

GIANTS IN
THE LANDSCAPE:
MONUMENTALITY AND
TERRITORIES IN THE
EUROPEAN NEOLITHIC

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Megalithic tombs, barrows, and enclosures in fourth millennium BC Britain

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Abstract

The date and distribution across Britain of megalithic monuments and related structures dating to the fourth millennium BC is briefly outlined, together with an overview of contemporary enclosures. Studies of the distribution of human body parts show that in southern Britain during the period c. 3800-3300 BC long barrows and oval barrows were built and used by the same communities that also created causewayed enclosures. The situation in western and northern Britain is less clear as few enclosures are known and preservation conditions militate against the survival of human remains. A simple model involving local and regional articulations between enclosures and burial monuments is briefly outlined.

Keywords: *causewayed enclosures, megalithic tombs, long barrows, oval barrows, settlement patterns*

Résumé

La datation et la répartition des monuments mégalithiques et des structures associées datées du 4^e millénaire avant notre ère sont brièvement décrits, tout comme un état des lieux des connaissances sur les enceintes contemporaines. L'étude de la distribution des os humains par partie anatomique montre que dans le sud de la Grande-Bretagne, des longs tumulus et des tumulus ovales sont construits entre 3800 et 3300 av. J.-C. et utilisés par les mêmes communautés qui ont creusé les enceintes à fossés interrompus. La situation dans l'ouest et le nord de la Grande-Bretagne est moins évidente car peu d'enceintes sont connues et des problèmes taphonomiques ne permettent pas la conservation des restes humains. Enfin, un modèle territorial simple illustrant les relations entre enceintes et sites funéraires aux échelles locale et régionale est brièvement présenté.

Most-clés: *enceintes à fossés interrompus, tombes mégalithiques, longs tumulus, tumulus ovalaires, trames territoriales*

Introduction

Megalithic monuments have been recognized and studied in many parts of Britain since the seventeenth century AD when antiquarian scholars and travellers first marvelled at the rude stone structures and great mounds (Michell 1982). Since that time our understanding of the date and variety of such monuments has expanded considerably. It is now clear that various styles were preferred by communities living in different parts of Britain during the course of the fourth and third millennia BC, and that in areas where stone was scarce or absent such structures were often made of earth and wood (Ashbee 1984). By contrast, enclosures of the kind that can now be assigned to the fourth and third millennia BC were not recognized as a distinct class of archaeological monument until the early twentieth century AD when research in Wiltshire and Sussex (Curwen 1930) showed that earthworks characterized by interrupted ditches dated to the Neolithic period (Piggott 1954: 18-32). In this paper attention is first directed towards current interpretations of the core evidence for megalithic monuments, barrows, and enclosures across the island of Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) before turning to the question of the relationships between such monuments.

Megalithic tombs and related monuments

There is a very wide range of megalithic and non-megalithic burial monuments dated to the fourth and third millennia BC across Britain, many with similarities to structures found on the near continent

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in France, Netherlands, northern Germany, and southern Scandinavia, as well as in Ireland. Although detailed inventories exist for Scotland (Henshall 1963, 1972; Henshall and Ritchie 1995, 2001; Davidson and Henshall 1989, 1991), the situation for England, Wales, and the major islands around their coasts is less good. The overview by Daniel (1950) remains useful, and can be complemented by a series of national studies (Ashbee 1984; Kinnes 1979; 1992) and regional reviews (for example Powell *et al.* 1969; Lynch 1976; Smith *et al.* 1979; Philp and Dutton 1985; Barker 1992; Darvill 2004). The following summary is based on a recent overview of the evidence in its wider context (Darvill 2010: 103-117).

Multi-period monuments are common (Corcoran 1972) and provide stratigraphic evidence for the succession of structures at a particular site. Taken together such sequences help inform understandings of the constantly changing distribution of preferred architectural styles. As a general rule, monuments gradually mutate from simple closed inaccessible chambers and burial zones with relatively few interments through to large, open, and easily accessible chambers containing the remains of many individuals (Bradley 1998: 60). But there are many exceptions to the rule and many local traditions. Likewise, the shape of covering mounds varies greatly: round, oval, square, rectangular, and trapezoidal are all common. Some monuments, such as dolmens, portal dolmens, and timber mortuary houses, were not normally encapsulated within a mound at all but may have been surrounded by a low platform. In some cases these simple essentially open structures later became incorporated into larger, mounded, monuments.

In the west of Britain some of the simplest monuments, known as ‘dolmens’, were made by raising a large block of stone above the ground, supported by stumpy-looking orthostats. At some, such as Cerreg Samson, Pembrokeshire, there is evidence that the raised stone was an earthfast boulder that had been elevated over the spot where it originally lay (Lynch 1975). A more elaborate style of dolmen is the so-called ‘portal dolmen’ or ‘portal tomb’ whose distribution includes southwestern England, the north Cotswolds, Wales, and most of Ireland where by far the greatest concentration is known. Characteristically, portal dolmens comprise four or more large upright slabs supporting a single capstone with the front of the tomb defined by three of the uprights set in an H-shaped formation (Kytmanow 2008).

Across eastern and southern Britain, where large stones for building were scarce, simple timber mortuary houses are well represented, usually as tent-like structures or timber boxes (Ashbee 1969). Most were constructed by splitting a large tree-trunk, generally oak, down the middle to provide a pair of D-shaped posts for either end the chamber. Once the two posts were securely set in the ground a chamber was formed in the gap between using smaller timbers and panels of wattle-work. Structures that are very similar to those in Britain are well-known amongst the northern TRB monuments of Jutland, especially mortuary houses defined as the Konens Høj Type (Madsen 1979).

Across much of Scotland, the northeastern England, and a handful of areas further south, round barrows were the most common form of fourth millennium BC burial monument (Leary *et al.* 2010). Most simply comprise mounds of earth and stone, sometimes carefully layered, covering a central burial pit, cremation trench, closed stone chamber, or some kind of above-ground wooden chamber. Some were surrounded by quarry ditches, which often survive as ring-ditches even where the mound has gone. A detailed study of these monuments Ian Kinnes catalogued more than 80 examples but he suggested that as many as 20,000 might once have existed (Kinnes 1979). A variant of the round barrow involves covering the burial pit or chamber with an elongated oval-shaped mound. Presumably the difference is one born of projecting a particular identity onto the world because the basic arrangements inside are otherwise identical between the two traditions. Less widespread than round barrows, oval barrows are mainly confined to southeastern Britain. At Wayland’s Smithy, Oxfordshire, an oval barrow 14 m by 7 m was built over the decayed remains of the timber mortuary house in 3520-3470 BC, less than a century after its initial construction (Whittle 1991; Bayliss and Whittle 2007: 117-119).

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Along the western coastlands and extending inland to a few areas such as the north Cotswolds and the Peak District of Derbyshire are a light scatter of simple passage graves of continental type that also occur in Ireland at the same time. They are characterized by a round or slightly oval mound covering a centrally placed stone-built chamber that was connected to the outside of the mound by a straight passage thereby allowing continued access to the burial area. At Broadsands, Torbay, an example excavated in 1958 contained four small groups of human remains associated with Carinated Bowl pottery and worked flints dated to the period 3900-3700 BC (Sheridan *et al.* 2008). Typologically, the monument finds strongly paralleled with sites such as Guennoc II (Finistère), France, dating to about 4000 BC and Pavia Type monuments in Portugal that are still older. In north Wales, Anglesey, the western Isles, and Orkney much larger so-called developed passage graves appear after about 3300 BC, part of a tradition whose heartland lies in the Boyne Valley of eastern Ireland (Herity 1974).

Soon after 3800 BC a new kind of monument became fashionable across Britain, and remained so for two or three centuries. These were long barrows, and they are characterized by a large rectangular or trapezoidal mound usually covering one or more burial chambers. At one end of the mound there is usually a substantial façade of some kind, sometimes with a forecourt in front to form an arena for ceremonies. In some cases the chambers open directly from the façade or the back of the forecourt (known as terminal chambers) while in others the chambers open from the long sides of the mound (lateral chambers). Long barrows are often orientated roughly east-west, but it is clear that pre-existing monuments on the site sometimes over-ride this rule. Local topography was also important in the positioning of sites and many are set near the top of steep slopes with broad views in some directions, very limited views in others, and almost always overlooking a spring or the headwaters of a major river-system. Broadly similar monuments are also known in Ireland and throughout the Atlantic coastlands of Europe from the Loire to the Baltic, as well as some inland areas on the Continent. Large specimens, like West Kennet, Wiltshire, or Na Tri Shean, Highland, measure 100 m or more long, and while smaller examples are common, all represent a considerable amount of energy expended on their construction. In some places long barrows were added to whatever stood on the site already, covering it completely with wholly new chambers or sometimes extending and remodelling existed structures. Elsewhere, long barrows appear to have been planned as a unitary structure, coherent in design and constructed as a single operation. In all cases, however, it is notable that the chambers rarely occupy more than about five per cent of the total area of the monument (cf. Fleming 1972; 1973).

Several thousand long barrows are extant across the country, especially where they have not been disturbed by later activity (Figure 1A). Their widespread distribution reflects the expansion of farming settlement between 3800 BC and 3500 BC. Nevertheless, broad regional groupings can be discerned on the basis of common styles in tomb design. Thus for example a Cotswold-Severn Group, North Wales Group, Clyde Group, Northeastern Group, Midlands Group, Wessex Group, and a Medway Group can be recognized. The fashion for long barrows was fairly short-lived. Few were built after 3500 BC, and those still in use were often deliberately blocked up or subject to some final ritual event. Curiously, many of the other types of monument mentioned above – for example various kinds of dolmen, round barrows, oval barrows, and passage – continue to be constructed and used through the later fourth millennium BC and in many cases through into the third millennium BC.

Enclosures

Across much of southern Britain large ditched or walled enclosures were built in the centuries after 3700 BC (Darvill and Thomas 2001; Oswald *et al.* 2001; Whittle *et al.* 2011; and see Darvill 2010: 96-103 for a summary of the evidence). Various called camps, causewayed camps, causewayed enclosures, enclosures, or interrupted ditch systems the terminology reflects the apparent diversity of field evidence while recognizing that the ditches defining many (but not all) were dug as a series of elongated pits separated by narrow causeways. Spoil from the ditches was used to build a rampart or wall inside the ditch, usually continuous except for the main entranceways. Largely thanks to aerial

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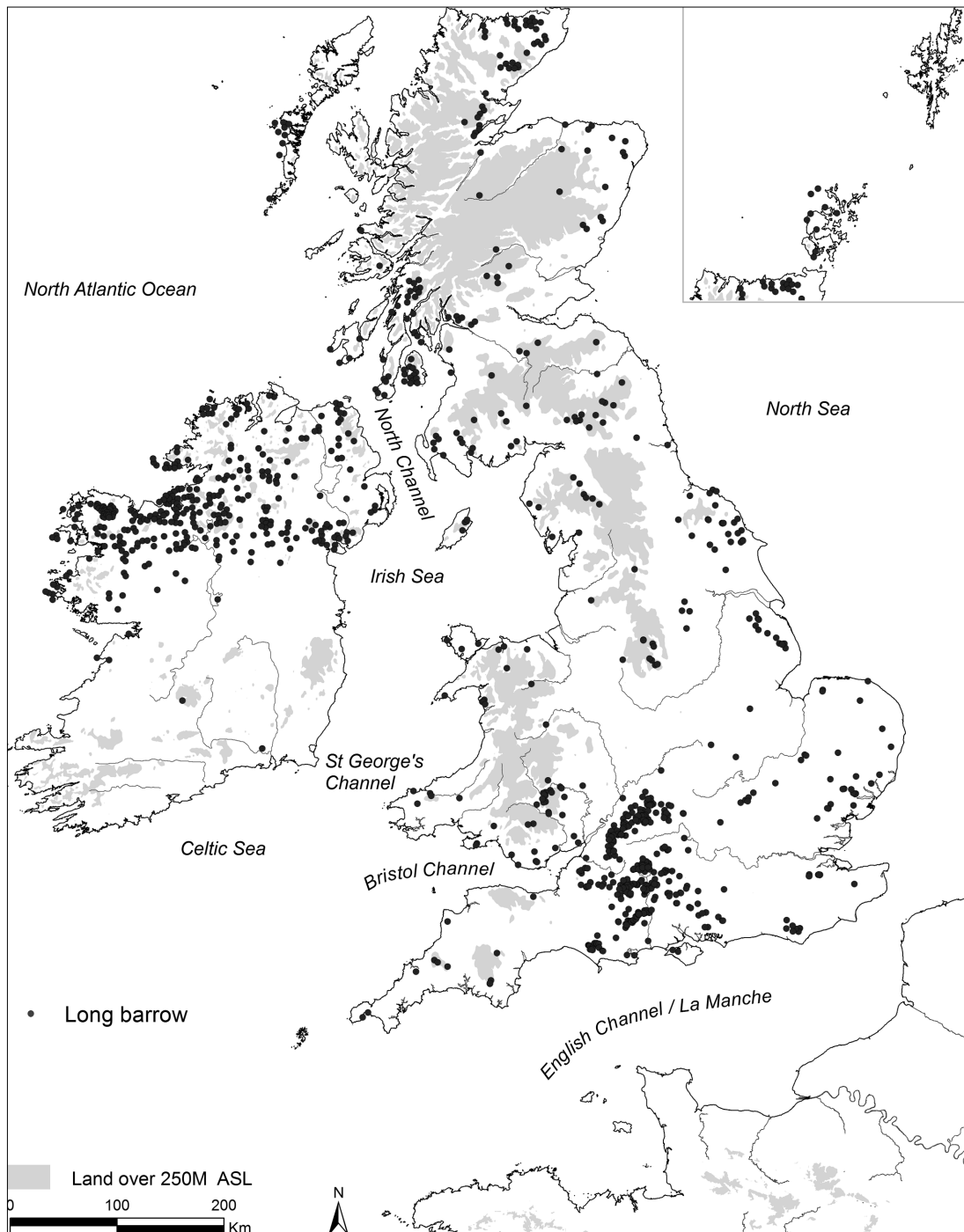


FIGURE 1A. DISTRIBUTION OF NEOLITHIC MONUMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 3800-3300 BC. LONG BARROWS. (FROM DARVILL 2010: FIGURE 39).

photography the number of these sites known has doubled since 1970 so that over 100 examples can now be cited (Palmer 1976; Oswald *et al.* 2001). Not all have been confirmed by excavation and so far there are no convincing examples in northern England or Scotland (Figure 1B). In southern Britain they occur in a variety of positions including hilltop and promontory situations, hillslopes, and valley floors. Many appear to have been built in light woodland or small clearances. Their size, construction, and the scale of the boundary ditches, vary greatly. On a wider, continental scale, the British examples appear relatively late in the overall sequence, but contemporary with other regional

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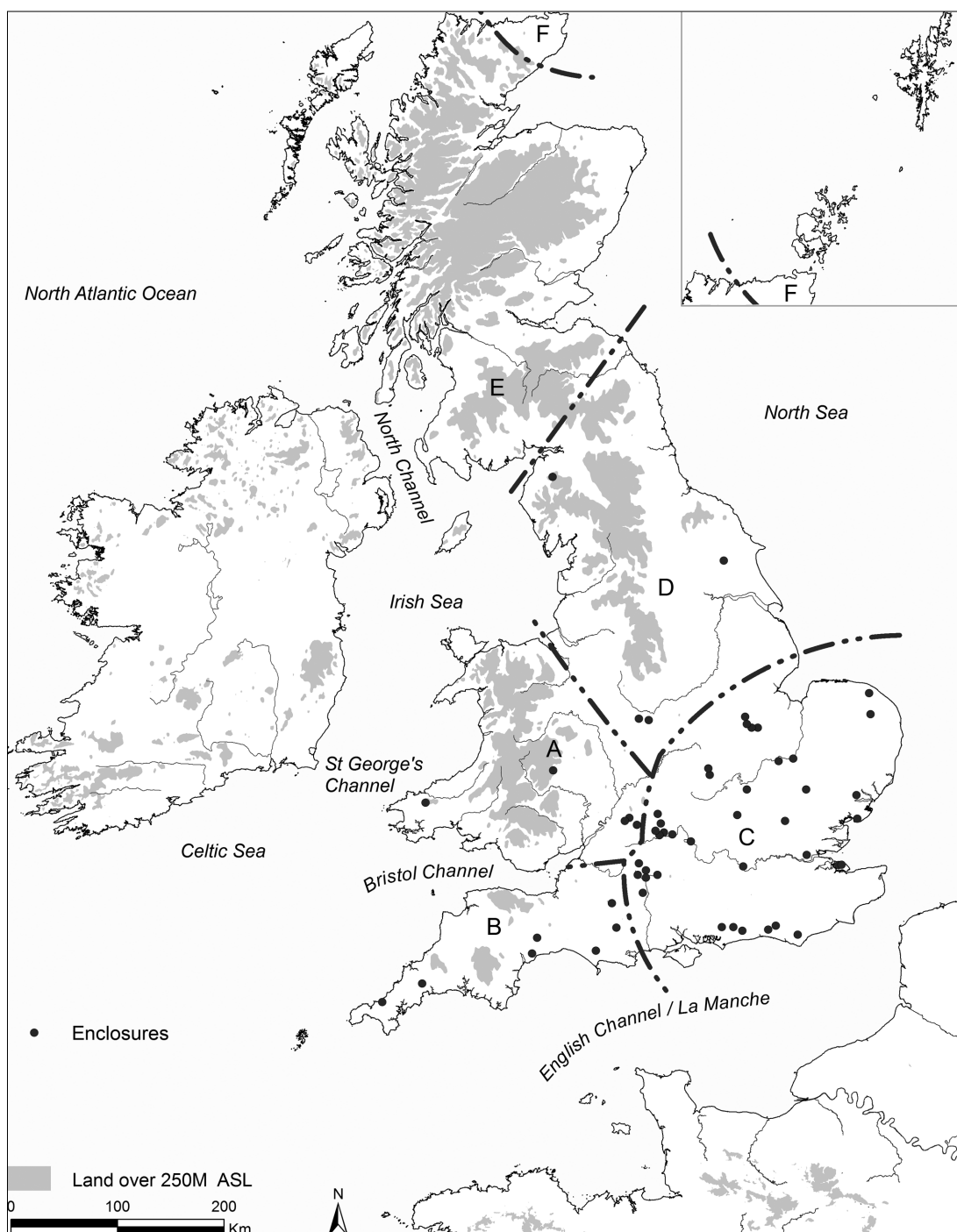


FIGURE 1B. DISTRIBUTION OF NEOLITHIC MONUMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 3800-3300 BC. CAUSEWAYED ENCLOSURES. (FROM DARVILL 2010: FIGURE 33).

expressions of the enclosure tradition in western France, the late Michelsberg Cultures of eastern France and the Rhineland, and the TRB Cultures of north Germany / southern Scandinavia (Klassen 2014: 211-219).

Much debate has surrounded the interpretation of these enclosures and they have variously been seen as settlements, cattle enclosures, ceremonial centres, excarnation sites, trade and exchange centres, and periodic festival sites (Oswald *et al.* 2001: 123-131). But simplicity of purpose and

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modern distinctions between settlements and ceremonial places are not especially helpful, and many enclosures can best be interpreted as settlements, either temporary or permanent, which also acted as meeting places and provide an arena for ceremonies and rituals. The interior of most enclosures contain a variety of features including houses, pits, and, on occasions, burials. Sometimes there is such a profusion of features that interpretation is difficult, while elsewhere severe erosion prevents full appraisal of the arrangements inside. Ditches usually prove rich in artefacts. Some material suggests localized deliberate structured deposition, but broken pottery, animal bones, flintwork, axes and tools, and worn-out querns is sufficiently widespread to suggest that the ditches were frequently used as middens. Soil was occasionally thrown over these deposits, probably to stifle the smell inevitably associated with such dumps. This practice, coupled with the problems caused by the occasional collapse of the internal ramparts necessitated periodic re-digging of the ditches. Such re-digging the ditches has been used as evidence to support the idea that enclosures were subject to periodic occupation, perhaps for festivals of some kind when the population from scattered farmsteads gathered together at a central point. The fairly regular spacing of enclosures on the chalklands in Sussex and Wiltshire adds further weight to this idea and it is tempting to suggest that such activities were responsible for the origins of many enclosures.

Like long barrows, causewayed enclosures seem to have a fairly limited lifespan and few were built after 3300 BC (Whittle *et al.* 2011: 705). The final hours of occupation at Crickley Hill, Gloucestershire, in around 3450 BC witnessed a victorious attack on the settlement, which was then sacked and burnt. Hundreds of flint leaf-shaped arrowheads littering the ramparts and gateways were found during excavations through the 1970s and early 80s (Dixon 1988). After 3300 BC rather different kinds of enclosure start to appear and continue into the third millennium BC. These include henge enclosures, classic henges, C-shaped enclosures, and a range of palisaded enclosures (Harding and Lee 1987; Gibson 2002).

Linking barrows and enclosures

For a few centuries in the middle part of the fourth millennium BC, from about 3700 to 3300 BC, long barrows and causewayed enclosures seem to have been contemporary components of the settlement patterns found in the landscapes of southern Britain. A possible connection between them was first recognized in the early 1960s by Isobel Smith while writing up the earlier excavations carried out by Alexander Keiller at Windmill Hill, Wiltshire. She identified the possibility that activities within and around the enclosure could be related to the use of the West Kennet Long Barrow 3 km away to the south (Piggott 1962: 68; Smith 1965). The main evidence prompting this idea was the differential presence of human remains at the two sites: skulls and long bones in the ditch fills of the causewayed enclosure and the relative absence of these same skeletal elements within the chambers of the long barrow. Initially it was just a casual observation, but later work by Nick Thorpe (1984) gave qualitative and quantitative precision to the picture which he extended to an analysis of other assemblages from enclosures and barrow sites. However, crucial to the integrity of the argument was the contemporaneity of paired sites. Similarities in the pottery assemblages suggested that they were close, but it was not until detailed dating sequences became available that the two came into exact coincidence. The West Kennet long barrow contains the remains of around 46 individuals including men, women and children deposited over a relatively short period. The excavated primary deposits date to the period 3670-3635 BC and the last interments to 3640-3610 BC (Bayliss and Whittle 2007). Detailed dating of the construction sequence at Windmill Hill shows that inner ditch was constructed around 3685-3635 BC, the outer ditch at around the same time, 3685-3610 BC, and the middle ditch just slightly later at 3655-3605 BC (Whittle *et al.* 2011: 81-93). Chronologically, the structural sequence at Windmill Hill maps very well indeed with the burial sequence at West Kennet and it is therefore very probable that those buried in West Kennet participated in the construction and use of Windmill Hill.

Elsewhere in central southern England similar patterns can be seen. Almost all known causewayed enclosures have a long barrow within 5 km, often closer. Whether the reverse is also true cannot

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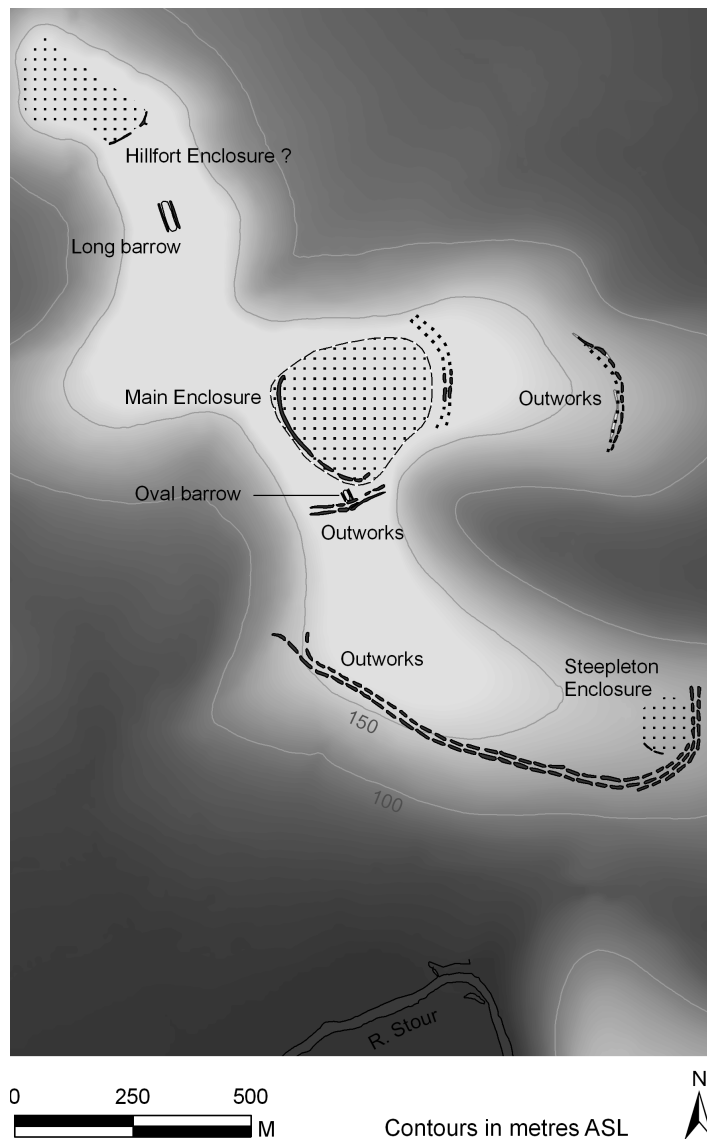


FIGURE 2. LOCATION OF THE ENCLOSURES AND LONG BARROWS ON HAMBLEDON HILL, DORSET. (FROM DARVILL 2010: FIGURE 48).

yet be determined, but on present evidence it seems more likely that a single enclosure was related to more than one long barrow. At Hambledon Hill, Dorset, at least two broadly contemporary causewayed enclosures are known on the top of a trefoil-shaped chalk upland (Figure 2). The main enclosure lies in the centre of hilltop and excavations between 1974 and 1986 showed that its ditches contained abundant disarticulated human remains; at least 11 adults and 19 immatures from the sample investigated (McKinley in Mercer and Healy 2008: 490). It is possible that some of these connect with burials made in a very large long barrow some 69 m long, 15 m wide, and 2.5 m high, that lies less than 500 m to the northwest. However, there are no recorded excavations of this monument so the links must remain speculative. By contrast, on the south side of the main enclosure there was a smaller oval-shaped barrow roughly 33 m by 15 m surrounded by a U-shaped segmented quarry ditch. When excavated this barrow was found to have been heavily disturbed, but displaced material included the remains of at least 4 adults and 1 immature that had probably come from a primary burial area in the central part of the mound (McKinley in Mercer and Healy 2008: 490). The main enclosure was constructed around 3680-3630 BC and continued in use for between 290 and 350 years. The oval barrow was constructed at the same time, 3680-3640 BC, and probably had a similar period of use (Bayliss *et al.* in Mercer and Healy 2008: Table 4.2).

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The Cotswold Hills and adjacent upper Thames Valley continues the heavy concentration of long barrows and enclosures northwards from the chalklands of Wessex. Crickley Hill and the Peak Camp on the Cotswold escarpment overlooking the Severn Valley comprise a pair of enclosures less than 2 km apart whose histories are intertwined (Darvill 2011; Dixon 1988; Dixon *et al.* in Whittle *et al.* 2011: 434-465). A large long barrow at the Crippetts some 3 km north of Crickley Hill may connect with the community that used the Crickley enclosures but without excavation it is impossible to be sure (Figure 3). Rather more clear is the situation at the Peak Camp, first built around in 3650-3550 BC and refurbished on several successive occasions down to 3330-3215 BC (Bayliss *et al.* in Darvill

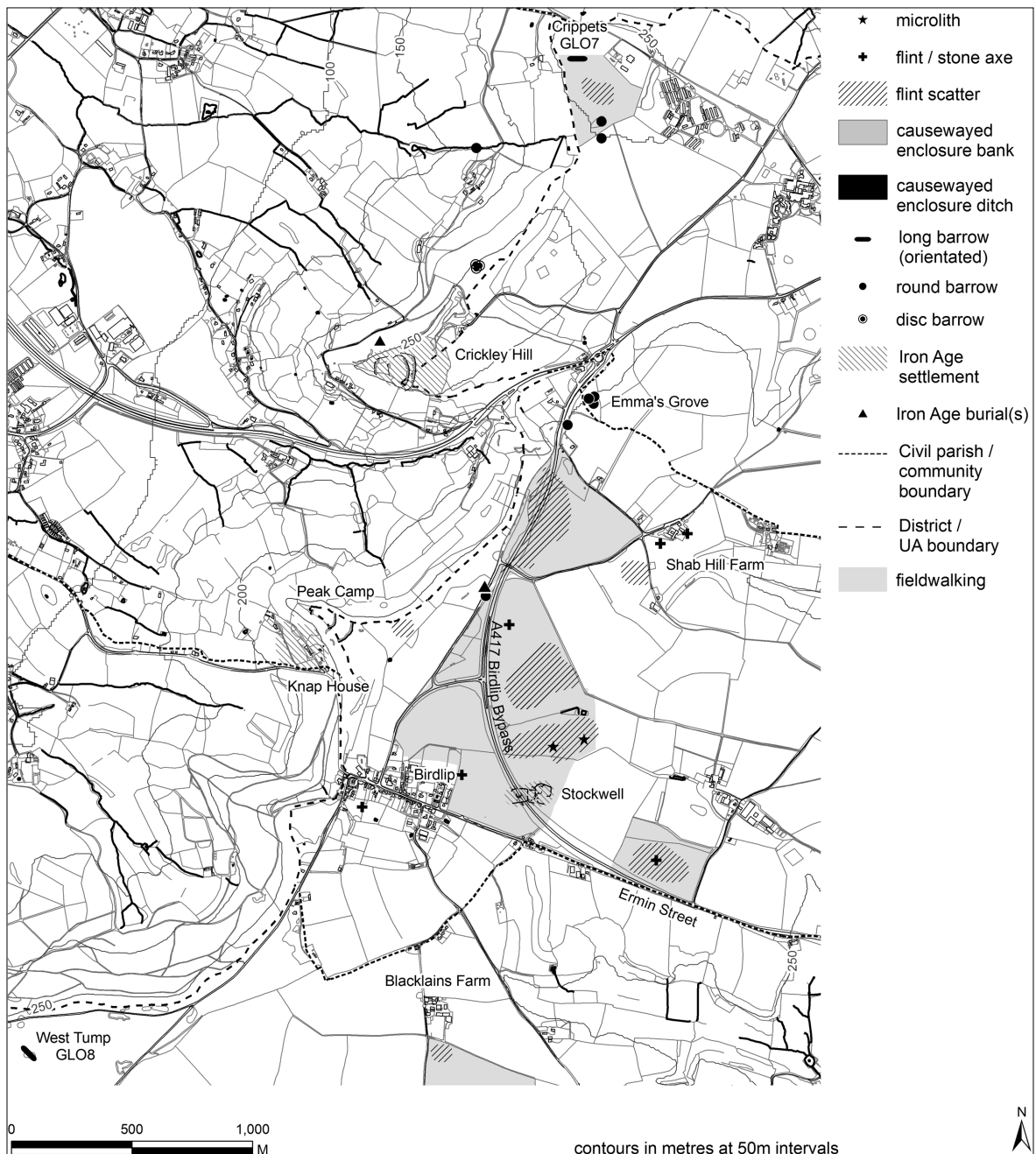


FIGURE 3. LOCATION OF CRICKLEY HILL AND THE PEAK CAMP ON THE COTSWOLD ESCARPMENT IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE WITH ADJACENT LONG BARROWS AND OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES MARKED. (FROM DARVILL 2011: FIGURE 1).

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2011: 187-194). Radiocarbon dates from burials at West Tump long barrow only half an hour's walk away from the Peak Camp to the south, span the period 3770-3630 BC to 3370-3090 BC (Smith and Brickley 2006: 340-343). This is more or less a mirror image of the Peak Camp range and it seems likely that the West Tump people were the builders, renovators, and users of Peak Camp.

Little is known about the relationships between the closely adjacent long barrows and enclosures at Adam's Grave and Knap Hill, Wiltshire (Cunnington 1912) and Roughton, Norfolk (Oswald *et al.* 2001: fig 6.7), but at Haddenham, Cambridgeshire, The Upper Delphs enclosure built 3820-2930 BC, probably towards the end of that period, seems to have been contemporary with the Foulmire Fen long barrow built in the mid fourth millennium BC just 3 km to the north (Evans and Hodder 2006; Whittle *et al.* 2011: 271-291).

Not all causewayed enclosures connect closely with adjacent barrows which is why understanding the chronology of monuments in a landscape context is so important. At Abingdon, Oxfordshire, for example the inner ditch of the well-known enclosure on the interfluvium between two north-bank tributaries of the River Thames was constructed around 3655-3630 BC with the outer ditch dug soon afterwards around 3660-3620 BC (Avery 1982; Whittle *et al.* 2011: 418). This seems to be slightly earlier than the date of the burials from an oval barrow just outside the enclosure to the southeast that were deposited in the last third of the fourth millennium BC (Bradley 1992; Whittle *et al.* 2011: 429). However, there may be undated earlier phases to the barrow, and there are certainly other long barrows in the vicinity yet to be explored. Pit graves to the east of the Abingdon enclosure include at least one burial that is contemporary with the use of the enclosure (Barclay and Halpin 1999: 28-31) showing how important it is to build up a comprehensive picture of how landscapes were used through the fourth millennium BC.

Connections between enclosures and other types of burial monuments of the fourth millennium BC are poorly understood. Duggleby Howe, North Yorkshire, for example, is a large multi-phase round barrow whose burial sequence started about 3555-3415 BC with a shaft-grave. The mound was added in the twenty-ninth century BC. The surrounding ditch forming an enclosure 370 m in diameter with a wide entrance gap to the southeast is probably later still, having been constructed in the later third millennium BC (Gibson 2011: 39-40). In western England the hilltop enclosure at Helman Tor, Cornwall (Mercer 1997), lies 3 km southwest of Lesquite Quoit (Barnatt 1982: 136), but while the construction of the former can be dated to the period 3845-3650 BC (Whittle *et al.* 2011: 504) the portal dolmen at Lesquite remains undated and in a ruinous condition. Similarly, Carn Brea, Cornwall, constructed around 4040-3530 BC (Mercer 1981; Whittle *et al.* 2011: 509), could potentially overlap with the use of a nearby dolmen at Carnwynnen Quoit. But the latter collapsed in 1967 and has never been adequately excavated (Barnatt 1982: 135-136). Southwest Wales is much the same with the hilltop enclosure at Banc Du, Pembrokeshire, constructed 3645-3490 BC (Darvill *et al.* 2005: 22-23; Whittle *et al.* 2011: 526-527) but the small dolmen at Cerrig Lladron overlooking the site some 1.3 km to the northeast has never been excavated. In many parts of western Britain acidic soils mitigate against the preservation of bone so substantiating close associations between enclosures and burial places will always be difficult.

Pattern and purpose

Archaeological evidence coupled with detailed dating shows that, in many areas, enclosures were exactly contemporary with long barrows and various other kinds of burial monuments. Questions therefore focus on how these structures fitted together into wider patterns? And how were they bonded together through the lives lived out by those who built and used them? We will probably never know exactly how these things worked within such landscapes (but see Oswald *et al.* 2001: 114-119 for summary of attempts), but it is nevertheless worth attempting a general model which serves to illustrate the possibilities (cf. Darvill 2004: 200-213 for case study in the Cotswolds). Some of the main relevant strands of evidence have already been introduced, but in addition it is important

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to emphasize that the role of topography and environment are important considerations. No single model will fit all situations, although the size of populations, the number of sites used, and the scale of land-use may be more important than the fundamental articulations.

Variations in landscape type and environmental diversity are key factors that influence the nature and distribution of archaeological evidence throughout Britain, and both need to be taken into account. In topographic terms, Graeme Barker and Derek Webley have observed that many causewayed enclosures in southern Britain lie on or near the interface between contrasting environments (Barker and Webley 1978). In some cases the interface is between upland and valley land; in other cases it is between a river flood-plain and the raised terraces above. One implication throughout is that the populations who used these enclosures were in the optimum situation for the effective exploitation of a wide range of resources. Equally, the enclosures were optimally situated to bring together communities whose everyday existence focused on different environments and who might therefore make complementary contributions to the overall economy and the well-being of the community as a whole.

The idea that long barrows and enclosures were somehow central places in the lives of a community is widely held, but how this significance was realized has become a matter of considerable debate. For Colin Renfrew long barrows and various other kinds of contemporary monuments were the territorial markers of segmentary societies, constructed in a climate of social stress as pioneering farming communities filled the landscape and brought upon themselves increased competition for land and resources (Renfrew 1973). This is a theme that I developed with specific reference to the Cotswold-Severn region some years ago, arguing that architectural devices embedded in the design and construction of the long barrows provided a symbolic scheme that could be decoded by contemporary people to reveal information about identity, ownership, and control (Darvill 1982: 41-75). In such a scheme, communities occupied defined settlement areas for appreciable periods, in some cases constructing enclosures to contain and define their activities and act as foci for the living (cf. Fleming 1973). Such simple distinctions between settlements and ceremonial sites of the kind that seem obvious to us today do not really work for the kinds of small-scale societies that must be envisaged for early farming communities in Britain. Elman Service referred to such societies as 'tribes' – groups of families or clans who believe they have descended from common ancestors and who form a close-knit community under a defined leader (Service 1971: 99-132). The land occupied by such a group becomes a territory, perhaps physically subdivided and fractured along kinship lines. In such communities everyday life is shot through with what to modern eyes seem like strange patterns of behaviour involving degrees of reverence, taboo, and beliefs that transcend everything that is done; all of life in this sense is deeply embedded in the ideas that structure the way things are done (see Sahlins 1968: 96-113). Thus although communities live in one place and bury their dead somewhere else, these should not be seen as corresponding to our particular notions of ordered existence; rather, barrows and enclosures should be seen as nodal points in a scheme of the world which we have to try to understand in its own terms. Barrows and burial places may be central to one series of routines, perhaps at a local household scale, while enclosures were central to other spheres of activity, perhaps at an inter-community level.

The question of mobility, or the lack of it, is an important factor in thinking about the way monuments fit together and relate to each other. During the 1980s a model of early farming communities developed in which communities are seen as being highly mobile. In this view, long barrows and enclosures were fixed points in extensive patterns of movement, perhaps with communities periodically meeting together at large enclosures and visiting their ancestral barrows in the neighbourhood for ceremonies and the placement of human remains belonging to those who had died since the last visit. The monuments in this scheme become permanent nodes within an impermanent world. For John Barrett, 'the temporal and spatial referents of these lives would have been known in terms of the seasons and of the distances between places ... sites did not occupy the centers of territories so much as lie at the end of one path and the beginning of the next' (Barrett 1994: 141). Alasdair Whittle described this

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in terms of what he called ‘tethered mobility’, periodic returns to a small number of fixed points (1997: 21), while for Julian Thomas it was engagement in such mobility and the various cycles of movement that went with it, including seasonal movements from place to place, that contributed to the development of personhood – the quality or condition of being an individual (Thomas 1999: 228). It is a tempting and seductive model which by its nature requires relatively little archaeological evidence to support it. Indeed, its origins owe much to the apparent poverty of evidence for structures that could be considered as long-term houses or settlements (cf. Darvill and Thomas 1996). But so far as the fourth millennia BC in Britain as a whole is concerned there are certain difficulties with the peripatetic community model, not least the existence of fairly marked regional styles of material culture – pottery and long barrows are obvious cases – which at the very least suggest that perhaps the areas within which communities might have moved around were of fairly limited compass. In many areas, and southern Britain is certainly one, there is increasing evidence of more established settlement patterns, and, for a few centuries at least, a fairly static residence system.

Underlying many of these ideas is the presence of some kind of hierarchy in the connections between sites; certainly there are differences in the number of recorded examples of different kinds of site that may be relevant here. Although undoubtedly biased by the way that different kinds of site are recognized and brought to attention, the proportion of each is perhaps instructive: enclosures are the least numerous with long barrows about four times as common. Movements between these and other kinds of site were undoubtedly important, whether at the everyday level of farming and carrying on essential life-sustaining tasks, or through periodic visits to more distant places and the participation in less mundane activities.

Condensing out the archaeological patterns, it is possible to explore and illustrate the possibilities at two related scales, albeit in a very tentative and provisional way (Figure 4). At a general level, it can be suggested that sub-tribal communities occupy interlocking geographically definable areas or territories, the boundaries of which may be rather fuzzy but locally known to those who directly encounter them and their neighbours (Figure 4A). The notional centre of each territory would be an enclosure, some of which were permanently occupied, but all of which acted as periodic gathering places for the wider community. These enclosures were not necessarily in the geographical centre of the territory, but rather in convenient locations with good access to the range of environments accessible to the particular communities. Scattered around the territory there were other settlements, variously occupied on a permanent or temporary basis. Around the enclosures and the other settlements there would be long barrows, perhaps one for each local lineage or kinship group. Moving in closer to the more detailed scale of particular communities, the location and position of the enclosure, residential settlements, industrial areas, and barrows would have reflected sensitivity to the landscape, the local environment, and the extent of cleared land (Figure 4B). There is some reason to think that the barrows may have been on the edge of the cleared ground while the enclosures lay on or near the interface between critical environments. Trackways and paths connected the main elements in the settlement system, and in turn linked these with the wider environment and neighbouring communities.

Conclusion

Crude as they are in the light of available evidence, models of landscape organization help focus attention on what is known and how gaps in our knowledge about the lives of these communities might be filled. By the middle of the fourth millennium BC, long barrows were regularly constructed and used throughout southern Britain by communities who also built and used large earthwork enclosures for short-term and long-term occupation. In some cases they lived in small defended hilltop villages while elsewhere their long-houses were the focus of everyday routines. Ian Hodder has suggested that the physical separation that existed between the long barrows and the concentrations of habitation may have been part of the very changes in the way that people saw the world around them, and the reason that people built long barrows at all. He suggests that ‘the drama of the control of nature would thus be enhanced by the very construction of the tomb in more distant and marginal

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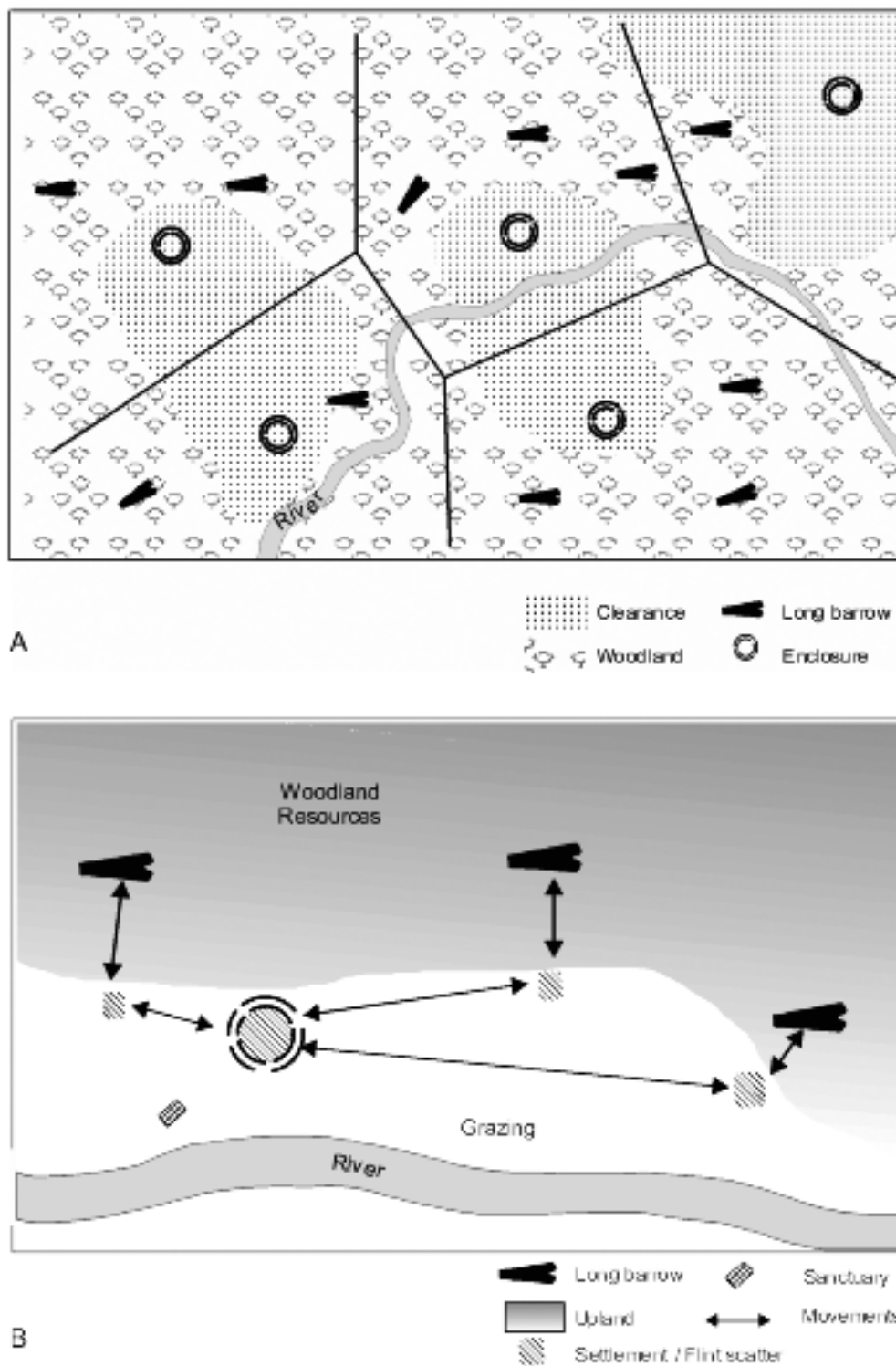


FIGURE 4. IDEALIZED SETTLEMENT PATTERN IN AREAS WITH LONG BARROWS AND ENCLOSURES.
A. REGIONAL SYSTEM. B. LOCAL SYSTEM. (FROM DARVILL 2004: FIGURE 82).

places ... the gradual extension of the domus away from the domestic sphere' (Hodder 1990: 255). It is a powerful image and one that emphasises how important it is to situate and understand the formal and informal relationships between archaeologically visible monuments in the context of socially constructed space within a meaningfully constituted world that we can now only begin to glimpse.

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