Archaeological Excavations at Holme Hall Quarry, South Yorkshire

In fond memory of

RICHARD DURKIN

Friend, colleague and expert geophysicist

Archaeological Excavations at Holme Hall Quarry, South Yorkshire

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Cover: Reconstruction drawing: looking south over the field system and associated droveways and enclosures at Holme Hall Quarry in the mid 2nd century AD (by Ada Lewkowicz).

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Summaries

Summary

Holme Hall Quarry is a large limestone quarry located on the 'Magnesian Limestone' ridge in South Yorkshire, 7.6 km south-west of Doncaster, and 3.2 km south of the River Don. Archaeological excavations and watching briefs encompassing a total area of 35.2 ha were undertaken in 2004 (1.1 ha by the University of Sheffield), 2015 and 2019–22 (34.1 ha by Archaeological Research Services Ltd) prior to northwards extensions of the quarry. The excavations were preceded by extensive fieldwalking and geophysical surveys.

The earliest human activity on the site was evidenced by a scatter of 206 chipped lithics ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age. The vast majority were found in topsoil and none appeared to derive from contemporary archaeological features. This lithic assemblage provides context for hunter-gatherer activity across the area as well as more extensive use of the landscape by Early Neolithic farmers who built their burial monuments along the Magnesian Limestone ridge.

Two pits found in the 2020–22 excavations were radiocarbon dated to the 4th to 2nd centuries BC in the Middle Iron Age. These pits lay *c*.520 m apart. Several possible postholes or small pits, none with finds, lay near one of the pits and could be contemporary with it, perhaps relating to a small area of Middle Iron Age settlement. The radiocarbon-dated features of Middle Iron Age date provide a useful addition to our knowledge of this period, which is poorly represented in South Yorkshire due to the paucity of features and artefacts, especially pottery, of this date.

The main occupation of the site occurred during the Roman period (possibly beginning in the very Late Iron Age, but unlikely). An extensive, well-preserved rectilinear/coaxial field system of this date, spanning at least 650 m east–west by 495 m north–south, was recorded and sample-excavated across a large continuous area of 25.8 ha in 2020–22. The field system was associated with a north–south droveway (which ran for at least 489 m across the full extent of the excavated area), three curvilinear enclosures (Enclosures 3–5) and a rectilinear enclosure or small field/paddock (Enclosure 6). Excavations a short distance further east in 2015 and 2019, revealed a rectilinear Early Roman farmstead (Enclosures 2a and 2b) with associated field ditches to the north and west. About 450 m further south, another curvilinear (sub-circular) Early Roman farmstead was excavated in 2004 (Enclosure 1). Four Roman deposits containing burnt or charred human bone fragments were also found in the 2015 and 2019–22 excavations, including a disturbed/truncated urned cremation burial of late 1st- to 2nd-century AD date, situated *c*.40 m south-west of Enclosure 2a.

The field system at Holme Hall Quarry appears to have represented a large-scale planned reorganisation of the landscape and will have served to intensify agricultural production on what were fertile soils situated over limestone. On the basis of the pottery and radiocarbon dates, the field system was probably established during the 1st century AD, likely (but not certainly) after the appearance of the Roman military in the locality, probably from the early AD 50s onwards. A few enclosures were also constructed early in the Roman period as part of this planned layout: rectilinear Enclosure(s) 2a and 2b was probably established in the late 1st or 2nd century AD, whilst sub-circular Enclosure 1 was possibly built in the late first century AD. D-shaped Enclosure 3, meanwhile, may have gone out of use by the late 1st century AD. Similar field systems are well known in areas of South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire to the north, east and south. Some of these other systems may have originated in the Iron Age, whilst others appear to have been established early in the Roman period, but it can be difficult to distinguish Iron Age field systems from Roman-period fields in this region.

Following occupation of the region around Holme Hall Quarry in the AD 50s onwards, the Roman military may have reorganised land tenure in order to intensify agricultural production to ensure their supply in an initially unstable and potentially hostile frontier zone. It is possible land in the Holme Hall Quarry area was confiscated or ownership/tenure transferred, with

farming taken up by preferred individuals or groups, such as Roman military veterans, rich absentee landlords, or friendly/compliant local 'native' leaders. The copper-alloy Stannington diploma, found hidden by a boulder on the western side of Sheffield, represents a grant of citizenship to a Roman auxiliary soldier by Hadrian and indicates that retired Roman auxiliaries may have bought/been granted land elsewhere in South Yorkshire in the early 2nd century AD.

Some useful insights into farming practices on the site were gained from analyses of the animal bone assemblage and the palaeoenvironmental samples. These indicated a mixed farming economy which likely supported local consumption as well as surplus for the Roman military. Bones of all three main meat-yielding species were represented and their relative proportions calculated: cattle were most commonly represented, closely followed by sheep/goat, with smaller amounts of pig. Charred grains of spelt wheat and barley were identified at Enclosures 2a and 2b (interpreted as rural Roman farmsteads), indicating crop processing, whilst fragments of quern stones found at Enclosures 1 and 2a indicate grinding of grain.

A considerable amount of Late Iron Age/Roman and Roman pottery (a total of more than 11,100 sherds, 117.56 kg) was recovered from the various excavations. This was largely of relatively local production (e.g. from the Doncaster area), but some vessels came from adjacent regions or other parts of Britain, whilst a handful of samian vessels (red glossy tableware) were imported from Gaul and olive oil amphorae from Spain. Other Roman objects included a few coins (x4, all copper alloy), a glass bead, copper-alloy brooches (x2, dragonesque and penannular types) and other metalwork, with a considerable amount of ironwork found near Enclosure 1.

Occupation at the site, as represented by pottery and other finds, appears to have focused on the enclosures/farmsteads, especially sub-circular Enclosure 1, which was probably a farmstead with evidence for cooking and for the presence of a blacksmith, and rectilinear Enclosure(s) 2a and 2b, which also appears to have been a rural farmstead, with evidence for feasting (the preparation and consumption of food). Curvilinear Enclosure 4 contained a small limestone quarry, although the enclosure may have been created before the quarry and perhaps originally had a different purpose. Other enclosures, such as D-shaped Enclosure 3, horseshoe-shaped Enclosure 5 and rectilinear Enclosure 6, might have been used to corral livestock.

The surviving parts of the field and enclosure ditches appear to have been filled by the late 2nd or early 3rd centuries AD, however, the field boundaries may have remained in use (e.g. as hedges and/or banks) into the later part of the Roman period or early medieval period. Numerous late Roman pits and postholes were found within rectilinear Enclosure(s) 2a and 2b, suggesting that this farmstead/enclosure may have remained a feature into the late 3rd century. Considerable evidence for occupation down to at least the late 3rd century was also represented by features within and immediately outside the other probable farmstead, Enclosure 1. There is, however, virtually no evidence for Roman activity on the site in or after the early/mid 4th-century, perhaps due to disruption of the previous system of military supply and/or to unrest and instability that was widespread across the Roman empire, including within *Britannia*, at this time.

A few early medieval features of 7th- to 10th-century date were identified in the 2020–22 excavations on the basis of radiocarbon dating. As for the Middle Iron Age, the radiocarbon-dated features of early medieval date provide useful additions to our knowledge of this period, which is archaeologically poorly represented in South Yorkshire. There is little evidence for activity during the high and late medieval periods and 16th to 17th centuries, when the site is likely to have been open fields, perhaps in part wooded. The site was primarily an agricultural landscape during the 18th and 19th centuries, but limestone was clearly being quarried on a considerable scale to produce lime for 'marling' the fields and maintaining fertility at the time of the Napoleonic and other wars when agricultural production was being intensified across England. Several infilled quarries of this date were recorded in 2004 and 2020–22, whilst the well-preserved base of a mid 19th-century lime kiln was also found in the 2020–22 excavations. This extractive activity was a precursor to the much larger-scale modern limestone quarrying at Holme Hall, which began after the Second World War.

Synthèse

La grande carrière de calcaire de Holme Hall est située sur l'arête de calcaire magnésien dans le Sud Yorkshire, à 7,6 km au sud-ouest de Doncaster, et à 3,2 km au sud de la rivière Don. Des fouilles archéologiques et des programmes de surveillance couvrant une superficie totale de 35,20 ha ont été entrepris en 2004 (1,10 ha, par l'université de Sheffield), en 2015 et en 2019–1022 (34,1 ha, par la société Archaeological Research Services Ltd) préalablement à l'extension de la carrière vers le nord. Les fouilles ont été précédées de prospections au sol et de relevés géophysiques extensifs.

Les activités humaines les plus anciennes sur le site sont mises en évidence par 206 matériaux lithiques éparpillés, remontant du mésolithique jusqu'à l'âge du bronze ancien. Retrouvés en grande majorité

dans la couche de terre arable, aucun ne semble provenir de vestiges archéologiques contemporains. Cet assemblage lithique donne comme contexte des activités de chasseurs-cueilleurs dans cette zone, ainsi qu'une utilisation plus extensive du paysage par des agriculteurs du néolithique ancien qui ont construit leurs monuments funéraires le long de l'arête de calcaire magnésien.

Deux fosses découvertes lors des fouilles de 2020–2022 ont été datées par radiocarbone du 4e au 2e siècle avant notre ère, à l'âge du fer moyen. Ces fosses sont écartées d'environ 520 m. Plusieurs trous de poteaux ou petites fosses, n'ayant rien révélé, se trouvent à proximité d'une des fosses et pourraient être contemporains, liés peut-être à une petite zone d'habitat de l'âge du fer moyen. Les vestiges datés de l'âge du fer moyen par radiocarbone sont un apport appréciable à nos connaissances de la période, qui est peu représentée dans le Sud Yorkshire du fait du manque de vestiges et d'artefacts de cette période, en particulier de céramique.

La principale occupation du site remonte à la période romaine (éventuellement à partir de l'âge du fer tardif, mais c'est peu probable). Un système de champs rectilinéaire/coaxial étendu et bien préservé de cette date, couvrant au moins 650 m d'est en ouest et 495 m du nord au sud, a été relevé et des sondages réalisés sur une large superficie ininterrompue de 25,80 ha en 2020–2022. Le système de champs était associé à un chemin d'accès (droveway) nord–sud (qui courait sur au moins 489 m sur toute l'étendue de la zone de fouilles), à trois enclos curvilinéaires (Enclos 3–5) et à un enclos rectilinéaire ou petit champ/paddock (Enclos 6). Des fouilles réalisées un peu plus loin à l'est, en 2015 et 2019, ont révélé une ferme rectilinéaire du début de la période romaine (Enclos 2a et 2b) associée à des fossés de champs au nord et à l'ouest. Environ 450 m plus au sud, des fouilles ont mis à jour en 2004 une autre ferme curvilinéaire (subcirculaire) du début de la période romaine (Enclos 1). Quatre dépôts romains contenant des fragments osseux humains brûlés ou calcinés ont également été retrouvés lors des fouilles de 2015 et de 2019–2022, y compris une sépulture à urne crématoire perturbée/tronquée datant de la fin du 1er au 2e siècle, située à env. 40 m au sud-ouest de l'Enclos 2a.

Le système de champs à Holme Hall semble correspondre à une réorganisation planifiée et à grande échelle du paysage et aura servi à intensifier la production agricole sur des sols fertiles recouvrant des couches calcaires. En s'appuyant sur la céramique et les datations au radiocarbone, il est probable que le système de champs ait été établi au cours du 1er siècle, sans doute après l'arrivée de l'armée romaine dans la région (mais ce n'est pas certain), probablement à partir du début de l'an 50. La construction de quelques enclos remonte aussi au début de la période romaine dans le cadre de cet agencement planifié : l'Enclos 2a et 2b rectilinéaire a probablement été établi à la fin du 1er ou au cours du 2e siècle, tandis que la construction de l'Enclos 1 subcirculaire remonte peut-être à la fin du 1er siècle. Entretemps, il est possible que l'Enclos 3, en forme de D, ait cessé d'être utilisé à la fin du 1er siècle. Des systèmes de champs semblables sont bien connus dans certaines parties du Sud Yorkshire, de l'Ouest Yorkshire et du Nottinghamshire, au nord, à l'est et au sud. Certains d'entre eux pourraient remonter à l'âge du fer, tandis que d'autres semblent avoir été établis en début de période romaine ; toutefois, il peut s'avérer difficile de faire la distinction entre les systèmes de champs de l'âge du fer et les champs de la période romaine dans cette région.

Suite à l'occupation de la région environnant Holme Hall à partir de l'an 50, il se peut que l'armée romaine ait réorganisé la propriété foncière afin d'intensifier la production agricole, pour assurer leur approvisionnement dans une zone frontalière initialement instable et potentiellement hostile. Il est possible que les terres dans la zone de Holme Hall aient été confisquées ou la propriété foncière/tenure transférée et l'exploitation agraire reprise en main par des personnes ou groupes privilégiés, tels que d'anciens soldats romains, de riches propriétaires absentéistes, ou des chefs locaux affables/bien disposés. Le diplôme de Stannington en alliage de cuivre, qu'on a retrouvé caché près d'un rocher à l'ouest de Sheffield, signifie que Hadrien concède la citoyenneté à un soldat de la légion auxiliaire romaine ; des légionnaires auxiliaires ont pu acheter/se voir remettre des terres ailleurs dans le Sud Yorkshire au début du 2e siècle.

Des informations précieuses sur les pratiques agraires sur place ont été obtenues à partir d'analyses de l'assemblage d'ossements animaux et d'échantillons paléoenvironnementaux. Ces derniers indiquaient une économie agraire mixte qui soutenait vraisemblablement la consommation locale, ainsi qu'un surplus pour les soldats romains. Les ossements des trois espèces productrices de viande étaient représentés et leurs proportions relatives ont été calculées : le bétail était le plus représenté, suivi de près par les moutons/chèvres, et quelques cochons en moindre proportion. Des grains d'épeautre et d'orge calcinés ont été identifiés dans les Enclos 2a et 2b (interprétés comme étant des fermes rurales romaines), ce qui est indicateur du traitement des céréales, tandis que des fragments de meules à grains retrouvés dans les Enclos 1 et 2a témoignent de la mouture de céréales.

Un nombre considérable de poteries de l'âge du fer tardif/de la période romaine et de poteries romaines

(au total, plus de 11 100 tessons, 117,56 kg) ont été retrouvées lors des diverses campagnes de fouilles. Il s'agissait principalement d'une production assez locale (p. ex. de la région de Doncaster), mais certains récipients provenaient de régions voisines ou d'autres parties de la Grande-Bretagne, tandis qu'une poignée de récipients samiens (vaisselle rouge vernissée) ont été importés de la Gaule et des amphores d'huile d'olive de l'Espagne. Parmi d'autres objets romains, on peut citer quelques pièces de monnaie (4, toutes en alliage de cuivre), une perle de verre, des broches en alliage de cuivre (2, l'une en forme de dragon et l'autre pénannulaire) et d'autres pièces de métal, ainsi qu'une quantité considérable de ferronnerie retrouvée à proximité de l'Enclos 1.

L'occupation du site, mise en évidence par la poterie et d'autres vestiges, semble avoir été axée sur les enclos/fermes, en particulier l'Enclos 1 subcirculaire, qui était probablement une ferme avec des traces d'activité culinaire et de la présence d'un forgeron, et l'Enclos 2a et 2b, qui semble également avoir été une ferme rurale, avec des traces de festin (préparation et consommation de nourriture). L'Enclos 4 curvilinéaire renfermait une petite carrière de calcaire, mais il est possible que la création de l'enclos ait été antérieure à la carrière et qu'il ait eu à l'origine une autre finalité. Les autres enclos, tels que l'Enclos 3 en forme de D, l'Enclos 5 en forme de fer à cheval, et l'Enclos 6 rectilinéaire, ont peut-être servi d'enclos pour le bétail.

Les parties subsistantes des fossés de champ et d'enclos semblent avoir été comblées à la fin du 2e ou au début du 3e siècle de notre ère ; toutefois, les limites parcellaires ont pu continuer à être utilisées (p. ex. sous forme de haies et/ou de talus) jusqu'à la dernière partie de la période romaine ou au début de la période médiévale. Des fosses et trous de poteaux de la fin de la période romaine ont été retrouvés en grand nombre dans l'Enclos 2a et 2b rectilinéaire, ce qui suggère que cette ferme/enclos a pu subsister jusqu'à la fin du 3e siècle. Des traces considérables d'occupation jusqu'à, au moins, la fin du 3e siècle sont visibles également à l'intérieur et immédiatement en dehors de l'Enclos 1, l'autre ferme probable. Il n'existe cependant quasiment aucune trace d'activité romaine sur le site au début/milieu du 4e siècle ou ultérieurement, peut-être du fait du bouleversement du système antérieur d'approvisionnement militaire et/ou du désordre et de l'instabilité qui s'étaient répandus à ce stade dans tout l'empire romain, y compris dans la province de Bretagne.

Quelques caractéristiques du début de la période médiévale, entre le 7e et le 10e siècles, ont été identifiées lors des fouilles de 2020–2022 par datation au radiocarbone. Comme pour l'âge du fer moyen, les vestiges datés par radiocarbone du début du Moyen-Âge sont un apport appréciable à nos connaissances de cette période, qui est peu représentée dans le Sud Yorkshire du point de vue archéologique. Il existe peu de traces d'activités au haut Moyen-Âge et à la fin du Moyen-Âge, et du 16e au 17e siècles, périodes auxquelles des champs ouverts recouvraient probablement le site, éventuellement en partie boisé. Principalement un paysage agricole aux 18e et 19e siècles, il est clair que le calcaire du site était exploité sur une échelle considérable afin de produire de la chaux pour le « marnage » des champs et en maintenir la fertilité à l'époque des guerres napoléoniennes et autres, où la production agricole s'intensifiait en Angleterre. Plusieurs carrières comblées de cette date ont été recensées en 2004 et 2020–2022, tandis que la base bien préservée d'un four à chaux du milieu du 19e siècle a également été mise à jour lors des fouilles de 2020–2022. Cette activité d'extraction était le précurseur d'une carrière de calcaire moderne à Holme Hall, dont l'exploitation à une échelle beaucoup plus grande a démarré après la Seconde guerre mondiale.

Zusammenfassung

Holme Hall Quarry ist ein weitläufiger Kalksteinbruch im Gebiet des Magnesian Limestone Ridge in South Yorkshire, einem Bergrücken aus magnesischem Kalkstein. Der Steinbruch befindet sich 7,6 km südwestlich von Doncaster und 3,2 km südlich des Flusses River Don. Auf einer Fläche von insgesamt 35,2 ha wurden hier 2004 (1,1 ha von der University of Sheffield), 2015 sowie 2019–2022 (34,1 ha von Archaeological Research Services Ltd.) archäologische Ausgrabungen sowie archäologische Baubegleitungen durchgeführt, bevor der Steinbruch in nördliche Richtung erweitert wurde. Im Vorfeld der Ausgrabungen wurden zudem umfangreiche Feldbegehungen und geophysikalische Untersuchungen vorgenommen.

Die ältesten Belege für menschliche Besiedelung in diesem Gebiet bilden 206 verstreut aufgefundene Steinartefakte, die aus der Zeit zwischen dem Mesolithikum und der Frühbronzezeit stammen. Der Großteil der Steinartefakte wurde im Oberboden gefunden und keines der Artefakte schien von Strukturen der jüngeren Vergangenheit zu stammen. Diese Ansammlung von Steinartefakten deutet auf eine Jäger-und-Sammler-Kultur in der Gegend sowie eine extensivere Nutzung des Gebiets durch frühneolithische Bauern hin, die entlang des Magnesian Limestone Ridge ihre Grabstätten errichteten.

Durch die Radiokarbondatierung zweier im Zuge der Ausgrabungen zwischen 2020 und 2022 freigelegter Gruben konnte festgestellt werden, dass diese im vierten bis zweiten Jahrhundert vor Christus in der

mittleren Eisenzeit angelegt wurden. Die beiden Gruben liegen circa 520 m voneinander entfernt. In der Nähe einer der Gruben befinden sich mehrere mögliche Pfostengruben bzw. kleine Gruben, in denen keine Funde getätigt wurden. Diese könnten aus der gleichen Zeit stammen und möglicherweise auf eine kleine Siedlung in der mittleren Eisenzeit hindeuten. Die radiokarbondatierten mitteleisenzeitlichen Strukturen liefern uns wertvolle neue Einblicke in dieses Zeitalter in South Yorkshire, über das aufgrund des Mangels an Strukturen und Artefakten aus dieser Zeit, insbesondere an Keramiken, nur wenig bekannt ist.

Die Hauptbesiedlungsphase des Gebiets fand zur Zeit des Römischen Reichs statt (möglicherweise ab der sehr späten Eisenzeit, was jedoch unwahrscheinlich ist). Zwischen 2020 und 2022 wurden ein weitläufiges, gut erhaltenes, rechtwinkliges/koaxiales Feldsystem aus dieser Zeit dokumentiert, das sich mindestens 650 m von Ost nach West und 495 m von Nord nach Süd erstreckte, sowie eine große zusammenhängende Fläche von 25,8 ha auf mögliche Funde untersucht. Das Feldsystem umfasste einen von Nord nach Süd verlaufenden Triftweg (der sich mindestens 489 m durch den gesamten Grabungsbereich erstreckte), drei gekrümmte Einfriedungen (Einfriedungen 3–5) und eine rechteckige Einfriedung bzw. ein kleines Feld/eine kleine Koppel (Einfriedung 6). 2015 und 2019 wurde bei Ausgrabungen etwas weiter östlich ein rechteckiges frührömisches Gehöft (Einfriedungen 2a und 2b) mit zugehörigen Feldgräben im nördlichen und westlichen Teil des Bereichs freigelegt. Etwa 450 m weiter südlich wurde 2004 ein weiteres gekrümmtes (kreisförmiges) frührömisches Gehöft entdeckt (Einfriedung 1). Im Zuge der Ausgrabungen in den Jahren 2015 und 2019–2022 wurden außerdem vier römische Lagerstätten freigelegt, die verbrannte bzw. verkohlte menschliche Knochenfragmente enthielten, darunter ein gestörtes/teilweise zerstörtes Grab mit Urne aus dem späten ersten bis zweiten Jahrhundert nach Christus, das sich circa 40 m südwestlich der Einfriedung 2a befand.

Das Feldsystem von Holme Hall Quarry scheint das Ergebnis einer umfangreichen, geplanten Umgestaltung der Landschaft gewesen zu sein und diente wohl der Intensivierung der Landwirtschaft auf dem fruchtbaren Boden, der den Kalkstein bedeckte. Anhand der Keramiken und der Radiokarbondatierung lässt sich feststellen, dass das Feldsystem wahrscheinlich im ersten Jahrhundert nach Christus angelegt wurde, höchstwahrscheinlich nach der Besetzung des Gebiets durch römische Legionen, vermutlich ab den frühen 50er-Jahren nach Christus. Einige Einfriedungen wurden ebenfalls als Teil der Plansiedlung in frührömischer Zeit errichtet: Die rechteckigen Einfriedungen 2a und 2b stammen vermutlich aus dem späten ersten oder zweiten Jahrhundert nach Christus, wogegen die kreisförmige Einfriedung 1 wahrscheinlich im späten ersten Jahrhundert nach Christus errichtet wurde. Im Gegensatz dazu wurde die D-förmige Einfriedung 3 im späten ersten Jahrhundert nach Christus womöglich bereits nicht mehr verwendet. Ähnliche Feldsysteme sind in der Gegend von South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire und Nottinghamshire im Norden, Osten und Süden bereits bekannt. Einige dieser Systeme stammen wohl aus der Eisenzeit, wogegen andere offenbar in frührömischer Zeit angelegt wurden. In diesem Gebiet erweist es sich jedoch häufig als schwierig, eisenzeitliche Feldsysteme von römischen Feldsystemen zu unterscheiden.

Nach der Besetzung des Gebiets um Holme Hall Quarry ab den 50er-Jahren nach Christus wurde der Landbesitz durch die römische Besatzung möglicherweise neu aufgeteilt, um die Landwirtschaft zu intensivieren und die Versorgung der Truppen in diesem anfangs instabilen und unter Umständen feindlichen Grenzgebiet sicherzustellen. Es ist vorstellbar, dass das Land im Bereich des Holme Hall Quarry konfisziert oder der Grundbesitz anderen übertragen wurde, um die landwirtschaftliche Produktion bevorzugten Individuen oder Gruppen anzuvertrauen, beispielsweise römischen Veteranen, wohlhabenden, nicht vor Ort lebenden Grundbesitzern oder wohlgesinnten/kooperationsbereiten „einheimischen“ Anführern. Das im westlichen Teil von Sheffield hinter einem Felsblock aufgefundene Stannington-Diplom aus Kupferlegierung stellt den Beleg für die Verleihung des römischen Bürgerrechts an einen römischen Hilfssoldaten durch Hadrian dar und deutet darauf hin, dass ausgediente römische Hilfssoldaten im frühen zweiten Jahrhundert nach Christus Ländereien in anderen Teilen von South Yorkshire erstanden bzw. erhalten haben.

Analysen von Tierknochenfunden und paläoökologischen Proben erbrachten einige aufschlussreiche Einblicke in die landwirtschaftlichen Praktiken des einstigen Siedlungsgebiets. Sie ließen auf gemischte Landwirtschaft schließen, die wahrscheinlich den Bedarf der lokalen Bevölkerung deckte sowie einen Überschuss für die römischen Truppen lieferte. Die Funde umfassten Knochen aller drei primären Fleischlieferanten. Laut Berechnungen waren Rinderknochen am häufigsten, dicht gefolgt von Schafs- bzw. Ziegenknochen sowie einer kleineren Menge von Schweineknochen. In den Einfriedungen 2a und 2b (bei denen es sich vermutlich um ländliche römische Gehöfte handelte) wurden verkohlte Dinkel- und Gerstenkörner gefunden, die auf die Verarbeitung von Getreide rückschließen lassen. Die in den Einfriedungen 1 und 2a aufgefundenen Mahlsteinfragmente deuten hingegen darauf hin, dass hier Getreide gemahlen wurde.

Aus den verschiedenen Grabungsstätten wurde eine erhebliche Menge von späteisenzeitlichen/römischen und römischen Keramiken geborgen (insgesamt mehr als 11.100 Scherben bzw. 117,56 kg). Diese Keramiken stammten größtenteils aus relativ lokaler Produktion (z. B. aus dem Gebiet von Doncaster), einige Gefäße waren jedoch angrenzenden Regionen oder anderen Teilen der britischen Inseln zuzuordnen. Eine Handvoll samischer Gefäße (rot glänzendes Geschirr) wurde hingegen von Gallien und Olivenölamphoren aus Spanien importiert. Die geborgenen römischen Objekte umfassten außerdem einige Münzen (vier Stück, alle aus Kupferlegierung), eine Glasperle, Fibeln aus Kupferlegierung (zwei Stück, eine Drachen- und eine Ringfibel) sowie andere Metallobjekte, darunter zahlreiche Eisenobjekte in der Nähe von Einfriedung 1.

Die durch Keramiken und andere Funde belegte Besiedelung scheint auf die Einfriedungen bzw. Gehöfte konzentriert zu sein. Dies gilt insbesondere für die kreisförmige Einfriedung 1, die vermutlich ein Gehöft war und Spuren einer Kochstelle sowie einer Schmiede aufweist, sowie die rechteckigen Einfriedungen 2a und 2b, die ebenfalls vermutlich Gehöfte waren und Spuren von üppigen Mahlen (Vorbereitung und Verzehr von Speisen) aufweisen. Die gekrümmte Einfriedung 4 beherbergte einen kleinen Kalksteinbruch. Die Einfriedung könnte jedoch bereits vor dem Steinbruch errichtet worden sein und ursprünglich einen anderen Zweck erfüllt haben. Andere Einfriedungen wie die D-förmige Einfriedung 3, die hufeisenförmige Einfriedung 5 und die rechteckige Einfriedung 6 dienten möglicherweise als Gehege.

Die intakten Teile der Feld- und Einfriedungsgräben wurden offenbar im späten zweiten oder frühen dritten Jahrhundert nach Christus mit Schutt aufgefüllt. Die Feldbegrenzungen fanden jedoch möglicherweise bis in spätrömische oder frühmittelalterliche Zeit weitere Verwendung (z. B. als Einfriedungen und/oder Böschungen). In den rechteckigen Einfriedungen 2a und 2b wurden zahlreiche spätrömische Gruben und Pfostengruben freigelegt, die darauf hindeuten, dass diese Gehöfte bzw. Einfriedungen bis in das späte dritte Jahrhundert hinein erhalten blieben. Funde in und unmittelbar außerhalb des anderen mutmaßlichen Gehöfts (Einfriedung 1) liefern ebenfalls einen eindeutigen Beleg für dessen Bewohnung bis mindestens in das späte dritte Jahrhundert hinein. Es existieren jedoch nahezu keine Belege für eine römische Besiedlung dieses Gebiets im bzw. nach dem Beginn/der Mitte des vierten Jahrhunderts. Dies könnte auf einen Zusammenbruch des vorhergehenden militärischen Versorgungssystems und/oder auf Unruhen und die instabile Lage zurückzuführen sein, die sich zur damaligen Zeit auf große Teile des Römischen Reichs, darunter auch auf *Britannia*, ausgebreitet hatten.

Im Zuge der Ausgrabungen zwischen 2020 und 2022 wurden einige frühmittelalterliche Strukturen freigelegt, die mittels Radiokarbondatierung auf das siebte bis zehnte Jahrhundert datiert werden konnten. Diese radiokarbondatierten frühmittelalterlichen Funde liefern uns genauso wie die Funde aus der mittleren Eisenzeit wertvolle Einblicke in dieses Zeitalter in South Yorkshire, über das nur wenig bekannt ist. Für eine Besiedelung im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter sowie im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert gibt es nur wenige Belege. In diesen Zeiträumen war das Gebiet wahrscheinlich von offenen Feldern geprägt und möglicherweise teilweise bewaldet. Im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert wurde das Gebiet vorrangig landwirtschaftlich genutzt. Es gibt jedoch auch eindeutige Belege für einen großangelegten Kalksteinabbau zur Zeit der Napoleonischen und anderer Kriege, um Kalk für Mergel zum Düngen der Felder herzustellen. In diesem Zeitraum wurde die Landwirtschaft in ganz England intensiviert. Einige mit Schutt gefüllte Steinbrüche aus dieser Zeit wurden 2004 und 2020–2022 dokumentiert. Im Zuge der Ausgrabungen in den Jahren 2020–2022 wurde außerdem die gut erhaltene Basis eines Kalkofens aus der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts entdeckt. Diese Bergbauaktivitäten gelten als Vorläufer des weitaus umfangreicheren modernen Kalksteinabbaus im Gebiet von Holme Hall, der nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg seinen Anfang nahm.