316, *Nunteywode* 1406).

Nutdayle (1250–60) is a lost name in the parish of North Carlton Li that looks to derive from the compound *hnutu*(*hnot*)-*deill* 'the share of land where nuts were to be found' (PNLi vii 35). Cavill (2018, 479) glosses *deill* as a 'share, portion of land in the common field' and EPNE (i 128) notes it is an element that commonly replaces OE *dāl* 'share, portion', especially in the north-east. The soil here is sand-based, but the alkalinity is variable. The northerly location means that this was probably a

reference to hazelnuts. Thus, this name perhaps indicated a portion of the common field that was intentionally given over for the growth of hazel-trees.

Nutfield Sr (*Notfelle* 1086, *Nutfelda* in 1169) looks to derive from OE *hnutu-feld*, which PNSr (302) glosses as 'open space with nut trees or hazels'. LPN (270) notes that *feld* had no 'special connotation of arable' and lists several tree-species that compound with this element (275). The soil at Nutfield is acidic, sand-based, and permeable, which is favourable for pure hazelwood or sweet chestnut growth. Open land would also have suited hazel, which is sensitive to the overshading that often occurs in mixed-species woodland. The compound *hnutu-feld* could even have identified a site with a similar purpose to *hnutu-lēah*, with the possible cultivation of nut-trees; however, the DB entry for Nutfield does mention the provision for grazing pigs, although it does not list the quantity of land that was given over to this. Wood-pasture or a more intensive form of nut-tree cultivation are therefore both realistic possibilities at this site.

5.5 Conclusion

In a toponymic context, it appears that *hnutu* was a word used to refer not to a particular tree-species, but to a location at which nuts were particularly notable. This could have been due to their palatability, the abundance of crop that was produced, or perhaps simply because they grew in an area where nuts were not otherwise available. In some cases, where the geology and climate were suitable, *hnutu* may have referred to a site where a variety of nut-tree species grew together and *hnutu* was deemed an appropriate label to identify a common feature of these trees. It is also possible that for individual names the label *hnutu* was a vernacular way of referring to a species that had a different name in a learned context, like the non-native sweet chestnut and walnut. These species were likely to have been introduced in monastic and elite contexts and may not initially have been familiar to the general populace.

There is possible evidence of regional distinctions in the use of *hnutu* in place-names, which was predominantly dependent on which nut-bearing tree species could grow in that region. Many uses of the word *hnutu*, especially those in more northerly locations, likely described the ubiquitous hazelnut while some southern *hnutu* place-names could have identified sites where sweet chestnut or walnut grew, limited as these species were by climatic pressures. Hazelnuts were also more likely to develop

abundantly in the south where the growing season was longer and warmer, perhaps an explanation for why larger and wealthier *hnutu* settlements tended towards a southerly distribution.

Consideration of the geology of these sites has provided a general insight into which nut-tree species might have grown at particular locations. *Hnutu-lēah* sites tend to have soils more favourable for the development of single-species hazel or sweet chestnut woodland, supporting the suggestion that these were locations where nuts could have been cultivated in grove-like settings. This was perhaps an Anglo-Saxon parallel of the contemporary Italian system explored by Squatriti (5.4.1.1). Sites like Nutbeam Farm and *Duntesb*(*o*)*urn*(*e*) *Notebem* Gl, in contrast, could have been named for their walnut-trees as they appear to refer to a single tree and are situated on more fertile clay-based soils.

The absence of any definitive examples of a *hnutu-tūn* compound, in contrast with the many examples of fruit-*tūn* names explored in the case-study on orchards (see 4.4), implies that *hnutu* sites, if cultivated, were places with a different type of horticultural practice; seemingly suited more to identification as a *lēah* with the connotations of subsistence farming and varied sylvo-pastural use. It is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study to determine whether these grove-like settings began as a purely wild resource or to what degree they were managed, but it is clear that *hnutu-lēah* sites were generally well-suited to both hazel and sweet chestnut, and either or both of these species were perhaps cultivated within these areas of semi-natural open woodland.

The species of tree and indeed the tree as a physical object do not appear to have been primarily relevant to the use of *hnutu* as a place-naming element. Instead, *hnutu* place-names seem to have arisen as a means to identify sites at which nuts could be foraged from the wild or possibly harvested from semi-cultivated trees in managed groves; they are names that indicate the importance of nuts as an edible resource and contribute to the otherwise largely absent record of nut-tree cultivation in early medieval England.

6. Chapter Six: Conclusion

The survival of a substantial corpus of tree-names in England provides valuable evidence for better understanding the early medieval arboreal landscape and gives insight into medieval attitudes towards trees as landmarks and resources. This thesis has produced a comprehensive overview of tree-species that appear in English major names: it explores the phonological development of tree words, how they compound with other elements in place-names, and what the distribution of these names can tell us about the arboreal landscape and silvicultural practices of the period.

This major name corpus contributes to the lexical map of early medieval England by highlighting dialect differences and regional patterns. One remarkable divide is seen between the OE and the Anglo-Scandinavian namescapes. The most notable example is perhaps the contrasting distributions of *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* names, which appear to have been the same type of settlement, probably one with an industry focused on the management of ash woodland. The difference between **mapel* and *mapuldor* names is not so easily explained and not as clearly defined as it might first appear, with the interchange of these words apparent in some early place-name forms; however, *mapuldor* is generally found in southern counties, where the comparable *apuldor* is also recurrent, itself contrasting the more northerly distribution of *æppel-treōw* names. The many different words for *Salix* species are likely in part due to the number of different willows, sallows, and withies that are native to Britain, but are also somewhat regionally specific, with dialect differences evident in *salh* (*sealh*) names and **wilig* (**wilign*) largely restricted to the Midlands.

Some names provide an insight into the natural and perhaps also the artificial distribution of tree-species in early medieval England. Generally, tree-names correspond to the ecological preferences of a species. Pear-trees have a natural climatic limit that explains the confinement of pear (OE *peru*, *pirige*) names to the more temperate south. Broom is a light seeking plant and OE *brōm* is commonly compounded with the generic elements *dūn*, *feld*, and *lēah*, suggesting it was found most often in open landscapes: on hillsides and in fields and woodland clearings. OE *æsc* is recurrent with the generic *ford*, which can perhaps be explained by the resistance of ash to periodic flooding that reduces competition by other species. Yet, place-name evidence does not always match the expected natural distribution or

environmental preferences of a species. Beech, (OE *bēce*, *bōc*) is thought to have had a south-easterly limit that is perhaps challenged by the presence of potential beech place-names in the West Midlands. Box (OE *box*, **byxe*) has a similar natural range to beech but specific geological preferences, and place-name evidence suggests it may have been planted beyond its natural reach.

Tree-names are useful for understanding how early medieval people perceived the trees in their landscape and how they may have valued certain species for their individual properties and characteristics. This corpus has brought to light some interesting and not wholly explicable patterns that illustrate how certain tree words behave in a toponymic context. Ash is the most common tree to appear as a simplex name by a large margin. This may have something to do with the monumentality of ash, or it could be the result of singular *æsc* used to describe areas of ash woodland; however, neither of these explanations is entirely satisfactory. Oak (OE *āc*, ON *eik*) can certainly be described as a monumental tree; old specimens are notable for their size and the unusual affect that age can have upon their shape and appearance. It occurs regularly as the generic element in major name compounds, often with qualifying adjectives describing how the tree looked, or with words indicating the cultural significance or performative function it may have held. However, oak is most often found in compound with the elements *tūn* and *lēah*, which likely signifies its importance as a source of timber, coppice, and pannage. Thorn is not a tree particularly notable for its size, but it is the species most often attested in major names and most commonly found as the name for a meeting-place. This may be a result of the physical characteristics of thorn, which produces an abundance of white blossom in the spring, or because it is a hardy species that is often found growing in exposed environments. Perhaps the most likely explanation, however, is that thorn grew at the site of meeting-places because it thrives in open land and clearings, where large gatherings would have taken place.

A secondary effect of this overarching study was the examination of those common native species that are not, or are only rarely, attested in major names. Their absence was probably due to environmental factors and a lack of perceived notability or value. Rowan and pine are probably largely absent from the toponymicon due to their natural distribution in upland areas, which does not correspond to the lowland regions in which major settlements were usually established. Hornbeam, on the other hand, is a

lowland tree usually found in woodland, but it appears to have been of less use as a source of food or wood than other species and was perhaps therefore little worthy of note.

Where particularly interesting or recurrent place-name compounds have arisen in the corpus, these have then been investigated in greater depth in three case-study chapters, which explore the importance of trees as a source of wood and food in early medieval England. Those with a specific denoting oak, ash, or a *Salix* species with a *tūn* or *bȳ* generic are likely to have been settlements established for the purpose of managing woodland to produce timber or coppice wood. Their distribution appears to have been primarily influenced by the availability of suitable woodland, with the densest concentration of *āc-tūn*s established in the oakwoods of the West Midlands, *æsc-tūn* and *æsc-bȳ* names persistent in areas where oakwood was less common, and *Salix* names tending towards wetter riparian environments. As places of industry, these settlements must have been well-connected to centres of administration or commerce. They were likely established to supply estates with much needed timber and coppice wood; however, some appear to have been linked by routeways to large towns and known markets, which would have provided the opportunity for trade.

In addition to indicating settlements that provided wood, tree-names also allude to places where food was produced. It is likely that *tūn* and *bȳ* names with a fruit-related specific were also settlements with a horticultural function, where orchards produced a surplus of fruit. There is a strong connection between these orchard settlements, trading routes, and centres of commerce, which suggests fresh fruit and fruit products were a marketable commodity. Pear *tūn* names have a strong south-westerly distribution likely attributable to the climatic preferences of this species and corresponding largely with the later known 'orchard counties' of England, while apple and plum orchard names are wide-spread and more common in northern counties where pear is unlikely to have grown. Names from OE *orceard* are found most often in the west but tend to have been smaller dependent sites, often with an ecclesiastical connection, that probably supplied a single estate.

Place-names with a *hnutu* element also appear to have recognised an arboreal crop. They likely referred not to a particular species, but to locations where a nut harvest was abundant, palatable, or notable within the wider landscape. It is also possible that

for individual names the label *hnutu* was given in the vernacular to refer to nut-producing trees of an unfamiliar species, like sweet-chestnut or walnut. The recurrent compound *hnutu-lēah* perhaps indicated places of silviculture where nut-trees were cultivated in grove-like settings, as was the case for sweet-chestnut sites in early medieval Italy. Unlike the functional *tūn* and *bȳ* names that produced fruit and timber, this process was probably less labour intensive and perhaps did not require an established settlement for housing a workforce.

This thesis only scratches the surface of what tree-names could reveal about early medieval landscapes and cultural practices. While it provides a necessary foundation for further research, there is potential for more in-depth treatment of individual names and recurrent compounds, and presumably much value in the pursuit of regional case-studies. It is possible the inclusion of minor names could also alter the distribution and conclusions drawn about some of the species discussed above. Some recurrent compounds and their etymologies have been addressed only in passing and present more questions than have been answered. To name a few examples, further research is necessary to determine why thorn is recurrent in the names of meeting-places, whether *elm* and *wice* were words that identified different species of elm, and whether Kirby Misperton really does refer to the medlar tree. Each of these would benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that allowed for greater consideration of the ecological and archaeobotanical contexts of individual names. It is the author's hope that this work will provide a platform for future study of tree toponyms and will act as an aid for general research into the early medieval arboreal landscape.

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7.2 Shapefile citations

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8.1 Corpus of timber-related place-names, organised by compound and then alphabetically by county

County	Headform, parish name	First attestation(s)	Grid reference
āc-tūn			
Ch	Acton	*Acatone*, *Actune* 1086	SJ 63166 53091
Ch	Acton Bridge, Weaverham	*Acton* early 13th	SJ 59202 75761
Ch	Acton Fm, Alderley	*Acton* 1352	SJ 85986 75659
Ch	Acton Grange	*Acton* 1194	SJ 58776 84764
Ch	Agden, Bowdon & Rostherne	*Acton* 13th	SJ 71509 85500
Cu	Aikton	*Aiketona* c.1200	NY 27456 53678
Gl	Iron Acton	*Actvne* 1086	ST 68062 83454
La	Aighton	*Actun* 1086	SD 70066 38977
La	Aughton	*Achetun* 1086	SD 39144 05418
Mx	Acton	*Acton*(*e*) 1181	TQ 20009 80177
Sa	Acton, Lydbury	*Acton* 1255	SO 50661 93668
Sa	Acton Burnell and Pigott	*Actune*, *Æctune* 1086	SJ 53351 01931
Sa	Acton Reynald	*Achetone* 1086	SJ 53482 23398
Sa	Acton Round	*Achetune* 1086	SO 63441 95636
Sa	Acton Scott	*Actune* 1086	SO 45372 89437
Sa	Boreatton, Baschurch	*Acton'* 1291–2	SJ 41308 22961
Sa	Shotatton, Ruyton	*Acton' iuxta Knokyn* 1291–2	SJ 36538 22852
Sa	Stoneacton	*Staniacton*' 1242	SO 50661 93668
St	Acton	*Actun* 1002(11th)	SJ 93732 17456
Wo	Acton, Ombersley/Elmley Lovett	*Acton* 1175, *Akton* 1275	SO 85011 67623
Wo	Acton Beauchamp	*Aactune* 727(1200)	SO 67945 50308
YE	Aughton	*Actun* 1086	SE 70168 38652
YW	Ackton	*Aitone* 1086	SE 41263 21951
YW	Aketon, Spofforth	*Aykton* 1218	SE 35173 52075
YW	Aughton, Ashton cum Aughton	*Actone*, *Hactone*, *Hacstone* 1086	SK 45461 86665
YW	Eckton, Otley	*Ectune* 1030(11th)	SE 20165 45357
āc-lēah			
Bd	Oakley	*Accleya* 1060(14th)	TL 01067 52972
Bk	Akeley	*Achelei* 1086	SP 70798 37784
Bk	Oakley	*Achelei* 1086	SP 64191 12284
Brk	Oakley Court, Bray	*Aukelay, Aukeley* 1220	SU 91511 76229
Ch	Oakleigh, Bromborough	*de Okelegh* 1353	SJ 32832 84648

Db	Oakley Fm, Croxall	*Acclea* 1002	SK 19309 13256
Du	Aycliffe	*Aclea* 782 ASC	NZ 28303 22162
Ess	Oakley	*Accleiam* 1086	TM 18785 27324
Gl	Oakle Street, Churcham	*Acle* 1263	SO 75788 17621
Gl	Oakley Fm, Cheltenham	*Ockeley'* 1344	SO 97070 22480
Gl	Oakley Wood, Cirencester	*Achelie* 1086	SO 97734 03167
Gl	Okle Clifford, Newent	*Acle* 1221	SO 74596 25664
Gl	Oakleaze Fm, Alkington	*Ocle* 1493	ST 69352 97054
He	Ocle Pychard	*Aclea* 1017×41(7th)	SO 59552 46217
Ha	Church Oakley	*(to) Aclea* 10th(12th)	SU 56736 50347
Li	Eagle	*Acley*, *Aclei*, *Akeley*, *Aycle* 1086	SK 87589 67208
Nf	Acle	*Acle* 1086	TG 40121 10294
Nth	Oakley	*Aclea* 11th(13th)	SP 87122 85849
O	Oakley Little Wood, Benson	*Okelee* 1266	SU 64454 88733
Sa	Aychley Fm, Prees	*Amcheleg* 1241	SJ 60789 34326
Sa	Oakley Wd, Westbury	*Oykkeleywode* 1349	SJ 35544 09424
Sf	Oakley	*Acle* 1086	TM 15719 77365
St	Oakley, Croxall	*(æt) Acclea* 1002×1004	SK 19311 13243
St	Oakley, Mucklestone	*Aclei* 1086	SJ 70102 36727
YE	Acklam	*Aclun* 1086	SE 78395 61698
YN	Acklam	*Achelu'*, *Aclun* 1086	NZ 48684 17047
æsc-tūn			
Ch	Ashton iuxta Tarvin	*Estone* 1086	SJ 50502 69031
Ch	Ashton on Mersey	*Ayston* 1260	SJ 77307 92705
Do	Ashington, Canton Magna	*Esseton* 1242	SZ 00194 98359
Do	Ashton, Hinton Parva	*Esseton*(') 1242	ST 99621 04556
Gl	Ashton Gout, Redwick &	*Ashton* 1327	ST 55782 86183
Gl	Ashton under Hill	*Æsctun* 991	SO 99668 37712
Gl	Cold Ashton	*Æsctun*, *Æsctunæ* 931(12th)	ST 75099 72737
He	Ashton	*Estune* 1086	SO 51514 64468
He	Pipe Ashton	*Hesintune* 1086	SO 46192 71902
La	Ashton	*Estun* 1086	SD 51152 30267
La	Ashton Hall	*Estun* 1086	SD 46137 57231
La	Ashton in Makerfield	*Eston* 1212	SJ 57698 98956
La	Ashton under Lyne	*Haistune*, *Haystuna* 1160	SJ 94142 98994
Nth	Ashton	*Ascetone* 1086	TL 05545 88326
Nth	Ashton, Bainton	*Æsctun* 960(c.1200)	TF 10228 05675

So	Long Ashton	*Estune* 1086	ST 55339 70957
Sx	Ashton Green, Ringmer	*Hastone* 1150	TQ 46259 12158
W	Ashton Giffard	*Ashton* 1289	ST 96077 39998
W	Ashton Keynes	*Æsctun* 880(1000)	SU 04169 94393
W	Rood Ashton	*Chapel As*(*s*)*hton* 1307	ST 87891 55903
W	Steeple Ashton	*Æystone*, *Aystone* 964	ST 90643 57113
YW	Eshton	*Estune* 1086	SD 93782 55998
æsc-bȳ			
Le	Asfordby	*Esseberie* 1086	SK 70812 18942
Le	Ashby de la Zouch	*Ascebi* 1086	SK 36121 16602
Le	Ashby Folville	*Ascebi* 1086	SK 70681 11990
Le	Ashby Magna	*Essebi* 1086	SP 56371 90482
Le	Ashby Parva	*Essebi* 1086	SP 52565 88626
Li	Ashby	*Aschebi* 1086	SE 90029 08659
Li	Ashby by Partney	*Aschebi* 1086	TF 42885 66878
Li	Ashby cum Fenby	*Achesbi*, *Aschebi* 1086	TA 25456 00948
Li	Ashby de la Launde	*Aschebi* 1086	TF 05508 54754
Li	Ashby Puerorum	*Aschebi* 1086	TF 32798 71412
Li	West Ashby	*Aschebi* 1086	TF 26582 72459
Nf	Ashby	*Askeby* 1044–7	TG 41909 15771
Nf	Ashby St Mary	*Ascebi* 1086	TG 32926 02235
Nth	Ashby St Ledgers	*Ascebi* 1086	SP 57323 68204
Nth	Canons Ashby	*Ascebi* 1086	SP 57819 50521
Nth	Castle Ashby	*Aschebi* 1086	SP 86237 59172
Nth	Cold Ashby	*Essebi* 1086	SP 65614 76273
Nth	Mears Ashby	*Asbi* 1086	SP 83846 66649
Sf	Ashby	*Askebi* 1190	TM 48896 99639
We	Asby	*Askebi*, *Askeby* 1150	NY 68066 13234
æsc-lēah			
Bk	Ashley Green	*Essleie* 1227	SP 97652 05209
Ca	Ashley	*Esselei*, *Esselie* 1086	TL 69789 61627
Ch	Ashley	*Ascelie* 1086	SJ 77528 84231
Db	Ashleyhay	*Assellewehay*, *Asselewesshay* 1254	SK 29144 51609
De	Ashleigh, Lifton	*Assileia* 1086	SX 39647 83546
De	Rashleigh Barton, Wembworthy	*Rasle* 1278	SS 67202 12841
Do	Ashley, Long Bredy	*Asseleghe* 1246	SY 55994 87918
Do	Ashley Barn, Tolpuddle	*Asleg'*, *Asseleg'* 1268	SY 81228 95427

Gl	Ashley Ho, Bristol	*Aysseleye* 1285	ST 58813 73853
Gl	Ashley Manor, Charlton Kings	*Esselega* 1160	SO 96562 21535
Ha	Ashley, nearr King's Somborne	*Asselegh* 1275	SU 38491 30829
Ha	Esselei Hundred	*Esselei hd'* 1086	
Nf	Ashill	*Essalai*, *Asscelea* 1086	TF 88406 04197
Nth	Ashley	*Ascele* 1086	SP 79418 91011
St	Ashley	*Esselie* 1086	SJ 76287 36434
W	Ashley	*Esselie* 1086	ST 81359 68412
Salix tūn			
Bd	Willington	*Welitone* 1086	TL 10661 49866
Ch	Withington	*Widinton*, *Widenton* 1185	SJ 81431 69744
Ch	Saighton	*Saltone* 1086	SJ 44318 61784
Cu	Wilton, Haile	*Wiletun* c.1205	NY 03750 11015
Db	Willington	*Willetune* 1086	SK 29482 28166
Do	Silton	*Seltone* 1086	ST 78267 29341
Ess	Widdington	*Widintunā* 1086	TL 53976 31781
Gl	Willington, Sandhurst	*Wilinton*(*e*), *Wilynton*(*e*) 13th	SO 83464 23821
Gl	Willington, Newland	*Wellenton* 1220	SO 55278 09525
He	Wilton	*Wiltone* 1086	SO 58879 24289
He	Withington	*Widingtvne* 1086	SO 56577 43485
La	Weeton	*Widetun* 1086, *Witheton* 1249	SD 38363 34650
La	Withington	*Wythignton*, *Withington* 1212	SJ 84964 92889
Li	Willoughton	*Wilgatuna* 1115	SK 92861 93094
Nf	Wilton	*Wiltuna* 1086	TL 72664 87686
Sa	Withington	*Wientone* 1086, *Widintona* c.1155	SJ 57686 12976
Sx	Sullington	*Sillinctune* 959(c.1100)	TQ 09835 13110
W	Witherington Fm	*Widetone* 1086	SU 18179 24844
YE	Weeton	*Wideton* 1086	TA 35509 20223
YN	Salton	*Saletun, Saleton* 1086	SE 71637 79969
YN	Wilton, Ormesby	*Widtune, Wiltune* 1086	NZ 58304 19744
YN	Wilton, Thornton Dale	*Wiltun*(*e*) 1086	SE 86089 82958
YW	Weeton	*Widetone*, *Widetun*(*e*) 1086	SE 28382 46502
YW	Widdington	*Widetone*, *Widetona* 1086	SE 48832 59858
Salix bȳ			
Le	Willougby Waterleys	*Wilebi* 1086	SP 57541 92477
Li	Willoughby	*Wilgebi* 1086	TF 47339 71965
Li	Silk Willoughby	*Wilgebi* 1086	TF 05380 42984

Li	Scott Willoughby	*Wilgebi* 1086	TF 05359 37631
Li	West Willougby	*Wlheb'* 1185, *Willigby* late 12th	SK 96645 43624
Nf	Wilby	*Wilgeby*, *Willebeih* 1086	TM 03107 89903
Nt	Willoughby on the Wolds	*Willebi*, *Wilgebi* 1086	SK 63392 25414
Wa	Willoughby	*Wiliabyg* 956	SP 51594 67441
YW	Selby	*Seleby* 1030	SE 61565 32372
Salix lēah			
Gl	Saul	*Salle* 12th	SO 74907 09320
He	Willey	*Wylileye* 1276	SO 32457 67089
Nf	Salle	*Salla* 1086	TG 11039 24885
Nt	Willeywood Fm, Greasley	*Haia de Willeg'* 1212	SK 47112 49241
Nth	Wakerley	*Wacherlei* 1086	SP 95674 99217
O	Woodleys, Wootton	*Widelie* 1086	SP 42082 19228
Sa	Willey	*Wilit* 1086, *Welileia* 1120	SO 67207 99194
So	Withiel Florey	*Wiðiglea* 737(12th)	SS 98688 33278
Sr	Willey, Chaldon	*Wille*, *Wyllee* 1316	TQ 32157 54123
Wa	Saltley, Aston	*Sautlega* c.1170	SP 09729 87669
Wa	Weethley	*Withelea* 714(16th)	SP 05515 55319
Wa	Willey	*Welei* 1086	SP 49658 84799
YW	Sawley	*Sal-lege* 1030	SE 24951 67751
YW	Sawley	*Sotleie* 1086, *Sallai*(*a*) 1147	SD 77823 46441

8.2 No. of trees-names by species and date; percentages of tree-names by species and generic element

Tree-species	Major names attested by 1200	Major and minor names attested by 1500
Ash	123	208
Oak	76	155
***Salix*-species**	93	150

Tree-species	*tūn*	*bȳ*	*lēah*
Ash major names (by 1200)	13	20	9
% of ash major names (by 1200)	**10.57 %**	**16.26 %**	**7.32 %**
Ash names (by 1500)	22	20	16
% of ash names (by 1500)	**10.57 %**	**9.62 %**	**7.69 %**
Oak major names (by 1200)	15	0	16
% of oak major names (by 1200)	**19.74 %**	**-**	**21.05 %**
Oak names (by 1500)	26	0	26
% of oak names (by 1500)	**16.67 %**	**-**	**16.67 %**
Salix species major names (by 1200)	21	9	9
% of *Salix* major names (by 1200)	**22.58 %**	**9.68 %**	**9.68 %**
Salix species names (by 1500)	25	9	14
% of *Salix* names (by 1500)	**16.67 %**	**6.00 %**	**9.33 %**

8.3 Corpus of 'orchard' place-names, organised alphabetically by compound and by county

County	Headform, parish name	First attestation(s)	Grid Reference
æppel-bȳ			
Db	Appleby Magna (and Parva)	(*æt*) *Æppebbyg* (sic) c.1002(c.1100)	NZ 12929 01609
Li	Appleby	*Aplebi* 1086	SK 31506 09847
Nth	Appleby Gate, Wellingborough	*Apelby* 1241	SP 85182 68953
We	Appleby	*Aplebi*, *Apleby* 1130	NY 68335 20439
YN	Eppleby, Forcett	*Aplebi* 1086	NZ 17706 13195
æppel-garðr			
We	Applegarth, Kirby Lonsdale	*le Apelgarth* 1346	SD 62620 84632
We	Applegarth, Windermere	*Appilgarth* 1411	SD 41134 98581
YE	Applegarth Lane, Bainton	*Appelgard* 1279	SE 96485 52481
YN	Applegarth, Marske	*Apalgard*, *Ap*(*p*)*elgarth*(*e*) 1154–63	NZ 12929 01609
YW	*Appelgarth*, Malham	*Appelgarth* 13th	SD 90086 62816
æppel-geard			
YW	Appleyard, Penistone	*Apelyard* 1297	SE 24651 03313
YW	Mapple Yard, Hooton Pagnell	*Appelyerd'* 1208	SE 48211 07886
YW	*Appulyerde*, Tanshelf	*Appulyerde* 1368	SE 45221 21651
æppel-tūn			
Brk	Appleton	(*æt*) *æppeltune* 942(c.1240)	SE 48224 07873
Ca	Appleton Plantation, Great Wilbraham	*Appelton* 1424	TL 54123 57166
Ch	Appleton Thorn, Great Budworth	*Epletune* 1086	SJ 63779 83851
Cu	Appleton Hall, Bridekirk	*Apeltun* c.1160	NY 11967 33400
Ess	Perry Appleton, Helion Bumpstead	*Beriapelton* 1336	TL 63888 40953
K	Appleton Fm, Ickham	*de Appelton'* 1261–2	TR 22816 55946
K	Appleton Manor, Waldershare	*Apletone* 1086	TR 34068 47516
Nf	Appleton (with Flitcham)	*Appletuna* 1086	TF 70553 27293
Nt	Appleton Dale, Blidworth	*Hapuldon Dale* 14th	SK 58338 53881
Wo	Nappleton, Kempsey	*Apelton*, *Lepeltone* 1182	SO 86201 48269
YN	Appleton le Moors, Lastingham	*Apeltun* 1086	SE 73480 88089
YN	Appleton le Street	*Apletun*, *Apeltun* 1086	SE 73433 73580
YN	Appleton Wiske	*Ap*(*p*)*elton*(*a*), *Apletune* 1086	NZ 38994 04665
YN	East & West Appleton, Catterick	*Apleton*, *Apelton* 1086	SE 23550 95777
YW	Appleton Roebuck, Bolton Percy	*Æppeltune* c.972	SE 48224 07873

orceard

D	Orchard, Dawlish	*Orchard* 1422	SX 96296 78637
D	Orchard, Instow	*Orchard* 1316	SS 49896 29961
D	Orchard, Thrushelton	*Orcherd* 1242	SX 46851 89107
D	Orcheton, Modbury	*Orcartona* 1086	SS 49896 29961
Db	Castleorchard, Duffield	*le Castull Orchard* 1389	SK 34438 44014
Do	Old Orchard, Canford Magna	*gardin' voc'* (*le*) *Oldeorchard* 1374	SZ 02892 97744
Do	Orchards, Whitchurch Canonicorum	*Orchard* 1422	SY 39664 95328
Do	Orchard Ctgs, Steeple	*the Orchard* 1384	SY 91134 80904
Do	East & West Orchard, Church Knowle	*Horcerd* 1086	SY 94110 80753
Hrt	Orchard Ho, St Albans	*le Orcheyerde* 1446	TL 14522 06902
Nf	Orchard Farm, Roughton	*Appelyerd* 1330	TG 21760 36586
So	Orchardleigh	*Horcealei* 1086	ST 77708 51279
W	Orchard Fm, Malmesbury	*Orchardbrigge* 1341	ST 93281 87352
Wo	Cherry Orchard, St Peters, Worcester	*Shirreves Orchard* 1327	SO 85412 53200
Wo	Norchard, Hartlebury	*atte Norchard* 1327	SO 84569 68498

peru-tūn

He	Ashperton	*Sp*(*er*)*tvne* 1086, *Aspretonia* 1144	SO 64255 41494
Wa	Wasperton	*Waspertune* 1043(17th)	SP 26572 58775

pirige-tūn

Gl	Purton, Lydney	*Periton*(*e*), *Peritune* 1086	SO 67061 04574
Gl	Pirton and Parton, Churchdown	*Piriton*, *Pyryton* c.1180(1220)	SO 67061 04574
Hrt	Pirton	*Peritone* 1086	TL 14696 31658
O	Pyrton	(*to*) *Pirigtune* 987(11th)	SU 68737 95691
So	Puriton	*Piriton* 854(4th)	ST 32034 41721
St	Perton	*Pertone* 1086	SO 85720 98766
W	Purton	*Perytun, Puriton*(*e*), *Puritona* 796(14th)	SU 09680 87171
Wo	Pirton	*Pyritune* 972(c.1050)	SO 87979 47430

plūme-tūn

Cu	Plumpton Wall	(*haie de*) *Plumton'* 1212	NY 49711 37161
La	Fieldplumpton	*Pluntun* 1086	SD 49948 34425
Nth	Plumpton	*Pluntun*(*e*) 1086	SP 59764 48311
Nth	Plumpton End, Paulerspury	*Plumton'* 1275	SP 72380 45269
Sx	Plumpton	*Plumtone* 1086	TQ 35678 13502
Wa	Plumpton, Kingsbury	*Plumtun* c.1180	SP 21483 96266
YW	Plumpton, Ripon	*Plumton'* (*gate*) 1307	SE 29066 69623
YW	Plompton, Spofforth	*Plontone* 1086	SE 35701 54056

plȳme-tūn

D	Plympton	*Plymentun* 904(13th)	SX 53766 56316

8.4 Corpus of *hnutu* place-names, organised alphabetically by county

County	Headform, parish name	First attestation(s)	Grid Reference
Bk	Notley, Long Crendon	*Nutele* 1210	SP7157309198
D	Nutcombe, Combe Martin	*Notcomb* 1330	SS6106345747
D	Nutcombe, East Allington	*Notcomb* 1330	SX7627548488
D	Nutcombe, Rose Ash	*Nuttecumb* 1283	SS8028921525
D	Nutcombe Farm, Clayhanger	*Notcomb*(*e*) 1244	ST0161723396
D	Nutley, Tavistock	*Nutlegh* 1238	SX5091475608
D	Nutton, East Pulford	*Nottone* 1330	SS3518718062
D	Nutwell Court, Woodbury	*Hnutwille* 1072	SX9878685040
Do	Nutford, Pimperne	*Nortforde* 1086	ST8795708012
Ess	Notley, Black & White Notley	*Hnutlea* 998	TL7615220724
Ess	Nunty's Farm, Pattiswick	*Noteheye* 1285	TL8239826451
Gl	Nutbeam Farm, Duntisbourne Abbots	*Nutbeame* 1220	SO9799907441
Gl	Nutham, Pauntley	*Noteham* 1216–72	SO7300430003
Ha	Nurstead, Buriton	*Nutstede* 1204	SU7635421151
Ha	Nuthanger Farm, Kingsclere	*Notehangre* 1281	SU5002158589
Ha	Nutley	*Noclei* 1086	SU6095944476
Hrt	Notley, Abbots Langley	*Notteley*(*e*) 1287	TL1001002503
Hrt	Nuthampstead	*Nothamsteda* 12th cent.	TL4116434639
Wt	Nettlestone, St Helen's	*Hoteleston*(*e*) 1086	SZ6241290773
K	Nurstead	*Notestede* 1086	TQ6412068278
Le	Nut Bush, Medbourne	*notebuske* late 13th	SP8058093336
Li	*the nutdayle*, North Carlton	*the nutdayle* 1250	SK9454677635
La	Nuthurst, Manchester	*Nuthurste* 1322	SD8873202224
La	Nutshaw Hall, Penwortham	*de Noteschaw* 1285	SD506732802
La	Nuttall Wood, Bury	*de Noteho* 1256	SD7958215336
Nt	Nuthall	*Nutehale* 1086	SK5147544473
Sa	Nutty Hills	*Nuthull* 1208	SJ7590114247
Sf	The Nussteads, Polstead	*Hnutstede* 1000	TL9775938751
Sr	Nutfield	*Notfelle* 1086	TQ3091950866
Sr	Nuthill Farm, Send with Ripley	*Nuthille* 1205	TQ0290753276
St	Nutborough, Wolstanton	*Noteburgh* 1391	SJ8301949001
St	Nut Wood, Gnossall	*Nutiwude* 1206	SJ8154822496
Sx	Nutbourne, Billingshurst	*Notburne* 1288	TQ0747818833
Sx	Nutbourne, Westbourne	*Neoburna* 1179	SU7782205454

Sx	Nutham Barn, Horsham	*Nutham* 1261	TQ1648625377
Sx	Nuthurst	*Nothurst* 1228	TQ1922226167
Sx	Nutknowle Farm, Woodmancote	*Noteknoll* 1327	TQ5689113432
Sx	Nutley, Maresfield	*Nutleg, Nutlye* 1249	TQ4423427762
Wa	Nuthurst	*Hnuthyrste* 704(1000)	SP1468172096
YE	Nuthill, Burstwick	*Not*(*h*)*ele* 1086	TA2153629956
YN	Nutwith Cote, Mashamshire	*Nuttewith -wyth* 1198	SE2311878988
YW	Nut Clough, Halifax	*Nut Clough* 13th century	SD9955927600