The Churches, Settlements and Archaeology of Ea Medieval Norfolk

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Minsters, Estates and Parish Boundaries: the Churches, Settlements and Archaeology of Early Medieval Norfolk.

Author Matthew Godfrey

Abstract

The primary aim of this research has been to examine the development of the parish in Norfolk. This has been achieved by focussing on the earlier arrangements of great estates and pastoral care. The development of parishes is often linked to the nucleation of settlement, provision of local churches and the development of open field agriculture. In Norfolk these developments are poorly understood due to a lack of early documentary evidence, a complex pattern of landholdings portrayed in Domesday and the disruption caused by Scandinavian settlement. Traditional views on these territorial organisations are critically re-examined using an extensive compilation of settlement, church and archaeological data from the county SMR.

This study has revealed a complex landscape that cannot be easily generalised. It challenges existing views about the distribution of settlement and local churches, the usefulness of Domesday and previous assumptions about the impact of Scandinavian settlement. Case studies have been analysed in detail to demonstrate the many subtle differences in the landscape evident at a local level that are not apparent at a county level of consideration. There is evidence to support the idea that great estates were once present in the county, but there is little to demonstrate that a system of minster churches once existed. This research has also shown that parish units can be used to demonstrate many aspects of the landscape that cannot easily be recovered by other methods.

At the core of this study is the use of GIS data management software which has proven to be a powerful research tool for landscape analysis and allows contrasts and comparisons to be made with the data that would not have been possible by other methods.

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Abbreviations

- DMV Deserted Medieval Village
- EAA East Anglian Archaeology Report
- OE Old English
- OSc Old Scandinavian
- OS Ordnance Survey
- SMR Sites and Monuments Record

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Chapter One: Introduction

Until relatively recently Norfolk has been largely isolated from other parts of England. Its western extent is bounded by marshland and fenland; the rivers Little Ouse and Waveney form its southern boundary with Suffolk, but by far the most distinctive aspect of the county is the large stretch of coastline, which forms its northern and eastern extent, from Kings Lynn to Great Yarmouth. With the exception of the city of Norwich at its centre the other large towns of King's Lynn, Thetford and Great Yarmouth are all located at its outer fringes. This leaves the interior dominated by a rich variety of rural settlement interspersed with a number of small market towns like Swaffham, Holt and Fakenham (Williamson, 1993:2). Unlike other areas of England more recent history in Norfolk has not been marked by any major changes in the landscape, and it was largely unaffected by the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to a lack of mineral reserves and sources of water power (Williamson, 1993: 1). As a result Norfolk has maintained its rural character.

This rural character in Norfolk is typified by a high surviving number of village churches, a broad and diverse settlement pattern and a complex arrangement of parish boundaries that appear to have gone relatively unchanged since the medieval period. In other parts of England these factors are often perceived as the end result of a fundamental re-organisation of the landscape that started in the middle Saxon period and finished in the late Saxon period (Hall, 1988; Hamerow, 1991; Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001). During this time it is thought that former tribal territories developed into a series of large secular estates. Christianity was also developing, and a number of important churches or 'minsters' were being established often near the centre of these large secular estates. This seemingly neat and ordered landscape did not last very long and by the time of Domesday the minster system and the pattern of large secular estates were in apparent decline resulting in the pattern of small territories or parishes and the growth of local churches that are so familiar to us today.

Our understanding of these middle Saxon secular and ecclesiastical estates is largely founded on the work of Jones (1979) and Blair (1988a) who have developed models to identify such institutions primarily using documentary evidence and Domesday, although other factors such as place-names, architecture and settlement patterns also play a part. The problem for Norfolk is that surviving documentary evidence is very limited and it is recorded in the smaller volume of Domesday, commonly known as Little Domesday, which is widely acknowledged to be far more complex and requires much more interpretation than the main volume. It is for

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these reasons that the themes of great estates and minster churches have been largely overlooked by scholarship and are therefore still poorly understood. During the final revisions of this thesis Blair's latest book was published and his overall opinion that the East Anglian region is still one of the least rewarding for this type of research has not changed from his previous work (2005: 317).

Williamson (1993) is one of the few scholars to consider the Norfolk evidence and his research has shown that a number of potential minster churches and great estates may have existed. However, these identifications are not generally based within the framework of Jones and Blair's models but upon later documents, place-names and parochial geography. Therefore a number of issues are still subject to debate. For example, it is still unclear in Norfolk if secular estates were similar to those found elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England. Similarly with so little evidence of early church provision was there a minster system as perceived elsewhere, or was there a different system of pastoral care in the county? Even more difficult to assess is the chronology of the break up of these systems, which is an important point from which later trends and developments in the landscape originated. This research will address these problems and contribute to a greater understanding of the landscape of Anglo-Saxon Norfolk.

With the absence of the normal type of evidence used to identify secular estates and minsters it could be suggested that there is little else that can be discovered about the landscape of Anglo-Saxon Norfolk. However, with so much surviving evidence of settlement, churches and parishes there is a lot the county can potentially reveal. Norfolk has not always been as isolated as it appears and in the Saxon period the North Sea basin formed a focus for economic and cultural exchange, which gave Norfolk a much more central role (Williamson, 1993: 5). This proximity to the North Sea basin also made the county vulnerable to raids from overseas, most notably the Vikings and subsequent Danish settlement in the late ninth century. This mixture of isolation, cultural contact, settlement from Denmark and inclusion within the Danelaw has made for a county that has developed from a complex mixture of factors. By examining these many factors it may be possible to see the extent to which Norfolk differs from other areas of Anglo-Saxon England.

There are a number of reasons why Norfolk is a promising candidate for this type of research. In the later medieval period it was a county with over 830 rural churches, 217 of which were recorded in Domesday. This Domesday total represented the second highest number recorded anywhere in England, only surpassed by neighbouring Suffolk. A high number of churches were equally matched by a high number of settlements with up to 726 vills recorded in 1086 (Darby, 1971: 103). By the later medieval period this figure was considerable greater. These settlements and churches were matched by an equally high population which was the densest recorded by the survey anywhere in England (Darby, 1977: 345). Also in contrast to its distinctive rural character the City of Norwich at the heart of Norfolk was the second largest city in England in 1086 (Williamson, 1993: 2).

To understand the reasons for such a high number of churches, diversity of settlement, large population and the network of parishes portrayed by Domesday requires detailed examination of the proceeding middle and late Saxon periods. The problem with this however is that tracing developments earlier than Domesday is very difficult due to a poor survival of early documentary evidence. There are a number of late Anglo-Saxon charters but few of these date back much beyond the mid eleventh century and only seem to confirm the complex arrangements presented by the Domesday survey that follows them.

Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex are all recorded in Little Domesday. Little Domesday contains a far more detailed account than Great Domesday, which is more of a summary of information. However, this additional detail is not without its drawbacks and the entries are untidier than the main Book, which poses a number of problems with interpretation (Darby, 1971: 7). Norfolk in 1086 was clearly a county with a complex pattern of tenurial holdings and lordship, which resulted in an extremely fragmented pattern of land holding with many vills containing more than one manor. However, the details that Domesday records about these arrangements are often almost impenetrable. The survey also varies greatly on how these details are recorded and they can often vary immensely even with vills contained in the same hundred.

It is clear therefore that trying to trace the development of Anglo-Saxon Norfolk in the context of the models proposed by Blair and Jones is challenging. This research does not try and identify early landscape organisation through the use of the models but instead it tests how applicable they are to this part of England. Norfolk also provides another area of the Danelaw, which as of yet is still poorly understood, so this research compares Norfolk to other Danelaw areas to see if any differences can be observed.

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Due to the complex nature of Domesday and the lack of early documents a fresh approach is required for the Norfolk evidence. This research is based on a new and extensive compilation of church, settlement and archaeological data that has been placed into two project databases (appendix 1). The research follows three broad lines of investigation. Firstly, the extent of current research in the county is examined and compared with other areas of the country. Secondly, the data collected is considered and the evidence it presents plotted to base maps to explore its patterning at the county level. Thirdly the data is analysed at a much more local level with the use of case studies. These help to examine in more detail local circumstances in different parts of the county that may not be detectable at a much broader scale of consideration.

This thesis is divided into eleven chapters. The first two chapters review current understanding of Norfolk and theses about the origins of parochial organisation and the development of settlement units and land use. The remaining chapters are based on original research using the databases assembled to develop, clarify and contest some of these theses and orthodoxies.

Chapter Three examines the work of both Blair and Jones and traces the development of their minster and multiple estate models respectively. The validity and application of these models is then compared for different parts of the country. This chapter considers the various problems associated with these models and the general reluctance of some scholars to accept the findings from them as a true reflection of the early medieval landscape. The extent of our current knowledge on great estates and minster churches in Norfolk is then examined.

Chapter Four explores the nature and origins of settlement and the associated agrarian systems employed in England, and then considers the extent of current research on these two themes in Norfolk. This chapter also looks at the evolution of the parish unit and its development in various parts of the country. Parishes are organised into much larger administrative units, hundreds and deaneries, and these also are considered in the context of the Norfolk landscape.

Norfolk's abundance of rural churches is discussed in Chapter Five. These are an important archaeological resource that may answer many questions about earlier arrangements in the landscape. The sites on which they are located represent decisions often taken long before the thirteenth century, when they were positioned in relation to other landscape components such as settlement patterns, roads, dwellings, cemeteries, fields, fortifications and earlier places of worship many of which have since been altered or disappeared (Morris, 1989: 3), The controversial subject of Anglo-Saxon architecture is also examined. The development of the study of Anglo-Saxon architecture from the earlier works of Baldwin Brown (1925) and Clapham (1930) are explained together with the controversies that are still associated with them. The chapter then focuses on the archaeological and art-historical work undertaken on Norfolk's churches and proposes an alternative way in which they may be studied.

Chapter Six details the methodology employed in this thesis. Clearly the large amount of data required needed a careful methodological approach to make sense of it. Therefore a degree of standardisation is essential so that observations and comparisons can be made. Geographical Information System software (GIS) has proved an effective way of storing and displaying such vast quantities of information. GIS can also display it in a meaningful way on distribution maps. As a research tool it can be used to model, compare and contrast data that is not possible by other methods.

The problem is what level of information to include. Settlement patterns, parishes and churches are the end result of the perceived fragmentation of the middle Saxon secular and ecclesiastical territorial units, so these form the main focus of this research. An accurate parish map of the county was generated that can be used within the GIS software. This allows the data to be plotted in a parish format so that settlement types, their distribution, location and the place-names attached to them can then be examined. The location, age and plan type of the rural churches of the county and whether or not they are recorded in Domesday is the other main data set which can also be examined through the use of the parish map. The archaeological evidence for the county is the final theme examined and again it is assessed on a parish basis that allows for the archaeological potential of any area of the county to be explored.

The next part of the research process is to plot the findings from this data and assess the level in which the most useful information can be obtained. Such a process must start at a county level and then from this point specific areas can be highlighted for more detailed research to see if there are any trends apparent at a much more local level.

Chapter Seven examines the distribution and evidence for Norfolk's rural churches. It considers both the fabric evidence together with the documentary evidence from early

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charters, Domesday and post-Conquest valuations and makes a comparison of these three sets of data. This data is then used to address a number of issues: is there any fabric or documentary evidence for minster churches? Is there a specific plan form that can be identified as a higher status church? Is there any evidence to illustrate that there were any dependent churches or chapelries in the county? How early are the churches recorded in the Domesday survey? What can be implied from the variety of ways in which Domesday records churches? What can the distribution of church fabric tell us about the formation of parishes and the growth of local churches?

Although lacking in early documentary evidence, one advantage that Norfolk does have is an extremely rich SMR and a number of detailed archaeological surveys that have been undertaken in various parts of the county. This data is explored in Chapter Eight. Unlike many regions, East Anglia has a good ceramic series in the middle and late Saxon periods marked by the use of Ipswich-type ware and Thetford-type ware respectively. Although these ceramics cannot be closely dated they do give a loose chronology to settlement sites. In the late Saxon period the introduction of Thetford-type ware, and its wider distribution means that it can be used to give the location, form, size and shape of many pre-Conquest settlements (Wade-Martins, 1980: 5). In addition to the ceramic evidence Norfolk has an abundance of metalwork finds. This is down to the success of the portable antiquities scheme and the good relations the scheme has forged with local metal-detecting groups. This has resulted in a rich and varied compilation of middle and late Saxon metalwork recorded in the SMR that can be used to complement the ceramic evidence.

The county's settlement pattern is examined in Chapter Nine. Many of today's surviving villages are those first recorded in Domesday, but what the survey does not tell us is the form or layout of these settlements. Our first evidence for this is from late eighteenth and early nineteenth maps, but how representative these are of the circumstances of the early medieval period is still unclear. This chapter examines both the documentary and physical evidence of Norfolk's settlement pattern and attempts to address some important issues: how does the settlement pattern relate to earlier secular estates? When did nucleation of settlement occur? Why did nucleation happen in some areas of the county and not in others? How has the pattern of earlier secular estates and settlement been influenced by the topography and soils of the region?

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A closely related aspect to settlement is the formation of the parish unit. In Norfolk the earliest accurate representation of these units is from the tithe maps of the 1840s. To understand settlement more fully these units also need to be examined. This again leaves a number of issues for consideration with the settlement data. How do parish sizes relate to ground conditions? Can parochial geography help identify earlier secular estates? Can parish boundaries be used to identify great estates and can any chronology be applied to them that may give an indication of when fragmentation occurred?

The final aspect of Chapter Nine will be the evidence presented by place-names, which will be shown to have significance in determining the location of secular estates together with details of ownership and estate fragmentation.

Chapter Ten draws on the conclusions from the three main strands of evidence examined in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine. It uses these conclusions to identify and examine in detail three selected case studies from different parts of Norfolk. This allows for a number of divergent circumstances and soil conditions to be investigated in far greater depth than is possible at a county level of consideration. These case studies illustrate subtle local trends and variations in different parts of the county. The implications that these case studies may have will then be considered for the county as a whole.

Finally Chapter Eleven, the conclusion, addresses the findings from this research. It draws together the evidence of great estates and minster churches in the county and how these findings relate to the models proposed by Jones and Blair. It also discusses how the break up of these larger territories may have influenced the development of settlement, parish formation and the growth of local churches. Additionally the conclusion suggests that our perceptions of landscape in Norfolk needs to be revised in the light of these findings and also argues that alternative models for the development and subsequent break up of great estates and minster church territories should also be considered.

Chapter Two: Topography, Christianity and Early Sources

The landscape of middle and late Anglo-Saxon Norfolk is still poorly understood. This is largely a result of the complexity of the material available and the poor survival of contemporary documentary evidence. Any study of the secular and ecclesiastical organisation of the middle and late Anglo-Saxon landscape must begin by setting the scene in a period where many changes were taking place. Therefore, a general overview of the topography, evidence for early Christianity, place-names and documentary evidence from the county are considered.

2.1 Topography

Norfolk to most casual observers gives the impression of a largely flat and rural landscape. This generalisation overlooks the many diverse regions that the county has to offer. A brief examination of these different regions will illustrate just how diverse and complex the landscape is and also highlights its regional uniqueness.

Perhaps the biggest natural influence on the landscape is the central watershed forming a great arc across the county, dividing it on an approximate east-west axis. This watershed has acted as a natural barrier between the eastern and western halves of the county since early times. During the Saxon period it was densely wooded; a landscape that was still evident in Domesday, and one which still persists, although to a much lesser degree today. The pattern of valleys radiating from the watershed have shaped the development of early social territories and also determined the progress of settlement (Williamson, 1993: 17).

However, the landscape is far more complex than just an east-west divide. It is made up of a diverse and complex array of soil types (figure 2.1) that have also influenced on the county's development. In the centre of Norfolk there are the Claylands, an area of medium to heavy strong loams, with many wide valleys that supported numerous settlements (Darby, 1971: 147). The uplands to the west of this region correspond with the central watershed. In contrast, in the south of the county are the Brecklands, a complex mixture of chalk and boulder clay subsoil overlaid with light sand (Darby, 1971: 150). This distinct region is now densely wooded, but until tree planting by the Forestry Commission in the 1920s it was largely heath and warren due to the acidic infertile soils (Darby, 1971: 150).



Figure 2.1. The main soil types of the county (Williamson, 1993: 12).

North of the Breckland is the good sands region comprising sands, gravels and medium to light loams, which up until the eighteenth century included great stretches of heath and sheep-walk (Darby, 1971: 150). In the medieval period the process of marling was commonly used here to improve the soil quality (Williamson, 1993: 11). Going towards the west of the county the nature of the landscape changes dramatically when the greensand belt or what is more commonly known as the western escarpment is encountered. This feature is the result of complex geology and falls from 65 metres at Hunstanton down to slightly above sea level at Hilgay (Williamson, 1993: 15). The western escarpment is a mixture of acidic sandy soils and some patches of clay, which would have once been heathland but are now conifer plantations. Settlement here is quite frequent, with the villages usually positioned on the ridges (Williamson, 1993: 14).

Further westwards from the escarpment the landscape changes to the flat plain of the fens, which itself forms two very distinctive landscapes. The northern part commonly know as Marshland, is an area of deep silts laid down in prehistoric and Roman times (Williamson, 1993: 14) with settlement only located on its outer fringes and along its northern edge, positioned adjacent to an Anglo-Saxon earthwork or tidal defence known locally as Roman Bank. In contrast the southern part of the fens is black peat soil, which only has sparse settlement located on islands within it, such as Southery and Hilgay (Darby, 1971: 151). This part of the fens is a stark open landscape with few trees and long straight roads and dykes, many of which are the result of post-medieval reclamation (Williamson, 1993: 14).

A region similar to Fenland also exists in the very eastern part of the county, known as Broadland. This too is an area of river estuaries, which formed the island of Flegg, now two hundreds lying on its northern edge. Settlement on Flegg is very dense and the place-names are mostly of Scandinavian origin. The soils here are very fertile medium loams (Darby, 1971: 149). Another area of Broadland was a large marshy expanse with many areas of open water that eventually silted up to form a great spit of land where Great Yarmouth is now situated. Broadland today is known as the Norfolk Broads, but to be strictly correct this refers to a series of artificial lakes that were created by peat cutting in the early medieval period upstream from the former estuary.

The last area to be considered is northeast Norfolk. This region has fertile light to medium soils, but it also has considerable stretches of infertile sands and gravels giving rise to heaths. Darby suggests this area was easily settled, which is the reason for the high number of settlements in this part of the county (1971: 149).

It is clear that the county is a complex mixture of soil types and landscapes. If considered in a broad sense the north and northwest of the region can be classified as planned countryside, whilst the south and east of the region are ancient countryside. These two regions have very distinctive characteristics. Ancient countryside is portrayed as having hamlets and small towns, ancient isolated farmsteads, many small areas of woodland and heathland with little evidence of openfield agriculture. Planned countryside in contrast has more nucleated villages, regular straight roads, little in the way of woodlands and heaths and a strong tradition of open-field agriculture (Rackham, 1995: 3-5).

This general description does fit to an extent with Norfolk with ancient countryside characteristic of the central Claylands, Breckland and the southern part of the Broadland estuary, and planned countryside in the silt and peat fen areas in the west, the good sands area, the loams of northeast and the northern part of Broadland. What this broad description overlooks however is that the soils have had a much greater influence on the development of the country in terms of settlement, agriculture and economy, than can be shown by the divisions of ancient and planned countryside. Williamson has recognised this and emphasises that whilst the soils played an important part in the development of the county, this development was related to and was never simply caused by the distribution of soil types (1993: 7).

Archaeological evidence can help address some of these complex relationships. For example, settlement evidence from recovered pottery sherds indicates that early Saxon settlement was close to soils that could be cultivated easily. However, by late Saxon times technological developments had allowed the successful cultivation of the heavier clays, and from this point onwards regional variations in population were primarily a function of other factors besides just the soil (Williamson, 2003: 32-33).

2. 2 Early Christianity

In the Early Saxon period one of the most important episodes in the development of East Anglia was the arrival of Christianity. Its impact was not only felt at the higher levels of kingship, but also at much more fundamental levels in society. Its long-lasting effects on the landscape can still be seen today from the great number of surviving rural and urban churches, together with more subtle influences on land holding and administrative boundaries or parishes, which were of fundamental importance in the later medieval period.

The process of conversion in East Anglia began in the late sixth century. The main instigator of this was Pope Gregory I, who pioneered a strategy, which ultimately enabled missionaries from Ireland to convert the northern parts of Britain, and missionaries from Rome to convert the southern parts of Britain. The Kingdom of the East Angles' first experience of the new Christian doctrine came in 616, when King Raedwald came into contact with it at the court of his overlord in Kent. However, he did not accept the new faith for very long. Bede tells us that certain "perverse advisers persuaded him to apostatise from the true faith". This resulted in Raedwald trying to serve both "Christ and ancient gods with an altar of Christ next to one on which victims were offered to devils" (HE II. 15. Sherley-Price and Farmer 1990: 133). After the death of Raedwald his son Earpwald accepted the Christian faith. However, this was short lived as he was killed soon after by a pagan named Ricbert and the East Anglian kingdom again reverted back to paganism (HE II. 15. Sherley-Price and Farmer, 1990: 133).

The breakthrough for the new faith came when Sigeberht, Earpwald's brother came back from exile in Gaul, to rule the East Anglian kingdom. Whilst in Gaul Sigeberht became a devout Christian and a man of learning. Once back in East Anglia he laboured to bring about the conversion of his whole realm (HE II. 15. Sherley-Price and Farmer, 1990: 133). This was a difficult process due to the constant threat from the pagan Mercian forces of Penda, who eventually invaded the East Midlands and then East Anglia in 635 resulting in the death of

Sigeberht. Penda was ultimately defeated in 654 by the Northumbrians, but his actions may have served to strengthen the Christian resolve in East Anglia and give the new faith a firm foothold from which to expand. Scarfe claims that this period was the formative two decades for Christianity in East Anglia (1975: 293).

There is very little evidence for early Christian sites in East Anglia due to a lack of documentary evidence and inconclusive archaeological data. It is Bede who provides us with the first reference to an episcopal see. He states that this first see was established at *Dommoc* in 627 by the Burgundinian Bishop Felix, who had come to the Kingdom of the East Angles under the instruction of Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury. Bede tells us that the arrival of Felix delivered the entire province from its 'age-old wickedness and infelicity' (HE II. 15. Sherley-Price and Farmer, 1990: 133). The exact location of this see has proven to be a contentious point amongst scholars with some suggesting it was located in Dunwich on the east coast of Suffolk (Page, 1906: 2; Whitelock, 1972: 4), while others argue it may have been Walton adjacent to Felixstowe, also on the east coast of Suffolk (Warner, 1996: 128; Rigold, 1961:59). I do not wish to rework these arguments, but there are two themes that are relevant to this research which need consideration: the archaeological data and the place-name evidence.

In Bede, *Dommoc* is referred to as a *civitas*, which implies a Roman settlement of some importance (Fernie, 1993: 201). However, if the archaeological evidence is considered there are no pottery data to confirm anything but a small Roman settlement (Warner, 1996: 127). Similarly there is no late coin series to suggest an important shore fort, and the only roads to Dunwich are of Anglo-Saxon origin (Warner, 1996: 128). Davison offers a contrasting interpretation, suggesting that there are three possible Roman roads heading towards the coast at Dunwich. She adds that the fourth century Roman document called the Antonine Itinerary mentions a place called *Sinomagus*, 32 (Roman) miles from *Venta Icenorum* (Caistor-by-Norwich). She claims that in a medieval copy of the Antonine Itinerary *Sitomagus* is referred to as *Sinomagus*, *Sinus* meaning gulf or inlet and *Magus*, a camp, i.e. a camp on the inlet; which exactly describes the location of Dunwich. Additionally, *Venta Icenorum* and *Sinomagus* according to Davison are the correct distance (32 Roman miles) apart (1970: 2-3). Warner is sceptical of such a suggestion and argues that the lost settlement of *Sitomagus* in the Antonine Itinerary cannot be substantiated either archaeologically or by place-name evidence (1996, 128).

The other potential site of *Dommoc* at Walton presents a very different picture. The archaeological data suggests a site of intense Roman occupation that was comparable to the

Roman shore forts of Burgh Castle and Reculver (Rigold, 1961: 58). Additionally Warner suggests that Walton appears to be linked more closely with the Roman road network and also has a much more comprehensive coin series (Warner, 1996: 127).

The second strand of the argument relates to the interpretation of the *Dommoc* place-name. Whitelock suggests the place-name of *Dommoc* evolved into the modern place-name of Dunwich, although she does have reservations as to how *Dommoc* became *Dun* (1972: 4). Ekwall's view is that the place-name derives from an ancient British root meaning 'deep' perhaps 'port with deep water'. The OE *wic* element 'town or port' has been added by the time the place-name is recorded in Domesday (1991: 154). Rigold however, argues that the association with Walton is more plausible due to the nearby place-name of Felixstowe preserving the founder's name (1961: 58). Ekwall claims this place-name means 'St Felix's place' the OE personal name *Filica* and OE *stow* or holy place (1991: 177). The problem with this place-name is that it is recorded quite late; it is not mentioned until the Valuation of Norwich in 1254, so it may simply be a popular etymology at this time.

These arguments may never be satisfactorily resolved, as both sites have now been destroyed by coastal erosion. The fort at Walton was lost in the eighteenth century, and the town of Dunwich has been systematically eroded away since Roman times. It is likely that if there was a fort at Dunwich it may have been lost to the sea by the time of the Norman Conquest (Wade-Martins. 1980a, 5). With the evidence available it is not possible to say which location was more likely to have been East Anglia's first see. What these arguments do illustrate though is that there has been a bishop's see in East Anglia since at least the early seventh century, which suggests that Christianity had a firm hold in the region. Further evidence of this is the Irish missionary Fursa, a contemporary of Felix who established an early monastery in the remains of the Roman shore fort at *Cnobheresburg*, which is almost certainly identified as the Roman shore fort of Burgh Castle in Suffolk (Whitelock, 1972: 5). One way or another it is clear that the diocese was established at a coastal location rather than central to the region.

The next significant event to happen to the see of *Dommoc* occurred after the death of Felix, some seventeen years after his arrival. His replacement Bisi, who was consecrated by Archbishop Theodore, became infirm soon after the synod of Hertford in 672, and the Archbishop took the opportunity to divide the see in two (Whitelock, 1972: 8). This left the original see at *Dommoc* and a newly established see at Elmham. This division by Theodore enabled the new bishops, Aecci and Beaduwine to each have a bishopric of a more manageable size. The information

relating to whether this new bishopric also resulted in the first actual division of the counties into Norfolk and Suffolk is unclear. Warner comments that the boundary did not exist in its present form until after the Norman Conquest (1996: 147)

The see at Elmham has proven to be as controversial as *Dommoc*. There are two possible locations: North Elmham in the modern county of Norfolk and South Elmham in Suffolk. This time however there are much closer parallels, as both sites have pre-Conquest churches, although the ground plans of each are very different. North Elmham is a cruciform, apsidal plan; South Elmham is a short apsidal plan with a narthex (Warner, 1996: 129). Warner suggests the former is of a late Saxon date, whilst the latter is of middle Saxon date. The Taylors broadly concur with these findings suggesting that South Elmham church is c.700-950 and North Elmham church is c.1000-1050, although they do raise the possibility that North Elmham church may have been built on the foundations of an older structure of c.650-700 date (1965: 228)

Further confirmation of the date of the site at North Elmham has been obtained from extensive archaeological excavations. In contrast the church site at South Elmham has only received superficial excavation work (Wade-Martins, 1980a: 5). Archaeological evidence suggests the North Elmham site originated in the middle Saxon period, and its location was more likely to have been influenced by the close proximity of the large pagan cemetery at Spong Hill, rather than its central location in the diocese (Wade-Martins, 1980a: 13).

The evidence for a church at South Elmham is less convincing and field surveys around the South Elmham site have not produced any middle or late Saxon pottery, which suggests that it was not an important site in the pre-Conquest period (Wade-Martins, 1980a: 5). Scarfe however, has demonstrated that the pattern of parishes radiating around the parish of South Elmham may be of pre-Danish origin, originally forming a ferding, i.e. a quarter of the Hundred of South Elmham (figure 2.2), which corresponds with the main bundle of the bishopric estates in Suffolk (1975: 123).

There are some other vague accounts that could be added to this information to give support to Scarfe's suggestion of an early date. For example, discoveries of urns filled with burnt bones were noted in the eighteenth century (Warner, 1996: 130 quoting Suckling, 1846: 209), and also an account of an Anglo-Saxon funeral urn dug up near the old minster (Knights, 1892: 56). These finds may suggest that South Elmham had similar early Saxon origins to North Elmham.

However, until further archaeological investigations are undertaken it is unlikely that this issue will be clarified.



Figure 2.2. The parishes around South Elmham parish originally forming a ferding (Scarfe, 1972: 123).

Under the reigns of Egbert of Wessex, Ludeca and his predecessor Beorwulf both bishoprics became impoverished and *Dommoc* was suppressed and the two sees were united into one at Elmham (Whitelock, 1972: 19). The last evidence of bishops at both sees was in 845, with Aethelwald at *Dommoc* and Hunbert at Elmham, although the early charters are not clear on how long the bishoprics persisted after this date (Whitelock, 1972: 18). This period corresponds with the start of the Danish incursions into the East of England, resulting in the martydom of King Edmund in 869. It has been argued that the Danish incursions did not spell the end of Christianity in East Anglia; the process actually reinforced the doctrine, and the work of Felix continued among the subject people with the Danes eventually accepting the Christian faith (Page, 1906: 216).

The next period in the ecclesiastical history of East Anglia is unclear due to lack of contemporary documentary sources, which is thought to be the result of the area being under Danish control. It

is not until the re-conquest of the region by the West-Saxons in 917 that further information comes to light. After the re-conquest, the southern part of the region was united with the London diocese, with a bishop's stool at Hoxne, although this is unlikely to have ever held an important position and must have only served as a regional centre for the acting Bishop of London (Wade-Martins, 1980a: 6). A new bishop at Elmham is not recorded until 955, which confirms that by this time the two former bishoprics had united into one (Wade-Martins, 1980a: 9).

The next significant episode was of particular relevance to Norfolk. In the early 1070s a council was assembled at London, which decreed that bishops should transfer their residences from villages to cities (Page, 1906: 218). The Bishop of East Anglia at this time was Herfast who relocated the bishopric to Thetford in 1071. The reasons for this relocation were perhaps two-fold. Thetford occupied a central position on the Norfolk-Suffolk border, and it was also one of the largest towns in late Saxon England with a population of 4000, comparable to Lincoln, York or Norwich (Dymond, 1985: 90). This newly Episcopal see was located in St. Mary's church, which was rebuilt for the purpose. It seems that Herfast only saw Thetford as a temporary relocation, as his underlying objective was to try and establish the bishopric at the wealthy abbey of Bury St. Edmunds (Wade-Martins, 1980: 6). Herfast did not achieve this objective and when he died, William de Bellafago, who served only for a short time as bishop, succeeded him. It was not until 1091 when Bellafago's successor Herbert de Losinga was consecrated that further changes were implemented. Under Losinga the bishopric was transferred to a new site at Norwich where it has remained ever since.

2. 3 Place-Name Evidence

The place-names of Norfolk are perhaps one of the least studied aspects of landscape. The county was only recently published in the EPNS volumes: Norwich (Sandred, 1989), the hundreds of East and West Flegg, Happing and Tunstead (Sandred, 1996) and the hundreds of North and South Erpingham and Holt (Sandred, 2002). Although this amounts to three volumes the area covered is surprisingly small with only seven out of thirty-three Domesday hundreds studied in detail, as well as Norwich. Prior to the EPNS volumes the only detailed work on Norfolk place-names was an unpublished PhD thesis (Schram, 1926 cited by Sandred, 1987: 10).

The Norfolk hundred-names are equally under-researched, with the last major work of Arngart in 1934. In recent years there has been a substantial increase in place-name studies with important contributions from Cameron (1975), Cox (1973, 1976) and Dodgson (1973, 1975). Additionally

Gelling has demonstrated the importance of topographical place-names (1978, 1993, 2000) and Fellows-Jensen has placed a fresh emphasis on Scandinavian place-names (1981, 1990, 1995). None of this important work however focuses specifically on Norfolk, although it is mentioned in some publications. Recent work on the county has been limited to short papers that focus on specific place-name types such as *by* names (Sandred, 1987) or detailed local studies on specific place-names or hundred-names (Arngart, 1979, 1983). Clearly there is still much that can be done with Norfolk place-names and a comprehensive data set for the county is still some way off.

The place-names of Norfolk are discussed in detail in Chapter Nine, but a brief summary of the main aspects is explored here. Generally speaking place-names are of more use the further back the spellings can be traced in time, and the more closely spaced the sequence of recorded spellings are, as this gives a more convincing explanation of the name (Copley, 1988: 2). This is the most obstructive element to the study of place-names in Norfolk, as the majority of them are only first recorded in Domesday and therefore are quite 'late' spellings. This is largely a result of the poor survival of early documentation for the county as mentioned above. Some early documents such as Anglo-Saxon wills have survived, but the large majority of these date from the mid-tenth century or later and are therefore not much earlier than Domesday. This means that the origins of Norfolk place-names have to be viewed with some degree of caution.

2.3.1 Early Place-Names

Amongst the commonest place-name types in Norfolk are those with the suffix *ham*: village, estate, manor or homestead (Ekwall, 1991: 213). Whilst place-names can only be used very roughly as a dating tool it has been shown that *ham* is one of the predominant place-name elements used before *c*. 730 (Cox, 1976: 57). A related group of place-names have the suffix *ingaham*: *ham* of (personal name's) people. These types of place-names have been found by Cox to be generally grouped away from areas where *ham* names predominate, potentially indicating a slightly later phase of settlement belonging to the post pagan period. He has also observed that the *ham* names in Norfolk seem to correspond with the earlier Roman road network (1973: 37-39).

Another type of common place-name in Norfolk are those that have the last element *tun*: homestead, or village (Ekwall 1991, 482). Place-names with the last element *tun* can be in many forms. In Norfolk there are examples compounded with a personal name, a topographical feature or a specialist agricultural function such as Bickerston, 'bee-keepers *tun*' (Ekwall, 1991: 41).

Copley (1988) has taken a different approach to the study of early place-names in the county. He uses archaeological data from pagan cemeteries, early and late settlement sites and surface finds data to put together a picture of early settlement. His findings illustrate a whole spectrum of place-name types. Copley's research is not confined to what are acknowledged to be the earliest place-names discussed above, although these names obviously figure strongly in his work. What is surprising are a number of examples of clearly later names such as the Scandinavian terms, which can be no earlier than the 870s. Such locations contain substantial evidence for much earlier settlement. For example, Kettlestone, is an OSc personal name and OE tun, 'Ketles-tun' a place-name first mentioned in Domesday Book. Here a mixed cremation and inhumation cemetery was discovered in the nineteenth century, which included early urn types and an early comb (Copley, 1988: 83). These artefacts are not associated with Scandinavian settlement and therefore may illustrate the replacement of an earlier place-name with a later one because there has been activity on this particular site for at least three centuries before the Viking invasions. There are problems with Copley's approach, the main one being that research of this type is outdated quickly due to a constantly increasing number of finds recorded in the SMR. Therefore, the amount of new sites and surface finds must now be considerably more than in 1988. The value of Copley's approach is that it demonstrates archaeological evidence can be used to enhance place-name research especially in a county where the documentary record is so poor.

2.3.2 Scandinavian Place-Names

There are numerous examples of Scandinavian place-names in Norfolk. The most common are the *thorpe* names: farm, hamlet or dependant settlement (Ekwall, 1991: 468), although most place-name scholars consider that these names are of little significance, and as a result they have largely been ignored. Williamson goes as far as to suggest that the *thorpe* term passed into the local dialect and cannot therefore indicate the location of ethnic Scandinavian communities, as places with this name were being established well after the main period of Viking settlement (1993, 109). The next significant group of Scandinavian terms are those with the affix *by*: village or homestead (Ekwall, 1991: 78). Unlike *thorpe* these place-names have an uneven distribution, and occur in significant groups, largely confined to the eastern side of the county. *By* names have been studied by Sandred who has looked at the largest group located in the hundreds of East and West Flegg. He claims that the large majority of these place-names are monothematic personal names: an old uncompounded Scandinavian personal name with a *by* ending, as opposed to compounded personal names, which are more characteristic in the Danelaw areas of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire (1987, 8). Sandred also comments that the hundred name of Flegg derives from an

old Scandinavian word for reed type vegetation, leading him to the conclusion that this part of the county was largely uninhabited until the Viking period due to its marshy nature (1987: 6, 24). Although Copley's research discussed above has shown that this was not necessarily the case.

Another important group of Scandinavian influenced place-names are those known as Grimston hybrids, which are place-names where the first element is an OSc personal name and the second element is the OE element *tun*, meaning '*Grim's tun'* (Ekwall, 1991: 206). Margeson claims that these place-names represent the earliest Scandinavian influenced place-names in the county (1996: 49).

One final aspect of Scandinavian place-names is the presence of three *kirkjuby* names identified by Sandred (1987, 22) This term refers to 'church village', and is found in the place-names Kirby Bedon, Kirby Cane and Kirby Hill. Sandred offers little in the way of an explanation for these names. However, they do demonstrate that a church was in existence in these areas during the period of Scandinavian settlement. Furthermore, two of these place-names, Kirby Cane and Kirby Bedon, are recorded in Domesday with a church.

2.3.3 Topographical Place-Names

The vast majority of place-names so far discussed can best be described as 'habitative'; there are however a large corpus of place-names, which are partly or purely topographical, and research into this particular area has still to be fully exploited. Woodland is one area of topographical place-names that has received attention in recent years, with Williamson demonstrating the existence of woodland prior to the Conquest by plotting the OE and OSc place-names that refer to it (1993: 60). Such names include the elements OE *sceaga* 'small wood', OSc *skogr* 'wood', OE *wudu* 'wood' and OSc *lundr* 'wood' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 245, 248, 257, 242). The most common woodland names however are those that refer to woodland clearings and these include the elements OE *leah* and OSc *thveit*, which may be taken to indicate substantial concentrations of woodland (Williamson, 1993: 60).

Other topographical terms have been explored by Gelling and Cole (2000). Many of these relate to roads and tracks, valleys and hollows, plough-land, meadow, pasture, rivers, springs and marshland. The importance of these place-names however cannot be fully appreciated until their locations are considered from map evidence, which has not yet been attempted for the county.

2.4 Early Charters

The early documentary sources for Norfolk are very limited; neither Bede nor the Anglo-Saxon chronicles have much to say about it (Williamson, 1993: 3). The charters that do survive date from the 970s and later and can only give a picture of late Saxon Norfolk in the period immediately before Domesday. In total there are over 30 such documents, although both Hart (1966) and Sawyer (1968) treat at least five as of questionable provenance. The reason for their caution is that few early charters survive in their original form. Some have been transcribed many times, meaning that accidental and deliberate changes may have been made to them (Hooke, 2001: 85). In Norfolk the charters of good provenance are usually in the form of wills bequeathing land to monastic institutions, or to other individuals. The will of Aelfric Modercope AD (1042 x 1043) for example, includes bequests of land at *Thurwineholm* and Loddon, Norfolk, to (Bury) St. Edmunds; at Bergh Apton, Norfolk with *Fuglholm* to St. Ethedreda's (Ely); at Barton Turf, Norfolk, to St. Benedict's Holme. (Hart, 1966; no.127 and Sawyer, 1968; no. S1490). Documents such as this show the fragmentation of landholding in the late Saxon period prior to the Conquest and in some instances confirm the complex manorial structure suggested by Domesday.

The lack of early documentary evidence is usually attributed to the disruption caused by Viking raids of the ninth century and the destruction of the monasteries where such documents were produced (Williamson, 1993: 3). However, the evidence for this destruction is as lacking as the early documents themselves. Pestell comments that whilst some sites may have been subjected to looting there is no evidence of burning at the productive sites of Brandon or Burrow Hill (1999: 102). This situation leads to a circular argument as a lack of documentary evidence makes the exact nature and date of devastation difficult to gauge (Pestell, 1999: 107). One factor seldom considered that may contribute to the dearth of documentary evidence is the complicated movements of the bishop's see as described above. With the see originating at *Dommoc* then being divided between *Dommoc* and Elmham, then temporarily locating to Hoxne and then back to one see at Elmham, which then moved to Thetford and then finally to Norwich, is it any wonder that the documentary evidence is sparse?

2. 5 Domesday Book

The importance of Domesday Book to contribute to our understanding of the Norfolk landscape in the late eleventh century cannot be overstated. Domesday has been a source of knowledge and debate amongst scholars for many centuries. Needless to say there has been a vast quantity of material published about various aspects of this important document Darby (1971, 1977), Dodwell (1969), Holt (1995), Maitland (1897), McDonald and Snooks (1986), Roffe, (2000), Welldon-Finn (1967), Williamson (1993). However, this does not mean that the document has revealed all of its secrets to us yet. There are many aspects of the survey that still elude us, and are still subject to much debate and speculation. The Domesday information regarding Norfolk is no exception and much of the data for the county is still poorly understood. The amount of recently published material for the Norfolk Domesday is surprisingly little. For the purposes of this research, subject areas such as population, settlement, agriculture, woodland and churches relate directly to the landscape, other aspects outside of these will only be considered where relevant.

The data for Norfolk is contained within the second volume of Domesday survey commonly referred to as Little Domesday Book. This volume also contains the listings for the other East Anglian counties of Suffolk and Essex. It is accepted that Little Domesday Book contains more detail than Great Domesday: it catalogues livestock on the demesne, gives details about population and other information for both 1066 and 1086 for example (Darby, 1971: 97). More information though is not without its drawbacks and Little Domesday entries are untidier than those in Great Domesday, giving the impression that they were compiled more hastily. In contrast the neat entries found in Great Domesday are not so detailed but are less ambiguous than those in Little Domesday (Darby, 1971: 97).

2.5.1 Population

The recorded rural population for Norfolk in 1086 was 27,000, which represented the most densely populated county in England. Only Lincolnshire with a rural population figure of about 21,500 came close to Norfolk's total. In an urban context Norfolk was also densely populated with Norwich and Thetford having broadly comparable population figures to both Lincoln and York in 1086: 4000-5000 people (Darby, 1977: 304-306). Norfolk also had a high number of separate vills recorded, 726 in total (Darby, 1971: 101; Williamson, 1993: 110). The large majority of these vills still survive to the present day, although some place-names only now

survive on the modern map as farms, individual houses or topographical features (Darby, 1971:103). It is in these many vills that the details of Norfolk's rural population can be found, usually listed as heads of households. This means that the recorded population is not the true figure. To find this recorded population has to be multiplied to represent women, children and slaves. Simple as this may seem there are a number of complications this poses.

Darby suggests that there are a number of factors that should be considered when making the calculations. Slaves for example, are listed as individuals by the survey; should they be listed as heads of households to account for their families too? He also comments that there is a percentage of the population not included in the survey; he estimates five percent. Should this also be accounted for? Darby concludes that for England as a whole a multiplier of 4, 4.5 or even 5 should be applied, giving a total population of 1.1 million to 1.3 million (1977: 89). Williamson broadly concurs with Darby's calculations, although he uses the multiplier of 5.5 to estimate the population of Norfolk in 1086 as 150,000 (1993: 110). Regardless of the multiplier used, the figures given in Domesday should only act as a guide. The true population figure can only be a matter of speculation. The value of this data is that it can be used to illustrate concentrations of population in different parts of the county. Williamson (1993: 112) plots the data as individuals per square kilometre in 1066 (figure 2.3), whilst Darby (1971: 117) plots the population density per square mile arranged by the Domesday Hundreds for 1086 (figure 2.4).

Essentially both maps display the same information, although Williamson's is perhaps clearer. It shows that population density in Domesday Norfolk was largely concentrated to the east and southeast of the county, with isolated pockets of dense population located in a number of major river valleys. These river valley densities do not show up clearly on Darby's map due to his use of hundreds, which tends to obscure the fact that not everywhere in the south and east was choked with people (Williamson, 1993: 112). Another important point that Williamson's map shows more clearly than Darby's is that there are lower areas of population density, which seem to correspond to the remaining areas of Domesday woodland.

A further way in which the recorded Domesday population can aid our understanding of late Saxon society is by the details of the different types of people recorded. The rural population was made up from five main categories of people: freemen, sokemen, villeins, boarders and serfs. A summary of this composition is shown in figure 2.5 below, which also includes the relative percentage of each group.


Figure 2.3. Population per sq km in 1066 (Williamson, 1993: 112).



Figure 2.4. Population per sq mile in 1086 (Darby, 1971: 117).

Recorded Rural Population in Norfolk 1086		Percentage of Population
Sokemen	5,505	21
Villeins	4,682	18
Bordars	9,275	36
Serfs	971	4
Miscellaneous	195	1
Total	25805	

Figure 2.5. The Domesday rural population of 1086 (Darby 1971: 111)

Figure 2.5 illustrates the numbers of freemen and sokemen are broadly the same at around the 20 percent figure; villeins make up around 18 percent of the recorded population, whilst those at the lower end of society, bordars and serfs combine to make up the final 40 percent. Freemen and sokemen are referred to in Domesday, as *liberis homines* and *sochemanni* respectively. Sokemen are regarded as free peasantry, but owing service to a lord, whilst freemen are again free peasantry, but holding land and not owing service to a lord, although they are usually commended to one (Williams and Martin, 2002: 1435,1432). Generally sokemen were included in the value of the manor with which they belong, but freemen were usually accounted for separately (Dodwell, 1941: 146). The reasons why these two particular groups are of interest is that they are recorded in higher numbers in East Anglia than any other area of England. Welldon-Finn comments that more than 80 percent of recorded freemen and sokemen are recorded in just the three eastern counties (1973: 43). Faith however, comments that outside Danelaw areas many free people went unrecorded (1997:123). Even with this caveat the two groups taken together in Norfolk amount to 41 percent of the recorded population (Darby, 1971: 114). Similarly Dodwell has shown that at a local level in some Norfolk hundreds the figure was as high as 74 percent. (1941: 147).

What is still poorly understood about these two groups is how they actually supported themselves, as their holdings were generally small at 5 to 10 acres, and Domesday rarely mentions oxen or plough teams on such holdings (Darby, 1971: 114). Dodwell has attempted to show a correlation between free peasantry with sheep farming but was unable to find any connection. The result is that two of the three intensive sheep farming areas, the north coast of Norfolk and the Cambridgeshire border had a low free peasant population. The third, less intensive area of the Waveney valley had a higher proportion of free peasantry (1941: 150-151).

Darby's belief is that apparent concentrations of free peasantry may be the result of duplicate entries, where the same freeman holds land under more than one lord (1971: 115). Darby however does not draw any overall conclusion regarding the high number of free peasantry and generally concurs with Dodwell, in that it may be due to the Scandinavian influence on East Anglia. This is because there are a number of concentrations of free peasantry that relate to areas with a high proportion of Scandinavian place-names. Dodwell even goes as far as to suggest that many of the free peasants of East Anglia were descendants of the Danish settlers (1941: 153).

Surprisingly this subject area has been largely ignored until quite recently when Williamson approached it from a different angle. He is very sceptical of Dowell's suggestion that sokemen were descended from Viking settlers, due to scant evidence of large-scale peasant immigration. He argues that sokemen had no connection with Viking settlers, but instead were men whose ancestors owed obligations to no other lords than the Wuffingas (1993: 117). Like Dodwell and Darby, Williamson agrees that the Domesday evidence shows that the sokemen paid their taxes directly through the estate to which they were attached, and equally the evidence for freemen proves that they had more of a direct relationship with public authority (1993: 117). Where Williamson's argument differs from earlier material is his treatment of the sokemen and freemen groups. He argues that much more useful information can be obtained if these groups are considered separately and not grouped together under the title of free peasantry (1993: 119). If this is done Williamson suggests the results are quite different. For example, sokemen are more evenly distributed throughout the county, with the higher concentrations characteristic of the old estate heartlands (see Chapter Three). Freemen however, are largely concentrated in the southwest silt fens of Marshland, and the southeast of the county, roughly in the area corresponding with the Broadlands estuary. These locations were prime grazing areas where the land available for cultivation had been increasing since middle Saxon times. By the time of Domesday these areas had been densely settled and much more land was under the plough. Williamson adds that the freemen in these areas were probably not the descendants of Danish settlers but middle Saxon farmers, who because of their remote locations owed few obligations. As population increased in the late Saxon period these groups succeeded in usurping full proprietary rights over their land (1993: 119-121).

One final aspect regarding sokemen and freemen is put forward by Faith, who argues high percentages of free peasantry recognised by the Domesday Book may be one of the reasons why the principal administrative and taxation unit in northern and eastern England is the vill and not

the manor, as is the case elsewhere. Free peasantry were quite independent of manorial structure and therefore could not be fitted under the heading of a single manor (1997: 123).

2.5.2 Agriculture

In terms of the agricultural regimes the survey is remarkably silent. Darby comments that we may suppose arable land or much of it was arranged in open-field strips, although there is only one entry in Domesday Book that actually mentions this, at Garsington in Oxfordshire (1977: 95). In terms of the field systems adopted for different regions Domesday can offer no information at all. However, it does tell us the number of ploughs in use and the areas of land under the plough. In Great Domesday most counties have entries for the number of plough-teams under ownership of the demesne and the peasantry together with the amount of plough-lands for which there were teams and the area of land held by each lord (Darby, 1977: 95). Furthermore Great Domesday also records the number of ploughs in both 1066 and 1086 making it possible to see where agriculture had declined. In Little Domesday however, the entries vary slightly in that no ploughlands are mentioned, only plough-teams. The other difference peculiar to the eastern circuit is the information about the plough-teams which is given as three dates: 1066, afterwards and 1086 (Darby, 1977: 115). Darby suggests this makes some of the entries irregular in that it is not always possible to make comparisons between all three dates (1977: 115). Plough-teams are by definition closely linked to population densities, and therefore Darby argues that they can be used to provide a check on one another (1971: 123).

Other aspects of the survey that can further our understanding of the Norfolk landscape are entries that mention meadowland of which there are concentrations around the Broadlands area and to a lesser extent the Fens in the west (Darby, 1971: 129). Surprisingly pasture is only mentioned in a few places in the county. The reasons for this are unclear; it may have been included under the heading of meadowland or as Darby suggests it was just another idiosyncrasy of the county, which meant that it was only mentioned sporadically (1971: 133).

Livestock is another useful set of data provided by the survey with 46,354 sheep recorded in Norfolk (Darby, 1971: 142). These figures are instructive in that they are concentrated in areas away from woodland. The highest concentrations are on the lighter soils of the west and the marshland areas of the Fens and Broadland. The figures given in 1066 and 1086 do vary on some manors and Darby argues that this is yet another example of obscurity of the Norfolk entries (1971: 142).

2.5.3 Woodland

Woodland in the Little Domesday differs from the entries in the Great Domesday in that woodland in the eastern counties is normally indicated by how much swine it could support, and not by the area it covered. Where the woodland is given by the number of swine it could support we are faced with the question of how large an area does a swine actually need in terms of beech mast and acorns to survive? In real terms the extent of woodland is therefore difficult to estimate. Rackham comments that we cannot tell if a wood for a few swine was a small wood, a hornbeam wood not yielding acorns, a coppice wood lacking big oaks, or a wood owned by a pessimist (1995: 76)! In Norfolk the majority of the woodland is confined to the central watershed and the northeast. If the figures for woodland in 1066 and 1086 are compared it is evident that some areas of woodland had decreased (Darby, 1971: 126). Rackham claims this may be due to a change in quality of woodland such as coppicing (1995: 55). Williamson however suggests that this could also mean that some areas of coppiced woodland may have been omitted from the survey altogether (1993: 114). He also comments that the survival of woodland on the central watershed may be attributable to the heavy and acid soils of the area which mitigated against easy conversion to arable. Williamson suggests that this would present a considerable obstacle for a peasant, but may be considered an economic asset for a larger landowner, at a time when the supplies of timber in Norfolk were dwindling. He claims the small highly manorialised vills owned by aristocrats, royal administrators and ecclesiastics on the central watershed are evidence of this (1993: 122).

2.5.4 Churches

In total there are 217 rural churches recorded in Domesday Norfolk (Darby, 1971: 138). This is the second highest total in England surpassed only by neighbouring Suffolk. It may be coincidental that both of these counties are recorded in Little Domesday Book, and may have been dealt with more fully than in other counties. However, in Essex, the only other county included in Little Domesday, only 37 vills are mentioned with either a church or a priest (Darby, 1977: 346).

Darby has largely summarised the information on churches highlighting the fact that even though there are a high number recorded there are still many inconsistencies. For example, there are a number of hundreds (Earsham, Forehoe, North Greenhoe, Grimshoe and Smethdon), which have only one church (Darby, 1971; 138). Equally there are vills which had more than one church, for example Tivetshall with two, now represented by two parishes, and Barsham which had three and is represented by the parishes North, East and West (Darby, 1971: 138). There are other peculiarities with some entries that mention only a fraction of a church; one quarter at Fincham, one half at Barmer and two thirds at Kirby Cane for instance (205b, 169b, 212a. Morris, 1984: 13,2; 8,108; 14,41). In such examples it is very rare to find the missing fraction in another entry for the same vill, therefore it can only be assumed it was held in another manor where the church was not valued separately. Priests are rarely mentioned and it can only be inferred that where they are recorded and a church is not, there is a strong likelihood a church existed somewhere nearby, as it is unlikely a priest would be present without one. Priests, like churches are also recorded in fractions: Kerdiston for example is listed with only half a priest (156b. Morris, 1984: 8,2).

A further inconsistency with the recorded churches is the way in which they are valued. Generally the value of a church was stated with the number of glebe acres it held, although there are entries which have no value, and it can only be assumed that the value was included with the holding as a whole (Darby, 1971: 139). Darby's observation is explicitly expressed in some entries, for example Domesday records that all the churches on the land of William de Warenne have been assessed with the manors (172a, Morris, 1984: 8,136). Others, such as those on the lands of the Bishop of Thetford are valued separately (191a-202a, Morris, 1984: 10,1-10,93). In contrast those on the lands of Hermer de Ferrers are recorded in one of three ways: land and a value, just land, or only a church (205b-208b, Morris 1984: 13,1-13,24).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how early ecclesiastical and secular development of the county in the middle Saxon period is still poorly understood. It is not until the mid tenth century that charters start to record the many complexities of the Norfolk landscape. However, these sources are limited in their extent and it is not until Domesday that a more comprehensive record becomes available. By 1086 Norfolk had the highest recorded rural population in England, together with two of the biggest towns at Thetford and Norwich. Also by this time Norfolk had the second highest total of rural churches in the country. The way in which this information is recorded in Domesday portrays a pattern of complex land holding and tenurial arrangements then existing in the county. These cannot be generalised but require detailed analysis at a local level in order to be understood.

There are a number of questions that Domesday cannot answer. Why are there so many churches listed in the county? With such a high density of population what forms of settlement were there in 1086? Why is there such an apparently high proportion of free peasantry? Had the parish system, so important in later medieval England started to form in the county and how did it develop? What agricultural regimes were being used in a county with such a high rural population?

To answer these questions wider issues need to be addressed that relate to the middle Saxon and late Saxon periods. To develop the information given by Domesday other methods of investigation need to be explored such as archaeological data, i.e. parish boundaries, settlement patterns and the one archaeological resource most villages have, local churches. These strands of evidence are all intimately linked in the landscape and to understand how they interact other regions of the country must be considered, which is the purpose of the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Great Estates and Minster Churches

Until relatively recently our understanding of middle and late Saxon England was largely based on the study of Domesday Book and other early documentary evidence. However two models, the great estate model by Jones (1979), and the minster model by Blair (1988a), have now forced us to change our ideas on this complex period. These models have been developed using Domesday data in combination with other evidence such as parish boundaries, agrarian practises, architecture and later documentary sources. The models propose that secular and ecclesiastical organisation in the landscape was both complex and well structured. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the nature of these models, examine the evidence they use and evaluate their significance in the context of Anglo-Saxon Norfolk.

3.1 Great Estates

The great estate model developed by Glanville Jones (1979) was largely based upon his research in North Wales. His model suggests the existence of local territories, which served as both administrative and agrarian units. The term 'multiple estates' is often used to describe these territories as they are perceived to have had component elements which performed different functions such as sheep pasture and arable farming (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 92).

3.1.1 Review of the Evidence

Maitland made the first suggestion of the existence of multiple estates in 1897. Using Domesday data he demonstrated that in the north and east of England, the manor was often the centre of an extensive but very discrete territory known as its soke (1897: 115). Maitland's work was built upon by Jolliffe who proposed that in Northumbria the unit of Anglo-Saxon life was not one of interlocking vill and demesne, forming a manor, but more of wide estates from whose central *mansio* a score of many different vills were administered (1926: 2). He believed this system continued until the arrival of Norman feudalism (1926: 5).

Jones utilised these earlier ideas to formulate a model, which uses a combination of Domesday, archaeological, place-name and documentary evidence to suggest estate centres and the grouping of settlements around such centres. The use of this model to recognise and define

large estates has been perceived as one of the greatest steps forward in understanding Anglo-Saxon territorial organisation (Hooke, 1997: 73).

Jones' original model was based on a group of thirteenth century Welsh law-texts known as the Book of Iorwerth (1979: 9). These texts and the territories they described enabled him to suggest that the multiple estate was a defined area that contained a hierarchy of settlements which performed different functions, but were under the supervision of a non-productive ministerial aristocracy whose occupants owed rents and services for the support of a lord (1985, 354). Jones made the jump between the Welsh and the English material when he found there were many parallels between Wales and Northumbria, leading him to claim there may have been a common origin for multiple estate organisation in both areas (1979, 18).

He substantiated this claim with an example from the south of England. Jones suggests the estate of Malling, later to become the hundred of Loxfield in Sussex, was once a multiple estate. He claims this estate had a central *caput* with an adjacent collegiate church or minster located in South Malling, which was its main secular centre. The central *caput* was located amongst the best agricultural land with woodland and pasture located on its outer limits. Also associated with this estate were a number of dependent hamlets (1979: 20-29). The Malling example is traceable in Domesday but the primary data used for its existence is a late custumal produced in 1273 (Jones, 1979: 22). Therefore the circumstances it describes may not be the same as they were in the early medieval period.

Most scholars agree that the basic framework of the model seems to be applicable in most parts of England. Evidence for multiple estates and their links to distant pastures and hunting grounds similar to those at Malling have also been discovered in Warwickshire, Wiltshire and Hampshire (Hooke, 2001: 53-54). In Kent it has been possible to reconstruct up to 40 'Jutish' *regiones* or early estates, a number of which were incorporated into the later pattern of 66 hundreds more or less completely (Everitt, 1986: 343). Similarly in the Midlands Brown has used Domesday and early charter evidence to identify estate structures centred on Fawsley, Daventry and Badsby (1991: 11).

These wide ranging examples seem to show evidence of multiple estates in most parts of the country. However, some scholars have cast doubts on the circumstances and landscapes portrayed by Jones' model. Without wishing to rework old arguments, only the main points will be discussed here. The most common criticism of the model is its reliance on relatively

late material sources. This has raised concerns on how such material can be used as a guide to earlier medieval arrangements (Hadley, 1996b: 10; Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 93). Of course, in many areas such as the Danelaw the poor survival of early documentary evidence has resulted in Domesday and later documents being the only material available.

The fiercest critic of the model is Gregson. She argues it is an example of a circular argument where hypotheses are set-up such that the model is used to describe the settlement pattern within an area, with the area itself being designated as a multiple estate. She points out that little attention is paid to any possible discrepancies between the model and reality (1985: 345). Gregson advocates the model should be thoroughly evaluated using a checklist of criteria incorporating spatial, social and economic attributes, which can be applied to different examples where the presence or absence of these criteria can then be assessed, thus determining areas where the model works and where it does not (1985: 346-347). Gregson's empirical method is essentially a tick list of criteria, which Jones argues is not so much a model, but a rigid unchanging blueprint, that would present insurmountable difficulties in areas where the medieval documentary record is deficient (1989: 355). However, one point from Gregson's argument is valid, and that is the identification of areas where the model does and does not work. Whilst this can be down to the survival of the evidence it could equally demonstrate a different set of circumstances in some parts of the country. It is in such areas that we should be cautious of accepting that such neat and orderly patterns of interlocking territories exist.

One area that may illustrate such a case is the northern Danelaw (Hadley, 1996b; 2000). This region may usefully be compared to Norfolk due to its inclusion within the Danelaw and a similarly poor survival of early documentary evidence. Hadley claims a system of multiple estates or 'sokes' existed in the northern Danelaw, but due to the disruption of Scandinavian settlement they are difficult to trace prior to the tenth century. It also appears that a significant number of soke centres were important royal or ecclesiastical vills before the tenth century (1996b: 4). One important observation she has made, inferred from Domesday, is that a number of these multiple estates have overlapping boundaries, which she argues is not the result of the fragmentation of larger sokes, but was due to a number of other factors:

 Where a royal soke may have been annexed to a distant manor or wapentake for administrative purposes, an observation also made in Norfolk (Williamson, 1993: 163).

- 2. The late acquisition of sokes where charter evidence suggests that a number of sokes attached to manors in 1086 had been acquired since the tenth century.
- 3. The sokes of some manors overlap other important manors and their sokes suggesting that these sokes were not an ancient feature of the organisation of that district.

These different circumstances have led Hadley to conclude that the territorial sokes in Domesday were not all contemporary, meaning that the pattern of sokes was to some degree fluid (1996b: 6). She advises that we should not assume that large estates suggested by Jones' model were not interspaced with smaller manorial units of exploitation that reconstruction essays are prone to overlook (1996b: 11).

3.1.2 Fragmentation of the Multiple Estates

Multiple estates eventually started to fragment; a process that is perceived as increasingly more common as the Anglo-Saxon period progressed. Fragmentation is often attributed to changing attitudes in land ownership, which resulted in a middle tier of society to fill the role of landed thegn. Hooke suggests that this is supported by charter evidence, which by the ninth century shows smaller estate units beginning to figure more prominently, and it is many of these smaller estates that become the manors so common in Domesday (2001: 54). Hadley concurs and adds that the great number of place-names that incorporate personal name specifics may also be evidence of this land market (1996b: 7). Therefore this process of fragmentation, which is in part recorded by Domesday and also by place-names, is a further strand of evidence that can be used to trace earlier secular estates.

3.1.3 Berewicks and Place-Names

Berewick simply means outlying farm or *wic* where barley was grown. The term eventually became widely used for a dependent farm or settlement (Faith, 1997: 42). It is these detached dependencies or berewicks recorded in Domesday that may be useful in identifying former estate centres.

Berewicks are found listed in most areas of England, but it is the Danelaw counties where so many estates were organised into centre-plus-berewicks that the compilers of Domesday had to devise a formulae by which to record the answers in order to reflect this form of estate structure (Faith, 1997: 43). However, berewicks are not recorded in such detail everywhere in

England. In Shropshire for example Darby found that while some manors were listed with high numbers of berewicks there were many inconsistencies with the evidence, resulting in 135 unnamed berewicks in the county. In contrast he cites some cases, for example Banbury in Oxfordshire and Sonning in Berkshire, where there were no berewicks mentioned although the number of plough-teams and a recorded high population suggested there must have been some (1977: 17-18).

Inconsistencies are also found in the northern Danelaw where manors ranged in size from a single berewick in Reasby to up to 12 in Southwell. Hadley also found that many vills contained a multitude of manors, berewicks and sokeland, which she attributes to the extreme fragmentation of territorial organisation in the eleventh century (2000: 110-111).

Berewicks may offer other insights into former estate structures by their place-names. For example, Hooke argues that Cheswick OE *chese* and *wic* 'cheese-farm' and Hardwick OE *heorde* and *wic* 'herd-farm', a settlement of shepherds caring for their flock are two common examples (2001: 52). Hadley however is much more cautious with this material and suggests that in the northern Danelaw there is little good evidence for the division of specialised functions between dependent members of the sokes. She adds that such names are largely absent from the sokes known to be of greatest antiquity (1996b: 11).

3.1.4 Boundaries

Parochial geography is another aspect of the landscape that can be used to identify former multiple estates. Everitt argued that in Kent parishes that arose from the subdivision of a minsterland were based on an early 'Jutish' multiple estate, so groups of parishes may frequently represent old estates (1986: 276). Similarly in the northern Danelaw Hadley found that many of the larger Domesday sokes were mirrored by the parochial geography (2000: 131). In Danelaw Lincolnshire estate boundaries identified by Roffe illustrate a clearly defined frontier of interest between two areas of land use; this may also mean that the intervening parish boundaries along Ermine Street where Roffe found that few soke relationships exist across its course and no tenant-in-chief had estates on both sides (1984: 118).

Although parochial geography may seem to be a useful tool in tracing earlier multiple estates it does have one main drawback: chronology of the boundaries. This can be demonstrated with the example of Derby which once formed the centre of a large rural territory from the evidence of the parishes attached to it, but neither its origins or the chronology of its fragmentation into separate manors can be dated (Hadley, 2000: 138). Similarly in the Midlands, Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer suggest it is possible that smaller vills and parishes may already have been in existence in the heyday of the great estates (2001: 93), a point that again highlights this problem. Parochial geography therefore, can be used most effectively in areas where charters with boundary clauses exist and the date of the boundaries is better understood.

3.1.5 Multiple Estates in Norfolk: Current Perspectives

The above discussion has illustrated that great or multiple estates have relevance in most parts of the country, although identification of these early territories varies considerably due to the nature and the survival of documentary and other evidence. The clearest examples of great estates are largely confined to non-Danelaw areas where the effects of Scandinavian settlement were not felt and documentary evidence is more complete. In Danelaw areas the picture is more complex due to a poor survival of early documents and a far more marked pattern of estate fragmentation as a result of Scandinavian settlement and a seemingly buoyant late Saxon land market. It is in these areas where a more speculative approach is required to identify great estates from parochial geography and the existence of berewicks recorded in Domesday. In such areas where this has been successful secular territories have exhibited a range of different estate sizes in an almost continuous state of flux, which has allowed us to reassess our ideas that the landscape was perhaps not as neatly divided up as Jones' models proposes.

In Norfolk the earliest evidence for multiple estates is from Domesday, which seems to suggest a very intricate pattern of tenurial organisation that may be most usefully compared to other areas of the Danelaw. It is this complexity which may be the reason why so few scholars have studied this particular aspect of the landscape, these are the ones who have: Williamson, (1993); Hart, (1992); Bond, Penn and Rogerson, (1990). These scholars concur that the lack of surviving documentary evidence makes such research difficult but it is only Williamson who has suggested other methods by which such territories may be identified:

1. Using groups of similarly named parishes, citing the example of the seven (formerly nine) Burnham parishes in northwest Norfolk, which he claims are a rare survival of an estate structure, as in most cases the shared place-name is usually lost during the process of estate fission (1993: 92-93). Jones also makes a similar comment and points out that when the bonds linking the components of any multiple estate to its caput were loosened or severed, renaming of settlements is likely to have taken place (1979, 34).

2. The distribution and concentrations of freemen and sokemen. In a number of cases in Norfolk concentrations of sokemen correspond with both hundredal manors recorded in Domesday, e.g. Mileham (Launditch), Wighton (North Greenhoe) and Saham (Wayland) and other important manors which were not hundredal manors, but seem to have been of early administrative importance, because they gave their names to hundreds, for example South Walsham, Blofield, Happisburgh (Happing), Taverham, Tunstead and Loddon (1993: 100). Williamson however does concede there are some instances where the evidence from sokemen cannot be as clearly understood and suggests that the 25 sokemen recorded at Deopham for example probably reflect the early importance of the adjacent vill of Hingham. He also acknowledges that Holt and Shropham while giving their names to their respective hundreds contained very low numbers of sokemen (1993: 100-101).

In contrast freemen were located in more peripheral areas, probably occupied by 'specialist grazing estates' (Williamson, 1993: 119-120). Freemen were not in all peripheral areas and they are largely absent from the central watershed area. He states the reasons for this are that in areas with woodland, such as the central watershed, aristocrats, royal administrators and ecclesiastical houses fought hard to maintain control of the vills, because woodland represented a valuable economic asset. Therefore vills in wooded areas were characterised by stronger lordship and had fewer freemen and that the largest concentrations of woodland were attached to places that had been ancient estate centres (1993: 122).

3. In a number of instances Roman sites and early Saxon 'central places' relate closely to middle Saxon estate centres. For example North Elmham is near the Roman site of Billingford and close to the early Saxon cemetery of Spong Hill, Wighton is near the pagan cemetery of Great Walsingham and also a Roman settlement and Earsham is only 4.5 km from the Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery at Ditchingham (Williamson, 1993: 102-103). These examples may indicate a continuity of use, an aspect that is discussed more fully below.

One aspect of the evidence that Williamson is unsure of is the evidence of berewicks recorded in Domesday. He sees these as of little value in reconstructing earlier estate structures, as few of them seem to be ancient. He also claims that many such berewicks are too far away from their great estate centre to have ever been a functioning economic sub-unit, citing the example of Caston, a berewick of Fakenham, which is more than 30 kms away and separated by three hundreds (1993, 93). Hart however, is not of the same opinion and argues that Holt Hundred encompasses all the berewicks dependent on the large royal estate at its centre (1992, 72). This evidence however is not as clear-cut as Hart suggests and the neighbouring vill of Thornage also has berewicks recorded, one of which, Hempstead is shared with Holt. (192a. Morris, 1984: 10,8).

One further way in which Williamson has tried to identify great estates is through the use of parochial geography in a similar way to Everitt (1986), Hadley (2000) and Roffe (1984) discussed above. In Norfolk, Williamson claims that a central parish in contact with eight or more other parishes could be a potential great estate. Using this approach he has identified 56 parishes showing this parochial core adjacency (1993, 152).

The GIS software used for this research and more fully explained in Chapter Six shows how this adjacency works. Figure 3.1 illustrates that by using a contact score of eight or more parishes a number of central core parishes can be identified in the landscape. It is also possible with GIS to separate the core parishes by the number of contacts they have. This shows that eight to ten contacts are found quite frequently, but eleven or more contacts are far more uncommon. One problem with this mathematical representation however is that the GIS cannot factor out the detached portions of parishes, which results in some inconsistencies in the Broadland and Fenland areas of the county.



3.2 Minster Churches

The system of pastoral care in early medieval England has long been recognised as having a greater impact on the landscape and economy than any other human agency (Everitt, 1986: 181). Blair's model (1988a) describes the details of the form, function and the jurisdiction that this early system of pastoral care exercised over the greater landscape. The components of this system he proposes however are still the subject of much controversy and debate amongst scholars, not least the terminology used to describe it.

3.2.1 Minster Terminology

The terms used to describe important churches, minster and *monasterium*, have proved to be particularly troublesome. *Monasterium* is a Latin term, whilst the Old English term *mynstre* is a loan word from the Latin term *monasterium*. The problem is that both terms were used in early documentary sources. Foot claims they were not used to describe different sorts of establishments but were more the result of a lack of variation in language at the time, resulting in Bede using both terms to describe religious houses (1992: 218-220). Blair's opinion is similar and he suggests that Bede used the imprecise term *monasterium* because the usage of the day left him no choice (1995: 194). The frequency in which these terms were used has led Foot and Blair to claim that they were used interchangeably to denote any kind of religious establishment or community (1992: 224; 1988: 1). Whilst most scholars now accept that minster and *monasterium* have similar meanings Foot and Blair's claim of the terms being interchangeable has drawn criticism.

The main objection to the imprecise use of the term minster is the implication it has for grouping all pre-Viking establishments together, implying that that they all shared a similar function (Cambridge and Rollason, 1995; Hadley, 2000). The important issue illustrated by these objections however, relates to contemporary terminology and not the existence of any early system of parochial care. It is accepted that the term minster does carry certain connotations, but a terminology is still required to describe these early churches. In the context of this research the term minster is used to imply a church with a territory wider than a single village/settlement unit.

3.2.2 The Minster Model

Blair is the main advocate of a system of early pastoral care focussed around minster churches (1985, 1988a, 1988b, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1996 and 2005). He suggests that these institutions housed religious communities, which although varying greatly in size, wealth and complexity, exercised rights and provided a system of pastoral care over a defined territory or mother parish, from now on referred to as a *parochia*. This research has enabled him to formulate a model (Blair, 1988a: 35-36), which can be used to describe the main features of the system.

- 1. In the seventh and eighth centuries most institutions that were called *monasterium* had a place in a coherent pastoral system with a responsibility for supporting a ministry within a defined territory or *parochia*.
- 2. Early minsters lay at some distance from their counterpart royal *villae*, often in Roman enclosures with the *villae* outside on open ground.
- 3. Minsters are more important than royal *villae* in the origins of small towns and such minster towns often exhibit distinctive topographical development.
- 4. The centralised control that a minster exercised was compatible with decentralized worship and *parochiae*. Older cult sites were often assimilated and then controlled and served by minster clergy where baptism and burial continued to be practised through the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries.

The model advocates a localised system of pastoral care, but to understand how and why this system was necessary minsters need to be viewed in the wider context of the conversion period. If seen from this perspective minsters can be seen as part of a continuing process of conversion in middle Saxon England. Augustine of Canterbury was coming to a country that was already Christian with a number of monasteries, particularly in Wales and the west of Britain. However, in the southern and eastern parts of Britain this was not the case (Aston, 2002: 41).

Conversion was not an easy process and the decision of the Anglo-Saxon kings to accept or reject Christianity was bound to have political connotations (Mayr-Harting, 1991: 65). However, by the late seventh century Augustine, his monks and their successors had been successful, and a number of cathedral centres and monasteries had become established (Aston, 2002: 49). Due to the problems with terminology as discussed above, identification of true monasteries in this period is difficult, a problem compounded by the changing fortunes of many sites. Some early monasteries became new bishoprics with extensive dioceses, others became the basis of tenth century refoundations and others simply failed (Aston, 2002: 50). Bede who in his letter to Egbert protests that "laymen on their estates" were founding a number of 'monasteries' illustrates a further complication in our understanding of this period. Bede tells us that these places were not staffed with real monks "but wanderers who had been expelled from genuine monasteries" (Sherley-Price and Farmer, 1990: 345).

Bede's writings clearly suggest a growing secular involvement in the continuing spread of Christianity, although his views must contain a certain element of bias, being a monk himself. What can be taken from his assertions is that changes were happening. Early minsters had been 'public' in the sense that kings normally founded them (Blair, 1988a: 39), but now local lords were also doing the same. What were their motives behind these new foundations? Morris suggests that a lord could feel some responsibility for the spiritual well being of his followers, which could give his church a coincidental pastoral function. Whether this church was virtuous and disciplined, showed little real spiritual life, or was simply a household chapel, or at different times became all three is difficult to say. He adds that to view minsters as a part of a coherent pastoral strategy is a mistake as they may have originated in different ways, out of varied motives and functions and they were not systematically located to provide comprehensive coverage of the landscape (1989: 133).

It would seem therefore that the pastoral care element or the *parochiae* minsters cared for is not as clearly defined as Blair's model advocates and it may not have been the primary reason for founding such churches. So what evidence is there for minster territories? The answer to this seems very little, at least from early sources. As Blair observes, no seventh or eighth century English source refers explicitly to a network of *parochiae* (1988a: 36). It seems these territories are only identified from later sources. Blair claims that the strongest evidence we have for these *parochiae* is that many minsters emerge as the foci of large multi-vill parishes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (1988a: 37). Morris concurs by suggesting that minsters only came to acquire the semblance of a system when in the tenth and eleventh century an administrative net was cast over a disorderly pattern (1989: 133). Probably the right question to ask about pastoral care is not whether its proponents saw minsters as the best possible means of providing it, but how successfully they harnessed the bandwagon for their own ends (Blair, 1995: 207).

The minster system advocated by Blair is present in the broadest sense in most areas of England and traces of such a system have been found in the Midlands (Franklin, 1984), Hampshire and Wessex (Hase, 1988, 1994), Dorset, Gloucestershire and North Devon (Pearce, 1982, 1985), Kent (Everitt, 1986), Yorkshire (Morris, 1989) and more recently the Northern Danelaw (Hadley, 2000). There is also a useful comparison of Hampshire with Lincolnshire (Ulmschneider, 2000). In this sense Blair's model illustrates that there were similar trends in ecclesiastical development throughout the country (Hadley, 2000: 297).

One key issue identified by Blair's model and demonstrated by these regional studies is that the development of the minster system was closely associated with royal or noble estates. Blair suggests such associations were more practical than pastoral, and the location of minster parochiae owed much to existing systems of government and exploitation. This resulted in the minster having a *parochia* that was coterminous with the territory or great estate the royal vill controlled (1988b: 2). Hase's study in Hampshire found that the four or five minster churches around Southampton Water, which date back to the late seventh or early eighth centuries, were connected with an ancient royal estate and a royal hundred. He also found that other less well-documented minster churches, still discernable in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, were similarly connected with ancient royal estates (1988: 46). The same was also true of Kent and the 15 recorded minsters were all associated with ancient royal estates (Everitt, 1986: 190-191). Even in areas where the documentary evidence is relatively poor a similar pattern is also apparent. In the northern Danelaw Hadley found minster churches evident in Domesday were evenly spread out across the region and most were located at the centre of large estates (2000: 279). The important point here is the fact that most identifiable early minsters followed a similar pattern of royal foundation. This is not to say however this was some kind of broad policy to assist in the process of conversion. It is unlikely that this was the case as it is hard to conceive of them as products of any coherent campaign (Morris, 1989: 130).

Blair's model also suggests that many minsters were not close to their royal *villae* but often located at some distance from it, perhaps in some sort of Roman enclosure (1988a: 35). The reasons for this again appear to be practical. Such locations reflect a prior re-use of the stronghold as a royal centre to which the church was attached (Blair, 1988a: 40). Morris is of a similar opinion, although he does suggest the desire for seclusion, to confront the past or simple opportunism may have also played a part (1989: 119). Blair uses a number of

examples to demonstrate this: *Cnobheresburg* (Burgh Castle), Bradwell-on-Sea, Reculver and Chester-le-Street were all located in former Roman fortifications (1992: 237).

However, there are numerous examples where churches were not so located. In Wessex for example, Anglo-Saxons seem to have avoided founding churches in Roman enclosures, and many early churches were founded outside of the enclosure and not within it. Similarly, hillforts were also avoided although the area is abundant in them (Hase, 1994: 54). In the Northern Danelaw only two of the churches considered by Hadley to be of a superior status utilise former Roman structures; Caistor in Lincolnshire and Flawford in Nottinghamshire (2000: 253, 232).

The model also proposes that there were a number of instances where a medieval town developed in the neighbourhood of a minster and royal vill, with the focus of the town usually around the church. Blair supports this claim by stating that Roman towns usually re-emerge in the medieval period when they contained minsters and rarely if they did not (1988a: 47), although the latter point is hard to substantiate. He suggests that in such cases three stages of development should be expected: firstly, some sort of church precinct, rectangular or curvilinear; secondly, organic late Saxon growth around the perimeter and along the approach road to the minster, perhaps including a market; and thirdly, some twelfth or thirteenth century burgage-plots peripheral to the earlier core. He has cited a number of examples of such instances: Wimborne (Dorset), Thame and Charlbury (Oxfordshire) and Lambourne (Berkshire) (1988a: 48-49).

The final aspect of the minster model is the re-use of former cult sites. Blair claims that in many instances holy wells and graveyards were the raw materials with which the first missionaries worked. He adds that such sites could be assimilated as subordinate elements into new *parochiae* and as they were controlled centrally and were not subject to separatist private interests (1988a: 51).

3.2.3 The break up of the Minster System

Blair's model describes a system of pastoral care that developed in the middle Saxon period; however by the mid-tenth century the system was in decline, largely due to fundamental changes brought about by the growth of local churches. This led to the fragmentation of the larger minster *parochiae* into the system of individual parishes we are familiar with today.

Blair suggests Domesday marks the halfway point of this process of change, and by 1086 the system was in "a state of unparalleled flux" (1990: 266). This state of flux in many areas, together with the disruptive effects of Scandinavian settlement in the Danelaw counties, has made the task of identifying minsters in some parts of the country a formidable problem.

Blair argues that just as the first minsters had been founded by royalty, new systems of local government, land tenure and a developing territorial aristocracy brought new kinds of domination and patronage (1988: 2). The late ninth century also brought the disruptions caused by Viking raids. It has often been assumed that these raids signalled the end of the minster system, although Blair is of the opinion this period was undeniably a period of loss, disruption and change it did not destroy the system (1988b: 3). Hadley agrees and found that in the northern Danelaw despite the great changes brought about by Scandinavian settlement the basic organisational framework of minsters clearly survived (2000: 279).

What did change however was the status the minsters once had. In this period, land alienated by the disruption was probably never restored. Kings took church land for political and strategic purposes and from the 990s the burden of Danegeld must have weighed heavily (Blair, 1988b: 3). But these were not the only problems that minsters faced. The difficulties of providing cure of souls from a single centre in a large district and the desire of lay lords to have a church at the gates of their own residences were also threats (Hase, 1994: 62). With increasing competition from private foundations it became necessary to protect the minster's rights of soul-scot and church-scot. Soul-scot was the payment of burial fees at the open grave; church-scot was a payment from the village usually consisting of a measure of grain although this differed from place to place (Stenton, 1988: 153). The law code of Aethelred c.1014 was an attempt to preserve the rights of ancient minsters. In this document four classifications of church are listed: head minsters (cathedrals), lesser or old minsters, and those of less significance still. This latter group includes thegaly foundations, which were further classified by whether or not they had a cemetery. If they did not they were classed as 'field churches' (Morris, 1989: 129). The latter two classes of church were not independent of the minster and even if they possessed a cemetery they were still expected to pay one third of their tithe to it (Morris, 1989: 129). These new foundations may not have implied the break up of a *parochiae* but they did make other types of development easier and in some cases mother churches were willing to give a private church complete independence if the lord was willing to pay them off (Hase, 1994: 62).

3.2.4 Minsters in Domesday Book

In areas where early charters are sparse Domesday Book is often the primary documentary evidence that can be used for the identification and reconstruction of minsters and their territories. In such cases Blair has devised a methodology, which is designed to identify minster churches from Domesday evidence. It works on the premise that the residual rights of mother churches in the post-Conquest period often reflect the extent of their former mid-Saxon *parochiae* (1988a: 36).

This methodology uses six criteria:

- 1. References to groups of priests where there is a fair assumption that they were resident.
- 2. Endowments of at least one hide or carucate.
- 3. Tenure of the church or its land separately from the parent manor, especially if the tenant is a royal clerk or other named ecclesiastic.
- 4. Separate valuations of churches and surveys of their assets.
- 5. Miscellaneous marks of status, including named dedications, exemptions from geld, and references to church-scot or rights over neighbouring churches or chapels.
- 6. Attachment to a royal demesne or bishops' manor. These are not used as grounds for inclusion but have held favour in some doubtful cases (Blair, 1985: 106).

When viewed in the context of the model outlined above the use of these six criteria seems quite straightforward. However, there are a number of problems, the main one being Domesday itself. Blair comments that there are many major differences in quality of the data and its presentation between the seven circuits used by the commissioners (1985: 106). Such inconsistencies can be demonstrated with the way in which churches have been recorded in different parts of the country. In Wiltshire Domesday records 32 churches, which Blair claims, are nearly all of important status. In contrast, Norfolk had 301 churches recorded but hardly any of which could be classed as of superior status. These differences are also apparent in other counties and superior churches were more numerous in Hampshire, Berkshire, north Somerset and west Sussex than ordinary ones.

The record of priests in Domesday is equally inconsistent and there is little evidence from Domesday to suggest the existence of collegiate churches. There are a number of counties where priests are not recorded and others where the commissioners appear to have had little interest with a priest's holding (Blair, 1985: 113). Similarly the parochial rights of churches are also poorly recorded. The mention of church-scot and soul-scot, the basic mother church dues, seem to be purely arbitrary, although where they are mentioned they are the clearest test of ancient minster status. The endowments mentioned are similarly inconsistent and well-endowed churches were thickest on the ground where late Saxon kings had their main estates and conducted their main activities (Blair, 1985: 114, 116).

Although these criteria seem to be relevant in the southern non-Danelaw counties, where they were formulated for use, they do not work as well in the Danelaw counties. Blair claims this is due to the incidences of superior churches decreasing progressively northwards and eastwards into the Danelaw counties (Blair, 1985: 112-113). However, is this statement correct for the Danelaw or an over generalisation of the evidence? We already know that great estates existed in the Danelaw counties but that they differed in size and complexity to non-Danelaw counties. Could this not also be the case with minsters? Hadley claims that the diagnostic features used by the minster model do not apply in the Danelaw. She also adds that a poor survival of early documentary evidence means we know less about the church in some areas of the Danelaw before the Viking settlement, so it is not safe to conclude that ecclesiastical communities in these areas were as well endowed and staffed as those in southern England (1996a: 113). A further point she makes is that the Vikings did not destroy ecclesiastical life, but argues that the increased secularisation of the church in the Danelaw is a sign of religious enthusiasm in the region (1996a: 127). This latter point however, is difficult to substantiate.

3.2.5 Post-Conquest Documentary Evidence

One final source used to discover or act as supplementary evidence for minsters are later thirteenth century valuations. The reasons for using such documents are that they might throw light on the financial arrangements which evolved from the earlier pre-Conquest church organisation (Parsons, 1996: 29). Such arrangements may include the designation of one church as a chapelry of another or they could mention a payment of a pension from one church to another representing dependence, although the later may have resulted from the appropriation of a church, or from a gift by a pious layman (Croom, 1988: 68). The principal documents used for this type of analysis are the 1254 Valuation of Norwich and the 1291 *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas. There are earlier valuations such as the 1217 *Valde Antiqua*

Taxatio, although only parts relating to the diocese of Ely and the archdeaconry of Leicester survive (Lunt, 1926: 100).

The complexity of these documents means that in the most part they have been examined in a superficial manner, as a thorough investigation of just these documents would require a doctoral research programme (Parsons, 1996: 29). Two notable studies by Croom, 1988 and Parsons, 1996 illustrate how this material can be used. Both have taken a different approach: Croom uses chapelries mentioned in 1291 to help reconstruct the pattern of churches dependent on a mother church in south-east Shropshire (1988: 76-77); whereas Parsons uses the evidence from the valuations in 1217, 1254 and 1291 respectively in Leicestershire. He found by starting with the 1291 valuations a recorded figure of £20 was well above average for Leicestershire churches and that £30 and above was exceptional (1996: 29). Using this criteria he was able to show the potential of higher valuations of 1217 and 1254 being in marks were not wholly compatible with the 1291 valuation in pounds, many examples showed an increase of value between 1217 and 1291.

3.2.6 Minster Churches in Norfolk: Current Perspectives

Although Hadley's work is based on the Danelaw she makes little reference to East Anglia. Therefore is it safe to assume that the circumstances portrayed elsewhere in the Danelaw are similar to those we might expect in Norfolk or does the county display distinctive characteristics that are specific to it? Put another way, does Norfolk reflect genuine regional contrasts or merely differences in later developments (Blair, 1988b: 2)?

Surprisingly there has been little work focussed on the ecclesiastical development of the county. Penn (1996) and Pestell (1999) have looked at aspects of monastic sites but do not greatly consider secular involvement. It is only Williamson (1993) who in recent years has addressed the problem of trying to identify Norfolk's minster churches and their *parochiae*.

The reasons for such limited research is largely thought to be due to the limited available documentary evidence. Another factor may also be that Norfolk, unlike other Danelaw counties does not have a readily available source of freestone, and therefore lacks the early sculpture and architectural fragments that have been used to aid minster identification elsewhere in the Danelaw.

The single surviving charter that mentions a minster relates to an agreement between Osulf and Leofrun concerning land at Dickleburgh and Semere 1044 x 1052. It records four priests who were to sing and conduct mass each week for the redemption of Osulf and Leofrun's souls. It also states that whoever is abbot of St Edmunds should be the guardian of the minsters (Hart, 1966: 86-87). The fact that this charter mentions minsters in plural is taken by Hart to mean that it is referring to one at both Semere and Dickleburgh with two priests at each (1966: 90). In part this is still evident in Domesday as Dickleburgh still has two priests although by 1086 Semere does not. Semere is now a DMV and has no visible evidence of a church.

With the exception of this charter Domesday is the primary documentary evidence used for minsters in the county as no studies have considered the later documents such as the 1254 Valuation of Norwich. However, due to the inconsistent manner in which Domesday records churches, as discussed in Chapter Two, the evidence it presents is difficult to interpret. For instance there is only one church; St Mary in Thetford that seems to have had any other churches attached to it, in this case four, suggesting the possibility of an urban minster (Blair, 1985: 111, Williamson, 1993: 151) This example is complicated by the fact that St Mary's was the cathedral see from 1071 to 1091. Such links are cited by Blair as evidence for possible minster churches, but in Norfolk this type of Domesday record is rare, and with the exception of Thetford the only other chapels recorded are the 43 in Norwich held by the burgesses of the borough (117a, Morris, 1984: 1,61 and Morris, 1989, 169).

In a rural context Domesday offers little information at all that could be suggestive of a minster. Williamson has cited possible minsters from large endowments of land and has noted that there are 25 churches with 40 acres or more (1993: 152). Although none of these are as large as Blair suggests, i.e. commonly one hide or carucate (1985: 106), it should be expected that smaller endowments were found in such a prosperous and heavily populated county where available land must have been scarce. This point is confirmed by Hadley who comments that land held by the church was normally much greater in the south, where the minster model was formulated (1996a: 111). One final aspect of the Domesday evidence that can be used for identifying minsters are those examples where Domesday records two or more priests, although again this evidence is rare. Dickleburgh mentioned above is one such example and Langley with one priest and two halves is another. These priests are listed with 100 acres of free land and appertain in the church of St Andrew, although the church at Langley is now dedicated to St Michael (Williamson, 1993: 152).

Due to this general lack of documentary evidence scholars have been forced to employ more speculative approaches. For example, Williamson uses parochial geography, which he has also used to identify great estate centres (see p.37 above). In this approach Williamson is identifying minsters by association with secular centres, a method that is included within Blair's model as discussed above. Using parochial geography Williamson claims to have identified potential minster churches at East Dereham, Cawston, Aylsham, Wymondham, Tunstead, Holt, North Walsham and Wighton. Figure 3.2 illustrates how this method works with the contact parishes around the central parish of North Walsham (1993: 152-153). This approach has merit in a county with so little surviving documentary evidence, although proving the existence of minsters in these core parishes is still problematic.



Figure 3.2. The pattern of parishes around North Walsham (Williamson, 1993: 153).

3.3 Conclusions

The models of both Jones and Blair explored in this chapter indicate that in the broadest sense similar developments were happening in most areas of the country, although at different rates and at different times. It is also clear that minster churches and great estates in the Danelaw differ from those encountered in non-Danelaw counties and it is in this context that Norfolk can perhaps be best considered.

This chapter has illustrated that the evidence for great estates in Norfolk appears to be fairly comprehensive in terms of Domesday and place-names and by using a combination of these

data scholars have identified a number of great estate centres. The problem however with the Norfolk evidence is that few of these great estates have been examined in detail and current research has not addressed the complexities of estate organisation shown in other areas of the Danelaw. This has resulted in Norfolk being perceived as having a neatly organised estate structure with little known about the inner workings, function and size of these secular territories.

Due to the limited nature of the documentary evidence available in Norfolk this research will address the problem of great estates by not only considering the data in the context of Jones' model but also by examining settlement types, settlement patterns, parochial geography, soils and archaeological evidence to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the landscape in the Anglo-Saxon period. In order for such a large and varied amount of data to be considered GIS will be used not only in the identification of estate centres as discussed above, but also map, compare and contrast the findings. Once the evidence for great estates at a broad county level has been considered this research will then examine a carefully selected number of case studies in much greater detail to try and reveal the more subtle intricacies that these great estates may exhibit and in doing so will attempt to show any regional variations apparent.

In contrast with the great estates, minster churches have proven to be far more obscure element in the Norfolk landscape. Evidence from elsewhere in the Danelaw has highlighted the difficulties in identifying minsters by the use of Blair's model. The limited research that has been focused on potential minster churches in the county has identified them by association with great estates: an association apparent in other parts of the country but is it correct to assume that it was also the case in Norfolk? It is tempting to suggest that there was no minster system as we perceive it in the county, but such a view does not take account of the proliferation of local church provision recorded by Domesday. Williamson claims that the establishment local churches went further here and earlier than anywhere else in England and had essentially masked any trace of an earlier system of pastoral care (1993: 150-151). More recently a similar view has been expressed by Blair who states that we must question whether minsters in East Anglia were obliterated by the Vikings or swamped by the proliferation of local churches (2005: 320).

Perhaps what we should be asking is what this large number of local churches implies in the ecclesiastical development of the county? Hadley faced similar problems in Lincolnshire

where few post-Conquest churches could be identified with mother-church attributes although the documentary, archaeological and sculptural evidence indicated that they were early (1996a: 123). In Norfolk the reasons for this proliferation are still poorly understood and although economic growth and social diversification have been suggested (Blair, 2005: 320) the county's local churches have seldom been considered in a wider context of ecclesiastical development. This research will re-examine the limited evidence for minsters but additionally will consider other issues: Why were there more local churches at such an early date in the county than elsewhere in England? Can the physical evidence of surviving early churches aid in the identification of possible minsters? What date do the first church buildings start to appear in the landscape?

From research undertaken so far in the county it is not possible to answer these questions with any conviction therefore a fresh approach is required to explore the data in different ways. The approach taken in this research will include as much information as possible and incorporate later documents such as the thirteenth century valuations; consider the surviving fabric of the churches themselves, as explored in Chapter Five, and give a broader consideration of the Domesday evidence, but perhaps more importantly the link between great estates and minster churches will be more fully examined building on the ideas originally suggested by Williamson. This would mean not just viewing the minster as a single entity but more one of the many components of the early medieval landscape, a subject explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: Village, Field, Parish and Hundred

The previous chapter examined the origins, development and the eventual decline of the principle elements in our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon landscape: great estates and minster *parochiae*. The resultant changes brought about by the decline of these elements are widely thought to have resulted in the nucleation of settlement, the adoption of open field agriculture and the imposition of a network of parish boundaries. This chapter will examine the evidence for these major landscape changes and explore if such events were happening in Norfolk.

4.1 Villages, Fields and Settlement Evolution.

The differences between planned and ancient countryside and how these two categories relate to Norfolk have been addressed in Chapter Two. These two broad characterisations represent a general truth, but it is inadequate to express the rich variety of settlement patterns and if applied too rigidly the dichotomy of dispersed versus nucleated could be a real obstacle to explaining the origins and evolution of these settlement patterns (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 62).

Many of the settlements we live in today are those recorded by Domesday in 1086. This 'land of villages' as Hoskins refers to it (1985: 45) is typified by a wide variety of settlement forms and sizes which are the result of a long and complex development following the collapse of the Roman provinces in the fifth century. Over the past 30 years archaeology has supplemented historical research by using detailed archaeological survey methods such as intensive field-walking, although this has resulted in a concentration of archaeological research in areas where ceramic evidence is more common, such as East Anglia (Hall and Coles (1994), Wade-Martins (1980b), Newman (1994). However, the abundance of archaeological evidence has culminated in little emphasis being placed on historical research and it is only in the Midlands region that the two approaches have been applied more consistently: Hall (1988) and more recently the Whittlewood project (Jones and Page, 2003), which encompasses historical research and intensive archaeological survey in the form of field-walking and test pitting.

The notion of a stable Anglo-Saxon settlement as the predecessor of a medieval vill is no longer tenable in the light of growing evidence. Research now indicates that most nucleated medieval vills are not the successors of early or middle Saxon settlements but the result of a remarkably late phenomenon known as the 'middle Saxon shift' (Hamerow, 1991: 1). This 'shift' is apparent not only in England, but also has parallels on mainland Europe. In order to understand the 'middle Saxon shift' the events leading up to this process have to be explored.

The most fundamental change in the early Saxon period was the loss of urban settlements and the collapse of the Roman market economy, from which it would take some 500 years to recover (Brown and Foard, 1988: 67). Recent fieldwork such as Hall (1988), Newman (1994) and Jones and Page (2003) illustrates that in many areas early Saxon settlement reused some of the former Roman framework, as a number of early Saxon sites were found associated with Roman ones. Many of these sites were located on richer soils and river valleys; claylands seem to have been avoided, which in some cases resulted in the regeneration of woodland.

The settlement pattern represented by these early sites is generally accepted to have been dispersed farmsteads (Hall, 1988: 100; Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 191). This is confirmed by archaeology where such early settlement sites that have been excavated: West Stow, Suffolk (West, 1985), and Mucking, Essex (Hamerow, 1993). The excavations at West Stow and Mucking have shown that the nature and status of these settlement sites was very diverse. West Stow illustrates a pattern of three shifting farmsteads, whilst Mucking although still exhibiting this shifting pattern did so within a territorial unit, which utilized the same burial grounds for three centuries (Hamerow, 1991: 10). However, this settlement 'drift' apparent in some of these early settlements is not sufficient to explain the nature of an increasingly nucleated pattern in the late Saxon period (Hamerow, 1991: 15-16).

The reasons for this fundamental change in settlement patterns and the date at which it occurred are often controversial points among scholars. Many accept the date of nucleation is in the late Saxon and post-Conquest period (850-1200) (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 191; Hamerow, 1991: 16; Hall, 1988: 102). However, in Northamptonshire Brown and Foard claim that nucleation occurred in the middle Saxon period (1998: 91). Often perceived to be associated with the process of nucleation is the adoption of a system of large unenclosed fields farmed in common, which replaced a mosaic of smaller fields farmed in severalty (Jones and Page, 2003: 57; Hall, 1988: 102). Again, Brown and Foard offer a different suggestion by asserting that in Northamptonshire these two events did not happen together.

They argue that the creation of open-field agriculture occurred in the ninth and tenth centuries and the imposition of these field systems fixed the settlement pattern at whatever level of nucleation it had reached (1998: 91).

The differences in both these views can be explained in that Brown and Foard suggest nucleation accompanied the formation of great estates in the middle Saxon period. They claim that in the late Saxon period a 'great replanning' occurred, which is reflected by only late Saxon pottery being found in the settlements that were to become medieval villages. Those failed and deserted settlements of the early and middle Saxon period have no late ceramic evidence, therefore the nucleation process must have been completed by the time late Saxon ceramics were introduced (1998: 76).

In contrast Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer argue that nucleation was the result of the break up of the great estates and claim that nucleation and the adoption of open field agriculture occurred at similar times. They add that a great replanning did not occur and nucleation in the late Saxon period was the result of open field agriculture, as only then was it necessary for inhabitants to be gathered into a nucleated village (2001: 192).

The important point here is that until much more fieldwork, excavation and historical research has been undertaken and more evidence becomes available the differences illustrated in these arguments may never be fully resolved. Of course, it may be possible that both arguments are correct in different parts of the country as the processes involved in nucleation are not revolutionary; they may be evolutionary (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 200) and therefore any number of local circumstances could effect the outcome of the nucleation process.

4.1.1 Field Systems

Open field agriculture or what is also called the 'Midland system' mentioned above, worked on the basis that a village was surrounded by two or three open fields which were divided into a multitude of strips, all individually owned but farmed in common (Taylor, 2000: 71). This simplistic description conceals the many variations and complications that open fields represent, but more importantly it illustrates that open field agriculture was a communal effort. Hooke claims the recognition of this form of agriculture is crucial to our understanding of early medieval settlement because it is based on the premise that a group of people in a village were working together in a communally organised activity, or at least had shared interests. Nucleation was therefore a way of achieving greater efficiency in agricultural production (1995: 96).

The main problem with this scenario is that both the origins of settlement nucleation and open field agriculture remain obscure (Thirsk, 1964: 7; Campbell, 1981b: 112; Williamson 2003: 24). Furthermore there has been a preoccupation by scholars to concentrate on areas where the Midlands system is prevalent (Campbell, 1981: 112). This has resulted in non-Midland systems being less well studied. However, non-Midland systems coincide with areas of greatest wealth, population density, highest levels of assessed lay wealth and the most productive agricultural areas (Campbell, 1981b: 113). Norfolk is an example of such an area.

Williamson (2003) to some extent addresses these problems by discussing non-Midland systems mainly from the perspective of the eastern region. He concludes that forms of settlement and field systems were never the simple consequence of cultural or ethnic features or a direct function of settlement chronology or tenurial structures (2003: 192). Williamson's stand point is that custom played a major part in the development of the landscape and he argues that customary practises were moulded by both the environment and the needs of lords and communities (2003: 192).

4.1.2 Discussion

The discussion above highlights the main problems associated with this particular aspect of landscape research. The main conclusion that can be drawn from these arguments is that it is difficult to generalise about settlement, agrarian practices, and the timescales in which they developed, because they were dependent upon a number of other factors at a local and wider level. The Midlands region is more fully understood in terms of settlement and agriculture and the intimate link between the two, mainly due to the quantity of research and fieldwork that has been focussed on this part of England. However, in other areas of the country the issues relating to the origins of both settlement and agriculture are still poorly understood and this is no more evident than in Norfolk.

The settlement pattern in Norfolk is far more dispersed in nature than in the Midlands region although nucleated settlement is still predominant in some areas. The county is fortunate in that a number of intensive archaeological studies have been conducted: Wade-Martins

(1980b), Lawson (1983), Silvester (1988a), Davison (1990) Davison, Green and Milligan (1994) and Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester (1997). Much of the information from these studies is surface evidence in the form of metalwork and pottery scatters, which are discussed more fully in Chapter Eight. However, this work still only accounts for a very small proportion of settlements in the county and it is unrealistic to think that such a small sample can be representative of the many different circumstances that may have been apparent. Fundamental to our understanding the rich diversity of settlement patterns in Norfolk is why nucleation occurred in some areas and not in others.

The archaeological evidence can be used to identify the locations of settlements and to an extent trace their development. However, what it cannot tell us is why patterns of nucleated settlement developed in one area and a pattern of more dispersed developed in another. The middle Saxon period remains poorly understood, not least because Ipswich-type ware pottery is generally only recovered in small quantities, and it is difficult to ascertain if a few sherds represent a settlement or manuring scatters. However, there are many cases where it is found in close proximity to the later medieval churches e.g. Beetley, Horningtoft, Longham and Mileham in Launditch Hundred (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 17, 25, 37, 41). Similar findings have also been noted at Witton in northeast Norfolk (Lawson, 1983, 70) and Illington in Breckland (Davison, Green and Milligan, 1993: 4). There are some exceptions to this and some sites seem to have only existed in the middle Saxon period as no earlier or later ceramic evidence has been recovered, for example, Hay Green in the Marshland parish of Terrington St Clement where an unusually large amount of Ipswich-type ware was recovered (Silvester, 1988a: 37). Similarly there are a number of settlements in Launditch Hundred (Wade-Martins, 1980b) and the Loddon area (Davison, 1990) where no middle Saxon material has been found. This suggests that settlement did not occur in these places until later or alternatively the evidence has yet to be discovered.

By the late Saxon period Thetford-type ware becomes very common and pottery scatters representing settlement sites are more easily recognised. In this period most settlement seems to remain in similar areas to the middle Saxon period, and is largely concentrated in the vicinity of the later medieval church, although in some cases the settlement starts to expand away from the middle Saxon focus. This can be seen at Mileham in Launditch Hundred (figure 4.1) where the settlement focus moved away from the church and spread northwards to the position marked by the modern village (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 42).



Figure 4.1. Middle and late Saxon settlement in Mileham. Double shading middle Saxon, single shading late Saxon, scale bar in metres (after Wade-Martins, 1980b: 44).

The archaeological evidence seems therefore to suggest that a degree of settlement nucleation had started to occur in Norfolk by at least the middle Saxon period. By the late Saxon period a number of new settlements and new parts of settlements had formed, while others continued in the same place as middle Saxon settlement, although perhaps expanding from the original nucleus. The next significant change in the settlement pattern is signified by the expansion of settlement to the edges of greens and commons. This finding is of importance because there is no archaeological evidence for settlement in such areas prior to the Conquest (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 86).

The origins of the field systems adopted in Norfolk are even more obscure that those encountered in the Midlands region. The evidence for agriculture is very limited and is largely obtained from later sources. Most research has concentrated on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the expense of earlier periods (Campbell, 1981a: 17). But despite this apparent lack of early evidence some writers have attempted to explore aspects of early cultivation, and a number of studies have been undertaken in the county Campbell (1980; 1981a; 1981b), Postgate (1962) and Silvester (1988b).

Campbell argues that East Anglian field systems share a number of common elements including an irregularity of field layout, haphazard intermixture of holdings, flexibility of cropping, common grazing on the aftermath of harvest and seigneurial monopoly of sheep folds (1981a: 26). Other writers make similar claims and have also noted the complexity of agrarian regimes and lack of uniformity in the region (Postgate 1962: 81). Campbell attributes these common elements to a general laxity of institutional constraints in matters of land tenure and social structure that allowed individuals maximum initiative in matters of cultivation (1980: 175).

The only archaeological evidence for field systems as perceived in the Midlands form are the remains of ridge and furrow earthworks largely confined to areas on the eastern Fen edge and isolated pockets in the eastern part of the county. Even in areas of Norfolk where earthwork survival is high, in DMVs for example, ridge and furrow is not present (Silvester, 1988b: 293). These findings suggest that common fields in the Midlands form were not present, in so far as ridge and furrow was not used. This could indicate a different method of agriculture or perhaps a different basic tradition in cultivation that meant that ridge and furrow was only adopted in the areas closest to the Midlands and rarely used in other parts of the county (Silvester, 1988b: 293).

The evidence for common fields is apparent in later sources such as the late thirteenth century records examined by Campbell (1980) for Martham in east Norfolk. Although the evidence does not give enough information to be able to determine the precise size and number of common fields it does illustrate the apparent complexity of the landscape. The manor of the Prior of Norwich owned 846 acres, which were divided into 2122 strips, most of which were less than one acre in size. Campbell claims that this illustrates a weak manorial control and an active peasant land market. He adds that the haphazard form of intermixed holdings suggest an origin that was spontaneous rather than planned (1980: 176-177).

In the west of the county far less is known about field systems until after the major agrarian changes in the later middle ages (Campbell, 1981a: 17). Campbell claims that field systems here derived from two opposing elements of flexibility and control (1981a: 17). The
southwest of the county has been examined by Postgate who illustrated that a regional characteristic of this area was the use of an infield-outfield system which has long been recognised as a method of cultivating marginal land (1962: 90). Therefore the differences in this part of the county can be attributed to the prevalent soil conditions.

The implications from these studies seem to be that Norfolk was a county of mixed field systems, which were a reflection not only of the soil conditions, but also on many other more local factors such as lordship, custom and personal initiative. However, it is not possible with the available evidence to suggest a date at which common fields or their derivatives came into being, although the evidence from Martham seems to suggest that common fields were not as such a result of planning but more of an evolution which may indicate that field systems in the county may have developed in different areas at different rates depending upon any number of factors. The question remains open for further investigation.

4.2 Parishes

Parishes are another feature of the landscape, which are thought to have resulted from the break up of great estates and minster parochiae, but as Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer point out there is no reason to believe that these land units could not have been in existence in the heyday of the estate (2001: 93). However, this assumption is very difficult to prove, as in a large majority of cases the earliest documentary record of a parish boundary comes from nineteenth century maps or tithe boundary awards, although in some parts of the country early charters exist which have boundary clauses attached giving at least some idea of a chronology.

From a contemporary perspective it is all too easy for us to see patterns of parishes and the areas their boundaries encompass on maps. But originally these boundaries were not formulated for maps; they were conceived by people with a much more intimate knowledge of the landscape in terms of topography, soils, field boundaries, rivers, roads, common land and woodland. Therefore, for us to understand the formation of parishes we need to view the landscape from a different perspective. This means considering boundaries not so much as where, but more why. For example, why does a boundary coincide with a Roman road? Why does a boundary appear to zigzag across a former area of common land or woodland? If viewed in this perspective it may be possible to see why parish units are the shape and size that they are and also understand the complex web they form and how this web related to

earlier great estates and minster parochiae. But first the need for these parish units needs to be addressed. Why were parishes required in the first place and why did the landscape need dividing up into this complex web of boundaries?

4.2.1 Terminology

Parishes today have two functions, ecclesiastical and civil. This dual purpose was first codified in the Tudor period when the Poor Law acts were first defined. These acts laid the responsibility for the poor with the ecclesiastical parish, thus giving a civil function to a former ecclesiastical unit (Winchester, 2000:7). These laws were further refined in the late nineteenth century when the 1889 Interpretation Acts defined the civil parish as a place for which a separate poor rate is, or can be made (Winchester, 2000: 7).

Prior to these civil obligations the primary function of the parish had always been ecclesiastical, and it is this ecclesiastical function with which early medieval society would have been familiar. Generally speaking the civil parishes in the southern half of England correspond with the ecclesiastical ones; the situation in the north of England is very different, and the two can contrast greatly (Winchester, 2000: 8). The focus of this discussion will be based upon the parishes in the southern half of England.

A widely accepted explanation of 'parish' is "the land of a community paying tithe to a local church" (Hooke, 2001: 68; Morris, 1989: 228). Jones, who offers a fuller description, comments that it provided an unchanging framework to everyday life, people's houses, farms, fields and cottages were located within the boundaries of the parish. The church was the central focus of the parish and the parishioners maintained the living of the priest (2001: 15). The priest in turn presided over the key rites of passage: baptism (Christian birth) and burial.

4.2.2 Evolution of the Parish

The importance and central role played by the church in the formation of parishes arises from the perceived demise or fragmentation of minster *parochiae*, and the closely linked break up of former great estate territories as discussed in Chapter Three. This process of fission led to a proliferation of patronal church building that seems to have been driven by the laity wanting more churches closer to hand. Lay lords may have built these churches for themselves, their families and to a lesser extent their tenants. There are even examples in East Anglia and Lincolnshire where local churches were also built through a co-operative effort by groups of peasantry (Lennard, 1997: 290) (see Chapter Five). Once constructed, churches were usually endowed with a bundle of rights supporting the priest, for example, a parcel of land or glebe 'gleba' meaning soil or earth fees for services paid by parishioners (Jones, 2001: 16). In Norfolk, Anglo-Saxon wills which survive from the period demonstrate this, for instance those churches recorded in the will of Edwin (c. 1040 x 1057), which mentions endowments of land of between four and ten acres to eleven churches (Hart, 1966: 83). The most important right however was tithe, essentially a crude tax of one tenth of an individual's income paid to the priest in kind. Tithe could be anything from a tenth of a hay crop, every tenth sheaf of wheat or other produce from the land (Jones, 2001: 16).

Tithe first appears as a compulsory payment in Athelstan's ordinance on church dues *c*. 926 x 930 (Morris, 1989: 210). It was levied upon individuals rather than calculated from areas, so the economic viability of a parish was initially determined by the size of its tithe-paying population (Morris, 1989: 233). This is an important point because it is tithe payments that gave the need for boundaries in the first instance, as an area needed to be defined from which tithe payments could be drawn. The question is can tithe help explain the differences evident in parish sizes? Morris argues that it can, because small parishes often correspond to great arable wealth, which in turn needs a relatively large population to support it. He adds that in areas of poor agricultural production and by implication sparse settlement, parishes tended to be much larger in order to provide comparable tithe payments (Morris, 1989: 233). Therefore the proliferation of patronal churches provided the parish with a pastoral purpose, which required an economic basis to support it. Parish boundaries now came to matter greatly, for upon their lines depended the directions in which revenue would go (Morris 1989: 226).

One difficulty with studying boundaries is trying to ascertain when they were first established. Clearly once a vill had a church to serve a lay community there was a need for a parish to support it. However, as discussed in the previous chapter the fission of former great estates and minster territories from which parishes are perceived to have been formed varied from region to region, thus making chronology very difficult. Morris claims that from the early twelfth century canon law regulated the rights and incomes of parish churches and these laws were enforced with increasing vigour. The result was that new parishes were very difficult to prise out of the existing network, so by this date the great majority of parishes and parish churches must have been in existence (1989: 171). Reynolds is of a similar view and states

that after the mid twelfth century the formation of a new parish was more likely to be disputed (1997: 85).

It seems likely therefore, that by the early twelfth century the vast majority of parish boundaries may have been in place. The difficulty is suggesting just how early these boundaries may have been formed. A number of scholars have tried to trace boundaries back to the Roman period or earlier, for example Bonney (1972 and 1979) and Goodier (1984). However, tracing boundaries back in time becomes increasingly difficult as the evidence becomes flimsy or non-existent (Hooke, 2000: 63). This is why such studies tend to be more focussed upon the later evidence, except in areas where Anglo-Saxon charters with boundary clauses are more common. Important studies by Hooke (2001) and Gelling (1978) have illustrated how such charters can be used to give an indication of the date of a boundary.

These charters are usually documents that record the conveyance of land or rights, usually from the king to the church, but also to other private individuals (Reynolds, 1999: 29). In many instances charters have boundary clauses that give a description of the estate that may often match a parish or part of a parish. These boundary clauses are usually descriptions of features in the landscape both natural and man-made: a tree, stream, road or a ditch for instance. These features are then used as markers to establish the bounds of the estate. Reynolds claims that the landscape described in some boundary clauses demonstrates how fixed and stable these boundaries have become as much of the Anglo-Saxon countryside still remains in a visible and tangible form (1999: 30).

Even with the existence of charters and boundary clauses a date for a particular boundary is still difficult to determine. The earliest examples are of late seventh-century date and it is not until the tenth and eleventh centuries that boundary clauses become more common. This Reynolds suggests is directly linked to contemporary changes in the way the country was organised (1999: 30). Morris using evidence from a group of parish churches in Lincolnshire and not boundary clauses, claims that the system of parishes was laid out no later than the tenth century and by 1000 was already in quite an advanced state of development (1989: 237). He accepts that there are no surviving churches from the tenth century but there is evidence of churchyards from this period in the form of tenth century gravestones incorporated in the fabric of later church buildings. Morris argues that this evidence implies local communities and may indicate that the main structure of settlement had taken place by this period (1989: 237).

A further complication when studying boundaries is that even though the parish network appears to be more or less stable by about 1200 it does not imply that all the boundaries had been set by this date. There are many examples of boundaries that were not agreed until the parliamentary enclosures of the eighteenth century or tithe awards of the nineteenth century (Pounds, 2000: 37). Such boundaries included those which Pantos describes as boundary zones, for example those that pass through woodland or those with parts of boundaries on the edges of fenland, which was gradually reclaimed (2000: 40).

Clearly the church was an instrumental factor in the origin of the parish system but the fact that a community wanted its own church suggests that other entities were also contributory. The problem is that these other entities namely the vill and the manor are less visible archaeologically than the boundaries themselves. The manor and vill represent the economic and secular components of the parish and in the view of Pounds are of equal importance as the growth of local churches (2000: 276). It is seldom possible to establish which came first because it was the lands of one or more manors that were contained by the boundaries of a parish, and the vill is important because it was the people who lived there that provided the labour and services for the manor to be able to operate (Pounds, 2000: 277).

There is one further aspect that is even more poorly understood, and that can be generalised under the heading of community. Understanding the community of a parish is a formidable problem as it leaves little or no evidence archaeologically or historically, and consequently is often overlooked. However, the importance of the community to the development and continued existence of the parish cannot be underestimated. Reynolds argues that the longevity of parish boundaries shows the importance tithe had to the community, especially where boundaries seem to cut across more obvious social units (1997: 92). This point is equally valid if considered the other way around where the church and manor depended on the community for their continued existence.

Further aspects that can be included under the heading of community are personal allegiances. These are important because through such affiliations parishes acquired their territorial identity, and boundaries came to be defined (Morris, 1989: 226). Personal allegiances can perhaps be best demonstrated by the numerous examples of boundary disputes where one community felt it had rights in land claimed by another community (Winchester, 2000: 41). Disputes tended to be related to woodland or waste areas and some were so long-lasting that permanent field-names such as OE *geflit* 'strife, dispute', OE *preapian* 'contend, dispute' and

OE *ceast* 'strife, contention' were left (Hooke, 2001: 79). These views suggest that the community was an important aspect in parish development and its continued existence. The evidence of boundary disputes demonstrates that communities were very protective of their territory, contesting any discrepancies with boundary positions.

4.2.3. Discussion

The parish boundaries of Norfolk have received little scholarly attention. There have been a number of detailed settlement studies for example, Lawson (1983), Wade-Martins (1980b), Silvester (1988a), Davison, Green and Milligan (1993) and Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester (1997), but parish boundaries are seldom discussed in detail. Wade-Martins for instance has conducted some very detailed studies of the parishes in the Launditch Hundred (1980b) and whilst he discusses the earliest available parish boundary plans he does not generally describe the boundaries or the features they may follow. Therefore the comprehensive settlement research has not been complimented by detailed boundary evidence.

The most instructive work on Norfolk parishes has been largely confined to the southeast of the region (Williamson, 1986; 1993; 1998, Davison, 1990). Here Williamson has noted that many of the parish boundaries in the Scole-Dickleburgh area tend to follow prominent and persistent landscape features, many of which are of Romano-British date or earlier, although he suggests that the parishes themselves have been imposed onto this earlier landscape. The parishes that result from the boundaries being aligned on these older features tend to be of a similar orientation and form a 'coaxial' or 'brickwork' pattern which he claims do not seem to relate to earlier territorial arrangements (1986: 247). Davison's work in Hales, Heckingham and Loddon has also recognised this coaxial pattern of parishes and he suggests that those on similar orientations i.e. Broome, Thwaite, Loddon, Mundham and Sisland could represent parts of on an earlier estate, although he offers no further evidence to support this (1990: 72). This coaxial pattern however does not seem confined to southeast Norfolk and is also evident in northwest Norfolk where Hesse (1992) has found similar patterns centred on the parishes of North and South Creake.

The only detailed account in the west of the region is by Rutledge for the parish of Colkirk in Brothercross Hundred (1990). He has made a number of important observations that are of relevance to parish studies in the county; for example a jagged boundary may indicate the subdivision of a tract of heathland that was originally common to several vills. This is contrary to received wisdom which links stepped boundaries to areas of arable land (1990: 20). The most important observation made by Rutledge however was that the boundaries were to some degree fluid until the enclosures of the eighteenth century. This fluidity although resulting in generally small changes, such as the assarts documented in c. 1240-1295, allowed the parish to diversify into both sheep-corn and wood-pasture economy ensuring its survival (1990: 32).

The above discussion highlights just how little is known about parish boundaries in the county and there seem to be a number of reasons for this. Firstly there are no surviving Anglo-Saxon charters with boundary clauses as there are in other parts of the country. Secondly earlier sources in which individual boundaries are recorded vary immensely. Some are recorded as early as the sixteenth century e.g. Tittleshall parish in Launditch Hundred (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 53), some on eighteenth century estate maps e.g. Kempstone is recorded in the 1779 Holkham Hall Estate (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 29) and for others the earliest surviving boundary maps only date back to the enclosure award maps of the early nineteenth century e.g. Horningtoft (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 24). This presents a formidable and incoherent collection of maps at many different scales and degrees of accuracy deposited at various places across the county. Thirdly the boundaries are not recorded at a county level until Bryant in 1826 (Barringer, 2002), and it is not until the 1880s that they are first comprehensively recorded on the second edition OS maps. This poses a number of problems for landscape research:

- To what extent are the boundaries recorded on these maps a true reflection of the medieval parish and potentially earlier landholding units in the landscape?
- How old are the parishes represented on the second edition OS maps?
- What do the patterns of smaller and larger parishes mean?
- Why are the boundaries of some parishes smooth and regular and others highly irregular?

Figure 4.2 illustrates just what a complex web the parish boundaries of Norfolk are. However, there are some general trends that can be observed. For example, the parishes in the west of the county tend to be larger than those in the east. This is particularly true of the Brecklands





in the southwest and also the western marshlands. These differences in these two areas could relate to inferior soils and areas of poorly drained land respectively, as larger parishes tend to reflect a generally poorer agricultural potential. The way in which boundaries are set out also varies. In the west there are a number of parish boundaries that are straight and align with Roman roads; not a common feature in the east of the county. The coaxial patterns of parishes discussed above are also obvious from this map in north and southwest Norfolk.

It is clear from this discussion that the parish boundaries in Norfolk are still poorly understood and there are many areas that have yet to be considered in detail. What the research discussed above does illustrate is that there are numerous factors that need to be considered when studying boundaries and these may only be apparent at a very local level of consideration.

4.3 Hundreds and Deaneries

The focus of this chapter has so far concentrated on the evolution of settlement, agrarian organisation and the development of the parish unit. Individual parishes however, were also part of larger administrative unit that contained a larger group of parishes. These larger units, hundreds and deaneries, were based on secular and ecclesiastical functions respectively. The nature and origin of these units also need to be explored as they may also potentially aid in the identification of earlier territories.

The Hundred performed a civil administrative function and was both a land area and an area served by a hundred-court (Miller 1951: 243). The hundred courts usually met once every four weeks and performed the duties relating to the civil functions of the parishes such as land holding disputes, taxation, military service, law and order and the sentencing of criminals. (Winchester, 2000: 70) Deaneries in contrast had an ecclesiastical function and formed the administrative network of the diocese. Deaneries were part of a larger area known as an archdeaconry. An archdeacon on behalf of the diocese administered these archdeaconries. In Norfolk the county was divided up into two archdeaconries, Norwich archdeaconry and Norfolk archdeaconry. Deaneries exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction rather than spiritual supervision (Hudson 1910: 57), and these jurisdictions were expressed through a hierarchy of episcopal and archdeaconry courts dealing with matters such as church repair, will probate and moral offences (Rutledge 1994: 90).

4.3.1 Hundreds

Practically the whole of England was divided up into units of local government that were called wapentakes in the north and hundreds in the south. Hart suggests these units were one of the most notable administrative features of the late Anglo-Saxon state (1992: 281). Hundreds or wapentakes were the second element of a three-tier system of local government, which is characterised by the shire at the highest level and the vill at the lowest level (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 46). Yet despite these units being so widespread their origins both as a territorial division and as a court are obscure (Loyn, 1984: 140).

Norfolk in 1086 was divided into 33 hundreds (including Norwich). Figure 4.3 illustrates that the size of these hundreds varied greatly. Some hundreds are listed as hundreds and a half: Clackclose, Forehoe, Mitford and Freebridge, whilst others are recorded as half hundreds: Diss and Earsham. A striking feature illustrated on figure 4.2 is the fact that there are a number of variations between the hundreds in the east and west of the county. If viewed in the broadest sense there are 12 hundreds in the west and 21 in the east. The average size of a hundred in the east is 626 acres, whilst the average size in the west is 1272 acres (Blake 1952: 259).

The age of the hundred units in East Anglia is widely accepted to be of a tenth century date (Barringer, 1994; Cam, 1932; Williamson, 1993) and may represent the extension of the West Saxon scheme of administration following the re-conquest of the area from the Danes (Corbett: 1900, 222). The evidence of this relatively late date can be seen from the fact that some of the hundred boundaries run through groups of parishes that share the same name. One such group, the Burnham parishes in northwest Norfolk have already been considered as an earlier great estate in the previous chapter. In this example Burnham Overy and Burnham Thorpe are in Gallow Hundred, while the remaining Burnham parishes are in Brothercross Hundred. Williamson claims this illustrates that hundred boundaries were drawn up by the hand of a late Saxon administrator. This may indeed be the case with some hundreds, but there are others that appear to be far more archaic (1993: 128). For example the Holt group of parishes, which may also correspond with a former great estate territory. This seems to illustrate that some of the hundred boundaries may be older and more significant than others. In order to further examine this other aspects of hundredal organisation require investigation.

East Anglia and Norfolk are unusual in that the administrative unit is called the hundred whereas in the rest of the Danelaw it is called the wapentake. A further difference is that hundreds were nominally assessed at one hundred hides arranged decimally in groups of five to ten. Wapentakes however were assessed in units called carucates arranged duodecimally in groups of six and twelve. There was a large variation in the number of carucates from wapentake to wapentake, whereas each hundred was allotted a fixed number of hides (Hart, 1992: 282). In Norfolk the method of assessment was the carucate and this seems to suggest that the county shared elements of both the West Saxon hundred and the Danelaw wapentake. However, the carucates of Little Domesday differ from those in Great Domesday, as they are not grouped in sixes or twelves. Similarly there appears to be no indication that they were used as assessments of geld as they are in Great Domesday (Hart, 1992: 75).

Geld collection in Norfolk was based upon a system of leets and not on hides, virgates, geld acres or ploughland like counties outside East Anglia (Hart, 1992: 83). Leets are mentioned twice in the Domesday Norfolk. The hundred of South Greenhoe and the hundred and a half of Clackclose were made up of 14 and 10 leets respectively (Hart, 1992: 83). There is no further mention of leets anywhere else in Norfolk, but the structure of leets is well attested in neighbouring Suffolk where the *Kalendar of Abbot Samson* records the revenues of some of the county's hundreds. This document reveals that all the vills in each hundred were grouped into leets and the purpose of this was to determine how much each vill had to pay towards the Danegeld (Hart, 1992: 83). Williamson argues that leets were unknown to the West Saxons so may have represented an earlier form of administration. However, he adds that leets were a subdivision of the hundred and so cannot have pre-dated it (1993: 131).

There is some evidence in a survey document from the abbey of Bury St Edmunds which suggests earlier administrative divisions could have survived (Douglas, 1928). This document only predates Domesday by a few years and is from the time of Abbot Leofstan (*c*.1045-65). It appears to indicate a structure of administration on the lands of the abbey organised upon the basis of food-rents (Douglas, 1928: 377). The document mentions four smaller hundreds including *Clencware* and *Lynware* now Clenchwarton and Kings Lynn, which Douglas argues are smaller than the Domesday hundreds and may be similar to the 12 carucate hundreds encountered in other areas of the Danelaw (1928: 378). Although these units may be called hundreds they bear a striking resemblance to leets and may have been the same unit under a different name. Douglas' important finding was that they were based on much smaller divisions, a 'manlot' or a peasant holding, which he argues were probably the result of Danish

land division in the tenth century (1928: 379). One final aspect of these smaller hundreds is that Williamson has noted that their names imply an older or at least indigenous origin (1993: 132). This again could imply greater antiquity, but as with many of the place-names in Norfolk the earliest spellings are from the mid-eleventh century and have no earlier provenance.

The hundred names of Norfolk present a mixture of different name types such as Clavering, Loddon and Happing, which are all named after 'primitive folk' groups (Williamson, 1993: 128). Others are named after the location of their 'mootstow' or meeting place: North and South Erpingham, Grimshoe and Forehoe all have the OSc element *haugr* 'tumuli or burial mound', others contain the OSc element *kross* 'cross' Guiltcross and Brothercross whilst Launditch refers to a the early Saxon earthwork known locally as the 'Devils Dyke'. Topographical features are also used as hundred names: Depwade OE 'deep ford', Mitford OE 'middleford', Smithdon, OE 'smooth down' and Henstead OE 'high place' (Anderson, 1934: 63-83). Only a few hundreds are named after their hundredal manor recorded in Domesday: Diss, Docking, Earsham, South Walsham (Walsham), and Tunstead. Cam claims that this is quite common and states that few hundreds bear the name of a royal manor, and this has little importance as hundred names were often changed (1932: 374). Arngart also makes a similar point and argues that hundred names were often quite unstable (1934: xxix).

The evidence discussed so far seems to suggest that the hundred units encountered in Domesday are a relatively late institution although they may contain some earlier elements. The origins of hundred-names are equally obscure as their spellings cannot be traced back much beyond Domesday and may also have changed. There is therefore little evidence to suggest that these administrative units are of any great antiquity. However, Williamson using a more speculative approach has tried to illustrate that some hundred units may be older by using the evidence of their boundaries. He argues that the archaic nature of some of them can be shown by the fact that some boundaries correspond with natural topography such as major rivers and watersheds, especially in the south and east where they may also correspond with secular territories mentioned above (1993: 128). Elsewhere in the county he suggests that some hundreds may represent a number of great estates that have been combined



Figure 4.3. The Hundreds of Norfolk. (Barringer, 1994: 89).

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milas 5

such as Forehoe Hundred, which includes the possible early estates of Wymondham, Hingham and Costessey (1993: 129).

4.3.2 Discussion

Whilst the real origins of the system of hundreds in the county are still unclear, it is apparent that there are certain earlier elements that may have been preserved within the framework of the later boundaries. These early elements seem to vary across the county and may be deliberate or accidental survivals. What these early elements imply is difficult to assess at a general level and can only be understood if the hundreds and the parishes within them are considered at a much more detailed and local level, a point carried forward in the case studies below.

4.3.3 Deaneries

Deaneries were groups of parishes that were incorporated into larger units called archdeaconries, each presided over by an archdeacon, who was the bishop's representative (Pounds, 2000: 42). It is unclear when the office of archdeacon and rural dean were created but both seem to have evolved in the late eleventh or twelfth centuries (Winchester, 2000: 79). Rural deaneries in eastern England, the east Midlands and Yorkshire are commonly found to correspond to the hundreds. However, in southern and western England there was little such correspondence (Winchester, 2000: 79-81).

The origins of the Norfolk deaneries are almost as obscure as the Norfolk hundreds, although they are generally accepted as a post-Conquest institution (Hudson, 1910; Rutledge, 1994). Figure 4.4 illustrates Norfolk's 24 deaneries plus Norwich, which stands by itself as an addition in the 1254 Valuation of Norwich (Hudson, 1910: 59). Rutledge offers a figure of 26 (1994: 90), because he uses the later divisions of Lynn deanery into Lynn and Lynn Marshland. The entire county was the archdeaconry of Norfolk until the construction of Norwich Cathedral by Bishop Herbert de Losinga in 1095. The relocation of the see from Thetford resulted in the formation of two archdeaconries: Norwich, incorporating the city itself and the richest areas of the county including Thetford, Lynn and Yarmouth, and the Norfolk archdeaconry covering the rest of the county (Rutledge, 1994: 90). Figure 4.4 also shows a number of Bishop's peculiars in the county, which were exempt from ordinary ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Those in the east formed part of the endowment of the bishopric

and Cathedral Priory of Norwich. Prior to the reformation these peculiars also included Hemsby, Hindringham, Scratby, Taverham and Winterton (Rutledge, 1994: 90).

Generally speaking the deanery boundaries seem to largely match up with the hundred boundaries and Hudson argues the county deaneries correspond in ecclesiastical organisation with the hundreds in civil administration (1910: 54). The deaneries of Burnham and Toftrees vary from this pattern although this is attributable to later hundred boundary changes (Rutledge, 1994: 90). In many instances two or more hundreds are combined to form a deanery. Cranwich includes the hundreds of South Greenhoe and Grimshoe, whilst Brooke deanery includes the hundreds of Clavering, Loddon and Henstead.

The names of the Deaneries may also be instructive as only seven rural Deaneries share the same name as the hundreds: five of the twelve deaneries in Norwich archdeaconry, and two out of the twelve in the Norfolk archdeaconry (Hudson, 1910: 55). The reasons for this are unclear, and Hudson claims that the Valuation of Norwich certainly does not suggest that some of the deanery names were taken from leading churches in the deanery (1910: 57). He also debates whether the names represent the parishes of the first deans appointed by the bishop, but concludes that this is doubtful as deans were as a rule parochial clergy (1910: 57).

4.3.4 Discussion

The deaneries of Norfolk are an aspect of landscape organisation seldom considered by scholars and it is difficult to accept an early place for them in the landscape. Deaneries are usually passed off as being a post-Conquest organisation based upon the earlier system of hundreds. All that can be said is that in Norfolk the deanery names, with the exception of Holt and Hingham, do not match with the possible minster locations suggested by Williamson, in Chapter Three. The deanery names also do not seem to represent a convenient central parish from where church matters could be administered, for example the deaneries of Breccles, Hingham and Rockland and the parishes which they take their names from, are all within 8 km of one another and do not represent central locations in their respective deaneries. Similarly the deanery of Brisley is where the former see of North Elmham is located and why Brisley should be chosen over North Elmham is obscure.





4.4 Conclusions

The many complex factors that have shaped the landscape in terms of settlement, agrarian practises and the need for boundaries to define these have now been considered. It can be seen that each of these subject areas poses a different set of problems for the landscape archaeologist. What is also apparent is that certain conventions have been applied to the evidence; settlement and agriculture are often considered together but parish boundaries are rarely linked with these studies. The relationship between the settlement and its fields therefore is often better understood than the relationship of settlement and its parish boundaries. These conventions often reflect the availability of the evidence and the difficulty associated with putting boundaries into a chronological context, but is this not also true of nucleation of settlement and the adoption of open field agriculture? The way forward with landscape studies is surely to consider all the available evidence of settlement, agrarian practices and parish boundaries together. This would allow a much wider base of evidence to be considered, from which other patterns may be apparent that would not be so if the different elements had been considered separately. This will be addressed in the case studies.

Chapter Five: Early Churches, the Building Evidence

Chapter Two has illustrated that Domesday gives a substantial, albeit inconsistent record of early churches in Norfolk. The problem is being able to identify any of these churches as superior or different than others. This problem is compounded with a general lack of early surviving documents and little or no evidence of dependent churches from Domesday or later records. Therefore one of the few resources left for this study is the physical evidence of the buildings themselves. Surprisingly there has been relatively little work of this nature undertaken in the county and the published material that does exist tends to focus upon specific church types, not on wider issues of what early architectural evidence could imply for a perceived earlier system of pastoral care. This chapter will explore the nature and difficulties with using the architectural evidence and also consider previous work done on this theme in Norfolk.

5.1 The Romanesque

Romanesque is a term that can be used characterize both Anglo-Saxon and Norman architecture in England and therefore can be of pre or post-Conquest date. This is an important consideration when studying early churches as it suggests a style of early medieval building directly influenced by formal Roman architecture, which uses the semi-circular arch as its main structural device.

The route of this style can be traced back to the Carolingian state during the second half of the eighth century, but the exact date this late antique style was revived is still somewhat obscure (Fernie, 1983: 74). During the Carolingian period many of the features now associated with churches were developed, for example, subterranean crypts, transepts and crossing towers. These developments are thought to be due to a transformation in liturgical practice resulting in a change from the Gallican to the Roman system (Stalley, 1999: 41-42).

Elsewhere in Europe however, the roots of Romanesque architecture are not as easily identified. Clearly it was influenced by both the surviving Roman public buildings and the architecture of the Carolingian empire, the impact of which had already spread out to the Alps, Saxony and other areas (Fernie, 1983: 76-77). Early Romanesque however, cannot be dated more closely than the first half of the tenth century to the first half of the eleventh

century due its great regional diversity, coupled with the geographical spread of the style through Lombardy, Catalonia, Burgundy, Rhineland, Saxony and the Loire Valley (Fernie, 1983: 77).

The origins of English Romanesque are equally obscure. Both Baldwin-Brown (1925) and Clapham (1930) favour the Carolingian influence, whilst Taylor and Taylor (1965) are inclined towards a more insular development, somewhat separate from Continental Europe. Fernie on the other hand favours influence from northern Europe, again from the Carolingian renaissance but in the form of the later styles from the Ottonian Empire, Lotharingia, Capetian France and Normandy (1983: 78).

The main problem associated with the Romanesque period is that the actual chronology of the style is still poorly understood up until, and after the Norman Conquest. With the exception of limited sections of upstanding fabric that have been dated to the late ninth or early tenth century on St Oswald's Minster in Gloucester (Heighway and Bryant, 2002: 61-62), there are no major structures such as cathedrals or monasteries known to have standing building fabric of Anglo-Saxon date. This lack of physical evidence is the result of the thoroughness with which the Normans rebuilt ecclesiastical buildings after the Conquest (Fernie, 2002: 24). Therefore the surviving corpus of Anglo-Saxon fabric is limited to minor churches and it is these churches which have largely been the root of the problem because they rarely have any documentary evidence with which to date them: in contrast to the high status buildings such as cathedrals and monasteries that in most cases do. As a consequence of this only four Anglo-Saxon churches, all from the post-Danish period can be securely dated by documentary evidence (Sherbourne, Westminster Abbey, Deerhurst and Kirkdale) (Fernie, 1983: 138).

The dating and chronology of Romanesque architecture has proved to be controversial since the work of Baldwin-Brown in 1925. Following Baldwin-Brown other scholars have sought to progress the subject using the three main tools of typology, archaeology and art-history. The overall aim of this continued research has been to try and establish a chronology in which architectural details, plan forms, construction techniques and materials can be used to date buildings. The difficulties with establishing a chronology start with the three principles mentioned above. Firstly the lack of historical documents, secondly a problem with dating surviving Anglo-Saxon architecture and thirdly the fact that church archaeology is still a relatively new discipline with very few churches in either an urban or rural contexts having been fully excavated. Barton-upon-Humber is one exception to this and a chronology has been established and absolute dating obtained from timber analysis (Gem, 1986: 146). However, establishing such chronological detail is rare, and the results at other recent church excavations, such as Rivenhall, Wharram Percy, Repton and Deerhurst have been less than exact (Gem, 1986: 146). In terms of minor churches this leaves only the study of the upstanding architecture, with all the problems of dating by stylistic evidence alone. With such a small sample of surviving Anglo-Saxon buildings comparisons are more difficult to make and it is harder to appreciate regional variations in the architecture. There are also problems with typology in that it cannot take account of things such as resources, status of foundation, and availability of building materials, which are all features that could result in two contemporary buildings being stylistically very different.

5. 1. 1 Anglo-Saxon Architecture

Even with the problems highlighted above the typological approach is still the most common way scholars seek to attribute a chronology to an early medieval ecclesiastical building. The problem is that a number of different chronologies have been suggested.

Baldwin-Brown used a tripartite chronology, advocating that Anglo-Saxon architecture can be placed in a sequence of three distinct periods, each identified by a different letter A, B, or C (1925, 3). Period A is the early period covering the seventh and most of the eighth-centuries; B is an intermediate period covering the ninth and early-tenth centuries and C covers the first half of the tenth century up until just after the Norman Conquest. More specifically he attributes the three periods to major historical events:

- A. The period from the conversion until the first Viking attacks.
- B. The destructive period of the Viking invasions.
- C. The epoch of the monastic revival (1925, 4).

The reasons Baldwin-Brown used the tripartite system are beyond the scope of this research, but he claimed they were based on the analysis of details and history of the buildings themselves (1925, 3). Using this tripartite approach made Baldwin-Brown the first to focus on the negative effects of Viking attacks to explain the development of Anglo-Saxon architecture: an idea that has remained with us ever since (Gem, 1986: 147). By 1930 Alfred Clapham had developed a very different chronological scheme proposing that Anglo-Saxon architecture should only be divided into only two periods. The first covered the period of Heptarchy from the conversion until the first Viking raids, while the second was seen as the period of Carolingian influenced architecture, which continued up until the Norman Conquest. The main difference between Clapham and Baldwin-Brown is that Clapham advocates that Anglo-Saxon architecture can be sharply divided into two distinct periods in which the Viking raids are a turning point. Baldwin-Brown's period B does not portray a turning point but more a period of limited building activity, brought about by the political and social disturbance these raids caused (1925, 195).

A more contemporary study is the encyclopaedic two-volume work of Taylor and Taylor (1965) followed by a third volume (Taylor 1978). The Taylors preferred a tripartite dating system, which is essentially the same as Baldwin-Brown's (with a shorter period B and a longer period C). The Taylors however, simply use this framework as shorthand for specifying dates as their work is not strictly typological, but more of an empirical method of analysis, which uses inductive reasoning to make observations and propose general principles (Gem, 1986: 146, 149).

Following the Taylors' work is that of Fernie (1983) who reverts back to the bipartite system and justifies his position by claiming that the tripartite systems used by Baldwin-Brown and the Taylors were overcomplicated. He advocates that there is every reason for abandoning period B, preferring a bipartite system of early and late periods separated by the Danish invasions (1983: 90). In support of this argument he states that the Taylors attribute less than a dozen churches to period B, all of which are included for reasons on the basis of uncertain or negative evidence (1983: 90).

It is clear that there are two distinct ways in which Anglo-Saxon architecture has been viewed, either in the context of a tripartite or bipartite chronology. It is not until Gem that a different approach is advocated. Gem states that the inherent weakness of these earlier approaches is that they only examine a single paradigm (1986: 150). Gem proposes a more multidisciplinary approach that combines the typological and empirical methods of the Taylors, the art-historical approach of Fernie, as well as considering other issues such as political, economic, religious and stylistic considerations (1986: 150). Gem also argues that the labels of A, B and C used by the Taylors may now have outlived their usefulness and suggests the terms of early, middle and late Anglo-Saxon would be better labels that would

allow architectural styles to be related to the chronology of Anglo-Saxon archaeology (1986: 155).

5.1.2 Late Anglo-Saxon Architecture

To date the earliest surviving architectural evidence in Norfolk is widely acknowledged to be of late Saxon origin, a point that is discussed more fully below. The earlier styles of Anglo-Saxon architecture are therefore beyond the scope of this study, so the focus of this research will be directed on the late Saxon period.

Architecture of the late Saxon period is widely acknowledged to be the most poorly understood of the Anglo-Saxon styles. This is a result of more attention being paid to the problems of the seventh and eighth centuries rather than the later periods (Cherry, 1976: 153). This is still a comment that could be made today even after a further 20 years of research, and the primary focus of recent archaeological work still seems to be focused upon the earlier periods and issues of chronology.

There are two problems encountered when looking at late Anglo-Saxon architecture. The first is to what extent Anglo-Saxon architecture persists after the Norman Conquest and the second concerns the extent to which it is possible to place a church of this period before or after the Conquest. The uncertainties encountered in dating late eleventh century churches are reflected in the use of the term Saxo-Norman or what is sometimes referred to as 'vernacular Romanesque' (Parsons, 1994: 60). These terms are used to describe late Saxon architecture which may include both Norman and Anglo-Saxon architectural features, and this is where the complications in chronology arise.

5.1.3 Saxo-Norman Architectural details

Dating Saxo-Norman churches currently depends on the presence of a number of architectural details. The Taylors identify double splayed window, long and short work quoins, pilaster strips, belfry towers, belfry openings, hood mouldings and stripwork as typical Saxo-Norman features (1978, 1068-69). Fernie proposes that long and short work quoins and salient crossings are two features particularly diagnostic to the period of the Conquest. He also identifies two other categories of features which are also relevant: some used in both major and minor churches and others restricted to minor churches (1983, 163). In the first category he places cushion capitals and the complex arch profile, whilst in the second he includes

round towers, double splayed windows and crossing towers with low chambers. An example of a church with several of these features is that at Great Dunham, Norfolk (figure 5.1).

Generally speaking the features that both the Taylors and Fernie regard as Saxo-Norman largely concur. However, their views on belfry openings differ. The reason for this is that the Taylors' views are based on statistical data with more churches in period C3 (1050-1100) having double belfry openings than in periods C1 and C2 (1978, 1069). This leads them to conclude that the presence of belfry openings can be regarded as indicative of a Saxo-Norman date (1965, 4). Fernie's views however are based on an art-historical approach.

Further contrasts are also apparent on arch treatment. The Taylors mention hood mouldings and strip work in relation to arches but they do not place much emphasis on the different architectural moulding profiles used. In contrast Fernie from an art historical perspective pays far more attention to the moulding types and draws a distinction between the Anglo-Saxon and Norman style Romanesque evident in these features (1983: 165-167).

The final architectural detail referred to by Fernie and the Taylors is that of the salient crossing tower. In East Anglia these particular types of church have not received the attention they perhaps should because of the interest shown in the controversial round towered churches detailed below. At present no detailed study to the knowledge of the writer has been undertaken on any of Norfolk's 19 non-round late Anglo-Saxon towers and there are no explanations relating to location, purpose or status of this group.

The issue of how long Anglo-Saxon architectural features may have persisted in minor buildings after the Conquest is equally complex with a number of different viewpoints. Fernie suggests the Taylors' view portraying Anglo-Saxon features surviving through force of inertia, and longest lasting in rural backwaters has some truth in it (1983, 163). Thurlby argues that the continuation of Anglo-Saxon features in later buildings rather than being prescribed by the patron are more likely to reflect technical matters and the working habits of the masons (2003: 128). The most important point however is made by Gem, who argues how difficult it would be to give an entirely consistent catalogue of Saxon and Norman churches earlier than 1100, concluding that the only sort of catalogue with any completeness would have to run through to 1150 or 1200 (1988: 24).



Figure 5.1 Great Dunham St Andrews from the southwest. A church with many Saxo-Norman features such as double belfry openings, stripwork around the west door and long and short work quoining on the southwest corner of the nave.

There has been much academic ink spilt over the importance that has often been placed upon whether or not a church dates before or after the Conquest. Trying to prove this by some has seen to be desirable, but in reality it is very difficult to achieve. Placing a church before or after the Conquest implies a kind of watershed, but the evidence does not support this view. The cream of the architectural profession did not perish at Hastings, nor did the survivors immediately flee westwards in the face of new continental fashions (Fernie, 1983: 162).

5.1.4 Norman architecture

Many architectural features in the Saxo-Norman period are common to both Anglo-Saxon and Norman Romanesque styles as discussed above. This means that they cannot be viewed as distinctively Norman or Anglo-Saxon. However, there are a number of architectural details that Fernie suggests are more diagnostic of Norman workmanship because they have no parallels in Anglo-Saxon architecture before the Conquest. These include: evenly laid quoins, the volute capital, angle roll, soffit roll, nook-shaft, moulded base and billet moulding (2002, 211). Such ornamental details are common in cathedrals such as Durham, Norwich and Winchester, which are all of late eleventh century date. These details in minor churches are not as easily dated due to a general lack of documentary evidence for them, but they can still be viewed as Norman rather than Anglo-Saxon.

In Norfolk one of the most significant features that can be safely placed after the Conquest is the use of dressed stonework, or more specifically the use of imported limestone, which is discussed more fully below. Closely linked to this is the distinctive appearance of Anglo-Saxon masonry when it can be contrasted with Norman masonry. In many parts of England including Norfolk masonry constructed in an Anglo-Saxon manner is typified by uncoursed rubble with wide mortar joints, irregular quoins and no ashlar facings. In contrast however Norman masonry construction in minor churches commonly uses cut stone dressings to window and door openings and regularly laid quoins (Taylor and Taylor, 1965: 7). Another feature of Norman work is that although rubble construction is still widely used it is much more regular in appearance than in Anglo-Saxon masonry (Fernie, 2002: 211).

A further diagnostic feature sometimes used to distinguish between the two forms of construction is wall thickness. Taylor and Taylor suggest walls constructed in an Anglo-Saxon manner are rarely more than 900mm thick and more commonly 750mm thick, whereas masonry constructed in a Norman fashion is usually in excess of 900mm thick (1965: 12). The value of this evidence however is limited, as no satisfactory method of validation of a particular measurement has been established in relation to wall thickness. This means that if a wall is measured at different heights its thickness may vary considerably (Hart, 2003: 41).

This discussion has highlighted that there are many complexities involved in studying Saxo-Norman architecture, but what conclusions may be drawn from these arguments? Starting with the more concrete evidence, it can be seen that there are a number of architectural details that may be diagnostic to this period. Most scholars agree this point. There is also no reason to believe that the Anglo-Saxon style did not continue after the Conquest in both minor and major buildings. Therefore the Conquest should not be seen as a watershed where an old style was replaced by a new style; this is simply not the case. Finally research seems to suggest that

viewing buildings in isolation or over-generalising about them may produce results, but these may not further our understanding of this complex period.

It seems that the way in which to understand these minor churches is to view them not only from an architectural perspective but also from a cultural one as well. They can then be seen in the contexts of Anglo-Saxon society as a whole and not as isolated entities. The time scale in which these buildings are studied should also be reviewed and the broader approach advocated by Gem to include all buildings up to 1200 (1988: 24) is a more constructive method. Finally a more regional framework or even studying these structures in limited groups will enable smaller variations in their architecture to be identified, which may be reflective of the social and economic contexts in which they were built.

5.2 Regional Studies

Despite the large number of rural churches in the county archaeological research has been surprisingly limited, and is largely confined to specific church types or selected groups. Before discussing these the limited archaeological work undertaken will be considered, as this can perhaps offer the most reliable physical evidence for the earliest church buildings.

5.2.1 Archaeological Evidence

The earliest archaeological evaluations available are those from nineteenth-century restorations, in which repairs to floors and walls have revealed earlier parts of the structure, or the plan of an earlier building on the site. For example, in a nineteenth century restoration at Dunham St. Andrew the church was discovered to have had an apsidal eastern sanctuary under the later medieval rectangular chancel (Bryant, 1903: 47). However, it is not until relatively recently that any of Norfolk's churches have been assessed by modern excavation or detailed analysis of the building fabric; and even then only a handful of churches have been studied in this detail. Most modern church archaeology in Norfolk is carried out in a rather piecemeal fashion and is restricted to watching briefs relating to repair or improvement works on churches. An example of such an investigation at West Somerton St Mary discovered a blocked Norman-style door and window when render was removed from the north wall of nave (Rose, 1990: 108). Similarly an assessment in response to the collapse of the already ruined structure at Godwick All Saints found reused Norman masonry, indicating that the church was originally a substantial Norman building (Rose, 1991: 245).

The most detailed archaeological studies on Norfolk churches are those covered by the East Anglian Archaeological reports (EAA). These cover a mixture of churches in both rural and urban contexts. The most important conclusion from these excavations is that the first masonry structures can be dated no earlier than the eleventh or twelfth century. For example, at Barton Bendish All Saints the remains of a buttress and fragments of worked stone were dated c. 1100 (Rogerson, Ashley, Williams and Harris, 1987: 53). Similarly early masonry has also been identified at St Michael, Thetford (Wilson and Morehouse, 1971: 130); St Martin-at-Palace, Norwich and St Michael, Bowthorpe (Beazley and Ayers, 2001: 55) all of which have been suggested as c. 1100. The dates proposed for St Martin-at-Palace, Norwich and St Michael, Bowthorpe are not attributed to dateable finds, but instead to the typology of the early wall foundations being similar to those found at Barton Bendish All Saints, which itself was not securely dated from stratified deposits. Therefore such dates need to been treated with caution.

Another important finding from these excavations is that in most cases the masonry churches were often shown to be pre-dated by timber structures. This was the case at St Martin-at-Palace, which on the evidence of a knife blade identified in a post fill, is a timber structure dating from the tenth or eleventh century (Beazley and Ayers, 2001: 55). Similarly at St Michael, Thetford the timber structure was dated sometime after the introduction of Thetford-type ware (*c*. 850-1150) (Wilson and Moorhouse, 1971: 130). The timber church discovered by Ayers in the northeast bailey of Norwich Castle was postulated to be of eleventh century date from the evidence of Thetford-type ware excavated from the post hole fills (1985: 17).

A further point that can be made from this evidence is that the church discovered by Ayers in the northeast bailey of Norwich Castle is of almost identical proportions to St Michael, Thetford (Ayers, 1985: 25) and may represent a regional building type. This may be confirmed by the discovery of the post-in-trench construction used in both structures, which was interpreted by the excavators, following Rahtz, as frequently reserved for aristocratic or ecclesiastical buildings (Beazley and Ayers, 2001: 54). These two churches may represent the earliest evidence of a regional style of church building and construction found in Norfolk.

5.2.2 Building Materials

The building materials used in the construction of early churches may also be an important way in which the different styles of Saxo-Norman and Norman Romanesque can be

distinguished. This may particularly be the case in Norfolk because it lacks good quality freestone, and this lack of suitable stone is reflected in the architecture. Saxo-Norman style structures therefore tended to be built from materials that were readily available in the locality of the church. At present there is no reliable evidence to suggest that limestone was used in the pre-Conquest architecture of Norfolk (Harris, 1990: 214; Hart 2003: 33).

There seems to be a clear contrast between the construction materials used in pre-Conquest and post-Conquest buildings. It could therefore be suggested that pre-Conquest buildings were constructed using 'as-found' materials, whilst post-Conquest construction included the use of imported limestone. In a general sense this assumption seems to be correct but this distinction may not be as clear-cut as it seems. Before exploring this issue the as-found building materials available in Norfolk need to be identified. There are three commonly used materials, detailed below:

- Flint is perhaps the most common and can be seen in buildings and churches in almost every part of the county. It can be obtained through mining chalk, reclamation from the seashore and simply from the surface of the ground in ploughed soil.
- 2. Carstone is a type of soft sandstone that was extensively used in North Norfolk coming from outcrops on the northwest coast (Harris, 1990: 210).
- 3. Ferricrete, or Puddingstone as it is sometimes known, is an ironbound conglomerate with a very course gravel texture that does not make it a particularly suitable building material. Although it is found in most parts of the county the fact that it is a poor construction material limits its widespread use and therefore it must be from a relatively local source when found in buildings (Harris, 1990: 211).

After the Conquest there was a period of massive rebuilding in England. Gem argues that building in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries had a momentum equalled scarcely anywhere in Europe (1988: 21). Building on such a scale must have required vast quantities of quality stone such as limestone, and in areas where this was not readily available it had to be imported. This was the case in Norfolk. Norwich Cathedral founded on a virgin site in 1096 by Herbert de Losinga and of course Norwich castle *c*. 1100 (Fernie, 2002: 72) were two such projects in the county that required this imported stone. The limestone used in both these buildings was imported from Caen in Normandy. The use of Caen stone however, is very regional as it is largely concentrated in the eastern area of southeast Norfolk, an area well provided with inland waterways (Harris, 1990: 215). Caen was also a relatively short-lived limestone source and was not used much beyond the end of the twelfth century; Harris

attributes this to the temporary loss of Normandy (1990: 215). After this date Barnack limestone from Cambridgeshire is more commonly found in both major and minor buildings in East Anglia. The monastic houses of Thetford and Bury St Edmund are both constructed of Barnack stone, which can equally be found the minor churches built in southwest of the county.

The question still remains: does the use of different types of stone in minor Saxo-Norman churches confirm that they were constructed after the Conquest? From the discussion above it is clear that from an architectural point of view many minor churches that fall into the 'Saxo-Norman' period could be equally placed just before or just after the Conquest so the use of building materials in this situation may help clarify the matter. However, the flint church at Framingham Earl is a church which may prove otherwise. Harris suggests the Taylors are wrong in claiming that the use of flint quoins on the church predate the features faced with Caen stone, arguing instead that such features are all contemporary and of the early twelfthcentury (1990, 208). He justifies this view by suggesting that several later churches such as the fourteenth century church at Rackheath have flint quoins (1990, 208). The final point he makes is that in an area with abundant amounts of flint this style of architecture can only be expected to have continued, and therefore flint-built features as a technique are therefore not datable (1990, 208).

There are some interesting conclusions that can be made from the evidence of construction materials. First it is possible to say that the use of limestone is post-Conquest, but it is not used in every church after the Conquest, as the flint tradition without the use of limestone continues at least into the fourteenth century. Secondly the use of limestone is very localised and is largely concentrated in areas near to waterways, the coast or large monastic foundations. In other areas it can be suggested that the local materials of flint, carstone and to some extent ferricrete persisted. The reasons for this could be numerous but one possibility must be that of simple economics. In the more isolated areas of the county the relatively cheap transportation of limestone by water was not possible and therefore the only alternative would have been by ox cart, which by comparison would have been far more expensive and therefore prohibit the use of dressed stonework. It comes as no surprise then to find that the use of as-found local materials persists longer in such areas.

5.2.3 Multiple Churches

One aspect of Norfolk churches that have received attention is the phenomenon of multiple churches in shared and adjacent churchyards. Examples of these churches are found in all the eastern counties between the Thames and the Humber although the highest numbers were found in Norfolk (Morris, 1989: 458; Groves 1995: 109). The most common suggestions for this apparent over provision are divided lordship (Morris, 1989: 232) and density of settlement (Batcock, 1991: 10), although other equally valid ideas have been suggested including splitting of estates and manors; the rural equivalent of the numerous closely spaced churches in late Saxon towns; competition amongst landowners (Dymond, 1985: 82); local status (Williamson, 1993: 158) and initiative of freemen (Warner, 1986: 43).

What is more certain is that multiple churches were apparent before the Conquest as 26 examples of more than one church are recorded in Domesday, of which 16 are simply entered as two churches with the remainder being listed under separate entries (Batcock, 1991: 10). The most controversial aspect relating to these churches is the numbers that actually share a churchyard. Warner suggests the figure it is as high as 36 (1986: 40), but Batcock argues that the true figure is much lower with only 12 examples, the remainder being separate churches in adjacent churchyards that were practically joined or belong to subdivided villages (1991: 10).

These shared or adjacent churchyards can illustrate more than just an over provision of church buildings, they can also potentially reveal the expansion of settlement and the development of the parish. One good example of this is Reepham churchyard (figure 5.2) which once had three churches, Reepham, Whitwell and Hackford (the latter destroyed by fire in 1543). Here the parish boundaries zig-zag through the narrow space between the churches. The extreme example of this is Whitwell (All Saints), which is linked to its own parish 200 metres away by a strip of land no more than 3 metres wide (Batcock 1991: 11). This apparent complexity may be linked to the landholdings in this area illustrated on a seventeenth century map discussed by Warner. He claims that a common field to the southwest of the churchyard included glebe land for all three churches, together with intermixed strips belonging to each parish: each strip being tithable in one of the three churches. This seems to indicate where freemen with widely scattered lands acted in partnership to build a church perhaps in a pre-established churchyard or ancient sacred site which was acceptable to all parties (1986:48-50). Williamson broadly agrees with this suggestion and makes the additional point that such an arrangement may also indicate the expansion, fission or migration of kindred to a new settlement who wished to



Figure 5.2. The churches of Reepham (right) and Whitwell. (Photograph Jarrold and Sons Ltd)

maintain continuity with a place of ancestral significance. He also makes the suggestion that shared churchyards are more common in areas where freemen were more numerous (1993: 159-161), implying that such church provision was only possible in areas with weaker manorial control. In reality the origin of multiple churches may lie in any one or combination of the suggestions above, but it is unlikely that one cause will be the same for all of them. One further point that can be made about these churches is that the complex issues relating to multiple church foundations could be equally applied to Norfolk's many individual church foundations.

5.2.4 Structural Evidence

In terms of Saxo-Norman architecture few studies have been made at a regional level in Norfolk with the exception of Cotton (1980). The studies that have been undertaken primarily deal with the major churches (Cherry, 1978), or with the more Norman forms of Romanesque architecture after 1100 (Margeson, 1994; Heywood, 1996). In order to get a better idea of late Anglo-Saxon architectural developments within the county the work of the Taylors and Fernie must again be considered. All of the Anglo-Saxon churches identified in Norfolk by the Taylors, without exception fall within their period C (950-1100), and the vast majority are of period C3 date (1050-1100). This accounts for 50 church buildings and potentially a further 10, which lack enough evidence remaining of Anglo-Saxon architecture for the Taylors to confidently place them in category C. In a later study the Taylors (1978) further reduced the list of potential Anglo-Saxon churches from 50 to 36. Their dating of these churches from fabric evidence is consistent with the archaeological data discussed above, which suggests that there are no stone churches in the county that antedate the eleventh century; prior to this they are thought to have been constructed from wood and other flimsy materials (Batcock, 1988: 179).



Figure 5.3. The round towered church of West Lexham. Note the Saxo-Norman belfry openings.

Included within their small corpus of Norfolk churches the Taylors incorporate a group that have proven to be particularly contentious. These are the round towered churches that are almost exclusively located within East Anglia, with up to 133 examples in Norfolk alone (figure 5.3). However, the Taylors only include a possible 21 round tower churches as belonging to the Saxo-Norman period (C3), which means the majority are of a later date. Fernie makes a similar claim and also adds that the large numbers of these towers concentrated in East Anglia can only suggest a regional school of minor church building, which extended from the first half of the eleventh-century through to the first part of the thirteenth-century (1983, 168). This Saxo-Norman and later date is partly confirmed by Heywood who has found that are 35 examples in Norfolk where a round tower has been added onto a pre-existing nave but no instances where a nave has been added onto a preexisting tower (1988, 169). More recently Hart has argued that at least 30 round west towers in England include the use of medieval brick in parts of the tower where they could not have been later insertions, placing them in the post-Norman period, although he offers no explanation as to the distribution of the churches to which he is referring (2003: 37).

The weight of the evidence so far considered for round west towered churches seems to suggest that whilst some are undoubtedly of a Saxo-Norman origin most date to the Norman and post-Norman periods. The work of Goode (1982) is at odds with this evidence. He argues that many of Norfolk's round west tower churches are much earlier. Goode is suggesting dates for Norfolk's round west tower churches from c. 950 (figure 5.4). He uses the same date periods as the Taylors discussed above, and identifies a total of 79 Anglo-Saxon churches with round west towers.

Date period of Church	Number of churches
C1 (950-1000)	30
C2 (1000-1050)	22
C3 (1050-1100)	1
Saxon	26

Figure 5.4 Goode's suggested dates for Norfolk's round towered churches.

The high proportion of round towers that Goode places in the C1 period (950-1000) does not correlate with any other writer and it is interesting to note that only one church, Haddiscoe St Mary, is located within period C3 (Saxo-Norman); the earliest category used by the Taylors. Finally he classifies one group of 26 churches as 'Saxon', where he does not have enough information to place the church within a more specific date category. Such a category was required by the Taylors but with only two examples at Kirby Cane and East Lexham.

Goode makes a number of other observations that are relevant to this discussion. Firstly he suggests that there are seven churches from period B3 (900-950) onto which C1 period towers have been added; a point that has not been considered by other scholars. One example of this is Merton St. Peter. The Taylors consider this church to be of Norman date (1965: 720), as does Pevsner (1962: 255). Goode places this church into period B3 (900-950) based on evidence of the wall thickness and the remains of a flint quoin on the northwest corner, claiming that no builder would have used flint quoins after the Conquest (1982: 70). The

discussion above illustrates that both these criteria are not reliable dating evidence, therefore Goode's analysis here seems to be putting an unrealistically early date on a building which is more likely of Norman origin.

The final aspect relating to these churches is the origins of the round west tower design. Fernie suggests this design is firmly rooted in a group of similar towers located in northwest Germany as no such towers are found in Normandy. This connection he attributes to an avenue of trade between these two areas (1983, 168). Heywood's view is similar but he also adds that the round tower design was a result of a free choice determined by aesthetic or cultural conditions (1988, 171). Goode however, claims that round towers may have developed from the influence of the Roman shore fort at Burgh Castle by arguing that local builders at the time had knowledge of the difficulties of the squared corner (1982, 23). This view appears questionable as Heywood argues that the effort required to layout and construct a round tower and to incorporate it with a straight nave gable wall far outweighs the difficulty of constructing a square eastern tower (1988, 171).

Due to the nature of the surviving evidence so far discussed the corpus of Saxo-Norman building suggested by the Taylors is quite low with only a possible 36 examples, 21 of which are of the regional round tower plan. Cotton however, suggests that this figure could be much higher, and includes a further 11 examples of Saxo-Norman churches noted by Pevsner and 14 more examples that he has found himself (1980: 15). Using this evidence in combination with the churches recorded in Domesday and then multiplied proportionally Cotton has estimated that there may have been up to 650 rural churches in the late eleventh century (1980: 17). Whilst this figure may seem high it is more in line with the later total of medieval churches than Domesday.

5.3 Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted a number of issues relating to the structural evidence of Saxo-Norman churches. Firstly, it has shown how difficult it is to date these churches in the context of the Norman Conquest. By seeking to place a church before or after 1066 scholars have implied a watershed in architecture that is simply not there. The archaeological evidence for Norfolk's many churches is extremely limited and has been undertaken in a very piecemeal fashion. Even so with this limited evidence it is possible to say that it seems unlikely that any church of mid-eleventh century date or earlier was constructed from masonry. This chapter has also shown that the foundation of multiple churches have a variety of complex causes which may not only be applicable to these churches but could equally apply to Norfolk's many individual churches. The final observation is that there may be far more fabric evidence for Saxo-Norman churches than previously thought by Taylor and Taylor and by examining this evidence again a higher total than that suggested by the Taylors and Cotton may emerge.

It would be all too easy to use this data to come up with a reliable set of statistics for the provision of early churches in the county, but this would be missing the point. It is clear that to fully understand the development of church provision in the county the churches must not be viewed as separate from other developments. Churches must be looked at in the context of the period up to *c*. 1200, thereby including both Saxo-Norman and Norman churches in line with the established boundaries of material culture remains. This avoids the difficulties encountered with dating and allows the church to be viewed not just as architecture but also as a component of the landscape, which reflected issues such as economics, culture, social structure, liturgical requirements and personal choice.

Chapter Six: Maps and Methodology

The previous chapters have illustrated just how complex and fragmentary the nature of the evidence is for Anglo-Saxon Norfolk. This has resulted in a limited knowledge of secular and ecclesiastical estates in the landscape and how the resultant break up of these territories can be related to the growth of local churches, the nucleation of settlement and the imposition of parish boundaries. The previous chapters also highlight that in order to make more sense of Anglo-Saxon Norfolk a different approach is required with the available evidence. This new methodology needs to examine the landscape in a much wider context and include far more information than has previously been considered. Therefore this research encompasses parish boundaries, settlement patterns, church archaeology, soil types, Domesday Book, place-names and archaeological evidence. In order to manage, compare and contrast such a large volume of information a database and suitable mapping software are required.

Maps could have been produced by more traditional methods or by software such as Coral Draw[®]. However, these methods do not allow for efficient manipulation and modelling of the results, so the use of a digital map is preferable, not only in terms of quality and accuracy but also in terms of detailed analysis. The University GIS software that is currently available for this purpose is ArcMAP. The ArcMAP software requires an accurate digital map on which to plot and model data and also a database from which to gather the information required. The database programme chosen for this purpose was Microsoft Excel[®], as this programme is more compatible in ArcMAP than other database programmes.

6.1 Mapping

In terms of mapping there are a number of problems that the landscape researcher encounters:

- 1. What base map to use to display the information.
- 2. What sources accurately depict the parish network in a format that is thought to most closely relate to the medieval pattern.
- 3. The accurate location of both churches and settlements
- 4. How to classify the different settlement types.

The base map not only has to serve the purpose of showing the county, it also has to include the parish boundaries. Therefore a digital copy of Norfolk including parish boundaries was sought. However, despite a detailed search it was soon clear that a suitable digital map
including parish boundaries was not available. The one digital map that has been compiled (Kain and Oliver, 2001) is a digital reproduction of their 1995 publication and is only for use with Adobe Illustrator software, which is not available at the University, and therefore not in a format compatible with ArcMAP. A further variation of this map is obtainable on Adobe Acrobat software in a 'view-only' format, and therefore can only serve as a guide.

The Old Maps website (www.old-maps.com) uses second edition OS maps (c.1880-1915) which include parish boundaries. However, using the digital second edition OS maps as a base map for parish boundaries was decided against for two reasons: firstly the cost of obtaining them for the whole county, and secondly the fact that they can only be supplied in a rasta layer which was not suitable. A rasta layer is a term used in GIS to describe a digital map layer that can include everything e.g. roads, topography and rivers etcetera, and not just parish boundaries. To be of use this rasta layer would need to be digitised (drawn electronically) by hand so that the parish boundaries could be separated from the other data. This would produce a map that only had parish boundaries on it, called a vector layer. This vector layer can be laid over other digital map layers to see how the boundaries may relate to other features such as topography and settlement for instance. The process of digitising the boundaries from a rasta layer is as time consuming as digitising from a printed base map and no benefits of this approach were obvious.

With no suitable digital map available other published resources had to be considered. The majority of these are maps in a large-scale format, which means rivers, Roman roads or topography are seldom included. Therefore there are no other landscape features that can serve as visual references to which parish boundaries can be related. Their large-scale size is also prohibitive to reproduction by digitising, as the parish boundaries are not shown in sufficient detail. Such publications include Wade-Martins (1994), which illustrates parishes prior to government reorganisation in 1923, and also a map of modern parishes; Murrels (1993) illustrating the registration districts of the Norwich Diocese; and Humphrey-Smith, (1995) which includes parishes and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the Archdeaconry of Norwich and Norfolk, as well as the peculiars of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich, and the Bishop of Ely.

The earliest published small-scale map of Norfolk is William Faden's map of 1797 (Barringer, 2004). This map is at a scale of 1:63360 (one-inch to one-mile), a suitable size for digitising although it does not include parish boundaries. The slightly later map produced by

Bryant in 1826 (Barringer, 2002) is of a different scale than Faden's 1:51742 (one-and a quarter-inch to one-mile). Unlike Faden's map though it does show both parish boundaries and hundred boundaries, although the sources Bryant uses to plot these features are unclear. The problem with both these maps is that their planimetric accuracy is generally not good enough for the rigours of GIS (Kain and Oliver, 2001:18)

The first Ordnance Survey maps for the county were produced in 1837-38. These were reproduced at the popular scale of 1:63360 (one-inch to one-mile). These first editions now reproduced in Margary (1987) are known for their accuracy and reliability, and features such as topography were a great improvement on both Faden's and Bryant's earlier maps (Barringer: 2002, iii). It is not until the second edition maps, known as the 'New Series' (*c*.1880-1915) that parish boundaries are included. However, Kain and Oliver suggest that by this time the boundaries on these and later editions became increasingly makeshift, and were not based on the most authentic sources (1995, 829). They also claim that none of the nineteenth century published maps constitutes a definitive record of parish boundaries (2001: 19). This means that whilst the one-inch to one-mile maps are planimetrically accurate the boundaries they illustrate may not be, so another source for this information was required.

Tithe maps are by far the most important maps when considering parish boundaries. They were produced between 1837 and 1851 as a record of tithe commutation, and their value lies in the fact that they were exhibited publicly to enable interested parties to draw attention to errors (Kain and Oliver, 2001: 22). These tithe district boundaries are the most complete record before extensive changes in the last three decades of the nineteenth century (Kain and Oliver, 1995: 85-86). Therefore, whilst it is unclear how closely they relate to the circumstances of the early medieval period they do represent the most reliable form of parish boundaries that can be expected for Norfolk.

The tithe boundaries are shown in both Kain and Oliver 1995 and 2001. On both these maps parishes are depicted with many more appendages and detached portions. The 1995 map is at a large scale unsuitable for digitising whilst the 2001 map is in Adobe Acrobat view only format and has formed the principal guide for this research. Kain and Oliver have used 634 tithe maps for Norfolk which gives 89 percent coverage of the county and a total of 795 parishes, second only to the West Riding of Yorkshire. By using tithes as a basis for parish boundary mapping many of the smaller parishes now amalgamated into larger modern parishes are still apparent, for example, Ridlington, Walcott, Edingthorpe and Crostwright all

of which have since been absorbed into the boundaries of the modern parishes of Witton, Bacton and Paston in northeast Norfolk. Similarly using tithe boundaries other modern additions to the parish map are avoided such as Old and New Hunstanton in northwest Norfolk. There are however some boundaries that are not included because they must have been amalgamated at an early date. This is particularly evident in east Norfolk in parishes such as Stokesby with Herringsby, Ashby with Oby and Repps with Bastwick which Kain and Oliver have been unable to divide into separate parishes from tithe maps. In many instances such amalgamations represent DMVs or smaller township absorbed into a larger parish.

6.1.1 Resolution of the Base Map

Now that a resource for accurate parish boundaries had been sourced the next problem to resolve was exactly how to use this material to create a coherent digital map of the earliest known arrangement of parish boundaries. It was considered that the best way to create a digital map was to use an accurate printed base map onto which the boundaries were drawn and simply digitise it, as described below. After considering the various maps and publications available it is clear that there are two criteria to adopt for this process.

- 1. There is a need to understand position of boundaries in relation to the landscape and the features they may follow. This can be achieved by plotting them on a small-scale map, in this case the first edition (one-inch to one-mile), used because of its accuracy and reliability.
- 2. An accurate source is required for the parish boundaries to enable them to be plotted onto the first edition map. Such sources are the OS sixth and seventh editions, which are readily available, and also at the same scale as the first edition. The boundaries on the sixth and seventh edition OS maps were then checked against Kain and Oliver (1995 and 2001) and any adjustments were made prior to them being plotted onto the first edition base map.

The process for producing a detailed map of the earliest parish boundaries is then no more complex than scaling, checking and then drawing the parish boundaries onto a copy of the first edition OS map. This seemingly simple process is also similar to the procedure used by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000), who also use the first edition OS maps reproduced in Margery (1975-1981) to plot settlement types. Although this is a relatively straightforward process,

there are a number of ways in which inaccuracies can be included, and these are detailed below:

6.1.2 Photocopying

The first edition OS map for Norfolk as discussed above is now published in book format (Margary: Vol V, 31-72: 1987) and sheet format, reprinted by David and Charles (1970 and 1982). Both of these reprints are reproduced in the small sheet format of the original map, which is roughly the modern A3 size. However, one large sheet of the entire county was required for the digitising process. This meant that all the smaller sheets had to be joined together and the only way of achieving this was to photocopy them and carefully join them together. Photocopying itself introduces small errors, so in an effort to reduce this all the pages were copied in the same direction. Joining the sections of the map together also produces small errors and these are unavoidable.

6.1.3 Drawing and Tracing

Once the parish boundaries had been plotted onto the base map they were then traced onto permatrace so that they could be digitised. This tracing off was necessary because the paper base map was not smooth enough due to taped joints and overlapping of photocopied sheets to use on the digitising tablet; the bumpy surface would have introduced distortions when the puck moved over it. Permatrace is smooth, and represented a far more stable and accurate map to digitise from. Again there may be small errors with tracing the boundaries off for a second time, but these are unavoidable.

6.1.4 Digitising

The final part of the procedure was to digitise the parish boundaries into a format that can be used within ArcMAP. For this purpose the spatial data acquisition software Cartalinx was used. The traced map is secured onto the digitising tablet and a set of control points (co-ordinates), which are based on the National Ordnance Survey grid are registered into the software. Once these points were entered into the digitising software the package can then determine and report the magnitude of any inaccuracies that exist between these control points (Wheatley and Gillings: 2002, 66). Any errors or discrepancies that are apparent are expressed as the root mean square error (RMS), which is the spatial equivalent of the

mathematical standard deviation statistic (Wheatley and Gillings: 2002, 67). Cartalinx recommends a minimum of four control points are used for any given map, and these are best located around the edges. In order that the highest degree of accuracy was maintained a list of ten control points was initially used, this was then reduced to six to bring the RMS within a tolerance of below twenty metres. This was decided as being an acceptable error on a map that was going to be reproduced at a large-scale.

6.2 Database Methodology

Now there was an accurate digital map of the county's parish boundaries the next problem was how to select and organise the data that was going to be plotted onto it. The great estate and minster models are being used as a framework for the data collection; therefore two databases were designed to reflect this; one for settlement data and the other for church data. The benefits in using ArcMAP are that it allows material to be considered simultaneously from one or both databases, for example Domesday data, place-name data and archaeological evidence can all be plotted on the same map. The data plotted on the map also has infinite flexibility allowing analysis at a general county level, by hundreds or at a more local level, such as a small group of parishes.

There are a number of common elements relating to both databases and these will be examined first. The more specific information relating to settlement and church databases will then be considered.

6.3 General Database Details

6.3.1 Geographical Location

The first two columns in both databases are the six figure grid references representing the eastings and northings ArcMAP uses to plot churches or settlements. The majority of these grid references were obtained from the OS website <u>www.old-maps.com</u>, which uses the second edition 1:63360 (one-inch to one-mile) maps with accuracy to the nearest metre. This resource was used in preference to the more modern 1: 50,000 Landranger site (<u>www.ordsvy.gov.uk</u>), which only gives accuracy to the nearest 100 metres. In this research

accuracy to the nearest metre has been adopted as some churches and settlements are located very close to parish boundaries.

Occasionally little or no trace of an earlier church or settlement remains. In these instances co-ordinates have been obtained from Batcock (1991) or Allison (1957), even then there are a limited number of cases where the position is still uncertain, resulting in the writers only quoting an approximate location and a four figure grid reference. Where this happens they have been changed to a twelve-figure grid reference so the information can be used ArcMAP.

The grid references given for a church relate to the centre of the building. However, the location of the centre a settlement is more problematic. In a nucleated settlement a grid reference from the centre of the cluster is the logical position. However, a common edge settlement or irregular row offers a greater degree of difficulty. In examples such as these the grid reference has been taken where there is the greatest amount of settlement activity on the maps being used (see below), for example, a small cluster of buildings. The nature of these grid positions is necessarily subjective, as a number of alternative grid positions could be interpreted as central in a dispersed settlement.

6.3.2 Parish Place-Names

The place-names included within the database are all the settlements mentioned in Domesday, early charters (Sawyer, 1968; Hart, 1966), the Valuation of Norwich (Lunt, 1926) and the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1334 (Glasscock, 1975). This corpus represents all settlements, including those without a church, and those now classed as DMVs, where their location can still be ascertained. Each place-name is given a unique identification number required by ArcMAP in order to plot data. A small number of former settlements from Domesday have not been included because their positions can no longer be identified, for example *Letha* in Blofield hundred (199b. Morris, 1984: 10,72).

6.3.3 Hundreds

Each parish is located within a larger group of parishes called a hundred as discussed in Chapter Four. In this research hundreds have been taken from Domesday (Morris, 1984) and the place-names have been arranged in their respective hundred groupings in the database. The main problem with this arrangement is that some parishes have detached portions that

may be in a different hundred. In order to make sense of these detached portions they have been given different identification numbers (starting from 1000) and the parish of which they form a part has been noted in the database. This enables ArcMAP to identify these detached portions and link them to their respective parishes.

6.3.4. Deaneries

In most cases deanery boundaries are similar to the Domesday hundreds as discussed in Chapter Four, although they may incorporate more than one hundred within their boundaries. The parishes recorded within each deanery have been taken from the 1254 Valuation of Norwich (Hudson, 1910).

6.4 Settlement Database Specific Categories

6.4.1 Village Classification and Mapping

The most challenging methodological problem in this research was the classification of settlement types and how to represent them on a parish map of the county in a meaningful way. These problems were:

- Which early maps most accurately represent the medieval settlement pattern?
- How should settlements be classified, given the spectrum of settlement goes from nucleated through to dispersed and the contrast between one group and the next is often blurred?
- Often a parish unit will contain or reflect more than one settlement type; how can this be illustrated?

Other scholars have faced the problem of which maps were the most accurate representation of the early medieval settlement pattern and found that the most consistent and comprehensive settlement patterns can be obtained from early and mid-nineteenth century maps, although it is accepted that these may not reflect the true nature of early medieval settlement (Roberts and Wrathmell, 2002:16; Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 49).

The maps considered for this research were either late eighteenth-century maps (Faden, 1797) or early nineteenth century maps (OS, 1838 or Bryant 1826). As discussed above the First Edition OS maps are the most accurate and are suitable for geo-referencing in GIS. However,

the settlement pattern they portray is the period immediately after parliamentary enclosures when few greens and commons remained; this is also true of Bryant in 1826 (Barringer, 2004: 9). Barringer claims that Faden's map is the last record of the remnants of the medieval system of commons (2004: 10). Therefore Faden's map may be the most accurate depiction of the earlier medieval settlement pattern available.



Figure 6.1. The area northeast of Wymondham c. 1797, showing the unenclosed areas of common land.

The changes in the landscape between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps are evident if Faden (1797) and Bryant's (1826) maps are compared. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 are a comparison of the area north of Wymondham in both 1797 and 1826. The changes brought about by parliamentary enclosures are clearly evident with large areas of common land in 1797, which was gone by 1826. On this evidence Faden's map seems to be a better representation of an earlier settlement pattern. However, Barringer claims that the way settlements are portrayed by Faden is questionable and suggests that whilst more important buildings were mapped other less significant buildings were not; therefore settlement representation was diagrammatic (2004: 9). Whilst this may be partly correct, especially as Barringer has noted a number of omissions, the value of this map is that it still illustrates that the county had more dispersed settlement than can be seen in the early nineteenth century

maps. Using this map involves some inaccuracies, but it is clearly the best illustration of the settlement pattern prior to the major changes brought about by enclosures.



Figure 6.2. The 1826 map showing the same area following parliamentary enclosures.

The next problem was how to classify the settlements portrayed on Faden's map. The wideranging classification proposed by Roberts (1977: 127) including settlement shape, regularity, size, complexity and fragmentation was considered too complex for this research as only general settlement trends were being sought. Therefore a simpler classification was needed. Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer (2001:51), have used Roberts' classification system in a simplified form, proposing five basic village types in central England: nucleated clusters, regular rows, interrupted rows, common edge settlements and farmstead clusters. The Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer system has been adopted for this research as their village types can equally be applied to Norfolk, although a further category has been added to include DMVs.

Even with this simpler classification system the distinctive nature of the Norfolk landscape still presents some challenges. Using such a system is to accept that settlement classification is necessarily subjective. For example, an interrupted row could potentially also be classified as a linear common with houses strung loosely along it. Similarly the difference between the relatively rare regular row settlements and interrupted rows is often problematic and gaps along the line of settlement have been used to determine into which classification it falls. Some of these gaps may not always be reflective of changes in settlement, but also the competence of the eighteenth century cartographer, as discussed above. Therefore the classification of settlement in this research is subjective but is the best that can be achieved from the available evidence.

The following examples show how the classification system works for both dispersed and nucleated settlement types. The first dispersed forms are common edge settlements, as illustrated by Great Dunham in figure 6.3. The criteria adopted for these are the existence of a number of small tofts along the edges of commons and heathland (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 51). The next form of dispersed settlements are farmstead clusters, which in contrast with common edge settlement are generally much smaller compact settlements with fewer than five single farms or small tofts, as illustrated by Moulton St Mary in figure 6.4. The final form of dispersed settlements is the interrupted row. These sites are very similar to the nucleated settlement form of regular rows in that they both appear as ribbon developments, the main difference being that the interrupted rows are not continuous and often have gaps in the form of small arable or pasture fields, and some also run for a much greater distance than a regular row (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 51). South Creake illustrates an example of an interrupted row (figure 6.5).



Figure 6.3. Common edge settlement at Great Dunham c. 1797.



Figure 6.4. A farmstead cluster settlement at Moulton (St Mary) c. 1797.



Figure 6.5. An interrupted row at South Creake c. 1797.

The remaining settlement types are all of a nucleated character. The most common of these are nucleated clusters. The main difference between these and the smaller farmstead clusters above are that nucleated clusters in this research are defined as agglomerations with more than five dwellings, grouped together at a single point in a compact grid, radial or cluster plan (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 51). An example of a nucleated cluster is North Walsham (figure 6.6) with the settlement arranged centrally around the church.



Figure 6.6. A nucleated cluster at North Walsham c. 1797.



Figure 6.7.A regular row settlement at Fincham c. 1797.

The final form of nucleated settlement is the regular row and is illustrated with the example of Fincham (figure 6.7). Regular row settlements are quite rare in Norfolk and are typified by a continuous ribbon development arranged along a road or a river. Fincham is positioned along a former Roman road (Margary 38).

The final form of settlement included in the database is the DMV. These have been included as there are a large number of examples in the Norfolk landscape and they represent 19

percent of the settlement types included in the database, as discussed further in Chapter Nine. These former settlements are difficult to categorise into any of the classifications explored above due to the variable nature of the surviving evidence. For example, some may only exist as a farm-name: e.g. Washingford, now in the parish of Bergh Apton. Others can still be traced by the survival of earthworks and the ruins of a church: e.g. Egmere near Little Walsingham. The details of these former settlements have largely been obtained from Allison (1957) and Beresford and Hurst (1971) although the later studies by Davison (1988) and Wade-Martins (1982) have also been used. A number of the DMVs in this research (80) are found as townships within another parish and subsequently are not the primary settlement within that parish on Faden's map.

The final aspect of settlement methodology is how best to represent it on a map and at what level of detail. Due to the complex nature of settlement in Norfolk a number of parishes may have more than one form of settlement. This can be illustrated with the parish of Wymondham in figure 6.1 above. Here the parish contains the main nucleated settlement of Wymondham together with a number of scattered farmsteads. Mapping such data has two problems: firstly if the data is plotted on a parish basis, the parishes which have more than one settlement type will have to have artificial divisions in order for GIS to differentiate settlement, which will over complicate the parish data. Secondly if a "dots on a map" approach is adopted the difficulty is knowing what level of detail to map. In the example of Wymondham above (figure 6.1) to locate and classify every farmstead would create a complex map that would be difficult to interpret. As this research is using the parish unit as a way of identifying great estates and minster parochiae, a parish map is the best way to observe general settlement trends in the landscape. Therefore the level of detail required need not include every farmstead and instead only requires the details of the predominant settlement in each parish, corresponding to those referred to in the documentary sources in section 6.3.2 above.

To use the parish as a basis for plotting general settlement trends is to accept that not all of the data will be examined, but the use of case studies in Chapter Ten will examine the landscape in far more detail and compensate for the problems of general mapping at a county level.

6.4.2 Place-Name First Recorded/ Separate Vill in Domesday

These two sections in the database are closely related. The earliest recorded spellings of place-names are usually in Domesday (1086), although a small number are also recorded in early charters. Some place-names however are not recorded until later in documents such as the Valuation of Norwich 1254 (Lunt: 1926) and the Lay Subsidy Rolls 1334 (Glasscock: 1975). Place-names recorded later than Domesday may suggest late settlement formation, or alternatively, indicate that the settlement was not substantial enough to be recorded separately. In some cases it may demonstrate when a parish may have been sub-divided leaving place-names with the prefix north and south or differentiated by their church dedications.

The column relating to separate vills at Domesday is just to provide clarification as to whether or not place-names later referred to as 'Great' and 'Little' or 'North' and 'South' for example, were actually separate vills in 1086. Great and Little Plumstead for instance in the Hundred of Blofield, were only listed as Plumstead in Domesday, so it could be inferred that only one vill was recorded or only one existed in 1086. However, in the case of North and South Creake in Brothercross Hundred both are mentioned in Domesday and clearly represent separate settlements.

6.4.3 Place-Name Classifications/ Origins

This section of the database allows for general patterns and clusters of different place-name types to be appreciated. The classifications of place-name groups used are topographical, agricultural, habitative, woodland, religious, and administrative. These specific groups have been chosen to try and identify potential areas on which to target more specific research. This section also lists place-names by their origin: Celtic (Cel) Old English (OE) and Old Scandinavian (OSc). More specific groups are also included such as Grimston Hybrid names (GH), Scandinavianised names (OE/OSc) and place-names that are Old Scandinavian in origin but do not include a personal name element (OSc*).

6.4.4 Place-Name Details

The largest section of the database relates to the actual construction of place-names. The various groupings in these columns are far more detailed to allow for much more specific

research functions. For example *tun*, *ham* and *ingas*, place-name elements can be identified and plotted by ArcMAP. The many topographical names are also specifically identified to enable a more in depth understanding of the Anglo-Saxon landscape than has previously been attempted. Topographical names have been arranged under headings similar to those used by Gelling and Cole (2000).

6.4.5 SMR Data

There are four columns in the database dedicated to SMR information. These are middle Saxon pottery and metalwork and late Saxon pottery and metalwork. The details of these different groups are discussed in Chapter Eight. This data is included so an assessment can be made as to the quantity and quality of archaeological data available in each parish, allowing comparison. The SMR data differs to the database used for this research in that the SMR data is arranged by modern parishes and not by the mid-nineteenth century ones. The only consequence this makes is that the boundaries of the parishes may differ slightly, but at a county level the overall impact of this was minimal.

The pottery and metalwork are recorded in the database by the frequency of finds spots found in each parish and not by the actual quantity of material found. Therefore, a find spot may represent a single pottery sherd or piece of metalwork, or many pottery sherds or perhaps a coin hoard.

6.5 Church Database Specific Categories

6.5.1 Dedications

All known dedications of the churches have been included within the database. These are of interest because in some cases groups of church dedications have been used to identify former minster precincts (Blair, 1992: 238-255). Also there are a small number of dedications that are unique to Norfolk. Bawburgh church in the hundred of Forehoe for example, is dedicated to St Walstan, a local Norfolk Saint whose unofficial cult was based at this church until the Reformation (Bryant, 1905: 25). Dedications, like place-names, are unreliable indicators of date as they may have been changed a number of times over the centuries. The vast majority of dedications are very common and exist in large numbers, for example St Mary the Virgin, St Mary Magdalen, St Andrew, St Peter and St Margaret.

6.5.2 Churchyards

Another landscape feature included within the dataset are churchyards, including those with two or more churches as discussed in Chapter Five. The reason for the inclusion of churchyards is that in some instances elsewhere in England they have been shown to indicate the precinct of a former minster. Blair has proposed that these precincts may be rectilinear (if based on Roman alignments) or concentric or curvilinear (if of Celtic origin) (Blair, 1988a: 48). Morris however, is cautious of using churchyards shape because so few have been tested archaeologically and he claims that circularity alone cannot be taken as a sign of great antiquity (1989, 455).

With such a large sample of churches the collection of churchyard data is clearly a large task if the earliest maps, plans and tithe maps are to be sought for every location. It is for these reasons the large majority of churchyard layouts have been obtained from the second edition Ordnance Survey maps at <u>www.old-maps.com</u>. This website allows the map to be viewed at the small-scale of 1:10560 from an original map scale of 1:63360. This scale is sufficient to allow the churchyard plans to be viewed and recorded. However, there are a number of examples where the shape of the churchyard cannot be determined due to the poor quality of the original map or where the church is either ruined or located within a DMV. Batcock (1991) has helped to resolve some of the omissions but inevitably some gaps still remain.

In order for this information to be of use in the database and ArcMAP some standardisation was required so comparisons could be made. Therefore a series of categories have been used to identify different shapes of churchyards: square, rectangular, circular, oval and irregular. Due to the nature of this evidence such classifications are necessarily very subjective, for example the difference between oval and circular is sometimes very small. An irregular category has also been used so any churchyard that does not fit into any of the other categories can still be included in the dataset. Irregular refers to a churchyard that may be triangular, where it is positioned in the fork of a road for instance. Where there is possible evidence for a once larger precinct than the surviving churchyard, this is also noted in the database.

6.5.3 Plan Form

The plan form of a church may be instructive in that a different type may be more numerous in some areas of the county than others. Different plan forms may also reflect a response to vernacular materials, or a preference in building styles or construction techniques. The plan form may also be the only way in which the presence of an earlier Anglo-Saxon building on the site may be detected. Parsons claims that the sheer size and elaboration of a later medieval church may indicate that it was richly endowed, reflecting its pre-Conquest status (1996: 26). Franklin is of a similar opinion suggesting that pre-Conquest churches of importance would be of sufficient scale that the consequent retention of their core might influence the development of the buildings in the post-Conquest period (1984, 77-78).

The plan forms that may be indicative of earlier status include a long narrow nave and chancel with no distinction in width between the two (Parsons, 1995: 64), and a tall aisleless nave, north and south transepts towards the east end, and a rectangular chancel (Blair, 1985:121). Franklin however is more sceptical and using the evidence from Northamptonshire claims that there is no simple correlation between status and plan type and suggests that cruciform plans are also common in later Romanesque and Gothic churches (1984: 74-77).

The first problem to be encountered with this type of architectural evidence is that there is no standard method of recording church structures. The Norfolk SMR varies considerably in detail and content. Similarly architectural guidebooks such as Pevsner (1965) vary immensely from very detailed descriptions to virtually no detail at all. More recent books on Norfolk churches e.g. (Goode, 1982), (Batcock, 1991) have improved the situation, but these are limited in their subject matter, being concerned with round towered churches and ruined and disused churches respectively. More consistent coverage is given in Bryant's detailed accounts of church architecture (1898-1915), although the 18 volumes arranged by hundreds do not give complete county coverage.

Clearly a varied and inconsistent body of material is of no use in a database without some form of standard format. In terms of the plan form many permutations are possible and the method of recording these has to be able to account for every eventuality. It is for these reasons that a two-tier system of recording has been adopted. Firstly a numerical plan classification covering all the general plan forms encountered is used. This is further enhanced by a letter-based classification in which plan forms can be made more specific. It

must be emphasised that the plans recorded in the database are of the various churches as they stand today.

Plan classification.

- 1. Central tower, transepts, nave and chancel.
- 2. Nave, axial tower and chancel.
- 3. West tower, nave and chancel.
- 4. West tower, nave, transepts and chancel.
- 5. Round tower, nave and chancel.
- 6. Nave and chancel.
- 7. Modern plan, church largely rebuilt no evidence of earlier plan.
- 8. Unknown, church totally or largely destroyed.

Enhanced classification.

- A. North and south aisles.
- B. North aisle.
- C. South aisle.
- D. Continuous plan, no chancel-arch.
- E. Apsidal east end.
- F. Transepts/ transept where it is known that these elements have been added on.

Figure 6.8 illustrates examples of the plan form classification system in practise. For the purposes of clarity not all elements of the church structure have been included within the database. Generally porches, vestries, and chantry chapels only start to appear later in the medieval period and therefore have little bearing on earlier structures.

A further enhancement of the plan description has been included which details parts of the structure that have been removed, as evidenced from the standing building archaeology. Below ground archaeology has also been included, which may have been discovered through archaeological investigation or restoration works. These building elements are detailed by using a lower case letter as detailed below.

Parts removed.

- a. Both aisles.
- b. North aisle
- c. South aisle
- d. Continuous plan formerly with no chancel arch.
- e. Apsidal east end.

- f. Transept/ transepts.
- g. Square tower
- h. Round tower.
- i. Chancel
- j. Nave.
- k. Central tower.
- l. Co-axial tower.
- m. Single cell plan (usually from excavated evidence).
- n. Double cell plan (usually from excavated evidence or fabric analysis).







Bittering Parva St. Peter and Paul. Plan type 6D, nave and chancel with no structural division (Cushion *et al*, 1982: 97)



West Harling All Saints. Plan type 3 square west tower, nave and chancel (Batcock, 1991: 67)



Kiverstone St. Andrew. Plan type 5 round west tower, nave and chancel (Davison, 1988: 36)



Figure 6.8. Four variations of church plan types.

This final part of the classification system can be demonstrated by the following example. A church that is listed as 3-C-b-i has a square west tower, nave and chancel plan with the addition of a south aisle. The lower case 'b' denotes it once had a north aisle and 'i' denotes that the chancel has been removed. An example of this is Babingley St Felix (figure 6.9). Here the chancel arch has been blocked off, as have the former north aisle arcades.



Figure 6.9. Babingley St Felix looking east showing the blocked north aisle arcades and chancel arch. Photograph taken 1947. (Batcock, 1991: 85).

6.5.4 Dating Evidence

The many problems associated with dating churches have been explored in Chapter Five. Therefore the purpose here is to detail what information has been included in the database and how it is organised.

The dating evidence is broken down into four sections in the database: firstly the date period; secondly the evidence of the date period, i.e. the location within the building of the earliest architectural fragment or structural element; thirdly, secondary dating evidence, such as early

fonts and sculptural fragments within the building fabric and fourthly the date period of the secondary evidence. Clearly a number of churches may have been largely rebuilt in later periods and will only have primary dating material from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Where this is the case other information such as secondary dating evidence may be the only way in which the existence of an earlier church building can be traced.

As discussed in Chapter Five there is no evidence to suggest that any surviving masonry churches in the county pre-date *c*. 1050. Therefore the classification system used can commence from this date. The problems associated with the Saxo-Norman and Norman evidence has also been discussed and it is suggested that both these architectural styles continue through until *c*. 1200. The later periods of architecture appear not to be quite as controversial as the earlier periods, largely due to the survival of more documentary evidence. The date periods for the later architectural styles are based on a number of sources (Batcock, 1991; Pevsner, 1962; Coldstream, 2002 and Hutton and Cook, 1989). The conventional chronology of the various periods is set out below. These different styles of architecture are identified by a different letter (A-E) in the database. For purposes of clarity Romanesque architecture is divided into two periods, one representing Saxo-Norman and the other Norman. This distinction allows for the stylistic and constructional differences between these two Romanesque styles.

Date Periods

- A Romanesque (Saxo-Norman) c. 1050-1200
- B Romanesque (Norman) c. 1050-1200
- C Early English c. 1200-1300
- D Decorated *c*. 1300-1360
- E Perpendicular c. 1360-1540
- F Unknown.

The final date period F is included to account for those churches that have been completely rebuilt in more modern times or those where there is not sufficient fabric evidence surviving for dating purposes as in the case of a ruined church for instance.

6.5.5. Domesday Evidence

The Domesday evidence included in the database relates to the information that is used by Blair (1985) to identify possible minster churches. These criteria are discussed in Chapter Three, but briefly summarised these are whether a church was recorded in 1086, the area of land held by the church, separate church valuations, presence of two or more priests and if the church was attached to a royal demesne or bishops' manor.

The churches recorded in the survey are generally listed singularly or occasionally in pairs. However, there are some instances where only one half, one third, or even two thirds of a church are mentioned. Also some entries are a little imprecise, mentioning only land belonging to a 'certain church'. In these cases this has been taken to mean the same as if a church had been mentioned specifically. Other writers have employed a similar approach. Darby (1977: 346) for example has included such entries in his statistics and has made no differentiation between these and more straightforward church listings.

The area of land held by the church includes both the land listed with the church and that of land belonging to a 'certain church', as discussed above. This land, or glebe, recorded in acres in Domesday is also included in the database. Due to the complex nature of the survey two adaptations were necessary to present the areas of land in a consistent manner. Firstly, a number of examples have one or more carucates. One carucate is equal to 120 acres (Darby, 1971; 109) and is listed accordingly. Secondly there are some listings where two churches are mentioned with a single endowment of land. Langham in the hundred of Holt is recorded with two churches and 16 acres of land for example (194a. Morris, 1984: 10,22). To clarify this the database entries have been listed as identical, and where this has been required it has been stated in the notes column. This duplication of entries is needed because ArcMAP will not be able to process two church locations with only one Domesday entry.

Two further columns are included in the database for listing areas of land, which are recorded in Domesday as 'free land of the church' and 'church land in alms'. Although these entries are infrequent they have been included because they are contained with a church listing and may be of significance at a local level.

Separate church valuations in Domesday are listed in pounds, shillings and pence, which is repeated in the database entry. For instance Taverham is recorded with a quarter of one

church and valued at 16 pence (229a. Morris, 1984: 20,27), and is listed in the database as 00,00,16. Again some clarification of entries has been undertaken to allow the data to be used in ArcMAP. This has only been necessary when two churches are mentioned in the same valuation. In such examples valuations have been written in duplicate, and where this has been required it recorded in the notes column.

The presence of a priest or priests has been interpreted as also showing the existence of a church, as a priest is unlikely to have been resident without one. These entries are infrequent in Norfolk but where they are recorded interpretation can be problematic. For example there are two priests recorded holding land at Topcroft before 1066 (212a. Morris, 1984: 14,37) and 30 acres of land held at Yaxham was by a priest in 1066 (179a. Morris, 1984: 9,82). Neither of these examples has a church recorded in their entries.

6.5.6 Secondary Data

Finally, other information recorded in the database has been included to give the broadest possible account of the information available. Therefore churches mentioned in early charters Hart (1966) or Sawyer (1968) have been included to supplement the Domesday totals. These churches only represent a very small percentage of the dataset, and do not pre-date Domesday by much more than twenty years. Therefore this information may be of limited use except where a church is not recorded in 1086.

Some information from the 1254 Valuation of Norwich has also been included in the database, namely whether or not a church was recorded. The purpose of this data is that it gives the extent of church provision in 1254, which is a useful comparison to Domesday. Other information from the Valuation of Norwich and the later Valuation of Pope Nicholas in 1291 including some of the valuations and the dependent chapelries will be discussed in Chapter Seven but has not been included in the database.

The final pieces of information included are the earliest recorded incumbent, the condition of the church, i.e. a ruin or crop mark as listed in Batcock (1991) and in a very small number of examples the dimensions of the building where they are of Saxo-Norman date. These final aspects are of very limited use but may be more instructive at a more local level of consideration.

Chapter Seven: The Church Data Evidence

This chapter explores the both the architectural and documentary evidence from Norfolk's rural churches. Most of this data is studied through the use of GIS, where the different data sets are examined in turn.

7.1 Architectural Evidence

7.1.1 Primary Dating Evidence

The fabric evidence for the Saxo-Norman and Norman churches varies immensely. In some instances an entire church may be categorised as Saxo-Norman or Norman, but more commonly the evidence is a window or door opening or just a small number of architectural fragments built into the fabric of a later structure. The difficulties in dating this evidence have been illustrated in Chapter Five, and it for these reasons that the two categories of Saxo-Norman and Norman are both considered to exist up until c.1200.

Figure 7. 1 shows the 122 churches that have surviving Saxo-Norman (Period A) architectural evidence. This illustrates that the main concentration of surviving Saxo-Norman churches are in the southeast of the county largely within the hundreds of Humbleyard, Henstead and Depwade. In the northeast of the county there is a very pronounced cluster at the area where the hundreds of Holt and North and South Erpingham converge. Elsewhere the pattern is somewhat different and further westwards the sequence appears to be just a random distribution. The fen edge is particularly poorly represented with only Bexwell in the hundred of Clackclose having any surviving Saxo-Norman fabric: a window in the north wall of the nave. This lack of fabric evidence is a contrast to Domesday, discussed below, which indicates that the fen edge was well endowed with church buildings in 1086.

The distribution of the 168 churches with surviving Norman fabric (Period B) shows some interesting contrasts with the Saxo-Norman structures (figure 7.1). There is again a marked concentration in the east of the county. However, it has shifted slightly further east into the hundreds of Loddon, Blofield and Clavering. In the northeast of the county there is little surviving Norman architecture, which is in sharp contrast to the equivalent Saxo-Norman fabric.





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Towards the west of the county there appears to be just a random distribution with no marked concentrations evident until the fen edge is encountered. Here the concentration appears largely similar to the distribution of churches recorded in Domesday. A further cluster is also evident around the King's Lynn area.

The final styles of church architecture considered are periods C, D and E, which relate to the Gothic styles of Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular respectively. These later periods are beyond the scope of this research, but there are a number of churches built in these later styles that are included in Domesday or an early charter. Therefore, whilst such churches can offer no fabric evidence from an early date they are clearly earlier than their surviving architecture suggests. In the absence of an early charter or Domesday entry it is almost impossible to place these churches in the period up to c.1200. However, as will be further discussed below, some forms of secondary dating evidence may survive which could indicate that some of these later churches may have earlier origins.

The final category of churches to be considered are those classified as period F: structures which have either been completely demolished or have so little in the way of remaining fabric evidence that a date cannot be assigned to them. It is clear from these churches that Domesday and early charters are the only way an early date may be suggested.

The statistical data from the fabric evidence is summarised in figure 7.2 below. This information demonstrates just how formidable the data is to interpret when trying to establish a pattern of early church building.

Date Period	Total number of	Churches accounted for	Churches accounted for
	churches per date	in an early charter but	in Domesday Book
	period	not in Domesday	
Α	122	2	42
В	168	4	46
С	128	5	31
D	223	9	67
E	69	3	15
F	121	2	30
Total	831	25	231

Figure 7.2. Summary of architectural data.

There are 122 churches with surviving Saxo-Norman fabric, 42 of which are listed in Domesday; six are listed in early charters, although four of these are also recorded in 1086. A similar sequence is also apparent for Norman churches; of the 168 included by virtue of their architectural elaboration, 46 are recorded in Domesday and a further six are included in pre-Conquest charters of which two are also included in 1086.

The statistics from the above table could be quoted for the remaining four groups but the picture is broadly similar. The only noticeable difference is the data from period E (Perpendicular style *c*. 1360-1540). The frequency of churches represented from this period is lower because by this time the large majority of churches were already in existence. Therefore the lower figure represents a limited number of new foundations and complete rebuilds that may have erased evidence of an early structure, above ground at least. Potentially the most interesting group of churches archaeologically are those with little or no remaining physical evidence (Period F). Only 32 of these churches are represented in either Domesday or an early charter leaving 89 unassigned to a specific period. This is a significant number if it were possible to date them. Unfortunately the only way this can be achieved is by archaeological excavation, and this seems very unlikely.

7.1.2 Secondary Dating Evidence

The distribution of churches identified from secondary dating evidence is shown on figure 7.3. Whilst this data seems relatively straightforward there are a number of problems with its interpretation. For example, it is not possible to state whether a font is still in its original church, as it may have come from a nearby church that has since been demolished. Similarly the remains of late Saxon gravestones have to be treated with equal caution, although there would be little reason for a gravestone to be relocated. Figure 7.4 is an example of secondary dating evidence. The Norman font pictured is at Shernbourne St Peter and St Paul, a church not mentioned in early charters or Domesday and which has no remaining fabric earlier than the thirteenth century.

In total there are 49 churches that have secondary dating evidence from either the Saxo-Norman or Norman date periods. This total includes 22 additional early churches, which have not been identified in Domesday, early charters or by fabric analysis. Figure 7.5 is a summary of the secondary data. This shows nine churches that have secondary dating evidence from the Saxo-Norman period in the form of either sculptural fragments or late Saxon grave slabs.



Figure 7.3. Secondary dating evidence (Periods A and B).

Out of this total one church is already accounted for in Domesday, and a further four are identified by virtue of their architecture to either period A or B. This leaves four churches that are potentially of Saxo-Norman date that can only be identified by secondary evidence. The secondary data for the Norman period is much better represented with 40 churches, 12 of which are included in Domesday or an early charter. A further ten have been primary dated from their architecture.



Figure 7.4. Secondary dating evidence in the form of a Norman font in Shernbourne St Peter and St Paul.

The use of secondary dating evidence therefore allows for the identification of a further 22 possible churches that may have been in existence prior to c.1200. When considered with the documentary evidence below this gives an overall total of 474 churches that can be placed in the period before c.1200, representing 57 percent of the later medieval total.

Secondary dating evidence	Number of churches from secondary dating evidence	Accounted for in early charter or Domesday	Accounted for in architectural date period (not including those in	Number suggested by secondary evidence alone
			Domesday or early charter)	
A	9	1	2 (period A)	
			2 (period B)	4
В	40	12	5 (period A)	-
			5 (period B)	18
Totals	49	13	14	22

Figure 7.5. A summary of secondary dating evidence.

7.1.3 Plan Forms

The different plan forms of the churches used in this research and the reasons for their inclusion have been introduced in Chapter Six. In total eight plan forms are considered, although the plan forms 7 and 8 are not included within this analysis because of the reasons stated in Chapter Six. The omission of these two plan forms reduces the total of churches studied by 127 or 15 percent of the dataset.

The plan forms that have been claimed to give an indication of a church of high status are an aisleless transeptal or cruciform plan, Blair (1985) and Parsons (1995) or a continuous nave and chancel plan with no division between the two Parsons (1995). In the database the former are distinguished between those with a central tower (plan form 1) and those without a central tower (plan form 4). The continuous plan without a chancel arch is denoted by plan form 6D.

There are 10 churches that have a transeptal plan with a central tower with or without the addition of aisles (plan form1); these are Aldeby, Attleborough, Binham, East Dereham, Gressenhall, Heacham, King's Lynn (St Margaret and St James), Snettisham and Wymondham (see figure 7.6). Two of these churches, Wymondham and East Dereham, have already been suggested as early estate centres or ecclesiastical sites (Williamson, 1993: 96-98 and 144-145; Penn, 1996: 40-45). At East Dereham there is still a well dedicated to Withburga, daughter of King Anna who is reputed to have founded a nunnery there in the seventh century. However, there is some dispute that this may have in fact been at West Dereham (Penn, 1996; 43).

The present church at Wymondham was a former dual use Benedictine Abbey shared as a parish church from the outset of its construction (Bryant, 1903: 1-2). It was founded in the early twelfth century (Margeson, Seillier and Rogerson, 1994: 49), although there is a vague reference to a Saxon church being demolished here by Bryant (1903: 1-2). It is possible that the plan form at Wymondham reflects contemporary developments in architecture rather than an earlier status as Margeson, Seiller and Rogerson claim that both Wymondham and Binham, another Benedictine house founded in the late eleventh century were heavily influenced by the newly constructed Norwich Cathedral.

The churches of Gressenhall and Attleborough are large buildings both of which have surviving Norman architecture. Neither have been suggested as early ecclesiastical sites or early estate centres, but one tentative piece of evidence for Gressenhall is an undedicated well in the churchyard (Williamson, 1993: 142). Aldeby has surviving Norman architecture and is the only church in this group recorded in Domesday, albeit with a relatively low valuation of 2s and an endowment of 12 acres (230a. Morris, 1984: 20,36), none of which suggests an unusual status.

The remaining churches in this group are relatively late foundations, for example Kings Lynn St Margaret and St James; 1101 and 1130 respectively, St James being a chapel of ease to St Margaret (Richards, 1990: 1). The same can also be said of Heacham, which has no surviving fabric pre-dating the Early English Period (c. 1200-1300) and Snettisham that has no fabric earlier than the Decorated Period (c. 1300-1360), although Williamson claims that the latter was the location of an important royal manor (1993: 154).

A similar church design is plan form 4: cruciform plan, west tower and with or without the addition of aisles. These churches are the most poorly represented in the dataset with only four examples. One of these churches, North Elmham, the only example without a west tower is particularly problematic and has been discussed in Chapter Two (p. 14) and therefore will not be considered here. The remaining three examples of Terrington St Clement, Islington and Swaffham are all located in the west of the region.

Terrington St Clement is the only church of the three which appears to have been planned with a central tower, although this was never built and a detached west tower was constructed instead. This may have been a response to ground conditions not being able to support a crossing tower or simply that funding became a problem. Terrington is also the only church to



have some secondary dating evidence in the form of a fragment of a late Saxon grave slab. It is also very large and elaborate, which may give an indication of its pre-Conquest status. Swaffham St Peter and St Paul is similarly built on a grand scale although the earliest surviving fabric only dates back to the Decorated Period (*c*. 1300-1360). The last example of this plan form is Islington St Mary; a much more modest structure dating entirely from the Early English period from the surviving architecture, although it is the only church out of the three recorded in Domesday. It is thought that this church just represents an unusually complete example of an aisleless Early English church (Batcock, 1991: 5: B14)

Plan form 2: nave, axial tower and chancel is a closely related plan form to those mentioned above. There are 16 examples of this plan type or just fewer than two percent of the dataset (figure 7.6) and without exception they all fall into the Saxo-Norman or Norman date periods. A further three churches may be added to these 16, namely Guestwick, Weybourne and North Walsham. These three churches now fall into different plan form category because of their later medieval extent. However, the archaeological and fabric evidence suggests that these churches were once of a nave, axial tower and chancel configuration.

A number of these churches have been cited as possible minsters that may correspond with early estate centres; these are: Burnham Overy, Lopham (North or South), North Walsham and Bawsey (Williamson, 1993: 93, 152: Penn, 1996: 42-43). The evidence for Bawsey is made even more compelling as it seems to have been sited in a former Iron Age enclosure and was a productive middle Saxon site (Penn, 1996: 43) both of which could be significant for an earlier ecclesiastical site as discussed in Chapter Three.

A number of these churches are recorded in Domesday, although due to vagaries of the survey there is little to suggest that any of those that are recorded are of unusual status. The churches listed are Chedgrave, Flitcham, Gillingham, Melton Constable, Burlingham and North Walsham. Chedgrave has the largest endowment of land at 50 acres and is valued unusually for Norfolk in *orae*, in this case two, which was the equivalent of 40d or 32d (Williams and Martin, 2002: 1434): not exceptional by Norfolk standards. The remaining valuations are between 8d and 10d with between 6 and 30 acres, again nothing of which is unusual for churches recorded by the survey. The only church in Domesday that may have been an estate centre and possible minster church by association is North Walsham which was on the lands of St Benedict of Holme and recorded with 30 acres of land but no valuation (219a. Morris, 1984: 17,38).



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Figure 7.7.Distribution of church plan type 3 (square west tower, nave and chancel).

The next church plans to be considered are those with a continuous plan without a chancel arch: plan form 6D category with the D denoting the absence of a chancel arch (figure 7.6). There are only six examples of this type of church, all of which are very small modest structures and the term single cell could be equally applied. Croxton is the only example mentioned in Domesday, although it is not valued separately. Four of these churches can be placed prior to c. 1200: Croxton and Shingham on primary architectural evidence and Bodney and Little Ringstead on the secondary evidence of an Anglo-Saxon interlace design sculptural fragment on a buttress and the discovery of a tenth/eleventh century wheel cross fragment respectively. The remainder of the churches in the plan form 6 category (with a chancel arch) amount to a mere 20 examples, almost half of which can be placed in the period up to c.1200 on primary and secondary dating evidence.

The remaining church plan forms represent the most numerous examples. Plan form 3: square west tower, nave and chancel, with or without the addition of an aisle or aisles is the most common plan form in the county with 516 churches or 62 percent of the dataset. These types of churches can be accounted for in every date period from Saxo-Norman through to the Perpendicular. Nearly half of these churches, 250 in total, have surviving architectural and sculptural evidence that can place them in the period prior to c.1200. These types of churches are evenly distributed across the county as illustrated on figure 7.7.

Another common church plan is the round west tower with a nave and chancel (plan form 5) as discussed in Chapter Five. Such churches may sometimes be enlarged by the addition of an aisle or aisles. There are 133 churches of this plan type in the county (figure 7.8), representing 16 percent of the total. A further 14 churches with ruinous or fragmentary remains of former round towers including those discovered by archaeological investigation are also incorporated within this total. A further six churches Ashby, Brinton, Briston, Great Moulton, Kirby Bedon (St Andrew) and West Beckham could have been also been included in the dataset as they once had a round west tower. However, they have not been included because the evidence for these former towers cannot be verified or the later extent of the churches places them in a different plan form category. A good example of this is Ashby church, now only evident from aerial photographs (figure 7.9). This clearly shows that the later medieval church with a square west tower that was built over an earlier round tower church (Batcock, 1991: 156).



z





Figure 7.8. Distribution of church plan type 5 (round tower, nave and chancel).
Unlike the more common square west tower plan churches, round tower churches have a more distinctive distribution with the large majority of them being located in the eastern half of the county with the highest concentrations in the hundreds of Humbleyard, Henstead, Depwade and Clavering. A further concentration can also be noted along the boundary of the hundreds of North and South Erpingham. In the west of the county there are no such marked concentrations although round west tower churches are more common in Grimshoe hundred in the southwest and the hundreds of Docking, Smithdon and Brothercross in the northwest.



Figure 7.9. Crop marks showing the original round tower at Ashby church (Batcock, 1991: 156).

7.2 Documentary Evidence

7.2.1 Early Charters

Norfolk has very little documentary evidence prior to Domesday. The few early charters that do survive are only dated to the period of the c.1040s and therefore only give a picture of church building some 40 years prior to 1086. The locations of the churches mentioned in these early charters are shown on figure 7.10. There are 39 such churches, 14 of which are

also mentioned in Domesday. Potentially this adds a further 25 churches to the Domesday total of 231 recorded in 1086.

With the exception of Tottington in southwest Norfolk the churches mentioned in early charters are all located in the eastern half of the county, with two small clusters adjacent the large parish of Wymondham and a much larger grouping in the northeast, approximately following the course of the Bure valley. The concentrations of churches is not easily explained and may simply be down to an accident of survival, or the fact that more charters were written in the east of the county than in the west.

7.2.2 Domesday Churches

By the central medieval period there were 831 churches in rural Norfolk. The Valuation of Norwich in 1254 lists 764 (Lunt, 1926; Hudson, 1910). Domesday however, only records 231 rural churches, a mere 28 percent of the later medieval total. Within this number are seven churches which are only included because a priest is mentioned in the Domesday entry. Of course, it is impossible to know whether there were churches at the locations where only a priest was mentioned, but it seems probable that a priest would only be present if there was a church nearby.

As discussed in Chapter Three the usual evidence from which minsters can be identified in Domesday are rarely found in the Norfolk entries, with only two possible exceptions at Thetford and Dickleburgh. Little Domesday makes no reference to soul-scot or church-scot and no dependent churches are mentioned. Even the use of larger than average endowments of land are of limited value and out of the 40 churches with 40 acres or more put forward by Williamson only five have been identified as potential churches with superior status: Thetford St Mary, Reedham, Loddon, Elmham and Stow Bardolph.

Further possible minsters are apparent if a lower land endowment is considered. For example, Dickleburgh and North Walsham, identified as possible minsters from other evidence only have endowments of 30 acres. Similarly the valuations recorded by the survey cannot add to the identification of minsters because valuations are so haphazardly recorded with some churches valued separately and some valued with their manors. It is difficult to see any patterns at all and in many instances the valuation is not proportional to the land endowment.









It is not unreasonable therefore to suggest that Domesday does not identify more than a few churches with an unusual status. The true value of Domesday however is what it can illustrate in terms of local church provision at the end of the eleventh century. The number of churches recorded combined with evidence of church fabric does show that local church provision in Norfolk was perhaps more advanced than many other areas of the country in 1086.

The locations of the churches listed in Domesday are shown on figure 7.11. There is little that can be read into these locations due to the haphazard way in which churches are recorded; therefore figure 7.11 is more likely to illustrate administrative variety more than anything else. Nevertheless, some trends are apparent and it is clear that more churches were recorded in the east of the county, with higher concentrations in two areas: the three hundreds of Humbleyard, Henstead and Depwade in the southeast, and in northeast along the coast and inland, roughly centred on North Walsham, an area which roughly corresponds with the hundreds of Tunstead and North and South Erpingham. The remainder of the eastern part of the county appears to have no obvious pattern with only occasional small clusters evident. The west of the county is more sparsely recorded and again has no obvious pattern. The only concentration in the west of the county is that focussed upon the parishes of Wormegay and Shouldham, all within the hundred of Clackclose. West Walton is the only church recorded in the Marshlands area, and then it has only been listed as half a church in Domesday (274b. Morris, 1984: 66,21).

7.2.3 Post-Conquest documentary sources

As discussed in Chapter Three the later medieval valuations namely the Valuation of Norwich (1254) and the Valuation of Pope Nicholas (1291) are both complex documents which constitute a research topic on their own. So just a summary of the information they contain is attempted here. There are two versions of the 1254 Valuation of Norwich, Hudson (1910) and Lunt (1926). The former includes a comparison between the 1254 valuation and the later 1291 valuation allowing for comparisons to be made between the two. Previous studies that have used these valuations have focussed on either the valuations of the churches listed (Parsons, 1996) or the evidence of chapelries and pensions which have then been used to reconstruct minster *parochiae* (Croom, 1988).

The 1254 Valuation of Norwich records 764 churches in rural Norfolk not including Thetford and Norwich. This represents a substantial increase from the totals recorded in Domesday but

it is still 67 churches short of the total 831 that once existed. A number of these omissions can be explained by some churches not being very long-lived, for example only one of the two churches recorded at Barton Turf in Domesday is valued in 1254 and it seems likely that one of these churches disappeared during the period between both these documents being written. There are other similar examples where one church is valued in 1254, but there were two churches are recorded 1086 e.g. Tivetshall St Mary and St Margaret. Here both churches survive to the present day therefore the churches may have been valued together, or alternatively, as Hudson suggests, one of the benefices may have been to small to be valued at all (1910: 72), although the valuation does not explicitly state this. A further possibility for the omission of a church is that it may not have been constructed by 1254. This may be a possibility at the parishes of North and South Lopham, recorded as a Lopham in Domesday. Here the parish church of North Lopham (St Nicholas) with no fabric earlier than c. 1300 may be an indication of this.

Given that the Domesday evidence discussed above has so little information that can be used for the identification of potential minster churches can a document written some 168 years later reflect any earlier arrangements in the landscape? To assess this the ways in which this document has been examined before needs to be considered for the Norfolk evidence.

The 1254 Valuation only records 13 chapelries which are listed in one of three ways:

- Listed next to a church entry *cum capella*, Wroxham for instance where the chapel is thought to be Salhouse, one of the two churches recorded by Domesday now in Salhouse parish.
- Listed with a church but specifically mentioned by name for example, the chapels of St Margaret's church in King's Lynn, namely St Nicholas and St James.
- Recorded as a chapel of a named church e.g. '*Sci Alberti Capellanus de Depedale*' St Ethelbert (Burnham Sutton) the chapel of Burnham Deepdale.

The latter is the only chapel of the 13 mentioned that is associated with a church that has been previously suggested as a potential early estate centre (Williamson, 1993: 93). The remaining examples appear to be relatively late additions to the landscape as in the case of St Nicholas and St James as discussed above.

The valuations listed in 1254 document are made up of three parts. The value of the benefice, the portions which were separate from the benefice and lastly the temporal goods that belong

to religious persons (Hudson, 1910: 63). These valuations give an idea of the income of a particular church in the diocese and it is this income that is often cited as evidence of earlier status e.g. Parsons (1996). The problem with this document and the Norfolk evidence is that due to the sheer number of churches recorded understanding the valuations is a formidable problem, especially as they are not made according to modern ideas of statistical accuracy (Hudson, 1910: 65). Broadly speaking the churches in the archdeaconry of Norwich are on average valued higher than those in the archdeaconry of Norfolk (Hudson, 1910: 67) therefore this will be reflected in any valuations given for individual churches. Also the valuations differ across the individual deaneries meaning that the highest church valuation in the deanery of Taverham was £9, 6s, 8d (Hellesdon), while the highest valuation in the deanery of Ingworth was £33, 6s, 8d (Aylsham). Such variations make it difficult to compare findings across the different deaneries and therefore such evidence is more useful at a local level of consideration and will be considered with the case studies in Chapter Ten.

The final strand of evidence from the 1254 valuation is that of pensions, or payments from one church to another which may represent a former dependence (Croom, 1988: 68). Again the document for Norfolk lists very few such entries. In the Archdeaconry of Norwich there are five such entries each in the following deaneries: Holt, Walsingham, Flegg, Toftrees and Lynn. A similar pattern is also apparent in the Archadeaconry of Norfolk where there are six entries: three in Hingham deanery and single entries in the deaneries of Depwade, Burnham and Redenhall. It is difficult to see how any of these entries can be evidence of an earlier system of parochial care, as most entries seem to relate to later monastic houses. For example, Warham St Mary in Walsingham deanery paid a separate pension to the *Abbatis de Fontem* (Hudson 1910: 99). The same is also true of Burnham St Clements in the deanery of Burnham that paid a pension to the Prior of Wymondham (Hudson, 1910: 123). Other examples illustrate similar circumstances. These entries all seem to indicate later arrangements and the fact that they are so infrequently recorded means that they may only make sense at a more local level of consideration.

7.3 Discussion

Figure 7.12 below is a summary of the findings from the fabric and documentary evidence explored in this chapter. The actual numbers of churches recorded in each of the fabric categories are shown in brackets. The totals shown in brackets also include churches recorded

in Domesday or early charters; therefore the latter have been deducted from the overall totals to arrive at the actual number of churches identified from architectural evidence alone.

Type of evidence	Number of churches	Expressed as percentage of later medieval total (831 churches)
Saxo-Norman fabric	78 (122)	9
Norman fabric	118 (168)	14
Secondary fabric evidence	22 (49)	3
Domesday Book	231	28
Early Charters	25	3
Total	474	57

Figure 7.12 Summary of church data. Note numbers in brackets in column two indicate figure before churches in Domesday and early charters are deducted.

The churches identified from architectural evidence alone illustrate the value of such data and add a further 218 churches to the existing number attested by Domesday and early charters. This means with fabric and documentary evidence combined at least 474 churches can be confidently placed in the period c. 1050-1200, which represents 57 percent of the later medieval total.

The use of GIS has enabled the various data sets to be plotted in the landscape revealing some interesting distribution patterns. The edge of the West Norfolk Marshlands for example is well endowed with churches from the evidence of Domesday but where is the Saxo-Norman architectural evidence for them? Only one church, Bexwell in the Hundred of Clackclose is in both data sets. However, if the Norman architectural evidence is considered many of the Domesday churches are visible again. Of course this may simply be an accident of survival, although it could equally mean that these churches were built or rebuilt in the Norman style in the period between the Conquest and Domesday. A further possibility is that the Norman churches had already replaced earlier timber churches by 1086 and it is these that were recorded in the survey. Another interesting distribution pattern is evident on the far east of the county. Here the Norman style churches are further east than the Saxo-Norman churches or those mentioned in Domesday. This may represent a real chronological difference reflecting the development of new parishes and the expansion of population.

The GIS also demonstrates how difficult the Domesday and early charter evidence is to interpret. The Domesday pattern may illustrate nothing more than just the inconsistencies of

the document. However, the patterns of incompleteness shown do seem to correlate with the architectural evidence especially on the claylands of the central watershed. Here fewer churches are recorded in 1086 corresponding with an area sparse in Saxo-Norman architecture, but richer in Norman architecture, which again may indicate the formation of new parishes.

A further way in which the architectural data has been explored is by the frequency and distribution of the different plan forms of churches in the county. This has shown the relative rarity of some plan forms and the regional distributions of the more common ones, which is no better illustrated than with the round tower churches.

The concentration of round churches in the eastern half of the county is very similar to the distribution patterns shown in the Domesday Book particularly in the area represented by the hundreds of Henstead, Depwade and Humbleyard. Why this should be requires further consideration. It does not seem to relate to the availability of building materials as flint and local outcrops of Puddingstone and sandstone can be sourced in most parts of the county; a round-towered church could be built more or less anywhere. However, this was not the case; they were largely constructed in the southeast and a smaller concentration in the northeast of the county.

It could be that the survival rate of these churches in the east was greater than those in the west, or that there was more of a tradition of timber church building in the west of the county than there was in the east. It is unlikely that if there were a great number of round towered churches in the west of the region they would have been so completely erased from the archaeological record. It can be convincingly argued that the Saxo-Norman technique of building round towers was more of a regional style, largely confined to the eastern half of the county. Where on occasion round towered churches are evident in the west of the county they are seldom in isolation and are usually found in either pairs or in groups of three: for example the round towered churches of East and West Lexham (see figure 5.3) in the Hundred of Launditch and also the group at Merton, Threxton and Watton in the Hundred of Wayland which are all within a 3km of one another. This small group is interesting in that both Merton and Watton are mentioned in Domesday but Merton is Saxo-Norman in style and Watton is distinctly Norman, again highlighting the fact that both of these architectural styles co-existed together.

The plan form type 2 churches with a nave, axial tower and chancel are another group of buildings that without exception can be placed in the period before *c*.1200. There are two distinctive church types in this group; firstly those churches in the Saxo-Norman tradition such as Newton-by-Castle Acre (figure 7.13) and Little Snarehill. These churches are relatively small and are thought to represent a once common form of European minor church building of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Rogerson, Ashley, Williams and Harris, 1987: 78). Then there are the larger churches such as Melton Constable, Bawsey and Fundenhall, which are very much in a more Norman tradition and generally on a much grander scale although they share the same fundamental plan form. Included within this latter group are the churches of Great Dunham, West Barsham and South Lopham which are again much larger than the former group but share the characteristics of both the Saxo-Norman and Norman styles. This again demonstrates how the two styles of architecture are very closely linked in the county in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The present distribution of this church type suggests very little as the sample is too small to be of use statistically. However, there are examples of this church type in all parts of the county and it seems likely that there were once many more. If so why have so few survived? The answer to this may be that fewer were built in the first place. However, if we accept that these churches like the round towers were a common form of minor church design in the period before c. 1200 another answer can be suggested. These two church types are relatively contemporary from the architectural and documentary evidence, but there is a fundamental difference in their design that may have affected their survival rate.

The key to understanding axial tower churches is the adaptability of their plan form. The central position of the tower would have presented later medieval builders with a number of difficulties when adapting these churches to an increasing population and changes in liturgical practise. This means that the addition of a larger nave or chancel is greatly affected by the central position of the axial tower. This may have resulted in the demolition of the axial tower or a change in its function. With a round west tower however, the nave and chancel could have been easily adapted, rebuilt or enlarged in the later medieval period without duly affecting the tower. As a consequence this may be why so few of these axial towered churches have survived when compared to the contemporary round-towered churches.



Figure 7.13. The Saxo-Norman axial tower church at Newton-by-Castle Acre.

Barton-upon-Humber (figure 7.14) is a good example of where the former axial tower now performs the function of a west tower with a galilee (west) porch (the former nave). The earlier chancel has been replaced with a much larger and later medieval structure. Similar kinds of adaptations are rare and only a few examples exist; Langford in Oxfordshire is another (Taylor and Taylor, 1965: 367-372), where the axial tower has been retained in a central position between a later nave, chancel and aisles.

Such adaptations are also evident in Norfolk. At Guestwick (figure 7.15) the remains of the former axial tower are now at the east of the north aisle and may have once served as a north transept (Taylor and Taylor, 1965: 264). North Walsham is a further example where the axial tower survives in the angle between the north aisle and the west tower (Taylor and Taylor, 1965: 630-631) and similarly at Weybourne the remains of the axial tower stand to the northeast of the existing medieval chancel (Taylor and Taylor, 1965: 646-647).



Figure 7.14. Barton-upon-Humber showing the former central axial tower and former nave now re-used as a west tower and Galilee west porch.



Figure 7.15. Guestwick St Peter showing the reuse of a former axial tower now incorporated into the north wall of the chancel and east wall of the north aisle (Taylor and Taylor, 1965: 265).

The infrequent church type in Norfolk is the transeptal plan, either with or without a central tower. This particular plan form has sometimes been used to indicate the earlier status of a church (Blair, 1985; Franklin, 1984; Parsons, 1995, 1996), a point explored in Chapter Six. What can be said of these churches is that a number of them are relatively late foundations, a fact that is supported by documentary evidence. Therefore, St Margaret's and St James' in King's Lynn, although fitting into the period before 1200 have no earlier history.

Wymondham is a monastic foundation, and it is unclear if a church existed here before the abbey. Bryant mentions an Anglo-Saxon church here without citing his source (1905: 235). The remaining churches in this group with a central tower may be a variation of the axial tower plan, especially as four of them are of Norman date, although Heacham and Snettisham cannot be included in this period and are Early English and Decorated periods respectively. The first documentary evidence for these churches is the 1254 Valuation of Norwich.

The three remaining churches with a transeptal plan, but without a central tower all fall into either the Early English period or Decorated period although there is evidence to suggest earlier origins as Islington is mentioned in Domesday and Terrington St Clement has the remains of a late Anglo-Saxon coffin slab built into the south wall of the chancel.

The most common type of church plan form in the county is the square west tower, nave and chancel with the addition of one or more aisles. In this respect the county is very similar to most of parts of England. There are 167 churches in this category in Norfolk that are represented in either Domesday or an early charter or in both, and a further 70 that can be placed in the period up to *c*.1200 from primary architectural evidence with an additional 14 that can be placed before 1200 by secondary dating evidence. In total 251 churches with a square west tower, chancel and nave plan can be placed before 1200, or 48 percent of the total number of churches in this category. These churches appear to be evenly distributed throughout the county so this plan form can be reasonably described as being representative of the increasing prosperity of rural churches in Norfolk. This can be demonstrated from the later architectural evidence starting with the Early English period continuing through to the Perpendicular period. These later periods are represented by 389 churches, of which 138 are accounted for by Domesday, an early charter or by secondary dating evidence.

7.4 Conclusions

When combined with the other dating evidence it has been possible to demonstrate that up to 474 churches were in existence prior to *c*.1200, which represents 57 percent of the later medieval total. Domesday only records 231 churches in 1086 which then means that at least 250 churches were built in the hundred year period after the survey or more realistically, that Domesday is an unreliable record of early churches in Norfolk, a concern already established, though the scale of the discrepancy has not been previously recognised. The difficulties of trying to place churches before or after the Conquest in the context of the Domesday document and architectural evidence has shown to be a complex problem, and trying to place churches before or after the Conquest only serves to rework old arguments. More constructively Domesday must not be viewed as a watershed as it clearly is not, but more of a valuable, but partial documentary record that is written about half way through a period in which many churches were being constructed or rebuilt in more permanent materials.

Similarly the fabric of the churches themselves must not be viewed in a rigid manner as either Saxo-Norman or Norman, which has often been the case with round towered churches. The evidence suggests that both Saxo-Norman and Norman styles overlap, and are potentially both in use until about c.1200. These styles are not used in separation as mixtures of both are often found in the same structure. Plan form can also be included in this dual use as the minor church plan of the axial tower is continued in the Norman style but on a grander scale, although still using some details borrowed from the Saxo-Norman style.

The architectural and documentary evidence and the distribution patterns that they exhibit will have more meaning when combined with the archaeological evidence and settlement data explored in the following chapters, but one thing they do demonstrate is that there were substantially more churches offering pastoral care in the landscape than previously recognised in the county c. 1050-1200.

Chapter Eight: Archaeological Evidence

The use of archaeological data to supplement settlement and church evidence is essential when trying to understand the earlier circumstances and organisation of the early medieval landscape. In many instances the archaeological data is the only way in which the gaps left by a poor documentary record and eighteenth and nineteenth century map evidence can be bridged. In Norfolk the vast majority of the archaeological information relating to settlement has been collected by field-walking and metal-detecting, although some settlement data has also been recovered from detailed archaeological excavations, e.g. North Elmham (Wade-Martins, 1980a) and Middle Harling (Rogerson, 1995). However, excavations of this nature are rare and the majority of archaeological data is still derived from surface finds, for example Silvester (1988a) and Davison (1990).

Norfolk is fortunate in having one of the richest SMRs in the country and there are two reasons for this. Firstly Norfolk is still a relatively rural county, meaning that vast tracts of land are available for archaeological activities such as field-walking and metal-detecting. Secondly the county SMR enjoys a good relationship with local metal-detecting and field-walking groups, resulting in accurate recording and identification of recovered artefacts. A consequence of this relationship is an SMR that is a constantly changing resource for the landscape archaeologist.

8.1 Metal-detecting

The large quantity of metalwork finds in Norfolk are attributable to the activities of the five detecting clubs operating in the county, and more importantly the reporting of these finds to the SMR, most recently through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Between 1975-90 the number of metalwork finds recovered from metal detecting accounted for 47 percent of the metal artefacts found, whilst field walking only accounted for 28 percent; development and dyke cutting accounted for the final 14 and 11 percentages respectively (www.britarch.ac.uk/detecting/fig20). In 1997 Gurney quoted an equally impressive set of statistics. The various artefact types and the percentage of recorded finds in the SMR discovered from metal detecting alone were: early Saxon brooches 78 percent, middle Saxon pins 89 percent, medieval buckles 87 percent and all metalwork hoards 93 percent. (1997: 529). At face value these figures sound impressive. However, as figure 8.1 shows the

distribution of these recorded metal-detector events per parish in 1997 is not as good as the statistics suggest and metal detector coverage in the county can be at best only classed as intermittent. There are numerous blank areas attributable to a landowner, authority or an institution where detecting is not permitted or wooded areas devoid of known activity (Gurney, 1997: 530). The overall result is that the majority of Norfolk parishes have less than twenty recorded detecting events. There are however some exceptions to this: North Creake (55), Quidenham (107) and Brampton (76) for instance (Gurney, 1997: 530-531). The reason for these higher totals appears to be due to a local detectorist group, or the fact that once something has been discovered in a parish it will be visited more frequently (Gurney, 1997: 531).



Figure 8.1. Metal-detecting recorded events in Norfolk for 1997 (Gurney, 1997: 530).

The question is are these inconsistent and diverse range of results of any value to landscape research as they appear to be more reflective of fieldwork activities and not settlement distribution? At a county level Gurney argues that they are and comments that the SMR can generate distributions and patterns of recorded artefacts that can be contrasted with the reported metal detecting activity; therefore the presence or absence of an artefact type in areas of more intensive metal detecting can be significant (Gurney. 1997: 529). Similarly Margeson claims that a concentration of metalwork finds may reveal evidence for local workshops (1992: 29).

One important aspect of the landscape that metal detecting has helped identify from the distribution of middle Saxon metalwork has been 'productive sites'. The first of these was discovered by stray metalwork finds at Brandon on the Norfolk-Suffolk border (Carr, Tester and Murphy, 1988). Since then a number of other sites have been discovered, which are largely confined to the northwest of the county: Bawsey, Burnham, Congham, Rudham, West Walton and Wormegay (Rogerson, 2003: 112), although other similar sites have also been found at Middle Harling (Rogerson, 1995), Hindringham (Pestell, 2003) and Caistor St Edmund (Pestell, 2003). The exact nature of these sites is still controversial and a number of theories have been suggested for their use, such as markets, monastic sites and aristocratic or royal centres (Rogerson, 2003: 120-121). These arguments may only be resolved when one or more of these sites are excavated.

One aspect of the west Norfolk evidence is that these productive sites have proved to be a useful comparison with the surrounding area. For example, these sites have a total of 49 middle Saxon coin finds. In contrast only 29 of the 102 rural parishes in the same area have middle Saxon coin evidence; of these 13 are just single coins. Rogerson asserts that some of this imbalance may be down to a lack of metal-detecting. However, he adds that many of the non-coin parishes have had some metal detecting done (2003: 12). This could suggest that middle Saxon coinage may indeed be quite rare outside of these 'productive sites'.

8.2 Field-walking

Ceramics are one of the most instructive forms of archaeological evidence, from which the large majority of data has been recovered through field-walking. Like metalwork, pottery sherds are surface evidence and therefore are not recovered from a specific context, but where there are concentrations of scatters settlement or some kind of activity may be indicated. There are many problems associated with the interpretation of field-walking data and most of these revolve around what exactly constitutes a settlement site. Usually it is defined as a significant concentration of pottery sherds. However, such concentrations may not always relate to settlement as they may also be caused by the accumulation of manuring material in the corner of fields, or the result of off-site rubbish disposal (Williamson, 1994b: 6). Other factors such as time spent field-walking and prevailing field conditions can also affect the number of sherds recovered (Wade-Martins, 1980a: 5).

These considerations are of particular relevance in Norfolk where the quantity of pottery recovered from the middle Saxon period is usually much lower than the late Saxon period. Davison suggests that seven pieces of Ipswich-type ware found in close proximity could be deemed to indicate a site, whereas seven pieces of later medieval pottery would not (1990: 12). Lawson's view differs and he comments that even though Ipswich-type ware is so sparse in surface collections, not every find spot can be viewed as a site of a settlement, but must in part also represent refuse disposal on arable fields away from the settlement (1983: 70). This view is also taken by Rogerson who suggests that even with a scatter of 133 sherds in the parish of Barton Bendish it was still not possible to deem any concentrations with the title of a 'site' (1997: 21).

The late Saxon period is marked by the arrival of Thetford-type ware which is extremely common in use and breakage resulting in easily locatable and identifiable settlement sites (Rogerson, 1997: 21). This increase in Thetford-type ware can be illustrated in Witton where the quantity found was almost five times larger than that of Ipswich-type ware (Lawson, 1983: 73).

8.3 The Pottery

Even with the caveats of site identification the main advantage with landscape archaeology in East Anglia is the fact that the ceramics used in the middle and late Saxon periods are quite distinctive and easily identifiable. The middle Saxon period was dominated by Ipswich-type wares named after the kilns discovered in the town. Thetford-type wares dominated the late Saxon or Saxo-Norman period where a number of production sites are known including the type site of Thetford. The latter also includes St Neots-type wares and Stamford-type wares. Hurst suggests that on most domestic sites where the kiln source cannot be determined the general term Thetford-type ware should be applied (1976: 287). The SMR data for the purposes of this research has been categorised as either middle or late Saxon pottery and in this respect the chronology of Ipswich-type ware and Thetford-type ware will apply.

8.3.1 Ipswich-Type Ware

Ipswich-type ware was made on a slow hand-turned wheel, giving it characteristic grooves, a thick profile and a slightly uneven appearance. In contrast to early Saxon pottery it was fired at a much higher temperature in proper kilns where heat and airflow could be maintained.

This resulted in a reduced grey fabric with a number of burnished or gritty surface finishes (Hurst, 1976: 299). Ipswich-type ware vessels also have a characteristic sagging base and evidence of knife trimming where the vessels were removed from the turning wheel. The name Ipswich-type ware derives from the first place it was recognised in two kiln sites in the Cox Lane area of the town (Blinkhorn, 1989: 12). Since then a further kiln site discovered in the Buttermarket area of Ipswich has greatly improved our understanding of this ware. In the Buttermarket discovery the Ipswich-type ware was different from that previously excavated. The jars and pitchers (only one bowl was discovered) were different from the standard forms. The jars were squatter with thinner walls also the pitchers had longer and broader strap handles. However, the most significant find was that of a number of highly decorated bottles, which were quite unlike anything else produced. In the opinion of Blinkhorn these were the finest vessels made in the Ipswich ware tradition (1989: 14). Even with the discovery of these three kiln sites in Ipswich which have undoubtedly increased our knowledge of production, manufacture and materials used it is still not possible to narrow the chronology down to anything more accurate than between c. 650-850, although Blinkhorn has tentatively suggested that the Buttermarket kiln may have been in use between c.800-850 given the context in which it was found (1989: 16). This represents the very last period of the Ipswichtype ware tradition immediately before the transition to Thetford-type ware.

8.3.2 Thetford-Type ware

This type of ware was made on a fast wheel and fired in fully developed kilns (Hurst, 1976: 314). Its method of manufacture allowed for thinner walled and taller vessels. The main production centres for this type of ware were based in the urban centres of Thetford, Norwich and Ipswich, but in its later phase it was also made in rural sites such as those discovered at Langhale and Grimston, both in Norfolk (Hurst, 1976: 314). Again, like Ipswich-type ware, Thetford-type ware is predominantly domestic vessels such as pitchers, bowls and storage vessels made from mainly a well-fired grey sandy fabric (Hurst 1976: 314).

Thetford-type ware is far more common than Ipswich-type ware and with more Thetford-type ware kiln sites having been excavated it figures that it should be more closely dateable. However, this is not the case and the kilns sites so far excavated in Thetford, Norwich and the rural centre at Langhale have all failed to produce dating evidence more accurate than Hurst's dating sequence of c. 850-1150. This problem is due to a number of factors; the most significant is that the kiln sites discovered have been limited to very small-scale excavations,

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largely due to the archaeological work being a response to modern development. Therefore it was not possible to view the kiln sites in the context of the surrounding area, which limited the possibility of more accurate dating. A further result of these limited excavations is that the relationship between Thetford and the other urban centres of production at Ipswich and Norwich is still poorly understood, and it is by no means clear which centre started production first (Rogerson & Dallas, 1984: 126). Similarly it is not apparent when the Thetford-type ware tradition ended. Rogerson and Dallas suggest that from the excavations in Thetford it is possible to observe an overlap with the early medieval wares for some time, but they are unable confirm a date of continuing production after c. 1150 (1984, 126). One thing we do know is that the Thetford excavations seem to indicate there were distinct changes in style within the tradition. Further excavation and research may at some time in the future be able to use these stylistic indicators to suggest a more accurate dating chronology.

8.4 The Metalwork

The SMR contains 3868 find spots for Middle Saxon and Late Saxon metalwork objects or 1307 and 2561 respectively. The range of material covered is extensive and includes many everyday items such as brooches, coins, strap fittings, buckles and mounts. It also includes less common objects such as swords and styli. The main problems with this evidence are that most of the artefacts were recovered from the plough soil and consequently have no context. Potentially this makes dating of objects more challenging. Dating therefore has to rely on arthistorical and typological criteria and associations with coin hoards such as the Trewhiddle hoard (Margeson, 1992: 30). Even with these caveats the material does offer an insight into middle and late Saxon society that would not be possible by other methods.

8.4.1 Middle Saxon Metalwork

The most numerous middle Saxon metalwork artefacts found in the county are brooches of varying styles: caterpillar or ansate type (figure 8.2), cast disc type or the higher status silver disc type found in a hoard at Pentney (Margeson, 1992: 30).



Figure 8.2. An eighth century ansate brooch from Bawsey with ring and dot decoration. Scale 1:1 (Margeson, 1992: 30).

Other common items include pins, hooked tags and strap ends. The evidence from just the various brooches has given new insights into the period, because it represents many levels of Anglo-Saxon society, which cannot be achieved with ceramic evidence alone. The lower status material is illustrated by copper alloy and pewter items, whilst the high status pieces can be made from silver with enamelling or niello panel decoration (Margeson, 1992: 35). Margeson argues that the silver disc brooch type seem to have been made in pairs which indicates a degree of mass production not previously known. She also argues that the group of cast disc type brooches are found so commonly in East Anglia that they may have been produced there (1992: 30-31). This latter point is difficult to substantiate, and Margeson has not considered that they may have been imported from a different part of the country in large numbers.

8.4.2 Late Saxon Metalwork

The most common late Saxon metalwork finds are again dress fittings in the form of brooches, hooked tags and strap ends, which Margeson comments fall into fairly standard groups suggesting mass production. She also asserts that most of the metalwork finds in this period are made of cheaper metal such as lead and pewter with far less gold and silver than in the middle Saxon period (1992: 33). Common brooches in this period are nummular brooches based on coin prototypes with those found in Norfolk distinctive and different to those recovered elsewhere in the country (Margeson 1992: 33). Other common finds are tenth century disc brooches easily recognised by their method of fixing and their design which derives from the Scandinavian interlaced Borre style (Margeson 1996: 52). There are also other brooch types that can be classed as imports such as trefoil brooches (figure 8.3) and lozenge-shaped brooches especially with Borre style decoration.



Figure 8.3. A tenth century trefoil brooch from Colton, Norfolk. Scale 1:1 (Margeson, 1996: 53).

Identification becomes more complex when these types of brooch differ from the Scandinavian form. Some brooches for instance only have a single lug fitting for attaching to clothing, as opposed to the two lug Scandinavian types. Margeson (1996: 54) claims this may indicate that a local craftsman has copied an imported brooch type, although it is difficult to see how this can be substantiated. The boundary between Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon types of metalwork becomes even more blurred by the eleventh century, as illustrated by box mounts from the period, which are a common find in Norfolk (figure 8.4).



Figure 8.4. A late Saxon sub-triangular mount from Swafield decorated with a lion-like quadruped in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Scale 1: 1 (Margeson, 1986: 325)

These mounts display both Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon decorative elements and are perhaps best described as Anglo-Scandinavian. Some of these mounts such as those found in Belaugh, Skeyton, Swafield and Walpole St Peter are decorated with a lion-like creature that is an Anglo-Saxon decorative device (Margeson, 1986: 327), while others such as the mount recovered from Martham have openwork in the Winchester style with elements of the Ringerike style, and are therefore Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian. In contrast there are other mounts such as those from Walsingham and Horsham, which are distinctly Ringerike style and are thus more Scandinavian in character (Margeson, 1986: 326). These latter examples show the difficulties associated with the identification of such objects from an art-historical point of view and it is only when more of these items are recovered from an archaeological context that it may be possible to refine dating criteria.

8.4.3 Coins

Coins appear to have received less attention than other metalwork items such as brooches and pins. Potentially one reason for this is that in the middle Saxon period goods and services were still organised largely around the payment of customary renders, therefore coinage was perhaps used less in rural areas (Williamson, 1993: 81). This to some extent is reflected by the evidence, with only 158 middle Saxon coins recovered in the county, 49 of which have been from 'productive sites' as mentioned above (Rogerson, 2003: 111). The late Saxon period has more coins finds spots than the middle Saxon period: 245 as opposed to 193. However, very little has been published about the distribution of late Saxon coinage, and even the recent paper by Pestell (2003) on the afterlife of productive sites in the late Saxon and Norman periods does not discuss either late Saxon pottery or coin evidence.

8.5 SMR Data

The archaeological finds recorded in the database have been shown on figures 8.5 to 8.8. These maps illustrate the actual frequency of find spots per parish and not the actual number of finds discovered. The most common number of find spots per parish is between one and five. This is illustrated with middle Saxon pottery, where 99 parishes have 1 find spot, 57 parishes have 2 find spots, 30 parishes have 3 find spots, 18 parishes have 4 find spots and 4 parishes have 5 find spots. A similar pattern is revealed if late Saxon pottery or metal work is used for instance. The difficulty with this type of information is displaying it in a useful manner. Parishes represented by a different colour for each number of find spots within them would not only look confusing, the sheer volume of data is difficult to interpret. Therefore, a series of ranges to show the quality of data for each parish was deemed more appropriate. The ranges chosen are listed below:

1-5 6-15

16-25

Greater than 25.



Figure 8.5. The distribution of middle Saxon pottery finds spots frequencies.







Figure 8.8. The distribution of late Saxon metalwork finds spots frequencies.

Finds as a percentage. Find spots range	Middle Saxon Pottery	Middle Saxon Metalwork	Late Saxon Pottery	Late Saxon Metalwork
0	72	65	56	55
1-5	25.5	27	34	29
6-15	2	6	8.5	12
16-25	0.25	1	1	2
>25	0.25	1	0.5	2

Figure 8.9. Summary of finds spots ranges in relation to parishes

Figure 8.9 shows how this data has been interpreted. Middle Saxon pottery and metalwork are represented in a similar percentage of parishes, although metalwork is slightly higher due to a greater number of finds spots. The same is also true of late Saxon metalwork and pottery where the percentage of parishes represented is broadly the same, although there are a higher number of parishes represented due to the greater abundance of late Saxon material. The one thing that cannot be addressed by presenting the data in this way is that metalwork from the late Saxon period cannot be differentiated into Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Scandinavian or Scandinavian typologies because such a high degree of interrogation on the SMR is complex and the results presented would be difficult to interpret.

In both datasets there are a number of parishes that have a higher number of finds spots, particularly with pottery, than parishes around them. Several of these parishes have been subjected to intensive archaeological survey and this explains the higher totals. Terrington St Clements, Tilney All Saints and Walpole St Peter in the western Marshlands for instance were all included within the Fenland Project (Silvester, 1988a). There are some parishes however which have not been subjected to such detailed archaeological survey but still show a high frequency of finds spots. These may simply be the result of an active group of amateur field-walkers and metal-detectorists but they do illustrate the archaeological potential of the county. One such example is the recently identified productive site at Congham where small-scale and casual collections of middle Saxon pottery and metalwork have largely been the result of amateur involvement (Rogerson, 2003: 115-116).

8.6 Discussion

It has already been suggested that the evidence of finds spot frequencies for pottery and metal-work seem to be a reflection of the extent of field-walking and metal-detecting events in the county, with any gaps in the data not representing a lack of evidence, but simply a failure to recover it. To an extent this is true and broadly speaking Gurney's 1997 map, discussed above (figure 8.1) is little different from the metalwork find spot frequencies plotted on figures 8.6 and 8.8 generated by GIS in 2005. A similar pattern is repeated with the pottery evidence which seems to indicate that field-walking and metal detecting have been carried out in similar areas, although one noticeable trend is the lower frequency of middle Saxon pottery finds spots, which may imply a lower circulation than the later Thetford-type ware, which is very widely distributed, and in much greater quantities.

However, does this incomplete coverage devalue the evidence the data represents? In some respects it does, as very little can be said of a parish with only one pottery find spot or metal artefact. Even where a more systematic approach has been taken, such as the areas covered by the Fenland Project, this can only reflect local circumstances, as areas of settlement on the Fen edge may have evolved very differently from those on the central claylands for instance. This makes it difficult to speculate what a comprehensive range of metalwork and pottery can tell us about areas where the evidence has only been recovered in a haphazard way or has not been recovered at all. At a county level this evidence has to be used with caution. The true value of this data can only be seen at a local level and this is especially evident in the parishes that have been systematically covered by the Fenland project or similar archaeological investigations.

One such example is the parish of Terrington St Clement where the largely unknown middle Saxon settlement of Hay Green was recognised from pottery data recovered from an area in excess of seven hectares, which had a total of over 1000 sherds of Ipswich-type ware. However, there was not a similar abundance of Thetford-type ware which implies the later Saxon site was located elsewhere (Silvester, 1988a: 37). The Thetford-type ware seems to have been concentrated around the area of the modern village and is a classic example of a settlement that has apparently moved position in the middle Saxon period. Without this systematic approach to field-walking taken by the Fenland Project such findings would not have been possible. Similar projects elsewhere have also demonstrated a degree of settlement migration, for example, some of the settlements in Launditch Hundred, discussed in the

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Chapter Four (Wade-Martins, 1980b). Again this would not have been possible without systematic pottery recovery.

In terms of the metalwork the distributions of both the middle and late Saxon material follow a similar pattern to the equivalent pottery data, although with a higher frequency of finds spots. The evidence the metalwork data illustrates is difficult to assess. Margeson claims it could imply mass production and regionality for the middle Saxon period. However, the main contribution from stray metalwork finds from this period is the fact that they have demonstrated evidence of a new archaeological feature, the 'productive site'.

Late Saxon period metalwork is similarly open to a number of interpretations, especially from the tenth century onwards. This is because the arguments for ethnicity and population numbers, previously engaged with Scandinavian place-names, have now been applied to stray metalwork finds. In Norfolk two views have been offered. Margeson sees the Scandinavian artefacts as a reflection of close cultural contacts with the Viking homelands, but adds that there are now sufficient items to see patterns emerge and even point to specific areas of the homelands such as Hedeby (1996: 56). She adds that coins and weights found indicate trading activities (1996: 56). Williamson's argument follows similar lines as he suggests that the metalwork artefacts need not indicate anything more than trade with Scandinavia or the presence of a small Danish elite (1993: 107).

Both points are equally valid but neither addresses the contemporary purely Anglo-Saxon material and the Anglo-Scandinavian material that is evident from the brooches and the box mounts mentioned above. The fact that there are purely Scandinavian brooch forms confirms trade. Many of the Scandinavian brooches recovered are also very worn suggesting a long period of use. However, the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian material clearly shows that there was a taste for both styles, the fact that most finds are of a lower quality than some of the middle Saxon metalwork could suggest the level of society represented by these items was showing an increasing consumption of purchased or traded goods in the late Saxon period. This may also be confirmed by the fact that higher status items are found in lower quantities. Alternatively it could be simply that higher status items were lost less frequently, or due to the materials they were made from were simply recycled. However, the most probable scenario is that the quality of the late Saxon period items show an ever increasing amount of mass production taking place, which seems to have started in the middle Saxon period from the evidence recovered from productive sites.

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8.7 Conclusions

The archaeological evidence discussed above offers a number of insights into Saxon society and settlement. At a county level the data shows the quality of information that each parish offers. To fully understand the data it is perhaps best to look at it in a more local context where the findings about settlement and society will have more meaning. The case studies in Chapter Ten will help to pull the evidence together as both pottery and metalwork finds will be considered with the other evidence presented in this research.

Chapter Nine: Settlement Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the data relating to modern and archaeological evidence of fixed primary settlements to which place-names can be attached. There are 822 primary settlements included in the database, which are located within 723 rural parishes.114 of these settlements are classed as townships, or an additional settlement within a parish. The classification system used to standardise this data and how it is mapped has been fully explained in Chapter Six. The data is explored in three ways: predominant settlement type, place-name classification and place-name origin i.e. whether the place-name is Old English, Old Scandinavian or a combination of the two. The data is plotted through GIS, which can be used to illustrate any trends or clustering apparent in distribution patterns. The data is plotted by the predominant settlement present in each parish as detailed in Chapter Six. While this may not represent all the data present in the landscape, at a general county level it can illustrate settlement trends and how they relate to parish units far more clearly than a more traditional "dots on a map" approach.

9.1 Settlement Types

There are six main settlement types included within the database. These are farmstead clusters, common edge settlements, interrupted rows nucleated clusters, regular rows and DMVs. These settlement types will be discussed with the use of figure 9.2, which illustrates the main soil types and regions found in Norfolk. A summary of the different settlements and their respective percentages are shown in figure 9.1 below. The difficulties with using DMVs within the framework of this research have been explained in Chapter Six; therefore they are not discussed in detail here.

Main settlement types	Number of examples	Overall percentage of dataset
Common edge	233	28
Farmstead clusters	213	26
DMVs	152	19
Nucleated clusters	102	12
Interrupted rows	67	8
Regular rows	55	7
Totals	822	100

Figure 9.1. Summary of main settlement types.



Figure 9.2. Soil types and landscape regions of Norfolk (after Williamson, 1993: 9, 12).

9.1.1 Dispersed Settlement Types

The most abundant settlement types in the county are common edge settlements with 233 examples or 28 percent of the dataset (figure 9.3). These settlement types are typified by small tofts along the edges of commons and heathland (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 51). The large majority of common edge settlements are concentrated in the eastern part of the region, roughly corresponding with the chalky boulder clay soils of the central claylands and the light loam soils in the northeast, with fewer examples found on the peat soils of the Broadland estuary. In the west of the county common edge settlements are largely confined to the alluvium soils of the western escarpment, the edge of the western silt fens and the eastern edge of Breckland. The parish sizes for this dispersed settlement type range from the smallest at 1361 km/s to the largest at 24561 km/s with an average size of 7422 km/s.

Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer define farmstead clusters as single farms or clusters of less than five tofts (2001: 51), which is similar to the classification used here. There are 213 examples of farmstead clusters or 26 percent of the dataset (figure 9.3). These dispersed settlements types are most heavily concentrated in the extreme east of the county where there are notable concentrations in the peat and alluvium soils of the Broadland estuary, continuing along the Yare valley westwards north of Wymondham. A further concentration on similar soils can be found again extending from the Broadland estuary continuing along the valleys of the rivers Bure and Ant in the northeast. In the west of the region there are fewer examples but concentrations can be found along the eastern edge of the silt fens of marshland, the mixed acidic sandy and silt soils of the western escarpment and the isolated pockets of peat and silt in Breckland. The parishes in which farmstead cluster settlements are found are generally small with a range of 1356 to 28696 km/s with an average size of 5445 km/s.

The final example of a dispersed settlement type is the interrupted row. There are 67 examples of this settlement type, or 8 percent of the dataset. Figure 9.3 illustrates the distribution of interrupted row settlements, although with a much smaller sample it is difficult to draw any conclusions on their distribution. What can be said is that interrupted rows are more common in the east of the county in generally the same areas as other dispersed settlement types, particularly around the Broadland estuary and the southern part of the central claylands. It is rare to find this settlement type on the acidic sandy soils of Breckland, but they are evident on the silt soils of the western Marshland and the light loams in the

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Figure 9.3 Distribution of the predominant dispersed settlement types in each parish

northwest of the county. A further small group are evident on the mixed light loams and infertile sands and gravels of northeast Norfolk. The parish sizes for this settlement type like the other dispersed settlements are quite small with a range of 1713 to 24073 km/s with an average size of 7347km/s.

9.1.2 Nucleated Settlement Types

The most common form of nucleated settlement are nucleated clusters with 102 examples or 12 percent of the database. These are found across most areas of the county although they are less seldom found in the Broadland estuary (figure 9.4). The parish sizes that relate to these settlements vary considerably reflecting their widespread distribution across a variety of soil types and topography with the smallest parish at 543 km/s and the largest at 54054 km/s with an average size of 11509 km/s. A number of the largest parishes in the county contain nucleated settlements, which are now the rural market towns so characteristic of Norfolk such as Wymondham, Swaffham, North Walsham, and Cawston.

Regular rows are the second type of nucleated settlement found in the county. These are usually typified by a ribbon of development along the course of a river or road. This type of settlement is the most poorly represented with only 55 examples, or seven percent of the dataset. Figure 9.4 illustrates that these settlements, like nucleated clusters can be found thinly spread across the county although there are fewer examples in the northeast. This pattern again illustrates that this settlement type like nucleated clusters can be found on a variety of soils .The size range of the parishes in this group is quite considerable from the smallest of 1370 km/s to the largest at 51731 km/s, with an average size of 10412 km/s. One noticeable difference with this settlement type is that their parishes are not generally as large as those illustrated by nucleated clusters discussed above.


Figure 9.4 Distribution of the predominant nucleated settlement types in each parish

9.2 Place-Names Categories

The place-names included within the database are in specific groups such as *stede*, *wick* and *tun* for example. They are further categorised in wider groupings under the headings of agriculture, administrative, habitative, religious, topographical and woodland as discussed in Chapter Six. The two largest place-name groups are topographical and habitative representing 169 and 383 place-names respectively, or 21 and 47 percent of the dataset. Topographical place-names define settlements by describing their physical surroundings, whilst habitative place-names have a component that may describe a farm, manor house or village, but more commonly a personal name (Gelling and Cole, 2000: xii). Gelling and Cole do however point out that these categories overlap (2000: xii). This may result in a place-name including both a topographical and habitative element; for example, Colney; *Cola's eg*, '*Cola's* island' (Gelling and Cole 2000: 42). The reverse is also true where a habitative element is qualified with a topographical feature: Wilton, *wilig tun*, 'farmstead or village where willow-trees grow' (Mills, 1991: 361).

Figure 9.5 illustrates the number and overall percentages of the different place-name types included in the database.

Place-name type	Number of examples	Overall percentage		
Habitative	383	46		
Topographical	169	21		
Agricultural	145	18		
Woodland	80	10		
Boundary/administrative	25	3		
Unclassified	12	1		
Religious	8	1 (less than)		
Totals	822	100		

Figure 9.5. A summary of the total of place-name types and overall percentages.

9.2.1 Habitative Place-Names

Habitative place-names usually include generic settlement-terms; for example *tun* 'homestead or village', *ham* 'village, estate, manor or homestead', *cot* 'cottage', *wic* 'dwelling place' and *worth* 'homestead' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: xii) (Ekwall, 1991: 482, 213, 124, 515 and 535). The first element or qualifier to these terms is usually a personal name.

One of the most common habitative place-names in Norfolk is the *ham* name, qualified with an OE personal name: Wymondham, '*Wigmund's ham*' for instance (Mills, 1991: 374). The element *ham* has long been accepted as one of the earliest name-forming elements due to its perceived association with pagan burials, ancient track ways and Roman roads (Cox, 1976). Cox attributes the Norfolk *ham* names to the earliest phase of Anglo-Saxon colonisation, because they are all so closely associated with the former Roman road network. He also claims that the eastern shores of the Wash offered the safest landing and ease of entry for migrants, which is why so many *ham* names are evident in the west of the county (1976: 37). However interpreted, this observation can be seen on figure 9.6 where a cluster of *ham* names in the western part of the county appear to be closely associated with the Icknield Way and the Peddar's Way (Margery, 1967: 333, 33b). The distribution of *ham* names in the east of the study area is less easily defined, as the evidence for Roman roads is generally quite poor. The two clusters that are apparent south of Norwich correspond with the former Roman settlement of *Venta Icenorum* and the one-time Roman port of Caister-by-Sea (Cox, 1976: 38-39).

A further observation that can be made about *ham* names is that in the west of the county a number of clusters correspond with areas of light loam soils such as the Fincham group on the eastern edge of Marshland and some of those in the northwest such as the Raynham group and East and West Rudham. The same cannot be said of the Great Fransham and Great Dunham group that appear to be located on a more mixed array of soils including heavy and medium clays. In the east of the county such clusters are less visible, although there are one or two examples where small groups of *ham* names occur on the lighter loam soils: Gresham and East and West Beckham in the northeast for instance.

A further group of habitative place-names are the *-ingas*, *-inga*- type. Dodgson suggests, from evidence in southeast England that these may not relate to the earliest phase of Anglo-Saxon settlement but from a later phase. He considers these names to be later than the *ham* names discussed above, suggesting that *-ingas*, *-inga*- are the names of communities extended in their territories in which they lived or had some interests (1975: 27). However, not everybody shares this view and Copley using evidence from the Anglian regions of England claims that *-inga*- names are unlikely to be later than *ham* names (1988: 13).





In Norfolk *-ingas*, *-inga-* are found in four different types of place-name: in a simplex *-ingas* form usually with an OE personal as the first element; for example Kelling, 'settlement of the family or followers of *Cylla* or *Ceolla* (Mills, 1991: 191); in an *-inga-* form as in Marlingford, 'ford of the family or followers of a man called *Mearthal*' (Mills, 1991: 224); as *-ingatun*, Hillington, 'farmstead of the family or followers of a man called *Hearthal*' (Mills, 1991: 172) or as *-ingaham*, Bressingham, 'homestead, estate, manor of the family or followers of *Briosa*' (Mills, 1991: 50). Figure 9.6 illustrates the distribution of these place-name types. It can be seen that the Norfolk evidence does broadly concur with Dodgson's findings from the southeast of England, as many Norfolk *-ingas*, *-inga-* names are generally away from the areas closest to the *ham* names, with a higher concentration of such names in the east and towards the centre of the county.

One final group of habitative place-names are the *tun* names, which are qualified with an OE personal name. There are 63 examples of this name construction with a further 11 possible examples. It can be seen from figure 9.6 that *tun* names are not evenly dispersed across the county and are more common in the eastern half where they tend to be on the periphery of *ingas*, *-inga-* names. Only in a very few cases do *tun* names occur singularly in these areas and in the most part are found in clusters. A further set of *tun* names included as habitative are those which denote a geographical location such as Easton, Norton (Subcourse) and Middleton and there are also a small number of examples that denote a new settlement e.g. Newton (by-Castle Acre).

9.2.2 Topographical Place-Names

Topographical place-names represent a system that operated over most of England and have their origin in the early part of the Anglo-Saxon period (Gelling and Cole, 2000: xv). Figure 9.7 illustrates that there are 169 examples of these place-names or 21 percent of the dataset. Gelling and Cole define topographical names as those that describe their physical surroundings (2000: xii); they also include woodland place-names in their study.

Topographical names in Norfolk reflect many different aspects of how the landscape was viewed in the Saxon period. Topographical place-names may also sometimes be useful as a very blunt tool for chronology. However, this cannot easily be achieved in East Anglia, which is poorly represented with the early documents that Cox uses to determine which place-names are before and after his arbitrary date of c. 730 (1976: 13). This does not mean however that

some comparisons cannot be made with other areas, but the trends observed can only be conjectural. For example, Cox suggests names such as *eg*, 'island in a marsh', *feld* 'open country', *ford*, *dun*, 'hill', *burna*, 'stream' and *hamm*, 'land hemmed in by water' are all good examples of names commonly in use before *c*. 730 (1976: 59-61). Gelling and Cole (2000) largely concur with these findings although they do offer more detailed evidence on the finer meanings of some of these terms. A number of these place-name elements are apparent from the Norfolk evidence, *eg* being one of the most common which is hardly surprising given the many poorly drained fenland, marshland and broadland areas of the county. It is in such a landscape that the names such as Bodney, '*Beoda*'s island' and Southery, 'southern island' (Mills, 1991: 42, 303) still make sense today.

The distribution of topographical place-names shown on figure 9.7 appears to be just a random scatter across the county, although some gaps are evident in this pattern. Northeast Norfolk for example has many areas where topographical names do not occur and this seems to relate to locations where the parishes are on average smaller and correspond to agglomerations of habitative names, which may suggest some renaming of settlements has occurred. This however is not true of southeast Norfolk where a similar pattern of small parishes and habitative names are found along with topographical terms.

9.2.3 Agricultural Place-Names

There are 145 agricultural place-names in Norfolk, or 17 percent of the dataset (figure 9.8). These place-names are important because their distribution may indicate the position of former great estate centres as discussed in Chapter Three. Therefore, where agricultural placenames exist in groups around a central core it could be an indication of an earlier territorial unit. Figure 9.8 illustrates that with the exceptions of southeast Norfolk, Breckland and the Fens agricultural place-names can be found across most of the county, therefore covering a wide variety of different soils types and ground conditions. They rarely occur singularly and in most instances form part of a larger group: Salthouse, Bayfield, Letheringsett, Thornage, Stody, Hunworth, Edgefield and Hempstead are one such group centred on the parish of Holt in the northeast of the county. The large majority of agricultural place-names are OE in origin. Plumstead (Great and Little), OE *plume-stede* 'a place where plum-trees grow'; Barton (Bendish), OE *bere-tun* 'barley farm' and Bickerston, OE *bicere-tun* 'farmstead of the bee-keepers' (Mills, 1991: 260, 26, 34). There are no agricultural names that are purely Old Scandinavian in origin, although there are a limited number of examples that have been Scandinavianized. Keswick, OE *cesewic* (with OSc *k*), 'farm where cheese is made' (Mills, 1991: 194) for instance.

9.2.4 Woodland Place-Names

Woodland place-names are strictly speaking topographical terms (Gelling and Cole, 2000). The reason that they have been identified separately is because like agricultural names they may assist in the identification of earlier territorial arrangements, as woodland areas were often found on the periphery of great estates (Jones, 1979: 20). Therefore surviving woodland place-names may be indicative of such areas. There are a total of 80 woodland place-names in the county, or 10 percent of the dataset. Figure 9.8 shows that woodland place-names are not uniformly distributed and are focussed primarily in the area of the central watershed and the southeast. The central watershed area largely corresponds with the Domesday evidence of woodland where it is recorded by the number of swine it could support (Darby, 1977: 126). However, by Domesday the concentration of woodland in the southeast had largely disappeared, although the reasons for this change are obscure (Williamson, 1994: 94).

Unlike agricultural place-names woodland place-names are a mixture of both OE and OSc elements, although the OE elements are more common. These names describe woodland in a variety of ways. The OE element *leah* is the most numerous, and indicates a woodland clearing. It is found in place-names such as Foxley, 'woodland clearing frequented by foxes, or Kimberley 'OE personal name '*Cyneburg's* woodland clearing' (Ekwall, 1991: 186, 276). The OE element *wudu* 'wood' is also found in names such as Gaywood OE personal name '*Gaega's* wood' and in a simplistic form Wooton (North and South), OE *wudu-tun* may denote more of a functional name used for settlements which played a special role in handling timber (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 261, 258).

The names of OSc origin are discussed more fully below but they are similarly found describing different aspects of woodland. Thwaite (St Mary and All Saints) for example is a simplistic OSc term *thveit*, which Gelling and Cole suggest has a similar meaning to the OE term *leah* 'clearing' (2000: 249). It can also be found in Crostwright, OE *cros* or OSc *kros-thveit*, 'clearing with a cross' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 251).

9.2.5 Religious Place-names

The religious place-name types are the least well represented in the county with only eight examples or just less than one percent of the dataset (figure 9.8). These place-names have been given a separate category as they may indicate the location of a church that is not possible from other evidence. This small number includes two *eccles* type names, which derive from the Latin *ecclesia*, 'a church' (Ekwall, 1991: 159). Two OE *stow* type names, 'holy place, hermitage, monastery or church' (Ekwall, 1991: 448) and four OSc *kirkju-by* names, 'English village with a church' (Fellows-Jensen, 1995: 175). It is not possible to comment on the distribution of these place-names with such a small sample. All that can be said is that the *kirkju-by* type names can perhaps be explained in that their locations correspond to areas where other OSc place-names are evident. These four place-names also illustrate examples of English settlements that were renamed by Danish settlers, an observation also made by Fellows-Jensen with similar place-names in Yorkshire (1995: 175). Two of these names have OE elements: Kirstead is a Scandinavianized version of the OE *circestede*, 'site of a church' (Mills, 1991: 200) and Colkirk may be the personal name OE *Cola* or OSc *Koli*, 'Cola's or Koli's church' (Ekwall, 1991: 117).

9.2.6 Administrative Type Place-Names

Administrative place-names have been considered in a separate group because they may give an indication of such functions in the landscape, although this may only be possible to appreciate at a local level. In total there are 25 place-names that fall into this group or three percent of the dataset.

Even though there is only a small sample of these place-name types the variety of features they describe is quite extensive; for example, Shadwell 'boundary stream' (Ekwall, 1991: 413), or an early earthwork, Beechamwell, OE *Bichamdic*, *Bicca's ham* plus *dic* 'dyke', where the settlement is near Devil's Dyke (Ekwall, 1991: 35). A similar place-name is Ditchingham: '*ham* of the *Dicingas* or dwellers at a dyke or ditch' (Ekwall, 1991: 146). Other place-names in this category suggest different functions: Matlaske 'ash tree where a moot was held' (Ekwall, 1991: 318) or Shotford 'ford where a toll is taken' (Ekwall, 1991: 419).



There are however, some place-names that are not quite as easily understood. Waxham for example, may have two meanings according to Ekwall, who claims the first element or qualifier could be the OE personal name *Waegstan* or alternatively OE *waecce*, watch. Therefore, Ekwall suggests the meanings of '*Waegstan's ham*' or '*ham* where watch is held' (1991: 502). As the settlement is near to the coast the latter meaning could be a possibility.

9.2.7 Discussion

The GIS map evidence presented above using the main settlement form in each parish illustrates that in the broadest terms settlement in the eastern half of the county is predominantly dispersed, whilst the western half is characterised by more nucleated forms. This illustrates the considerable influence the central watershed has exerted on the county and it seems that this feature not only appears to define settlement type but also parish size. The reasons for these considerable east-west differences however, are far more complex than just this apparent division. To some extent the division of ancient and planned countryside discussed in Chapter Four can explain them but where dispersed settlement occurs in predominantly planned countryside such as in northeast Norfolk, these explanations are not sufficient.

A number of theories have been suggested to account for these differences, such as manorial structure (Campbell, 1986), Danish settlement and the fission of great estates (Williamson, 1993) and differences in agrarian organisation (Campbell, 1980). Similar ideas have also been suggested in the East Midlands, but it was found that no single factor adequately explained the variation in the medieval settlement pattern (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 191). Therefore in Norfolk the differences between the east and west of the county may be attributable to a wide variety of factors. In order to understand these factors more fully both the settlement pattern and the wide variety of place-names encountered in the county need to be considered.

Figure 9.9 is a summary of the different settlement types and how they relate to the placename classifications. The numbers of place-name types represented in each settlement category are also expressed as a percentage of the sample, with the exception of the administrative and religious categories that are too small to be of use statistically.

Settlement type	Common	DMV	Farmstead	Interrupted	Nucleated	Regular
	edge		cluster	row	cluster	row
Place-name category						
Agricultural	48	23	42	11	14	7
(Percentage of sample)	(21%)	(15%)	(20%)	(17%)	(14%)	(13%)
Administrative	6	6	4	2	6	1
Habitative	113	66	99	30	52	23
(Percentage of sample)	(48%)	(43%)	(46%)	(45%)	(51%)	(42%)
Religious	4	1	2	1	0	0
Topographical	36	33	46	16	20	18
(Percentage of sample)	(15%)	(22%)	(22%)	(24%)	(19%)	(32%)
Woodland	26	12	20	6	10	6
(Percentage of sample)	(11%)	(8%)	(9%)	(9%)	(10%)	(11%)

Figure 9.9. Place-names and how they correspond to settlement types.

Surprisingly the results across the different settlement types are very similar. For instance, habitative place-names represent a range of between 42 and 51 percent across the spectrum of settlement types, and are the most numerous place-names. Other ranges however are perhaps more instructive. Topographical place-names are represented in a range between 15 and 32 percent across the settlement types. Common-edge settlements are the most poorly represented within this category and are statistically more likely to have a habitative, agricultural or woodland place-name. Similarly farmstead clusters and common edge settlements are statistically more likely to have a fabitative, agricultural or woodland place-name. Similarly farmstead clusters and common edge settlements are statistically more likely to have agricultural place-names (20 and 21 percent respectively) than nucleated forms of settlement: nucleated clusters are 14 percent and regular rows 13 percent.

This speculation from statistical data could be quoted for a number of other permutations but such data can only be stretched so far. What is perhaps more important for this research is whether these statistics actually reflect genuine difference across the county. It has been shown that the habitative place-names with the element '*tun*' are more common in the east

than in the west. The habitative place-names in the latter are more commonly of the *ham* type and therefore potentially from an earlier stratum of place-names. A further difference is in the parishes themselves. In the east they tend to be smaller than those in the west. This is partly no doubt due to the underlying soil conditions especially if the generally infertile soils and larger parishes of Breckland are compared to the smaller parishes on the fertile central claylands. However, this is not always the case and there are a mixture of both large and small parishes in the good sands region in the northwest which are both on similar soils.

The settlement pattern across the county also varies considerably and broadly speaking common edge settlements seem to favour the central claylands, although the distribution of these settlements in northeast Norfolk on the lighter loam soils does contradict this. These contradictions make more sense if common edge settlements are viewed in the context of their development. Williamson has highlighted that these settlements tend to be later than other settlement types (2003: 161); a point also attested by archaeology as discussed in Chapter Four. He adds that such settlements are hard to class as encroachment onto waste areas although those with woodland place-names may be an exception (2003: 161). Warner found similar circumstances in East Suffolk noting that common edge settlement was a secondary development and an extension of an established settlement pattern (1987: 13).

The location of common edge settlements in central and northeast Norfolk seem to reflect the extension of settlement into previously sparsely settled claylands and rich loams, which are both areas recorded in Domesday with relatively low population densities and therefore areas where such expansion may have been easier. However, there are again exceptions to this and common edge settlements in the southeast of the county correspond with the highest areas of population density in 1086. These may therefore illustrate not extension of settlement but more a division of it, which can be seen from the number of very small parishes in this part of the county.

The distribution of farmstead clusters is also distinctive with many of these settlements favouring the alluvium soils of the river valleys in both the east and the west: an association which has also been noted in the East Midlands (Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, 2001: 80). However, they have a high proportion of woodland names (20 percent) perhaps indicating assarting and the extension of settlement seen with common edge settlements discussed above. This may explain why there is little evidence of remaining woodland in this area by

the time of Domesday. The difference in this particular area though is that farmstead clusters correspond with areas of high population density recorded by Domesday.

Nucleated settlement offers a completely different range of circumstances with a widespread distribution across the county although largely absent from the Broadland estuary. These parishes on average tend to be larger than those of dispersed settlement. This group also more commonly have a higher percentage of habitative place-names but unlike dispersed settlement these place-names belong to an earlier period with *ham* and *ingas* being prevalent. The distinct lack of this settlement type in the Broadlands estuary area seems to indicate that the circumstances here were different from other areas of the county, and the high population densities and higher degree of parish fragmentation resulted in the survival of fewer nucleated settlements here and the earlier stratum of place-names associated with them.

9.3 Scandinavian Place-Names

Perhaps one of the most perplexing questions for landscape archaeology is the extent of Scandinavian settlement in the county and how this settlement may have affected the territorial organisation of the landscape. Looking at the Scandinavian and Scandinavian influenced place-names may be one way that the process of Scandinavian settlement may be more fully understood. A summary of the Scandinavian place-names and how they relate to settlement types are shown in figure 9.10 below.

Settlement type	Common	Farmstead	Interupted	Nucleated	Regular	DMV
	edge	cluster	row	cluster	row	
Place-name						
type						
by	5	9	2	3	0	4
Grimston hybrid	11	5	2	3	0	5
thorpe	13	13	2	1	2	15
Scandinavianized	16	14	2	4	2	8
Other	10	6	1	0	0	3
Scandinavian						
Totals	55	47	9	11	4	35

Figure 9.10. Scandinavian place-names and how they correspond to settlement types.

9.3.1 By Place-Names

The most distinctive group of Scandinavian place-names are those with the second element *by* meaning village or homestead (Ekwall, 1991: 79). There are 23 *by*-names or just fewer than three percent of the dataset. Without exception all the *by*-names are located on the eastern side of the county (figure 9.11) with a marked concentration within the hundreds of East and West Flegg. The name of these hundreds themselves derive from a Scandinavian word for a marsh plant (Arngart, 1934:70) although it is difficult to imagine that this area was as unpromising as the hundred name suggests as the light loams and silts in this part of the county were amongst some of the most productive in the later medieval period (Campbell, 1980: 176-177). Beyond this concentration the remaining *by*-names are very dispersed; the most westerly example is Wilby. The *by* settlements are generally of the dispersed type (see figure 9.10) with 16 examples classified as farmstead clusters, common edge settlement or interrupted rows, only three are classed as nucleated settlements. The remaining four examples are DMVs.

The general view that used to be held by scholars was that *by*-names represent new Scandinavian settlements in previously unoccupied areas. Cameron went as far as suggesting that Scandinavian settlers did not, in general, take over English settlements but came rather as colonisers of marginal land (1975: 124). His research also showed that in the area of the Five Boroughs *by*-names were situated in close proximity to communication routes such as Roman roads and river valleys and also that they seldom occurred in isolation (1975: 121).

The subject of Scandinavian settlement has been a controversial subject in recent years, which has led to the revision of these views by modern scholarship. In some areas it has now been recognised that some *by*-names were in fact older English settlements that had been renamed. In Yorkshire, Fellows-Jensen suggests that the sites of some *by*-names were in such favourable locations that pre-Viking origin seemed likely (1995: 175). This may equally apply to the Norfolk *by*-names, in particular those found on Flegg.

Generally speaking the Norfolk evidence for *by*-names has received little critical analysis. The work of Sandred (1987, 1996) has defined the meanings of these names more closely but he has not considered them in a wider landscape context. The first observation that can be made is that the majority of Norfolk *by*-names occur in groups; this concurs with Cameron's findings in the Five Boroughs (1975). Similarly the large majority of *by*-names have good

communication routes, as many are located close to the coast as is the case with the Flegg *by*names while others are close to rivers, for example Aldeby is adjacent to the river Waveney, and Alby and Colby in northeast Norfolk are only 4km from the river Bure. The only exception to this is the isolated case of Wilby, which is not adjacent to any obvious communication route.

The most striking feature of the Norfolk evidence however, is the use of a personal name as qualifier. Cameron found in the area of the Five Boroughs that 207 *by*-names out of a total of 303 or 68 percent contained an OSc personal name as a first element (1975: 118). Fellows-Jensen found that in Yorkshire159 *by*-names out of a total of 279, or 57 percent have an OSc personal name as a qualifier (1995, 179). The Norfolk evidence cannot be viewed with such certainty due to the smaller number of place-names, but even with this caveat there are 10 *by*-names with an OSc personal name. This gives a total of 13 out of 23, or 56 percent. The implication of these high occurrences of personal names may be significant if the evidence for Denmark is considered. Here personal names only occur in ten percent of *by*-names (Fellows-Jensen, 1981: 138).

The remaining *by*-names in the study area are derived from a Scandinavian appellatival description of an English settlement, which again is evident in Yorkshire and the Five Boroughs. Ferriby in Lincolnshire for example means the village near the ferry (Cameron, 1975: 118); Holtby in Yorkshire translates as village near the wood (Fellows-Jensen, 1995: 179) and the Norfolk example of Stokesby means village near outlying pasture situated near water (Sandred, 1987: 18). The implications suggested by these *by*-names are difficult to assess, although it is clear that these were English settlements that were partially renamed in the Viking period. In the East Midlands up to 40 percent of *by*-names are of this construction, whilst in Yorkshire the figure is 29 percent; in East Anglia the figure is at least fifty percent (Fellows-Jensen: 1995: 180). The higher percentages in the Southern half of England was less than in Yorkshire because of the fewer partially renamed English settlements (Fellows-Jensen, 1995: 180).

9.3.2 Grimston Hybrid Place-Names

A further group of Scandinavian influenced place-names are those known as Grimston hybrids, of which there are 26 examples, or three percent of the dataset (figure 9.11). Grimston hybrids are place-names that have an OSc personal name compounded with the OE element *tun* (Fellows-Jenson, 1995: 170). As with the *by*-names above Grimston hybrids are characterised by dispersed settlement types (figure 9.10) with eleven common edge settlements, five farmstead clusters and two interrupted rows. There are only three nucleated clusters in the Grimston hybrids dataset; the remaining five examples are DMVs.

Fellows-Jensen has shown in Yorkshire that Grimston hybrid names were unlikely to have been founded by Scandinavian settlers due to their favourable situations, high status and general prosperity, which indicated that they were established settlements taken over by Scandinavian settlers at the time of land partitioning in the late ninth century (1995: 174). Cameron also came to a similar conclusion in the area of the Five Boroughs (1975: 170), proposing that Scandinavian by settlements are thickest where Grimston hybrids are rare (1975: 163). This is also true of the Norfolk evidence and figure 9.11 illustrates that whilst the by-names are concentrated in specific areas, Grimston hybrids are more widely dispersed across the county in areas where by-names are not common. Such areas in Norfolk represent a variety of different soil types with a very small number of Grimston hybrids on the acid sands and gravels of Breckland, although the majority are concentrated on the medium and heavy clays of central Norfolk. One final observation made by Cameron which may be of relevance to the Norfolk evidence although difficult to prove from just place-name evidence alone is that Grimston hybrid names probably belong to an early rather than later phase of Scandinavian settlement in areas already heavily settled by the English (1975: 170). Cameron has based this idea on the fact that at least two of the Five Borough names are first recorded in the middle of the tenth century. This kind of data is not available for Norfolk, although Thurgarton 'Thorgeirr's tun' first recorded in c.1044-47 (Ekwall, 1991: 471), could hint at such a possibility. What is more certain however, is the fact that Norfolk's Grimston hybrid names are all located in areas where ham names are predominant, which does seem to indicate that they are located in areas already heavily settled previously as Cameron suggests.



9.3.3 Thorpe Place-Names

Another major group of Scandinavian influenced place-names are those that include the element *thorpe*, which indicates a smaller settlement due to colonisation from a larger one (Ekwall, 1991: 468), or essentially an outlying settlement. Figure 9.11 illustrates that there are 46 *thorp* place-names in the database, which represents just over five percent of the dataset. Most of these names are mentioned in Domesday although there are some exceptions such as Thorpe-next-Haddiscoe (1254), Themelthorpe (1203) and Edingthorpe (1198) (Ekwall, 1991: 469, 465, 160). The late dates for these three examples may indicate that they were too small to be included separately in early valuations: either they were valued with a larger settlement or they were simply not established until relatively late. The majority of these *thorp* settlements are of a dispersed settlement type (figure 9.10) with farmstead clusters and common edge settlements being the predominant forms. The only examples of the nucleated settlement types are the two regular rows of Ashwell Thorpe and Gayton Thorpe and one nucleated cluster, Calthorpe. *Thorpe* settlements seem to have a high mortality rate with 15 examples being classified as DMVs.

Thorpe place-names tend to be controversial with scholars concerned with ethnic origin as the Scandinavian *thorp* can be easily confused with the OE *throp*, which has a similar meaning. In Norfolk the earliest spellings of most place-names comes from Domesday, therefore it is not possible to trace the earlier structure of many of the *thorp/throp* names. Some examples such as Burnham Thorpe and Honingham Thorpe are clearly outlying settlements of established English settlements and may therefore derive from the OE *throp*. Other examples however, have a Scandinavian personal name as a first element: Swainsthorpe, '*Sveinn*'s thorp', Themelthorpe, '*Thymel*'s thorpe' and Gunthorpe, '*Gunni*'s thorpe' (Mills, 1991: 31, 324, 151) and indicate a much greater Scandinavian influence.

The final group of *thorp* type names in the database are much rarer and include an OE personal name as a qualifier, Edingthorpe '*Eadhelm*'s thorp' and Felthorpe '*Faela*'s thorp' for instance (Mills, 1991: 118, 130). These last two examples may of course be OE in origin, although Fellows-Jensen has argued that in Yorkshire *throp* names are demonstrably young and that at least 58 percent of Yorkshire names are of the purely Scandinavian *thorp* origin (1995: 183).

Cameron made the suggestion that in the Five Boroughs *by*-names appear to be of greater importance than the *thorp* names (1975: 142-143). Fellows-Jensen has made a similar observation with evidence from Yorkshire and suggests the lowly status, inferior situations and low assessments of *thorp*-names may simply reflect the fact that land resources at their disposal had always been limited (1995: 183). In Norfolk this could also be true as most *thorpe* names are located in generally small parishes, although there are exceptions to this such as Thorpe St Andrew and Gayton Thorpe. Similarly a large number of these *thorpe* names are located on the poorer heavy clays and acidic gravels particularly in the southeast and northeast of the county.

The position of the *thorpe* names in Norfolk therefore does appear to suggest a lower status and inferior situation, also the fact that they are on generally poorer soils may indicate that they are an intensification of cultivation suggested by Cameron (1975: 126) or equally they may show the splitting up of larger land units as suggested by Sawyer (2000: 107). The settlement types these place-names represent confirm these views as many are either common edge or farmstead clusters which as suggested above do seem to indicate an expansion of settlement.

9.3.4 Other Scandinavian Place-Names

The final category of Scandinavian place-names can be divided into two groups. The first are Scandinavianized place-names which have an OSc personal name or qualifier combined with an OE element, the second, those place-names which are purely Scandinavian in origin (figure 9.11). The first group contains 46 examples or six percent of the dataset (figure 9.10), and like the other Scandinavian names mentioned above the majority of settlement types represented in this group are of a dispersed nature with 32 examples. A further six examples are characterised by nucleated settlement and the remaining eight are DMVs. Figure 9.11 shows that the Scandinavianized place-names have a wide and varied distribution, although there is still an eastern bias. Most are found on the central claylands and the area of rich loams in the northeast of the county, although there are some examples on the Breckland soils of the southwest.

The place-names represented in this first group are varied and include names under several classifications, for example: habitative: Topcroft, '*Topi's croft'* OSc personal name with OE *croft*; 'small piece of enclosed land' (Ekwall, 1991: 130). Topographical: Costessy, '*Cost's*

eg', OSc personal name (although could be OE) and OE *eg*; 'island' (Ekwall, 1991: 123) and woodland: Bradcar 'broad brushwood' OE *brad* 'broad' and OSc *kjarr* 'brushwood' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 57). In this respect these names are similar to a number of the *by*-names mentioned above, as they are also Scandinavian appellatival descriptions. This may suggest that they were existing English settlements that were partially renamed, and the use of an OSc personal name helps denote ownership.

Another observation is that a number of these place-names denote a specific agricultural function similar to those above. Such names include: Forncett, '*Forne's geset*' OSc personal name with OE *geset*, 'sheep fold' (Ekwall, 1991: 184); Keswick, OE *cese* (with OSc *k*) and OE *wic*, 'farm where cheese is made' (Mills, 1991: 194) and Carleton (Forehoe, Rode or St Peter), OSc *karl* (often replacing OE *ceorl*) and OE *tun*, 'farmstead or estate of freemen' (Mills, 1991: 67). These agricultural names are important as they may reinforce the idea that some Scandinavian names represent the splitting up of larger land units or estates, especially as these few examples have an OE second element. It is possible to speculate that these settlements where partially renamed or at least influenced by Scandinavian settlers, or the Scandinavian language that may have passed into the local dialect.

The second group of names in this category are those which are of purely Scandinavian origin and are denoted in the database by the abbreviation OSc*. There are 20 such examples which amounts to just over two percent of the database (figure 9.10). As with the other Scandinavian names mentioned above this small group is also characterised by dispersed settlement, with 16 examples, ten of which are common edge settlements and the remaining six farmstead clusters. There is only one example of nucleated settlement in this group; the regular row of Holme (next the sea). The final three examples are DMVs. With such a small sample it is difficult to say much about their distribution but they are mainly concentrated in the east of the county in areas where other Scandinavian place-names are prevalent.

The large majority of the place-names in this group relate to woodland: Rockland (St Andrew, St Peter, St Mary and All Saints), OSc *hrokr* (or could be OE *hroc*) 'rook' and OSc *lundr*, 'wood' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 242-243) or Thwaite, OSc *thveit*, 'clearing, meadow or paddock (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 249). There are also a few examples that relate to topographical features: Holme, OSc *holmr* 'island, inland promontory, raised ground in a marsh, river-meadow' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 55) and Beck, OSc *bekkr*, 'stream, beck' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 5). The evidence these names present for Scandinavian settlement is

not easy to assess with so few examples. There are four examples of Rockland for instance, which statistically can show very little. However, Gelling and Cole argue that wood called *lundr* was likely to be of economic value in areas where woodland was scarce (2000: 242). The four examples of this place-name in Norfolk may suggest this, as they are located in three different hundreds, Wayland, Shropham and Henstead, in areas where there is little evidence of woodland from either OSc or OE place-names.

Thveit-names are an equally poor indication of abundant Danish settlement as there are only five examples in the county. Fellows-Jensen encountered a similar problem with the evidence from Yorkshire. Here the five examples included in Domesday Book allowed her to suggest that *thveit*-names show evidence of new land being brought under cultivation by Danish immigrants and their descendants (1995: 184). This could also be speculated for the Norfolk evidence as the *thveit* names represent common edge settlements, and as suggested above such settlements seem to suggest an extension of settlement with the possibility of woodland names indicating encroachment into areas of waste (Williamson, 2003:161).

9.3.5 Discussion

The Norfolk evidence of Scandinavian place-names has so far been considered from two very different viewpoints. Williamson's view is that there is little evidence to support the idea of large scale immigration of a Scandinavian population. Instead he argues that the majority of Scandinavian place-names mainly lie within the peripheral zone of Romano-British and early Saxon settlement, which corresponds with the sparsely settled parts of the county. He claims that Viking peasant settlers were encouraged to settle in these remote spots whilst the Viking elite would have resided at the existing major estate centres. He continues by suggesting that Scandinavian place-names may not indicate areas of immigrant settlement but places first established or first attaining tenurial independence (1993: 108-109). Using this line of enquiry Williamson is essentially suggesting that it was not so much settlers that influenced the county but more the language that they brought with them which was absorbed into the local dialect.

In contrast Margeson's view is more focussed on the ethnic debate and large scale Scandinavian immigration in which she sees place-names as concrete testimony for the Vikings' presence in Norfolk (1996: 49). She adds that place-names give evidence of three waves of settlement with the Grimston hybrid names being the earliest followed by the *by*- names and then the *thorpe*-names, which represent dependent settlements of the *by* settlements or an English named village (1996: 49).

Williamson and Margeson's views represent different ends of the argument. In other areas such as the Northern Danelaw Hadley claims that these two central debates relating to the scale of the Scandinavian settlements and their locations are now tired and the distribution of Scandinavian place-names cannot tell us much about either (2000: 329). Similar views have also been expressed by Fellows-Jensen who remarked that evidence in Yorkshire highlights the fact that Vikings sometimes settled in English villages without changing their names and also that some villages with purely Scandinavian names must have been established before the arrival of the Vikings (1995: 171).

Do these claims stand up to scrutiny with the Norfolk evidence? Margeson's traditional view of *thorp*-names being dependent settlements does seem to fit with the available evidence as it has been shown above that most *thorpe* names seem to have been carved out of an existing pattern of parishes and the dispersed settlement types they represent may indicate an extension from the established pattern of settlements. Margeson also advocates that Grimston hybrid names are earlier than other Scandinavian names. Again this is not demonstrable in Norfolk. Even where early documents are more common such as the Five Boroughs, Cameron has only based his assumptions that Grimston hybrids are earlier than other Scandinavian type names from two examples recorded in the middle of the tenth century (1975: 170), although these could hardly be classed as early documents.

Williamson's view that Scandinavian settlement generally occurred in areas previously sparsely settled is also difficult to substantiate, as Fellows-Jensen has suggested in Yorkshire (1995: 175). In Norfolk the Hundreds of East and West Flegg, which have the highest proportion of *by*-names also have early Saxon pagan evidence at the OE settlements of Martham and Runham (Copley, 1988: 43-44). This provides good evidence that this area was already under arable use prior to the Vikings' arrival in the 860s. The archaeological data put forward here highlights one of the dangers of relying upon place-names as evidence for Scandinavian settlement and in the case of Flegg it seems that a number of the *by*-names may represent older English settlements that have been renamed.

Scandinavian place-names as evidence for settlement may have their limitations. However, as discussed above there are other ways in which the evidence of Scandinavian place-names can

be considered. More recently they have been used to show territorial aspects in the landscape. Here Williamson's view that in Norfolk that they may represent places first attaining tenurial independence (1993: 108) may be of particular relevance.

The small parishes noted by Sawyer are especially common in the eastern half of Norfolk, although many do not have Scandinavian place-names. However, place-names with Scandinavian personal names and *by* do not occur in all parts of the country. For example they are rarely found in Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumbria or in East Anglia outside of Norfolk (Fellow-Jensen, 1990: 16). What are more common in the county are the *tun* names qualified by a late personal name. Williamson argues that these *tun*-names were not the original settlement name but were coined when these settlements first became separate estates, which were severed from more ancient territorial units (1993: 88). This seems to be a common factor that Norfolk shares with other parts of the Danelaw where smaller parishes reflect the practise of buying and selling land in the form of small estates which Fellows-Jensen claims owed its development to Viking activity (1981: 144).

9.4 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the complex variety of factors that seem to have influenced settlement distribution in the county and whilst a number of factors such as soil type, topography and Scandinavian settlement have all influenced the settlement pattern there are far more complex agencies at work. GIS has highlighted this complexity and diversity, challenging the idea that useful generalisations can be made about naming, settlement form and the impact of the great army, although some trends emerge:

- The dispersed settlement types of farmstead clusters and common edge settlements are found in distinctly different areas.
- Dispersed settlement types are found in generally smaller parishes than nucleated settlement types.
- The use of place-name categories can highlight potential estate centres.
- Scandinavian place-names are more likely to represent renaming of existing settlements than the founding of new ones.

Importantly GIS has illustrated that place-names do give an indication of some great estate centres partially through the use of woodland and agricultural land but also by the fact that

many potential estate centres appear to be of the older stratum of place names such as *ham*. A number of these place-names tend to be within large parishes normally with nucleated settlements which now form the basis of a number of Norfolk's rural market towns. Not only this but the fission of these secular territories seem to be represented by the much smaller parishes with habitative names more commonly including the elements *tun* or *by*. It is also clear that fragmentation of these larger estates and the resultant pattern of parishes varies across the county and those in the west are far less fragmentary and hence more visible than those in the southeast for instance.

What the data cannot reveal at this level of consideration are the finer details and other evidence that can be use to make estate identification more certain. This is only possible by focussing on more specific areas. In order to do this case studies have been chosen from different parts of the county to explore regional differences and to see if there are any common themes that link them together.

Chapter Ten: Case Studies

10.1 Case Studies

The various strands of evidence for both great estates and minsters have now been considered at a broad county level. This has shown that there is a complex mixture of local circumstances in the different patterns of local churches, settlements and parishes that cannot be easily generalised. It has also shown that in most parts of the county the arrangement of parishes, place-names and settlement patterns can aid the identification of great estate centres. Searching for minster churches however amongst the large quantity of local church provision and the inconsistent material presented by Domesday has been more illusive with only slight hints and indications of any churches with anything more than just local church status. A way to resolve these problems is to examine the evidence more closely so that local circumstances can be appreciated better and any regional differences can be seen more clearly.

Due to the large amount of data available only three case studies were considered. These were identified on the basis of the need to compare and contrast the eastern and western parts of the county, which has figured so prominently in this research. Therefore a case study was selected from each part of the county, and a further example was taken from an area which represents where the east and west differences may meet.

As this research has shown the quality of this data across the county is inconsistent and three case studies with the same amount and quality of data are impossible. This however, need not be a negative aspect and the information from the case studies chosen can show strengths and weaknesses of the data in different areas. One key concern in choosing the case studies was to make use of the work that has already been undertaken in the county, and although the large majority of this has not been directly concerned with the formation of parishes, the identification of minster *parochiae* and great estates, it has dealt with the archaeological evidence in a number of detailed accounts spread across the region. These studies will be used to supplement the case study areas.

As discussed in Chapter Three contact scores are one method used which may help in the identification of secular and ecclesiastical territories. Contact scores together with the other data considered in this research are used to examine the chosen case studies. These contact

scores are valid at a general level but at a local level only examining the contact parishes could potentially miss some significant relationships. However, using all the parishes beyond those in the contact zone can substantially increase the amount of data being considered which again could result in subtle local difference being missed. For example, the parish of Swaffham has ten contact parishes; if this is taken to the ring of parishes beyond it increases to 22, representing a considerable area. Therefore the decision was taken to be led by the data itself and where this suggested contacts and relationships in parishes and vills beyond those in the immediate contact zone the research followed. After careful consideration Holt, Loddon and Swaffham were chosen as case studies as they represented a wide and varied selection of data in different parts of the county, all situated on different topography and soils.

Holt is located in the northeast of the county, just inland from the coast. It is an area which is relatively untested archaeologically. There is evidence from the middle and late Saxon periods contained in the SMR but it is very limited. The Holt area has a high percentage of agricultural and woodland type place-names, which give an indication of the landscape in the middle and late Saxon periods. All settlement types are encountered here but generally speaking this is an area of dispersed settlement. The churches in and around Holt are poorly represented in Domesday, however, there are a number of churches with surviving Saxo-Norman fabric evidence although the evidence for Norman fabric is very low.

The parish of Loddon lies in the very southeast of the county. It has been subjected to more archaeological investigation than Holt although not as much as the Swaffham area. This is the only one of the case studies where the central parish has been tested archaeologically, together with the parishes of Hales and Heckingham (Davison, 1990). This archaeological evidence can be used to supplement the archaeological data from the other parishes considered in this study area. There are more habitative place-names around Loddon than any of the other case study areas, and as a result agricultural place-names are poorly represented. Woodland place-names however are comparable to the numbers encountered in Holt. The settlement pattern in the Loddon area is predominantly dispersed and nucleated settlements are rare. There are a significant number of churches with surviving Saxo-Norman and Norman fabric and an equally high number recorded in Domesday.

Swaffham has been chosen as a western area, because it is adjacent to three areas that have been intensively studied archaeologically. The Fenland Project covered the parishes of the Nar valley in the west of the study area (Silvester, 1988a), Launditch Hundred is to the northeast of Swaffham (Wade-Martins, 1980b) and Barton Bendish and Caldecote are immediately to the west (Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester, 1997). The place-names around Swaffham are very distinctive in that they are a mixture of habitative and agricultural names with no surviving woodland place-names. This area has a mixture of settlement types, which demonstrate an almost east-west division with Swaffham at the centre. The church data may also be instructive as few churches are mentioned for this area in Domesday although surviving early church fabric of Saxo-Norman and Norman style is well represented in a number of parishes.



Figure 10.1. The principle soil regions of Norfolk with the three case study areas and contact parishes outlined (after Williamson, 1993: 12).

10.2 Holt Case Study

Holt is the parish that gives its name to both the hundred and the deanery. The Domesday hundred comprises 27 parishes, the deanery 30 parishes. These three additional parishes are Salthouse, Field Dalling and Saxlingham. Salthouse is included in the hundred of North Erpingham to the east of Holt Hundred and Field Dalling is in the hundred of North Greenhoe to the west. The parish of Saxlingham is unusual in that it is a detached parish from the hundred of Gallow, again to the west. Holt has a contact with nine other parishes: Bodham,

Kelling, Salthouse, Cley (next-the-sea), Letheringsett, Thornage, Hunworth, Edgefield and Hempstead. A further 16 parishes can be added to this total if the parishes beyond those in contact with Holt are also considered. The potential of Holt as an early estate centre has been recognised by both Williamson (1993: 100) and Hart (1992: 72)



Figure 10.2. The parishes, settlements and churches of the Holt study area.

10.2.1 Parish Boundaries

The boundaries of the contact parishes appear to be loosely arranged around the central parish of Holt (figure 10.2). The parishes outside this group tend to be smaller and more irregular. The boundaries of the contact parishes follow a variety of features including streams and roads, as well as more irregular routes across former areas of heath and common land illustrated on Faden's map of 1797 (Barringer, 2004: 4, 9). Small streams and rivers bound the parish of Holt on all but its northwest corner. An exception to this is found on the

boundary shared with the parish of Edgefield, where a distinctive notch into Holt parish seems to allow Edgefield access to both sides of the small Glaven valley. Whilst this irregularity could indicate an earlier arrangement of intercommoning it is more likely to represent access to an area of common land marked as a warren by Faden in 1797.

Many of the parish boundaries to the east of Holt are located on heath and common land. In a number of examples these areas appear to have been divided equally between adjacent parishes, placed approximately centrally through areas such as Edgefield Heath and Plumstead Green for instance as marked on Faden (1797). This pattern is repeated to the west of Holt with a number of boundaries similarly located on former common areas e.g. (Field) Dalling Common and Sharrington Common. The only difference is that the boundaries to the west of Holt are slightly more irregular than those in the east, for example the boundaries of Briningham, Brinton, Sharrington and Gunthorpe.

The parishes to the north of Holt are different to those noted elsewhere. Cley (next-the-sea), Salthouse and Kelling all have access to the coast. These parishes seem to radiate towards Holt and in the case of Cley and Salthouse have long appendages of land extending southwards. The reasons for this are clear from map evidence. On Faden's map the road along the coast (now the A149) marks the edge of the former coastline. Beyond this was, and still is, an area of salt marshes, which would have provided good grazing for sheep and cattle. The boundaries in the southern part of Cley and Salthouse are formed by roads that could have been drove roads to and from Holt, giving access to the coastal marshes. Similar patterns of drove roads are also apparent in the West Norfolk marshlands, where common marshes were similarly used for grazing animals (Hall and Coles, 1994: 141).

One final aspect of the parishes in the Holt area is there are three small-detached portions in other parishes. The smallest one of these is located in Bodham parish and is a detached portion of West Beckham. The other two other detached portions are in Briston parish. They are shown on Bryant, 1826 (Barringer, 2002: 20) and by Kain and Oliver (1995: 326-327) and are the detached portions of the parish of Stody. The reason for these detached portions is obscure although they may reflect earlier rights or an extension of grazing land.

Another aspect of parish topography is the positions of settlements within their parish boundaries (figure 10.2). It can be seen that majority of contact parishes and outlying vills are centrally placed with the only exceptions to this at Cley, Wiveton, Bayfield and Glandford.

These can easily be explained by the fact that these four vills all share the river Glaven as a parish boundary, and it would seem that all four have been positioned for ease of access to this small river. Thornage is a similar example and the location of the settlement can be explained by its positioning near a small river, which also forms part of its southern parish boundary.

The final factor that seems to have influenced the size and nature of the individual parishes is the underlying soil types (figure 10.1). Holt itself is exclusively on a pocket of light loam soil hemmed in by more infertile areas of acidic sands and gravels to the north, south and east with an area of peat and silt to the west, which corresponds with the Glaven valley. The parishes to the north and east of Holt are on a mixture of acidic sands and gravels and light loams, and due to the generally poor characteristics of the underlying soils tend to be on average slightly larger than those on the more fertile medium clays in the west of the study area.

10.2.2 Churches

The evidence for early churches in the Holt area is particularly poor (figure 10.3). No early charters survive that mention a church and there are only six recorded in Domesday. One of these, Thornage is a contact parish, whilst the others are all located in the outer parishes of Baconsthorpe, Briningham, Saxlingham, Blakeney and two at Langham. One Langham church is thought to be the lost church of St Mary, formerly in Langham Parva. There is nothing from the Domesday entries that suggests any of these churches are of an unusual status. Valuations are comparable with most Norfolk churches and range between five pence at Melton Constable to 32 pence at Thornage. Similarly the landholding of each church is equally unremarkable with a range starting at six acres at Melton Constable up to 32 acres at Thornage. There seems to be some correlation between land and value; Briningham for example has 12 acres and is valued at 12 pence and Thornage has 32 acres and is valued at 32 pence (192a, 198a. Morris, 1984: 10,8; 57). However, this formula does not always work, Blakeney is listed with 30 acres and is only valued at 16 pence (198a. Morris, 1984: 10,56). One final aspect of the Domesday data is that all the churches listed in the Holt area are on the lands of Bishop William (de Bello Fango) of Thetford, although they are under the tenure of a number of different sub-tenants.

Neither the Valuation of Norwich nor the Valuation of Pope Nicholas add any further information. There are no dependent churches or chaperlries mentioned in either document for the deanery of Holt and the only valuation higher than £20 is Snitterley (Blakeney) and Glandford at £26, 13s, 4d (1254) and £33, 6s, 8d (1291) (Hudson, 1910: 96). This figure is perhaps higher then the others recorded as two churches are combined for the valuation, although they are not in adjacent parishes and are separated by Wiveton.

The surviving early fabric evidence is more extensive. Figure 10.3 illustrates the churches in the Holt area with surviving Saxo-Norman and Norman fabric. Of these only three, Briningham, Melton Constable and Thornage are encountered in Domesday. The most common church plan form in the Holt area is the square west tower, chancel and nave, with or without aisles. There are also two round towered church plans at Letheringsett and Stody and a single church at Bayfield, which is of Saxo-Norman date with just a chancel and nave plan.

The two most interesting churches in the Holt area are Melton Constable with an axial tower, nave and chancel of Norman date which may have had an earlier apse (Bryant, 1903: 113) and Weybourne, also formerly of an axial tower plan but of Saxo-Norman date. The latter was incorporated into a complex of church buildings that once formed part of a house of Augustinian canons, which can be dated no earlier than the reign of King John (1199-1216) (Pestell, 1999: 203).

Figure 10.2 illustrates that in the majority of cases the centre of the settlement is coterminous with the position of the church. There are only a few exceptions to this: the interrupted row settlement at Bodham is the opposite side of the parish to the church and the church at Cley is positioned south of the settlement on a ridge overlooking the coast. This may indicate that the church had both an economic and religious function as Cley was a port in the medieval period and thus the church may also have served as a local landmark for shipping.



Figure 10.3. Settlement types and early churches in the Holt study area. Note the parishes shown in white are classed as DMVs or detached parish portions.

10.2.3 Settlement

The settlement pattern around Holt is diverse mixture of both nucleated and dispersed settlement types (figure 10.3). Holt and the contact parishes of Thornage, Letheringsett and Cley are nucleated settlements whereas the remaining contact parishes are characterised by dispersed settlement in the form of common edge and interrupted rows. Farmstead cluster settlements are rare in the immediate vicinity of Holt parish and there are only two examples within the outer contact zone: Glandford and Stody. Beyond the contact parishes the settlement pattern is predominantly dispersed with nucleated settlement largely confined to a few parishes to the west of Holt: Brinton, Brinningham, Saxlingham and Weybourne in the northeast.

10.2.4 Place-Names

A number of the place-names around Holt can be classed as agricultural (figure 10.4). Seven of these are very specific in their meanings. Edgefield and Bayfield refer to arable land communally cultivated, the first elements from the OE *edisc* 'enclosures' and OE personal name '*Boega*' respectively. The term *feld* may have been used from the end of the ninth century (Gelling and Cole 2000: 270, 274, 276). Thornage has a similar construction with the second element OE *edisc* 'pasture or enclosure where thorn bushes grew' (Ekwall, 1991: 467). Hempstead and Plumstead can also be included in this group 'a place where hemp and plums were grown' respectively (Ekwall, 1991: 234, 369). The remaining place-names of Salthouse, Letheringsett and Stody relate more to animals and industry, 'house for storing salt', the 'fold of *Leodhere's* people' and 'enclosure for horses' respectively (Ekwall, 1991: 403, 296, 444).

In contrast to agriculture woodland is only mentioned three times: Holt itself meaning 'single species woodland' (Gelling and Cole 2000: 233), Blakeney, the earlier spelling of which was Snittersley in Domesday, '*Syntra's* woodland clearing' (Ekwall, 1991: 48) and Bale OE *baed* and *leah*, which Sandred suggests could be 'woodland clearing with a spring' (2002: 111). The element *leah* is suggested by Gelling and Cole to have been used to form place-names between c. 750-950 (2000: 237). With the exception of Holt the remaining two woodland names are to the extreme west and northwest of the study area.

The remaining place-names are of the habitative type with the final elements *ingas*, *ingaham*, *tun* and *thorpe* all qualified with an OE personal name or family name, although Hunworth, meaning OE '*Huna*'s enclosure or homestead' (Ekwall, 1991: 258, 536) can also be added to this category. There are two further place-names that are more obscure. The first of these Weybourne could have a number of meanings: 'felon stream' (Ekwall, 1991: 510); OE *wagu* 'quagmire' or OE *waer*'weir, river dam' or a pre-English river-name (Mills, 1991: 354). Sandred favours the latter choice suggesting it has been combined with OE *burna* 'stream' (2002: 146). The final name Melton Constable is interpreted by Sandred as 'farmstead or village with a crucifix or cross' he also suggests the first element, OE *mael* could also refer to speech (2002: 135). Could this place-name suggest a congregation point for a priest and those under his pastoral care?



Figure 10.4. Agricultural and woodland place-names in the Holt study area.

10.2.5 Field-Names

The Holt study area is the only example where a comprehensive list of field-names are available, due to the fact that the hundred has been included in the EPNS volumes (Sandred, 2002). Many of the field-names derive from OSc or OE and are taken from the nineteenth century Tithe Award Maps or earlier sources that do not pre-date 1700 (Sandred, 2002: xiii). Therefore earlier spellings are not available and the time at which a field-name came into being is in most cases difficult to establish. But even with this caveat some field-names are still instructive. For instance, in the parish of Holt the field-name of Thinhou, from OSc *ping* 'meeting, assembly, court' and OSc *haugr* 'hill' refers to the meeting place of the hundred (2002: 111).

10.2.6 Archaeological Evidence

The Holt area is poorly represented by archaeological finds in the SMR. This is attributable to a general lack of field-walking and metal-detecting in the area. The data from the SMR has been shown on figures 8.5 to 8.8. These show that middle Saxon pottery has not been identified in the central parish of Holt and it is not well represented in the parishes immediately surrounding it. Only Kelling, Weybourne, Letheringsett and Thornage have finds spots recorded, and even then there is only one find spot per parish. Middle Saxon metalwork is slightly better with single finds spots at Cley (next the sea), Salthouse, Holt and Hempstead. The most abundant number of finds spots of middle Saxon metalwork have been made at Kelling (14) and Letheringsett (12), the latter of which includes the parish of Glandford on the SMR.

Late Saxon pottery finds are recorded in low numbers in the SMR, with two find spots recorded in Kelling, Weybourne, Letheringsett and Thornage and single find spots in Stody and Salthouse. Late Saxon metalwork is the most abundant archaeological artefact with a high number of find spots recorded in Letheringsett (19) and Kelling (13). Other parishes with late Saxon metalwork are Salthouse (1), Weybourne (2), Thornage (1) and Stody (3).

This data shows the generally poor state of knowledge for the Holt area, although the higher number of metalwork finds recorded in the parishes of Letheringsett and Kelling, which are largely down to the work of a local detectorist highlight the potential. To get a more accurate picture of this part of Norfolk some of the more detailed studies in the area have to be considered. The most instructive of these are Davison (1994) located to the southeast of Holt and the site at Witton (Lawson, 1983), positioned near the northeast coast.

Davison (1994) has studied the parishes of Mannington, Wolterton, Itteringham, Little Barningham, Wickmere and Calthorpe. The most significant middle Saxon pottery evidence was a group of 21 sherds located to the northwest of Wickmere church. Other sites were also noted in the area at Mannington Hall and church and also at Calthorpe, but these were only represented by between one and three sherds. No middle Saxon activity was found in the parish of Wolterton, which may indicate it was later settlement (1994: 181). Saxo-Norman activity in the form of Thetford-type ware continued in the areas mentioned above with one additional area located near the edge of Wickmere Common suggesting expansion of settlement to common edges. Surprisingly Davison failed to find any Saxo-Norman activity

around the churches at Little Barningham and Wolterton, although both were recorded in Domesday. He does claim however that the evidence may be concealed beneath modern development (1994: 181).

The results from Witton are broadly similar for the middle Saxon period, with the greatest concentration of Ipswich-type ware (nine sherds) found close to the existing church, where a priest, but not a church is recorded in 1086. Lawson however, is cautious with this data suggesting that a late Saxon church could have been placed in former middle Saxon fields at a convenient place to serve a dispersed community (1983: 70). This claim however does not seem to fit with the Saxo-Norman pottery scatters (Thetford-type ware) which are again focussed on the area around the church, but in much greater quantities; such evidence shows that the church seems to have been the focus of settlement in both the middle and late Saxon periods.

10.2.7 Domesday Book

Domesday lists Holt as a royal manor with berewicks at Cley, Blakeney, Hempstead and Field Dalling (111b-112a, 113b. Morris, 1985: 1,19-20; 42) (figure 10.5). Additionally the survey states that five sokemen in Briston belong in Holt. Also in the same entry sokemen are recorded at Bale, Hunworth, Bayfield and Glandford (112. Williams and Martin, 2002: 1054-1055). Although these sokemen are not explicitly mentioned as belonging to the royal manor at Holt it does suggest that there was some connection and provide additional evidence for an estate here (Hart, 1992: 74). The vill of Sharrington is also listed as a berewick under the Holt entry although the survey states that it belongs to Fakenham at one carucate of land. A later entry however, mentions Sharrington as belonging in Holt (112b. Morris, 1984: 1,29, 1,31). This example appears to illustrate the tenurial complexity evident in Norfolk and in this instance Sharrington appears to be a berewick of Holt with one carucate of land held in Fakenham, also a royal manor.

Thornage, a contact parish with Holt is another important manor on the lands of the Bishop of Thetford before and after the Conquest. Domesday lists a number of berewicks here also: Brinton, Saxlingham and Hempstead (192a. Morris, 1984: 10,8). Hempstead however, is a complex example as it is also listed as a berewick of the King's manor at Holt (112a. Morris, 1984: 1,20), although this seems to be because two manors are present at this vill. Beckham is also listed as a berewick of Thornage and both Morris (192a. 1984: 10,8) and Williams and
Martin (192v. 2002: 1114) suggest this is East Beckham. Two Beckhams are recorded in Domesday one in the Hundred of North Erpingham and the other in the Hundred of South Erpingham, but it seems West Beckham is more likely to be the berewick of Thornage given that the detached portion of it is in Bodham, a contact parish of Holt. Letheringsett is another important manor on the lands of Walter Giffard. It is not listed as having berewicks but the manor does hold land in a number of other vills in the Holt area: Bodham (one carucate), Hunworth (60 acres), (North) Barningham (20 acres) and Stody (25 acres) (242b, 261a. Morris, 1984: 25, 21-22; 24; 36,7).



Figure 10.5. Domesday evidence of berewick connections in the Holt study area.

The evidence discussed so far has demonstrated a number of potentially ancient connections between the central parishes of Holt and Thornage and some of the parishes in contact with them. To try and develop these, other data listed by the survey also needs consideration. Domesday records no sokemen in Holt but the contact parishes of Salthouse, Letheringsett, Thornage, Hunworth, Edgefield and Bodham all have varying numbers of sokemen with the two highest concentrations at Thornage (16) and Edgefield (19). The outer parishes of Blakeney, Sharrington, Stody and Briningham also have sokemen listed but in far lower numbers, although there are three exceptions to this in the outer parishes of Field Dalling, Langham and Briston, which have 15, 17 and 19 respectively.

Freemen in contrast are mentioned very rarely in the Holt area. Where they are recorded it is usually singly, although sometimes they are listed in higher numbers and apportioned to different manors e.g. in Weybourne 12 ½ freemen dwell in Weybourne, Salthouse, Kelling and Bodham (279b. Morris, 1984: 66,97). Elsewhere in Holt freemen are recorded at Bayfield, Edgefield, Saxlingham, Sharrington, Field Dalling, Blakeney and Briningham. The distribution of freemen is not very different from sokemen and both sokemen and freemen are recorded at some vills e.g. Bodham, Edgefield and Salthouse.



Figure 10.6. Domesday evidence of sokemen and freemen in the Holt study area.

The evidence for Domesday woodland has to be treated with caution and can only serve as a guide, as discussed in Chapter Two. Woodland recorded in Domesday is present in most vills

in the study area although the largest concentrations appear to be in the southwest with pannage recorded for between 33 and 100 swine at Thornage, Edgefield, Briningham, Stody, and Melton Constable and Swanton Novers, none of which have corresponding woodland place-names. In the north and east with the exception of Salthouse with pannage for 100 swine, all the entries are much lower and pannage is recorded at between three and ten swine.

10.2.8 Discussion

There seems to be clear evidence for a secular or great estate in the Holt area from the data examined above. The berewicks recorded for the Holt area in Domesday are good evidence of this, with the manor held by the bishop of Thetford at Thornage having four berewicks in a similar area to those of the Royal manor at Holt, with one berewick that seems to be shared between both manors at Hempstead. A similar set links are also evident with land held by the manor at Letheringsett although no berewicks are recorded. On the basis of this evidence it seems likely that that the centre of the great estate here was once a larger unit that not only consisted of Holt parish but also included the parishes of Letheringsett and Thornage, which at sometime prior to Domesday became separate manors but retained some ancient links.

There are however two possible exceptions to this pattern with Field Dalling and Beckham, berewicks of Holt and Thornage respectively recorded in different hundreds. This could suggest that they are relatively late berewicks, something that is evident elsewhere in Norfolk (Williamson, 1993: 93) or alternatively they could equally show that the hundred boundaries in this part of the county may not fully respect earlier arrangements in the landscape.

Further evidence from Domesday, that of sokemen and freemen, seem to confirm the evidence of the berewicks with the largest concentration of sokemen located in the contact parishes to the south and west of Holt although not recorded in Holt itself. Therefore this case study demonstrates that Williamson's earlier findings (1993: 96-102) that sokemen were usually recorded at great estate centres is applicable in this part of Norfolk.

So far the evidence seems to indicate a great estate centred on Holt, Letheringsett and Thornage. What is less clear is how the pattern of parishes developed around this centre and why? Place-names have been used in other parts of the Danelaw to illustrate how a once larger territory may have been broken up. In Holt it is also possible to suggest this and the parishes to the west have a number of place-names with personal name or later place-name

forming elements more common after *c*.730 e.g. *tun* and *feld*, for example, Gunthorpe, Wiveton, Bayfield, Edgefield, Bale and Blakeney (Snittersley). Brinton is a further example that could be added to this list as it shares the same personal name element with neighbouring Briningham and may have once been part of the same parish. The parishes associated with these place-names are generally small and irregular with boundaries that correspond with areas of former common land illustrating that these land units were being divided to provide an equal share of resources. Potentially they also demonstrate an active land market in Norfolk similar to that identified in the Northern Danelaw by Hadley (2000: 139).

The parishes to the east of Holt share a comparable pattern of irregular boundaries and smaller units beyond the contact zone, and may indicate similar circumstances to the parishes on the west. However, there are a number of reasons why this may not be the case. These eastern parishes are distinctive with a number sharing a common name e.g. North, Town and Little Barningham and East and West Beckham. Little Barningham is separated from the other two Barninghams by the parishes of Plumstead, Matlaske and Baconsthorpe. The latter two names are of OSc origin or influence and may again indicate late land division or renaming of settlements. The important issue here is that the Barningham names with the *ingaham* suffix come from an earlier stratum of English place-names than Baconsthorpe. Therefore this grouping could indicate a former smaller territory to the east of Holt that maintained its name after fission had occurred. The hundred boundary may help confirm this theory as it separates Holt Hundred from North Erpingham Hundred in which these vills are included. This section of the hundred boundary may be an example of where a more ancient frontier of interest has been respected.

Put together these various strands of evidence illustrate that the great estate centre was focussed upon the three central parishes of Holt, Thornage and Letheringsett with the outer parishes and their boundaries illustrating an outer zone largely contained within the hundred boundary. This estate territory contained a number of agricultural place-names in the central contact zone with woodland place-names largely confined to the western periphery, with the exception of Holt itself. In this sense a great estate with similar circumstances to those identified at Malling by Jones (1979: 20-29) was present in this part of the Norfolk landscape.

What is not evident however is any ecclesiastical territory associated with this great estate. The Domesday data for Holt offered little that was suggestive of a higher status or minster church as perceived from Blair's model. The only tentative suggestions that can be made are

that Holt was a royal manor before and after Domesday with its own market by 1086 suggesting it was a place of some importance. The parish of Holt is also larger than many in the study area, and as detailed in Chapter Three large parishes have often been associated with minsters or the centres of secular estates (Everitt, 1986: 192). This information however is not enough to be able to identify a minster at Holt or any of the contact parishes. Instead what Domesday portrays is a landscape with evidence of local church building in a number of parishes. When this is compared with the fabric evidence it is apparent that the churches recorded by the survey are a very incomplete total and the landscape in this part of the county had a much more comprehensive pattern of local churches than the survey indicates.

10. 3 Loddon Case Study

The parish of Loddon is located in the very southeast of the county. The parish has given its name to the hundred, which on its southern extent shares the county border with Suffolk. The Domesday hundred is unusual in that it has one detached parish; Gorleston, located on the coast adjacent to the hundred of East Flegg, or more precisely south of Great Yarmouth. The Hundred of Loddon is bordered on the east by the hundred of Clavering, on the north by the hundred of Blofield and on the south and west by the hundreds of Henstead, Depwade and Earsham. The hundreds of Henstead, Loddon and Clavering make up the deanery of Brooke, which takes its name from a parish in the hundred of Henstead. The major rivers in this part of the county define both the larger pastoral unit of the deanery and the southern boundaries of Clavering and Loddon hundreds, whilst the Yare forms the northern boundary of Clavering, Loddon and Henstead and the Tas forms the western boundary of Henstead Hundred.

Loddon has ten contact parishes: Kirby Cane, Hales, Heckingham, Hardley, Chedgrave, Sisland, Mundham, Thwaite, Broom and Ellingham (figure 10.7). If the parishes immediately outside these are included a further 13 parishes can be added to the study area. Davison has noted that the parish boundaries in the Loddon area have distinct axes of alignment (1990: 73). Elsewhere in south Norfolk similar alignments have been highlighted and examined by Williamson in the Scole-Dickleburgh area (1986 and 1998) and over the border in northeast Suffolk with a group of parishes known locally as the Saints (Rackham, 1986: 156). Loddon has also been suggested by Williamson as a potential early estate centre and the site of an early church founded by St Felix (1993: 91, 144) The soils in this case study area are a mixture of medium and heavy clays combined with areas of peat and silt along the Waveney, Chet and Yare valleys. The heavy clays are largely confined to a strip approximately five km wide running east-west to the south of Loddon (see figure 10.1).



Figure 10.7. The parishes, settlements and churches of the Loddon study area.

10.3.1 Parish Boundaries

The parish boundaries in the Loddon area are quite distinctive with many sharing a similar north-north-east to south-south-west orientation. A large proportion are also very irregular in nature especially when compared to those around Holt. Also in contrast to Holt the contact parishes do not appear to be as closely orientated on the larger central parish of Loddon. Such variations seem to suggest a different set of circumstances may have influenced the boundaries in this part of the county. To the west of Loddon a similar arrangement had been noted in the Scole-Dickleburgh area where the landscape appears to be organized around a series of long, sinuous trackways, a number of which are of late prehistoric or early Romano-British date, which climb up from the Waveney valley out onto the heavier clays to the north

(Williamson, 1986: 243). A similar observation has been made by Davison (1990: 73) for the Loddon area where he has illustrated that a number of the parish boundaries match up with such roads, tracks and pathways (figure 10.8). The trackways around Loddon in this example are clearly orientated towards the Chet valley.



Figure 10.8. Parish boundary features in the Loddon area (Davison, 1990: 74).

In the Scole-Dickleburgh area Williamson made the important observation that the Roman road known as Pye Road was not used as a boundary feature and appeared to cross over the alignment of parish and field boundaries (1986: 243). A similar observation can be made in the Loddon area where the Roman road known as Stone Street which is on a north-west to south-east alignment crosses through Hedenham and Ditchingham without influencing the

position of any parish boundaries. However, two other possible Roman roads suggested by Davison which have a north-north-east to south-south-west alignment form sections of the parish boundaries to the east and west of Heckingham and Hales in the east of the study area and parts of the boundaries of Broome and Ellingham in the south of the study area (1990: 51).

The final aspect of these boundaries is their antiquity. Davison has noted that many follow stratigraphically different features in the landscape but he is unwilling to suggest a date for them (1990: 73). Williamson is more committal and argues that in the Scole-Dickleburgh area although the boundaries incorporate major or minor components from the earlier periods they also follow later features as well, which suggest that they have been imposed upon an earlier landscape (1986: 246).

10.3.2 Churches

Figure 10.9 illustrates the churches recorded in 1086 and there are some very noticeable concentrations. To the east of Loddon there are a group of seven churches at Heckingham, Hales, Kirby Cane, Ellingham, Stockton, Raveningham and Thurlton. A further group is evident to the southeast of Loddon at Gillingham, Aldeby, the now lost church and settlement of *Thurkeliart* and Wheatacre. To the west of Loddon there is a group of five churches around Woodton. Closer to Loddon itself are the two churches at Seething and the church at Mundham, but by far the largest group of churches recorded by Domesday are those roughly clustered along the Yare and Chet valleys in the northwest of the study area from Thurton through to Framingham (Earl and Pigot).

The details of the churches mentioned in Domesday differ greatly in terms of their glebe and the way in which the church is recorded and valued, again highlighting the idiosyncratic nature of the survey. For example, half a church is recorded at Mundham which is by far the smallest inclusion. It is not valued perhaps because it is on the land of the King, although it may also be due to the church possessing such a small area of land. At 10 acres it is small even by Norfolk standards. Another church not valued is Chedgrave with 50 acres and on the lands of Ralph Baynard, although under the tenure of Geoffrey, upon whose manor it is located (253b. Morris, 1984: 31,44). The church recorded at Woodton and the pattern of parishes here may be suggestive of a potential estate centre given that the parish has eight contact points. However, the church is far from exceptional with a Domesday entry of 12

acres of land and a valuation of 12 pence (177a. Morris, 1984: 9,54). The pattern of parishes around Woodton may simply reflect the woodland resource that this parish represented evident from its place-name. This is confirmed by Gelling and Cole who claim that this term was used to describe settlements that played a special role in handling timber (2000: 258). Loddon Church, which is in the largest parish, is potentially more promising. However, Domesday does not specifically record a church but states (belonging) to the church, 60 acres; meadow four acres; value five shillings (211b. Morris, 1984: 14,35). Loddon has the highest valuation in the hundred and it is on the lands of the Abbot of Bury St Edmunds, two factors that Blair's model uses for minster identification. However, there are two other entries recorded which may also be suggestive of a minster church in the area.

Most Norfolk entries usually state one church (*ecclesia*), the land holding in acres and sometimes a valuation. The entries for Langley and Topcroft are complex, as a church is not recorded at either location. In Langley however, Domesday records one whole priest and two halves. They hold 100 acres of free land and (their lands) appertain to the church of St Andrew. Langley is on the lands of the Bishop of Thetford in 1086. Prior to this the manor was under the tenure of Anand, a freemen, but the king had jurisdiction (195b. Morris, 1985: 10,33). At Topcroft the survey records that Berenger holds from the abbot (of Bury St Edmunds) 2 carucates of land, which 2 priests held before 1066 (212a. Morris, 1984: 14,37). This entry is again obscure, as it does not specifically mention a church. In such instances it is possible to speculate that there was a church or churches at both these vills as presumably there would be no need for a priest without one in the vicinity. More important is the fact that there is more then one priest. The two halves mentioned at Langley may be down to the complexities of recording manorial holdings, but the fact that there are two priests does fit in with the criteria Blair uses (1985: 106).

Taking each entry in turn it can be seen that at Langley there is a large endowment of free land '*libera terra*' (100 acres) that is assumed to be exempt from geld payments although this privilege was by no means invariable (Welldon-Finn, 1973: 69). There is also a mention of a named dedication, St Andrew, to which these lands appertain and the priests are on the lands of the Bishop of Thetford and prior to this the lands of the king. These are all items Blair uses to identify minsters from Domesday evidence (1985: 106). The endowment of land is not as large as he suggests (usually one hide or carucate), but it does represent a large endowment in Norfolk. Lennard confirms this suggesting that the commonest glebe sizes in the county were 30, 20 and 12 acres (1997: 309). The named dedication is puzzling as the church at Langley is

now dedicated to St Michael, and St Andrew does not relate to the Bishops' cathedral in Thetford, as this was dedicated to St Mary. The assumption must be that St Andrew was the earlier dedication of Langley. The neighbouring vill of Carleton St Peter also has land recorded; 80 acres of free land of the church (233a. Morris, 1984: 21,26). Again the assumption has been made that although a church has not specifically mentioned the presence of church land suggests a church existed. This land could also be taken as being exempt from geld. Domesday gives no further evidence to suggest a church at Carleton St Peter as the valuation under the church listing 'then 20 shillings; now 40' relates to the value of the manor and is not a separate valuation of a church, although the two may have been valued together.

The entry for Topcroft presents yet another set of problems. Here the two carucates of land relate to the manor of Berenger who holds it from the Abbot of St Edmunds (177a. Morris, 1984: 9,51), and not specifically the church or churches, which are assumed to have existed here. The two priests in the entry are the only suggestion of a church or churches in 1086, although in the later medieval period two churches were present in this vill. The surviving church is dedicated to St Margaret and the now lost church was dedicated to St Giles; the two priests mentioned in Domesday could simply relate to these two churches. Topcroft could therefore be an example of a multi-churched vill, which is quite a common occurrence in the county (see Chapter Five) and there are a number of examples close by: Seething, Mundham, Gillingham and Bedingham. Of these only Seething has two churches recorded in 1086, Mundham half a church and Gillingham one church. Furthermore Bedingham is the only pair of churches to share the same churchyard with all the others being a short distance apart.

Later thirteenth century valuations are particularly obscure for this part of the county but they can help expand the inconsistent data presented by Domesday. The highest valuation in the deanery is at Brooke which is valued at £23, 6d, 8p in 1254 and £33, 6d and 8p in 1291 (Hudson, 19190: 115). This church however is not within the direct contact zone of the Loddon parishes and is not mentioned in Domesday, so it is difficult to speculate any sort of special status. Even the fact that it is the church that gave its name to the deanery is of little significance as there is little evidence from the 1254 valuation to suggest that other churches that gave their names to deaneries were leading churches in their areas (Hudson, 1910: 57). The final piece of evidence from the these later sources is the mention of one chapel, listed beneath the entry for Topcroft (Hudson, 1910: 116) which may relate to the second church there suggested by Domesday as discussed above.

The fabric evidence for churches in the Loddon area is quite comprehensive. Figure 10.9 illustrates the churches in the area, which have surviving Saxo-Norman and Norman fabric. A number of these churches also correspond with the Domesday evidence: Heckingham, Hales, Kirby Cane, Stockton, Raveningham Thurlton, Chedgrave, Mundham, Seething and Carleton St Peter. There are a number of notable omissions from the fabric evidence and both Loddon and Langley have no surviving early fabric evidence despite being recorded in Domesday.

The most common plan forms for churches in the Loddon area are the west tower, chancel and nave with or without aisles. Another common plan type is the round west tower, chancel and nave, with or without aisles, which as discussed in Chapter Seven seems to be a regional building style more commonly found in the eastern half of the county. The only other church type in the study area is a single example of an axial tower plan at Aldeby.



Figure 10.9. Settlement types and early churches in the Loddon study area. Note the parishes shown in white are classed as DMVs or detached portions of parishes in the Bure estuary.

The location of churches in the Loddon area present yet another problem of interpretation as those to the east of Loddon tend to be close to or the focus of settlement whereas those in the west are far more isolated (see figure 10.7), although the settlement pattern of dispersed farmstead clusters and common edge settlements are broadly similar. The reasons for this are obscure but it may be attributable to complexity of land holding to the west of Loddon; something which is hinted at by the presence of a number of vills with more than one church, which as discussed in Chapter Five may be attributable to weaker manorial control and the expansion of settlement. Further confirmation of this may be from the parish network, which to the west of Loddon is typified by smaller, and far more irregular parishes than those to the west.

10.3.3 Settlement

Figure 10.9 illustrates that the Loddon area is characterised by dispersed settlement, farmstead clusters and common edge settlements being the predominant forms. Loddon is one of the few nucleated settlements in the area and is classified as a regular row, as is the nearby settlement of Seething. Both of these settlements are arranged along the predominant axis of the roads in the area, north-north-east to south-south-west.

The vast majority of settlements are located centrally within their parish boundaries but there are a number of examples where this is not the case (see figure 10.7). Loddon and Chedgrave are both positioned near the river Chet that forms the northern and south boundaries respectively and Langley is positioned on its southern boundary due to the fact that further north of this location are the marshy fringes of the Yare valley.

10.3.4 Place-Names

There is a marked absence of agricultural place-names in the Loddon area (figure 10.10), with only two examples, Carleton (St Peter), a place-name derived from the OSc *Karlatun*, '*tun* of the freemen or peasants' (Ekwall, 1991: 88, 96) and Sisland OE '*Sige's* land' (Ekwall, 1991: 423) although the latter could equally imply more about ownership than it does agriculture.

In contrast the study area is well represented by woodland names. For example, the contact parishes of Hardley OE 'woodland clearing on hard soil', Chedgrave OE '*Ceatta*'s pit or grove (Ekwall, 1991: 219, 99), Thwaite OSc 'clearing, meadow or paddock' (Gelling and Coles, 2000: 249) and if the wider area is considered Cantley, Langley, Southwood, Ashby, Haddiscoe and Woodton can also be included.



Figure 10.10. The agricultural and woodland place-names in the Loddon study area.

The remainder of the place-names in the Loddon area are mainly of the habitative type, Loddon for example is based on the old name of the River Chet, which was once called *Lutna* 'muddy-river' with the place-name referring to 'dwellers on the Loddon' (Ekwall, 1991: 302). Other place-names include the suffix *ingas*, *ingaham*, *ham* and *tun*: Seething OE '*Sipa*'s people', Heckingham OE '*ham* of *Heca*'s people', Mundham OE '*Munda*'s *ham*'and Stockton OE stoc tun 'tun belonging to a monastery cell' (Ekwall, 1991: 411, 230, 334, 444).

There are two further place-names in the area of Loddon that are very specific, and outside of the Domesday and charter evidence are the only other early references to churches, the place-name Kirby Cane OSc 'church village or village with a church' (Ekwall, 1991:279) and the closely related place-name Kirstead, a Scandinavianized form of the OE *ciricstede* 'site of a church' (Ekwall, 1991: 280). The problem is however, that these names are not first recorded until Domesday, or later in the case of Kirstead (c.1095).

10.3.5 Archaeological Evidence

The archaeological data for Loddon, Heckingham and Hales is quite extensive due to the detailed archaeological study of these parishes (Davison, 1990). Beyond this however the archaeological data is limited as illustrated on figures 8.5 and 8.6 which show that few

parishes have evidence of middle Saxon pottery or metalwork. The late Saxon period (figures 8.7 and 8.8) is equally poorly represented with ceramic evidence except in the parishes examined by Davison. The most abundant artefact is late Saxon metalwork, which is found in most of the parishes around Loddon with the exception of those to the north.

Davison's work has shown that in Loddon and Heckingham middle Saxon period settlement was concentrated on the lower ground close to the river Chet or its tributaries, with marked activity close to the church in Heckingham. He found no evidence of middle Saxon activity in Hales parish (1990: 16). The evidence of late Saxon and early medieval settlement is limited in Loddon and Hales. In Loddon this may be because of built up areas and in Hales it is due to grassland areas. However, in Heckingham there are abundant evidence of late Saxon pottery concentrations close to the church and Davison suggests that these field scatters indicate exploitation of the land comparable with middle Saxon times (1990: 21). Even in areas where there is ploughed land close to the church in Hales, late Saxon and early medieval activity is poorly represented (Davison, 1990: 16). There is limited activity on the eastern side of Hales Green, which by the late twelfth to fourteenth century, is marked by a continuous scatter of pottery and the green is then bordered by a deep ditch and bank which are no later than c. 1100 (Davison, 1990: 29-30). A similar earthwork feature of late eleventh or early twelfth century date has also been noted in the DMV of Langhale west of Loddon, which at the time was unique to Norfolk with the only parallels in high Suffolk (Wade-Martins, 1976: 122). Since then a similar earthwork feature has also been noted to the southeast of Rhees Green in Stratton St Michael parish (Addington, 1982: 108).

The DMV of Langhale is the only site in southeast Norfolk with evidence of a pottery industry. Excavations revealed a pottery kiln that produced Thetford-type ware (c. 850-1150), although the excavators suggest that the kiln dates from the eleventh century due to archaeomagnetical data from similar kilns discovered in Thetford. Due to the generally poor quality of the pottery produced here the excavators claim that the products from this kiln could have been aimed at the less wealthy market of this densely populated rural area, also that the production was rather short-lived (Wade, 1976: 115).

10.3.6 Domesday Book

Domesday Book does not record any berewicks for Loddon. However, a number of vills are recorded as berewicks or being in the soke of the manor of Earsham (figure 10.11); an

important episcopal manor, held by Stigand before 1066 (138b. Morris, 1984: 1,219). Stigand held the East Anglian see up until 1047 when he went on to become Bishop of Winchester (Campbell, 1996: 17-18). The important thing to note in this part of the county is that by 1086 the see held lands in 17 out of the 21 eastern hundreds. Prior to this date it held only land in two (Campbell, 1996: 19) Loddon Hundred must have been one of these two as Stigand is mentioned in a number of the entries for this area and the survey records that Stigand had almost full jurisdiction of the half hundred of Earsham, except for Thorpe (Abbots) which was under the jurisdiction of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. The vills in the soke of Earsham were Harleston, Starston, Denton and Billingford and the berewicks recorded were at Mundham, Ditchingham and Stockton. Billingford is located in Earsham hundred but is more than 15 km away and it seems unlike that it was a functioning part of an older territorial unit; it is more likely to represent a later administrative link. A similar such link has been noted at Seething which the survey tells us was added as an outlier to Toft Monks by Stigand after the arrival of King William (140a. Morris, 1984: 1,230). This suggests that Stigand was still busy accumulating lands here even after the Conquest. The manor of Earsham held lands in the most part to the west of Loddon including Mundham, which is a contact parish.



Figure 10.11. Domesday evidence of berewick connections in the Loddon study area.

Domesday records 16 sokemen in Loddon and a number in the surrounding vills of Hardley (4), Sisland (13) and Chedgrave (36 and two halves), which had a high number distributed across two manors. This places a high number of sokemen in three contact parishes on the northern boundary of Loddon possibly suggesting an estate centre. However, this pattern is complicated by what the survey records at Langley, which has already been suggested as having a church with an unusual status. Here the survey records 25 sokemen. Rockland St Mary and Surlingham belong to Langley (195. Williams and Martin, 2002: 1116). Could this concentration of sokemen be due to the influence of an important estate centre at Loddon, or an important centre at Langley? Domesday cannot confirm this, however a similar example has been noted by Williamson at Deopham, where a high number of sokemen have been taken as an indication of the importance of the nearby estate centre at Hingham (1993: 100).



Figure 10.12. Domesday evidence of sokemen and freemen in the Loddon study area.

Other sokemen are recorded in the Loddon area but in much lower numbers: Broome (4), Ellingham (5), Hales (2), and beyond the contact parishes Ashby (St Mary) (1), Thurlton (2) and Alpington (8). High numbers of sokemen are found at Ditchingham (22) but this may be attributed to its close proximity to the important manor at Earsham. The distribution of freemen in contrast is far more wide spread and in much higher numbers, for example Hales (13), Heckingham (21 with a further 8 after 1066) and Mundham (15). This pattern is repeated in many of the outer contact zone parishes and high numbers of freemen are recorded at vills such as Thurlton (17), Seething (43 and four halves) and Raveningham (43). This pattern seems to indicate a number of sokemen concentrated in the four vills adjacent to Loddon with freemen found widely distributed in the remaining contact and outer contact parishes.

In contrast to the Holt area, Loddon has relatively little woodland recorded by the survey even though woodland is suggested by a number of place-names discussed above. Woodland can be found at most vills in the contact parishes generally recorded by a low number of swine, for example Hales (15), Heckington (4) and Hardly (3). Higher numbers are recorded in Loddon itself (92), Chedgrave (30) and Thwaite (50) in the southern part of the study area, although there is a noticeable absence to the west of Loddon with places such as Mundham and Sisland with six and four respectively. In the outer contact parishes woodland is again recorded but in relatively low numbers of swine, although the southern parts of Ditchingham with over 100 swine indicates a more substantial survival of woodland adjacent to Earsham. To the north of Loddon both Langley and Carleton (St Peter) show a decline in swine numbers, which may be an indication of the reduction of woodland.

10.3.7 Discussion

The evidence for the Loddon area has now been examined and like the Holt case study discussed above it portrays an area of great complexity but with a different set of regional circumstances, not only apparent in Domesday but also in terms of the place-names, parish boundaries, churches and settlement data. Perhaps the most noticeable is the far more fragmentary and irregular shape of the parishes in this area which do not seem to radiate towards the larger parish of Loddon at their centre like they do in Holt and Swaffham. This seems to be largely the result of the parish boundaries following a number of pre-existing trackways and paths as well as later features.

However, within this complexity there are certain common features. A number of parishes, particularly those in the north and northwest of the study area such e.g. Ashby, Thurton, Sisland, Thwaite, Carleton (St Peter) and Claxton have either OSc place-name elements or personal name elements which belong to a later stratum of place-names. A number of woodland place-names could also be evidence of this as many are of OSc origin or contain a personal name element e.g. Cantley OE '*Canta's leah*', Chedgrave OE '*Ceatt's* pitt or grove', Haddiscoe OSc '*Hadd's* wood' and Thurton OE 'Thorn-bush *tun*' (Ekwall, 1991: 85, 99, 209, 472).

If these place-names suggest that the parishes to which they are attached are evidence of a land market and therefore that a potentially larger unit may have been broken up there is little chronological evidence of these events. Only a small number of these parishes have Domesday churches, suggesting pre-Conquest parish formation, but a far greater number have surviving fabric evidence from the Norman period, which could indicate these parishes were later, but in existence by c. 1200.

The parish place-names discussed above may relate to the later stages of land fragmentation, but is there evidence to suggest similar events happening earlier than the late ninth century? To answer this a more speculative approach is required. The place-names with the suffix ingaham, ingatum and ingas may relate to early phases of fragmentation, land organisation or perhaps smaller estates because they are later than the ham place-names (Cox, 1976: 62). Therefore Earsham, Mundham and Hedenham together with the Celtic place-name of Loddon may represent the earliest phase of place-name formation. Of course there is the possibility that many place-names have been changed in later periods, but these early place-names may indicate early territorial centres. Earsham does fit these criteria and seems to be an estate centre from the evidence in Domesday; it is also the parish that has given its name to the hundred, again suggesting some importance. The same could also be suggested for Loddon; it is not recorded in Domesday with berewicks although there is a concentration of sokemen in Loddon and the parishes to the north of it. More tentatively the fact that Loddon is the largest parish in the area may also be significant. It is also a Celtic name that may reflect the continuing integrity of the soke through the later Anglo-Saxon period (Hadley, 2000: 139). This may not always be the case, for example Mundham and Hedenham are difficult to fit into this pattern. One possibility could be that Hedenham and Mundham were smaller estates contemporary with Loddon or Earsham. These smaller 'manorial units of exploitation' have been noted elsewhere in the Danelaw (Hadley, 1996b: 11).

The settlement data elsewhere in the study area cannot help to identify great estates due to lack of archaeological investigation, other than the parishes studied by Davison (1990). Some tentative observations however can be made. Generally speaking, the middle Saxon ceramic and metalwork evidence is largely confined to the southern part of the study area. It is not until the late Saxon period that ceramic and metalwork evidence are evident in the wooded areas to the west and north. These observations seem to fit into the pattern of place-names, which suggests earlier intensity of settlement in the southern part of the study area.

By the time of Domesday it is clear that this densely populated part of Norfolk had a complex pattern of tenurial holdings that had recently gained the interest of the church as a potential source of income. This complexity largely masks any links that may have existed to the earlier organisation of Loddon Hundred. The parochial geography here is equally complex and does not seem to demonstrate a meaningful arrangement of parishes around a central parish as shown in the earlier case study. However, it still illustrates that fragmentation of the land-holding pattern is occurring from at least the late ninth century.

The evidence for a church organisation in this part of the county is a complex problem. The two priests recorded by Domesday at Topcroft seem to relate to the two churches that were once in the parish and represent a multi-churched vill which is not an uncommon feature in the Norfolk landscape. Langley however is more difficult to generalise: the one priest and two halves, a larger than normal land endowment and a named dedication could all be used in the context of Blair's model to suggest a minster church. But would this assumption be correct? The land endowment at Langley is by no means unique in this part of the county and neighbouring Carleton St Peter is similarly recorded with 80 acres of free land of the church. Langley church itself has no early fabric evidence and does not have a plan form that is suggestive of a church with a special status. The other church fabric evidence in the vicinity of Langley is largely of Norman origin which fits in with the pattern of later settlement in this area as suggested above. Based on this evidence it is difficult to see how Langley fits into an earlier pattern of church provision. Of course with a priest and two halves it could represent a late Saxon collegiate foundation but this is very difficult to substantiate from the limited Domesday evidence alone.

Similar problems of interpretation are also apparent with the church evidence from Loddon. Here no church is specifically mentioned in Domesday, but land belonging to the church is together with a valuation which is the highest in the hundred. Additionally the *Liber Albus* of Bury St Edmunds states that 'Felix bishop and Werned Abbot and Luthing Aetheling founded a church at Loddon (Williamson, 1993: 144). This however appears to be the only documentary evidence that mentions an early church here and it is not possible to claim a minster church in the context of Blair's model from such circumstantial evidence.

Although a minster church has not been identified in the Loddon area this is certainly not the case with local church provision. Both Domesday and fabric evidence portray a very extensive pattern of local churches with all but a few parishes in this part of Norfolk without

its own church, and a number of parishes with more than one by c. 1200. Domesday records more local churches in this part of Norfolk than in the other case study areas. This suggests that there were perhaps more churches here to record in 1086 and also shows how these churches were a reflection of the high population and wealth of the area. It also demonstrates that manorial ties here were weaker than the other case study areas allowing a more competitive church building culture to develop.

10.4 Swaffham Case Study

The Swaffham case study area is located in central west Norfolk. It is the central parish in the Hundred of South Greenhoe and is part of the deanery of Cranwich, which also includes the Hundred of Grimshoe to the south. The Hundred of South Greenhoe includes 30 parishes with the central parish of Swaffham having ten contacts: South Acre, Sporle, North Pickenham, Cockley Cley, Narford, Narborough, Marham, Beechamwell All Saints, Beechamwell St Mary and Shingham, although the last four parishes are included in the neighbouring hundred of Clackclose (figure 10.13).



Figure 10.13. The parishes, settlements and churches of the Swaffham study area.

10.4.1 Parish Boundaries

Figure 10.13 illustrates the general pattern of parishes and their boundaries around Swaffham. The parts of the boundaries of the contact parishes of Narford, Narborough and the western boundary of South Acre share a similar alignment, north-north-west to south-south-east. The nineteenth-century map evidence shows that these alignments in the most part follow trackways and roads and can therefore be usefully compared to similar alignments in southeast Norfolk discussed above. This part of the Swaffham study area shares another common attribute with southeast Norfolk in that some of the major Roman roads and the ancient trackway of the Icknield Way do not feature in parish boundaries except in the central parish of Swaffham. Here the northeast boundary is formed by the Peddars Way Roman road, and the northwest boundary by a Roman road (Margary 38), which links the Fen causeway to the east of the county. Another peculiarity is that the early Saxon earthwork, *Bichamditch* or the Devil's dyke is a feature on the western boundaries of the Beechamwells and Shingham but is not used north of the Roman road (Margary 38) although it extends northwards, terminating at the river Nar.

Roman road Margary 38 is a prominent boundary feature in a number of the western parishes e.g. Shouldham, Fincham and Barton Bendish, which all converge on it, although the boundaries do not always follow it closely until it reaches Swaffham. Margary 38 is marked on the 1838 OS map as Fincham Drove, which may give an indication of its later use as a drove road. This is more plausible if the parish to the west of Fincham, called Stradsett OE 'dwelling or fold on a Roman road' (Ekwall, 1991: 449) is also considered.

The remaining parish boundaries to the west of Swaffham in many instances are located in isolated areas such as marshland and heathland. For instance the boundary between Barton Bendish and Boughton is located medially in an area called Boughton Common and Barton Fen on Faden's map in 1797 (Barringer, 2004: 19). Similarly the boundaries between East Walton, West Bilney and Pentney all run through an area referred to by Faden as East Walton Common and Pentney Common (Barringer, 2004: 13).

The parish boundaries to the southeast and northeast of Swaffham are more irregular as can been seen with the Pickenhams and Houghton on the Hill. The reason for this appears to be that a high proportion of the boundaries are again located medially passing across commons and heaths; Holme Hale Common, Houghton Common and Bradenham Heath for instance.

To the north of Swaffham this is still evident with many boundaries running across former common areas recorded on Faden's map as South Acre Common, Dunham Common and Sporle Common (Barringer, 2004: 14). Closely related to the boundaries across former common areas is the way in which a number of parishes in this case study area appear to have been larger units that were subdivided up giving rise to a number of 'great' and 'little' directional and church dedication distinctions: Great and Little Dunham, North and South Pickenham, Beechamwell (All Saints), and Beechamwell (St John and St Mary) and West Acre, Castle Acre and South Acre.

One final factor to consider with the parish boundaries in this area is the underlying soils conditions and topography. As illustrated on figure 10.1 Swaffham parish is on an area characterised by acid sands and gravels so typical of the Breckland region. This is also the case for all of the parishes in the southern part of the study area. Broadly speaking the parishes to the east and northeast of Swaffham tend to be on average smaller than those in the west which may be attributable to the medium and heavy clay soils encountered here on the western edge of the central claylands. In the west and northwest the soils are different once again with light loams to the northwest and a complex mixture of soils on the western escarpment comprising of light loams, clay and a mixture of peat and silt from fenland and marshland.

10.4.2 Churches

The churches recorded in the environs of Swaffham illustrate yet another contrast in the way in which they are recorded in 1086 with fewer listed here than in both Loddon and Holt. Figure 10.14 shows the location of these churches only one of which, Beechamwell St John, is located in a contact parish, with all the other examples located in the outer parishes.

There are no Domesday churches in this area that mention a priest, and the majority of entries list just one church, the area of its glebe in acres and in most instances a valuation. There are however, variations to this. For example, Fincham is listed with one quarter of a church, whilst in contrast at Shouldham a single Domesday entry mentions 2 churches held by Aethelgyth with 73 acres between them and valued at six shillings and one pence (250b. Morris, 1984: 31,22). One of these churches was presumably Shouldham St Margaret, abandoned in the sixteenth century (Batcock, 1991: 54). Great Cressingham and Barton Bendish similarly have two churches mentioned in Domesday but they are listed separately on

different manors. The church of St George in Great Cressingham has suffered a similar fate to that of Shouldham St Margaret as it was abandoned in the sixteenth century and is now only visible from crop marks.

The church recorded by Domesday at Necton is the only one in the study associated with a royal manor before 1066. It is recorded with 36 acres of glebe land and valued at 36 pence. The other entries in this area have higher values per acre, the highest of which is listed at Shouldham with 73 acres at six shillings and one penny, although this is between two churches. The next highest valuations are at Beechamwell, two shillings and six pence and Barton Bendish at two shillings, although only one of the two churches recorded was valued. Wormegay church, the site of a possible early ecclesiastical site (Penn, 1996: 43) is recorded in 1086 but no valuation or glebe was given. This may simply be because Wormegay is on the lands of Hermer de Ferrers, where churches are rarely recorded with a value or glebe.

The later medieval valuations can suggest little more information than Domesday with regard to churches in the Swaffham area. No chapelries or pensions are mentioned, however, some of the values listed are relatively high. Swaffham had the highest valuation in the deanery of Cranwich at £40 in 1254 and £46 13s 4d in 1291 (Hudson, 1910: 118). The other valuations are less remarkable and only Necton and Sporle are of note. In 1254 Necton was valued at £20, but by 1291 it seems it had suffered a decline in fortunes with a valuation of £17 6s 8d. Sporle however increased in value from £18 13s 4d in 1254 to £31 13s 4d in 1291. Too much should not be read into this figure due to the fact that the spiritualities and temporalities were valued separately in 1254 but were grouped together in 1291.

The early fabric evidence provides a useful addition to the poor documentary data from Domesday and later thirteenth century valuations. Figure 10.14 illustrates that the majority of the churches in the contact parishes and a number of the outer parishes have early fabric evidence of both Saxo-Norman and Norman styles, although Norman is more common in the contact parishes. This again illustrates the incompleteness of the Domesday survey in recording churches and shows that local church building was prevalent here by at least the late eleventh century.

The church plan forms in this area are predominantly of the nave, chancel and square west tower with or without aisles. The round west tower, nave and chancel plan is evident with examples at Cockley Cley, Beechamwell (St Mary) and South Pickenham (All Saints). The axial plan church is evident but not common with only two examples at Great Dunham and Newton-by-Castle Acre. The final two plan forms evident are located at Shingham, which is a simple nave and chancel plan without a west tower, and Swaffham, which comprises a nave, chancel, square west tower and transepts. This plan may reflect that of an earlier church on the site, although this is impossible to prove without archaeological excavation as there is no surviving early fabric evidence. This lack of early fabric and the transeptal plan may be attributable to the church being substantially rebuilt in 1454-1510 (Bryant, 1903: 265) by which time transeptal plans were far more common.



Figure 10.14. Settlement types and early churches in the Swaffham study area. Note parishes shown in white are classed as DMVs.

10.4.3 Settlement

The settlement pattern around in the Swaffham study area is quite distinctive (figure 10.14). The western half is characterised by nucleated and regular row settlements and the eastern half is of a more dispersed nature. What is noticeable is that the nature of this dispersed settlement is mainly in the form of common edge settlements. Farmstead clusters are largely absent apart from a small grouping in the very north of the study area and a few isolated examples in the west. As found in the other case study areas discussed above common edge settlements tend to be confined to the central clayland region and this is also true of the Swaffham area. The western half of the study area by contrast is broadly speaking nucleated settlements which are found on a variety of soils that make up the western escarpment, Breckland and the southern part of the good sands region.

Most settlements in the study area are positioned approximately in the centre of their parish boundaries (figure 10.13). The settlements to the northeast of Swaffham do vary slightly to this, for example Narborough, Narford and West Acre, but these examples appear to have been positioned close to the river Nar, which forms a major boundary feature of their parishes.



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10.4.4 Place-Names

Figure 10.15 illustrates that there are a number of agricultural type place-names in the Swaffham area. However, only Barton (Bendish) OE 'barley *tun*' and Oxborough OE '*burg* where oxen were kept' refer to a specialist function. The addition of 'Bendish' in Barton Bendish means inside the ditch (Ekwall, 1991: 29) referring to *Bichamditch* discussed above. The other agricultural names refer to ground conditions, Cockley Cley OE *cleag* 'clayey soil', the Cockley part is obscure but Ekwall suggests it could also mean 'cock wood or wood frequented by wild birds' (1991: 111-112) and Acre (West, South and Castle) all of which refer to OE 'cultivated land or perhaps newly broken-in land' (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 263-264).

A significant feature of this area is that there are very few place-names that refer to woodland, Cockley Cley mentioned above and Sporle are the only ones which are contact parishes. Ekwall suggests the latter perhaps means *leah* or 'woodland clearing with an enclosure' although he is unsure how the late *o* fits into such a name (1991: 434). Mills offers a slightly different version by suggesting the place-name refers to a woodland clearing where spars or shafts are obtained (1991: 304).

There are a number of place-names in the area that refer to topographical features. Pentney, (West) Bilney and Wormegay, all have the second element OE *eg* 'island or raised ground in wet country', *Penta's* island or river name Pante, *Billa's* island and island of *Wyrm's* people respectively (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 42-43). All these place-names are positioned on the eastern limits of marshland and fenland, therefore the strong bias towards place-names with raised ground or island meanings is not surprising. Necton, OE *tun* by a neck of land' and Houghton (on the hill) '*tun* on the spur of a hill' are a reflection of topography, whilst Narford and Narborough OE '*neru*, narrow place or pass' *ford* and *burg* at a pass are both positioned near the river Nar; a river name that Ekwall suggests is a late back formation (1991: 337: 253, 336).

The remaining place-names are of the habitative type, which incorporate a personal name or describe a group of people; Swaffham '*ham* of the Swabians', (Great and Little) Dunham '*Dunna's ham*', Pickenham '*Pinca's ham*', Gooderstone '*Gulphere's tun*' and (East) Walton '*tun* of the Britons or serfs' (Ekwall, 1991: 495). Also included in this group are those which describe man-made features in the landscape: Caldecote OE 'cold hut' (Ekwall, 1991: 82),

Beechamwell OE '*Bicca's ham*' near the ditch with the addition of *well* referring to a spring, although the spring element was not added until 1212 (Ekwall, 1991: 34) and OE 'Newton' new *tun* (Ekwall, 1991: 341). Two curiosities are the place-names of Shouldham and Palgrave. In Shouldham the first element may refer to OE *scyld* 'debt or due'. Palgrave is more uncertain but Ekwall claims that the name may mean OE '*Paga* or *Pacca's* grove' (1991: 420, 357).

10.4.5 Archaeological Evidence

Figures 8.5 to 8.8 illustrate the extent of archaeological finds for the Swaffham area recorded in the Norfolk SMR. Higher concentrations of middle and late Saxon evidence are shown at the contact parishes of the Beechamwells and the outer parish of Barton Bendish due to the intensive archaeological work undertaken in these locations (Davison, 1988; Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester, 1997). The higher concentration of evidence in these parishes may be a good indication of the potential of other parishes in the area.

The parishes in the environs of Swaffham are similarly represented with find spots of pottery and metalwork from both the middle and late Saxon periods although this evidence is not consistent across the whole of the study area. To the west of Swaffham finds are more abundant and may be the result of more field-walking and metal-detecting.

The more detailed archaeology for this area can be obtained from a number of sources, although with the exception of Davison (1988) these are not specific to the case study area. The most instructive of these is Barton Bendish (Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester, 1997). The excavators suggest that the late Saxon village may have begun with two foci. A large focus at the western end of the modern village, had middle Saxon, and perhaps even early Saxon origins. This area contained a church (St Mary's) by the time of the Conquest and perhaps three manor houses. A smaller area to the east gained a church at an early stage (St Andrew's) perhaps within the tenth century which was followed in the early or mid-eleventh century by All Saint's Church, placed by the main street (Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester, 1997: 25). The spread of pottery around the late Saxon settlement shows an area of inner density, indicating frequently manured crofts, and an outer zone with a fine sprinkling of sherds, which is taken to indicate open fields. In contrast the middle Saxon sherds are only found close to the settlement focus. The excavators argue that this may indicate that some

land use other than crop production was being undertaken. (Rogerson, Davison, Pritchard and Silvester, 1997: 21, 25).

In Launditch Hundred Wade-Martins found that none of the known middle and late Saxon village sites owes their origins to the Roman period (1980b: 82). The pottery evidence also suggests that the eight villages with *ham* endings: Dunham, Elmham, Fransham, Lexham, Litcham, Mileham, Roughham and Weasenham were relatively early although there is no evidence to suggest that they pre-date the mid seventh century. Similarly the villages with *tun* endings, which had their origins spread over many centuries, appear to be later (Wade-Martins, 1980b: 85). One final aspect that may be of relevance to the Swaffham study area is that Wade-Martins found that there was a complete absence of pre-Conquest occupation around village greens, wherever they were available for field-walking. He attributes this to an expanding population after the Conquest (1980b: 86).

10.4.6 Domesday Book

Domesday records that Swaffham was a royal vill at the time of King Edward who gave it to Earl Ralph and by 1086 it was part of the lands of Count Alan (144. Williams and Martin, 2002: 1077). The survey reveals few other details about Swaffham but does state that it was acquired as two manors, the other one being Narford. It also states that the vill of Foulden was valued with Swaffham. More information however is given about the neighbouring vill of Sporle. Domesday records it was a royal manor, which King Edward gave to Earl Ralph, but by 1086 it was on the lands of the king of which Godric has custody (119b. Morris, 1984: 1,71). The manor at Sporle has berewicks recorded at Palgrave, South Acre and Pickenham (North and South), East Winch in neighbouring Freebridge Hundred and Breckles and Griston in Wayland Hundred (see figure 10.16).

Necton is perhaps the most complicated entry in the Swaffham study area. Domesday records that "Ralph holds that which Harold held at the time of Edward". Necton is listed under the lands of Ralph de Tosny and recorded with berewicks at Pickenham (North and South), Great Cressingham, Little Cressingham, Caldecote, Carbrooke, Acre (West and Castle) and a further three berewicks at Wretham (East and West) (235. Williams and Martin, 2002: 1050-1051). This last entry is complex as the survey does not mention East and West Wretham separately, and the third berewick is even more obscure. One possibility is that it refers to Thorpe, now a DMV in West Wretham parish.

Further connections can be added to Necton, as there are a number of manors within its valuation although not recorded as berewicks: Fransham (Great and Little), Dunham (Great and Little), Shingham, East Walton, Ickburgh and Breckles. Custhorpe and Bodney are also included within the entry for Necton and the survey states that the king had soke and sake over them, which again may imply some connection. Godwick also in the entry for Necton is a relatively late addition as the survey explicitly states that it did not belong in Necton at the time of Edward or Harold (236a. Morris, 1984: 22,13).

The many links and connections discussed above could imply possible estate centres at both Sporle and Necton but this evidence alone is not enough as many of these links in Norfolk have been shown to be relatively late and may not be representative of an earlier pattern of land holding (Williamson, 1993: 93). Therefore, further evidence must be considered.



Figure 10.16. Domesday evidence of berewick connections in the Swaffham study area.

In the Swaffham area sokemen are recorded in far fewer numbers than freemen (figure 10.17). There are no sokemen recorded in Swaffham, Sporle, Palgrave, Narford, Narborough, the Beechhamwells, Shingham, or Cley. The only ones recorded in the parishes immediate to Swaffham are those at Pickenham (North and South) (14), Necton (5) Acre (West and Castle) (2). Marham is also recorded with an exceptionally high number of sokemen (53) although the reasons for this are obscure in Domesday. It may be down to the fact that they were all attached to the manor of Ely Abbey and ecclesiastical estates required sokemen to render services differently (Williamson, 1993: 101).

Freemen recorded in the Swaffham area are far more extensive and they are found in varying numbers at most of the vills in the contact parishes with the exception of Narborough, Sporle and Necton. Swaffham itself has 12 and the parishes further towards the fens such as Barton Bendish, Fincham and the Beechamwells had higher numbers of 18, 64 and 17 respectively. The reason for such a high number of freemen in Fincham is unclear although it may be because of its position close to the Fen edge with extensive areas of grazing land.



Figure 10.17. Domesday evidence of sokemen and freemen in the Swaffham study area.

Another factor that has shown to be associated with, and may therefore aid great estate identification is woodland. In the previous two case studies woodland has been recorded in 1086 by how much swine it could support leaving the actual areas in question open to a number of interpretations. This is still the case in the Swaffham area but there are variations. For example in Barton Bendish it is recorded by the acre (8) and Fincham is recorded with half a league of woodland. Generally speaking the majority of the woodland recorded is no larger than pannage for 20 swine although Sporle is listed with pannage for 60. However, the largest entry is for Necton, which has woodland for 1000 pigs. As woodland is recorded at most of the berewicks and manors associated with Necton this figure does not seem to reflect a combined valuation, so it must represent a large area of woodland still apparent near this manor.

10.4.7 Discussion

The evidence for the Swaffham area illustrates just how complex the pattern of land holding was in this part of Norfolk. There are numerous berewicks and other associations recorded by Domesday (figure 10.16) at Sporle and Necton that are suggestive of a great estate. However, a number of these are far too far away to have been part of a functioning economic unit. For example, Breckles, the Wrethams, Ickburgh and Griston, all lie approximately 16 to 20 km away from their parent manors at Sporle and Necton. Similarly there is one example at Godwick, a berewick of Necton, which the survey tells us was added after the Conquest. Such late associations have been noted elsewhere in the county and of course it is possible that a number of other berewick links in the Swaffham area may have also been late additions like Godwick, but were simply not recorded as such by the survey. Even some of the closer berewicks such as Dunham (Great and Little), Fransham (Great and Little) and Acre (West and Castle) are included in other hundreds: Launditch and Freebridge respectively. This could mean that the hundreds unit may not be respecting earlier arrangements or alternatively that the hundred units are respecting earlier arrangements but the berewicks are not.

The other Domesday evidence for a secular estate is even more obscure and distribution of freemen and sokemen used in other parts of the county to help identify estate centres are difficult to interpret in the Swaffham area. The main concentration of sokemen, albeit in very low numbers, are found in a small number of parishes to the north and south of Swaffham but not in Swaffham itself. At the manors with berewicks sokemen are only recorded at Necton but in very low numbers (5). In contrast freemen are found in most of the parishes around Swaffham and in Swaffham parish, but they are more commonly found in the west of the region generally away from the areas of Necton, Sporle and the Acres which had the highest recorded expanses of woodland in 1086. The Domesday findings from Swaffham therefore challenge the view that sokemen are usually good evidence of estate centres. In this part of Norfolk this does not seem to be the case.

The parish geography for this case study area is equally challenging. There are a small number of agricultural names. Acre may refer to newly broken-in land (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 264); which may give an indication of changing agricultural regimes in what was still essentially a breckland zone. The most noticeable aspect of this area however is the general lack of place-names that are later additions in the landscape when compared to the other case studies. *Leah* names are evident at Cockley Cley and Sporle, and Necton and Newton illustrate *tun* names, but the majority of place-names in the area belong to an earlier stratum of place-names with *ham* endings, which suggests that few place-names in this area have been changed. The archaeological evidence for similar place-names in Launditch Hundred suggests that these place-names were no earlier than the mid seventh century (Wade-Martins, 1980: 85). Therefore in Swaffham they may represent a survival of some of the county's earliest place-names and equally may also demonstrate a number of smaller estates in the same area.

If the landscape in this part of the county was more commonly made up of smaller estates of varying size interspaced with much larger units how does Swaffham fit into this pattern? Some of the surviving berewick links are suggestive of a much larger unit comprising of Swaffham, Necton and Sporle. However, by 1086 this central area appears to have been divided into three royal vills. Further evidence of this larger unit can be found from the parish boundaries. The Peddar's Way Roman road marks the eastern edge of Swaffham parish, beyond this boundary was woodland, as evidenced from the place-names Sporle and Palgrave OE 'grove where poles were obtained' (Ekwall, 1991: 357). To the north of Swaffham the Acre place-name could suggest an area of heathland that had recently been broken in. This evidence indicates that settlement expanded in a northerly direction, Newton' new-tun' also showing this. Both Newton and Palgrave are small parishes and therefore may illustrate some fragmentation of existing land units. The Acres suggest newly reclaimed land, although a chronology cannot be ascribed to them. The fact that the Peddar's Way is not used a boundary in the Acre parishes could suggest that re-growth of woodland and scrub after the Roman period obscured the line of the road. Therefore this part of the study area may have been scrubland when the ham settlements were being founded. To the west of Sporle is Necton, a tun name potentially a later place-name, which could reflect settlement expansion to the east of Swaffham or the renaming of an earlier unit.

The available archaeological data for the Swaffham study area seems to support these findings as no middle Saxon pottery evidence has been recovered from Necton, Sporle or South Acre, although middle Saxon metalwork has. This could suggest that these areas were still woodland and waste in the middle Saxon period although there is middle Saxon activity in West and Castle Acre. By the late Saxon period ceramic evidence is visible in Necton, Sporle and South Acre, suggesting that by this time settlement had expanded into the woodland and waste areas.

The smaller estates or territories around Swaffham are illustrated by a number of ham placenames which although divided up into smaller parishes still retained their original placenames with the addition of 'north' and 'south', 'great' and 'little' or by church dedication which gave them their separate identities. The fact that these names have not been changed when these smaller units were divided into a number of separate parishes has been noted to be of significance when identifying former estate territories such as the Burnham group of parishes in northwest Norfolk (Williamson, 1993: 92). Such examples around Swaffham include North and South Pickenham, Great and Little Dunham and Great and Little Fransham. This division however is not always confined to ham names: Narborough and Narford both share the same prefix which relates to the river Nar and Acre is divided into West, Castle and South. These smaller units potentially give an indication of parish formation in this part of the county. In some instances they are recorded separately by Domesday e.g. Great and Little Cressingham but in other examples they are not, for example Great and Little Palgrave and North and South Pickenham. These latter two examples may show that these were not separate parishes in 1086 and were divided later. Alternatively they may also illustrate that both settlements may have been recorded together by Domesday. The evidence for a relatively late parish at Little Palgrave is made even more compelling by the fact that it is a place-name not recorded until c. 1157 (Ekwall, 1991: 357).

The complicated central estate and the smaller ones around discussed above have no evidence in Domesday to suggest an important early church of superior status. Swaffham church by virtue of its later grandeur may indicate that it was of some importance. It is located in an unplanned town, a common factor it shares with the other study areas and the fact that it is located in the largest parish of the group can only be described as circumstantial evidence. What this case study area does show like the other two case studies is an area with evidence of early local church provision, but this time it is not as extensive. This could be the result of stronger manorial ties in this part of Norfolk and a lower population density compared to Loddon. However, it could also be because this study area is located inland and not as accessible by cheap water transport as the other two case studies. Building materials may have had a more local bias and wood may have still been used. This would explain the low

number of Saxo-Norman churches and a higher number of Norman churches, perhaps representing rebuilding of the earlier timber ones.

10.5 Conclusions

The case studies considered in this chapter show that Norfolk at the time of Domesday was a county of contrasts. In the west of the region at Swaffham an area of low population in 1086 seems to have resulted in the preservation of an ancient structure of a central estate and smaller contemporary ones around it, although Domesday evidence for this is less than comprehensive. Over time this was partially fragmented by the expansion of settlement into woodland and waste. The parish boundaries here generally follow more natural features and as a consequence they are much more regular than the boundaries in the other study areas. The settlement pattern is also different and much more nucleated suggesting a much more stable landscape. This is only changed with population growth, which stimulated settlement to expand to the edges of greens, but this is only apparent in the east of the study area.

In contrast the other study areas show a much higher degree of fragmentation of land. The parishes at the outer limits of the Holt study area have irregular boundaries and a generally later stratum of place-names, suggesting that the estate was being picked away at its edges. However, it does share one common factor with Swaffham with the arrangement of the central parishes. In Holt, Thornage and Letheringsett may have once have been a single unit, much the same as Swaffham, Sporle and Necton may have been. Settlement in Holt reflects to a certain extent the later circumstances of estate fragmentation and as a consequence the settlement pattern is much more dispersed than in Swaffham.

Loddon in southeast Norfolk illustrates a complete contrast from the other study areas. Here the landholding pattern is extremely fragmented and the parishes are generally much smaller as a consequence. Many parishes have late place-names and show that the estate here was very fragmented by the time of Domesday. This may be why no berewicks are recorded for Loddon; by 1086 the evidence for them had already been lost. The boundaries in this case study do not predominantly follow natural features, neither are they arranged around the central parish as they seem to be in Holt. In Loddon they seem to be arranged, or influenced by features of a much earlier landscape and as a result parochial geography here is very obscure.

Although there are varying degrees of evidence for earlier estate structure in the three study areas the common factor they all share is the lack of evidence for minsters in the sense that they are perceived in many other parts of the country. Domesday is relatively silent on the subject although local churches are frequently recorded. All of the case study areas developed into small towns and their parish size was greater than those around them. This is the only evidence which could be taken as an indication of minster status, but this alone is not enough as the same circumstances are also true of great estate centres.

Whilst there is a distinct lack of evidence for minsters the evidence for local churches in all three case studies is very extensive in terms of Domesday and fabric evidence. It is clear that the circumstances in Loddon: weak manorial ties, high population density and productive soils allowed for a far more entrepreneurial spirit in terms of church building than either Holt or Swaffham. It also demonstrates that parish formation in this part of the county was in a more advanced state than in the other two case study areas. The opposite appears to have been the case in both Holt and Swaffham where lower population density, areas of poorer soils and stronger manorial links seems to have retarded parish development and local church building. The implications this and the other findings from the case studies have for the county as a whole are explored in the final chapter.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

The previous ten chapters have explored early medieval Norfolk from the perspectives of landscape archaeology and architectural history. This research has illustrated that the county of Norfolk is not easily generalised in terms of its settlement patterns, parishes or local church provision. While it does share some characteristics with other areas of England, it equally has other distinctive traits that are unique to it. This has proven to be evident with great estates which have been shown to have once been a common element in the Norfolk landscape, although this thesis has demonstrated that they were not quite as neatly spaced out across the landscape as previously thought. In fact they varied quite considerable in size and complexity across the county and were more closely comparable with other Danelaw areas of England. Minster *parochiae* however, proved to be far more elusive and the Norfolk evidence is not compelling enough to be able to suggest that they were coterminous with great estates as they are in other areas of the country. What the Norfolk evidence does suggest is that pastoral care was undertaken in a much more localised manner which had seldom been considered by current scholarship.

To be able to address these problems and to gain a greater understanding of the landscape of Anglo-Saxon Norfolk this research compiled a varied and extensive collection of data. This data was assembled into two project databases, one for settlement and archaeological information and the second for the architectural, documentary and archaeological evidence specific to Norfolk's numerous local churches. Collecting these large assemblages of data and being able to compare, contrast and display them in a meaningful manner was one of the challenges for this thesis.

The settlement data was perhaps the most difficult to standardise into a database format because of the subjective elements in the classification of the settlement forms studied. A number of difficulties were also encountered with the various historic maps considered and the production of an accurate and detailed plan of the parish boundaries of the county. This research has compiled an accurate digital map of parish boundaries and for the first time plotted the different settlement types encountered. The church data was equally challenging to standardise because of the inconsistent way churches are recorded on the SMR and also in well known architectural guides such as Pevsner. A method of classification was devised for this research that enabled the church evidence to be viewed objectively. This demonstrated
that this large body of architectural and archaeological evidence can tell us much about the earlier periods in Norfolk's development. The classification system used for Norfolk's church evidence could equally be adopted for use to categorise churches in almost any area of England, and should impact nationally on how these buildings are studied.

The key aspect in assimilating such large and varied datasets was through the use of GIS, which proved itself to be a powerful research tool. It also demonstrated that it has potential to undertake much more complex tasks such as the adjacency calculations discussed in Chapter Four. The most striking aspect of GIS however was the ability to be able to plot the data on a parish basis. This is not only more visually striking in terms of how it illustrates the findings, but also shows that the parish unit is especially useful for demonstrating great estates and their former territories, differences with place-name types, settlement distribution and archaeological evidence. Plotting data by parish moves away from the more traditional dot on map plans and allows for not just the settlement to be considered in terms of the landscape but also the area that defines it and how that area is related to those other parishes around it.

11.1 Settlements and Parishes

This research has shown that at a broad level of consideration the divisions of ancient and planned countryside portrayed by Rackham (1995) and Roberts and Wrathmell (2000, 2002) although illustrating general trends are not sufficiently detailed to explain the many varieties of settlement encountered in the Norfolk landscape. Therefore even the broad distinctions made between nucleated and dispersed settlements do not truly represent the Norfolk evidence. To gain a better understanding of settlement in the county requires other factors such as soil types, tenurial arrangements, population size, wealth and agrarian organisation to also be taken into account. This detailed understanding can only be achieved by considering the data at both a regional and local level.

By plotting the data on a parish basis this thesis has shown that there is a distinction between parish size and settlement type (pp.165, 167). Dispersed settlement types are usually located in smaller parishes than nucleated settlement types. The mode of plotting data by parish area has challenged the view that it is the settlement pattern that reveals more about the landscape. In Norfolk it is the form of the parish unit that is more instructive. There is also a distinctive east-west divide across the county with smaller parishes more common in the east than in the west. Some of these differences can be explained by expansion of settlement into previously

sparsely settled areas of the central claylands, as is the case with some common edge settlements. This is confirmed by archaeological data to be a relatively late addition to the settlement pattern. Similarly farmstead cluster settlements are also found in generally smaller parishes in the east of the county but more commonly on the more peaty and silty soils of the river valleys and the broadlands estuary.

The use of GIS has also enabled further differences to be observed in the relation between place-name type and the parish. Until this thesis the large majority of place-name research was focussed on Scandinavian place-names and debates specific to ethnicity and numbers in the 'Great Army'. GIS however, has allowed a number of different place-name categories to be considered, not only in terms of place-name construction, but also their position in the landscape, parish size, soil conditions and the relationship to adjacent place-name types. In this new approach it has been possible to avoid the arguments of chronology and ethnicity and show that place-names can also be important indicators of early territorial arrangements. For example, the spatial relationship of woodland names to agricultural names can be understood in terms of potential estates and their centres indicated by parochial geography or Domesday. This evidence like much of the rest discussed above is also variable across the county and the place-names seem to reflect regional differences in the balance of agriculture and woodland.

Place-names and parishes also indicate how earlier territorial arrangements eventually became fragmented by an increasingly independent peasantry. The GIS plots have illustrated that in the east of the county there are a higher number of smaller parishes with place-names that include a personal name element and *tun*. These place-name types and smaller fractured parishes are not so common in the west of the county where place-name types tend to be from an earlier stratum and parishes on the whole are generally larger. These findings have confirmed that estate fragmentation at the rate experienced in the east of the county was by no means universal.

11.2 Archaeological evidence

The archaeological evidence from the SMR examined in Chapter Eight although reflecting the variable nature of recovery from different parishes and the activities of local field-walking and metal detecting clubs does highlight the potential of the county in terms of available settlement data. For example, there are indications that middle Saxon pottery was available in

much smaller quantities and may reflect a higher status product or at least a rarer commodity than the more widely available Thetford-type ware found in almost every part of the county. The pottery evidence also demonstrates that in areas where only Thetford-type ware has been recovered it may indicate an expansion of settlement into previously sparsely settled areas, as is the case with common edge settlement. The opposite is also true and in areas where middle Saxon pottery is not followed by late Saxon pottery settlement shift can be suggested. While these findings are not new, being able to show the extent of pottery evidence across the county illustrates how this data can be used effectively to supplement other settlement data.

The metalwork evidence from both the middle and late Saxon periods is much harder to interpret. Generally speaking this research has shown that middle Saxon metalwork has been found in higher quantities than middle Saxon pottery. Similarly recovery of higher status items is more common from the middle Saxon period than from the late Saxon period. Again this may demonstrate that metalwork was a rarer commodity. However, by the late Saxon period metalwork items are far more commonly found although generally made from poorer quality materials. In Norfolk this seems to suggest that by the late Saxon period a change had occurred: this metalwork illustrating a higher consumption of traded goods, a much wider distribution and evidence of mass production indicating an increasing population and burgeoning economy.

Late Saxon metalwork has also attracted the same arguments as the Scandinavian placenames and has been used in discussions of ethnicity and social hierarchy. Again like the arguments for place-names such assumptions need to be revised. The questions that should be asked of such evidence now should not be about ethnicity or the extent of Scandinavian settlement but the wider implications this material may have when the Norfolk evidence is compared to other regions. Can these items reveal much about the wealth of the population and the extent of trade that may have been going on round the North Sea basin?

11.3 Great estates

Prior to this thesis the research for great estate territories in Norfolk was of limited extent with only a few examples being proposed (Bond, Penn and Rogerson, 1990 and Hart, 1992). Only Williamson (1993) attempted to show a more county-wide perspective. This research has confirmed the findings of Williamson but by moving beyond the more traditional lines of investigation such as Domeday and place-names it has also demonstrated how settlement

patterns, archaeological evidence and parish units can add to our knowledge of these earlier territorial structures. From the findings of this research it has been possible to confirm that Jones' model is applicable in the Norfolk landscape. However, it has also shown a number of areas that do not fully match his model but in fact have more in common with other Danelaw areas examined by Hadley (1996b, 2000). These include overlapping of estate boundaries and the smaller units of exploitation that were noted particularly in the west of the county. These findings imply that Norfolk did not have a neatly ordered landscape that Jones' model suggests. Even Williamson's view of a Norfolk landscape made up of 50 to 100 estates varying in size from 40 to 100 square km (1993: 102) requires revision.

One of the main difficulties with the studying the Norfolk landscape in this manner has been the lack of early documentary evidence. What does survive predates Domesday by a few years and only serves to confirm the complex organisation of land holding recorded in 1086. Nothing that includes boundary clauses or other evidence that could be used to date the fragmentation of these great estates into the familiar pattern of parishes we have today has survived. This means that any attempt at trying to establish a chronology for the break up of great estates is challenging. What this research has shown is that these problems do limit the use of the county as a unit of study. To fully understand the changing dynamics of the region case studies were the only way in which sufficient detail could be examined and differences across the county more fully understood.

Comparing the three case study areas has shown just how different the circumstances were across Norfolk. Perhaps the most striking of the differences was the parochial geography in each area. Common to all three was a large central parish which had eight of more other parishes arranged around it. The parishes around both Holt and Swaffham showed a degree of orientation towards the centre. This was not apparent in Loddon and the parishes in this part of the county showed that the central parish was much less of an influence on orientation. Instead the parishes and their boundaries here were largely arranged on much earlier landscape features.

A further aspect of the parochial geography was the actual size and shape of the parishes and the place-names attached to them. Those found around Loddon were on average much smaller than the other two areas and relate to a later stratum of place-names that include personal name elements, woodland and some Scandinavians place-names. The smaller fragmented parishes so common around Loddon were very limited in the Holt area and where they were evident they correspond with the outer limits of the projected estate there. The place-names in this part of Norfolk have more to do with agriculture and there are relatively few in the Holt area that refer to either woodland or have personal name elements. In the Swaffham case study area the parishes were generally larger than those encountered in the Holt or Loddon study areas and where fragmentation was evident it usually resulted not in a personal name element but the differentiation by elements such as Great and Little and East and West. There was also little evidence of Scandinavian place-names here with the possible exception of two minor *thorpe* names which could equally have an English root.

Further contrasts with the case study areas were apparent from Domesday. The survey lists berewicks at both Holt and Swaffham but not for Loddon. A number of the berewicks at Swaffham appear to be later additions and in that sense are reflections of later administrative arrangements rather than relict estate links. At Holt however this does not seem to be the case and the majority of berewicks here do appear to reflect earlier arrangements in the landscape.

By far the most complex aspect of the Domesday evidence is the way in which the survey records sokemen. Williamson has suggested that in most cases that high numbers of sokemen are an important clue as to the whereabouts of former estate centres although he does recognise that this evidence is not infallible (1993: 100). There are no sokemen recorded in Swaffham although freemen are recorded there. The closest sokemen to Swaffham are found in Pickenham (North and South) and also Acre (Castle and South). Similarly Holt has no sokemen listed although they are present in higher number in the contact parishes of Edgefield and Thornage to the south and west of it. In contrast there are 16 sokemen recorded at Loddon and high numbers in the parishes immediately north of it.

These three case studies illustrate just how complex the landscape of early medieval Norfolk was and the distinctive regional differences apparent. They also show that the normal methods of estate identification cannot wholly be relied upon. In some areas sokemen are instructive and in others they are not. Similarly berewicks may indicate earlier territorial arrangements but equally they may be a reflection of later administration. Parochial geography does not always indicate estate centres clearly either as demonstrated at Loddon where the boundaries were influenced by even earlier features in the landscape and were not arranged around a larger central parish as they were at Holt and Swaffham. The identification of the existence of more great estates will not necessarily make a further contribution to our understanding of the Norfolk landscape. It is clear from the research in this thesis and earlier work that they

existed. What needs to be more widely debated is why the evidence for them differs so greatly?

One of the biggest influences on the county in terms of soils and topography is the wooded central watershed on heavy clay soils, which formed an effective barrier between east and west from a very early period. This barrier seems to have allowed each half of the county to develop its own character and it appears that by the time of Domesday different rates of estate fission had happened or were still in progress. This could be why fission seems to have been much greater at Loddon than the other two case studies, but this separation from other parts of the county does not fully explain the many local circumstances that were also factors.

Williamson has suggested that estate fission occurs in two ways: from above, where estates or portions of them together with the obligations from their inhabitants were granted away by East Anglian kings and their successors to aristocratic families; and from below, where peripheral edges of the former great estate were systematically eaten away by ownership of local cultivators where division between co-heirs would be more likely (1993: 121). The case studies of Holt and Swaffham illustrate division from above with evidence of a once larger central area being divided into two or three separate manors. In contrast Loddon illustrates fission from below with the outer areas of the estate gradually being eroded away.

While these definitions are valid they do not take into account the circumstances only visible at a very local level of consideration. In Loddon the parochial geography, place-names and the fact that this area had a higher recorded population than other areas in 1086 shows there was pressure on both land and resources. The central claylands had started to open up to settlement with the resultant reduction in woodland apparent when the place-names and Domesay evidence are compared. However, even if the outer part of the estate was being eroded the central core was not, and the relatively high number of sokemen recorded in Loddon and the area directly north of it may imply that there was some effort to maintain control of the central area. The reasons for this may have been to maintain an area of precious woodland resources for the manor here to control, although by 1086 the number of swine recorded in the same parishes as sokemen suggests that this was not very successful. What Loddon shows therefore is certainly fission in its outer limits with some effort to maintain the central core from being divided up which could equally be called contraction. In contrast Holt shows the best evidence of a former great estate territory and the relict berewick links recorded by Domesday still imply a territory that was still evident in 1086 although the central core had been divided up into separate manors. Some of the peripheral areas had started to become eroded but the pattern of parishes seems to indicate that this process was not extensive. The reasons for the difference here are a result of a lower population density and a variety of soil types which meant that the settlement pattern here was more nucleated in character when compared to Loddon. Sokemen are also recorded at Holt and seem to be focussed around the central area further adding to the impression that there was still a relict great estate here in some form.

Swaffham in the west of the county illustrates yet another different set of circumstances. The parishes here are generally larger which could be attributed to the poorer quality soils of the area, particularly the acid sands and gravels to the south. This is not the case with the parishes on the light loams to the west of Swaffham, which are on good agricultural land reflected in a number of place-names. Here Domesday records a number of berewicks, many of which seem to be later additions and do not reflect the former estate structure. The population density here was generally quite low and has resulted in less estate fragmentation on the outer limits of the estate. However, by Domesday the central core was recorded as two manors implying division from above. This division has also removed most of the evidence of any sokemen in the central area and by 1086 this could illustrate that the status that they had once had had been reduced to villein status (Williamson, 1993: 125). What all this implies is that the relict estate system formerly centred on Swaffham had largely disappeared by 1086 and most evidence of its existence comes from the parochial geography. The smaller units of exploitation noted from the place-name evidence e.g. the Pickenhams and the Acres do have low numbers of sokemen recorded so although the evidence of the central core had largely gone by 1086 the smaller units still were visible.

The final point to make is that this research has demonstrated that the evidence for great estates varies quite considerably across the county. It has reinforced the view that manorial ties in the west were stronger than those in the east but this did not necessarily mean that the great estates in these areas would persist any longer than those areas with weaker manorial ties. This research has also shown that population is an important aspect in the fission of great estates: higher population coupled with weaker manorial ties results in a much more complex parochial geography, whereas in areas where the population is lower the relict pattern survives better in the landscape. What is still unclear however is why the population was higher in the east then in the west. It has often been attributed to Scandinavian settlement and disruption, which in other areas of the Danelaw gave the conditions for an active land market. This thesis has shown however that the Scandinavian place-names and archaeological evidence do not support this conclusion in Norfolk and it is more likely that the active land market was actually in place by the late ninth century and it was the local population that were an influence on the settlers and not the other way around. The reason for the high population however is still open for debate.

11.4 Local churches

The biggest challenge for this research was to try and reconstruct an earlier system of pastoral care in the county that was largely assumed to be based on a system of minsters as found in other parts of England. In the broadest sense it has been shown that Norfolk has more in common with other Danelaw areas in terms of great estate provision, therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect that this also applies to an earlier system of pastoral care. Other Danelaw areas have been shown to have a pattern of minster churches although they do differ from those encountered in non-Danelaw counties. However, the findings from this research have shown that a minster system as we perceive it is not evident in Norfolk. In the pre-Viking period there is no doubt that Christianity was present in the landscape with episcopal sees located at *Dommoc* and later Elmham. Within this landscape there were also a number of other ecclesiastical sites such as Bawsey and Wormegay that have been recognised from the artefacts discovered. What is not clear however is the extent of secular involvement in these sites. After the late ninth century there seems to be little evidence of a recognisable system of pastoral care and minster churches as perceived elsewhere cannot be traced in the landscape. What does emerge after the period of Scandinavian disruption is local church building on a prolific scale. This thesis has shown that the key to understanding the development of pastoral care in Norfolk is to appreciate what the evidence of local church building tells us about the developments in the landscape from the ninth through to the eleventh century.

What Norfolk does have is evidence for prolific local church building that can be found in Domesday and early charters, both of which are acknowledged to be very incomplete in their representation of the true number of church buildings. Until this research the number of churches present in the late eleventh century had only been crudely estimated (Cotton, 1980). It is now possible to give a much more accurate figure by using Domesday and early charters in association with architectural and archaeological evidence from existing church structures.

This has given a figure of 454 churches or 57 percent of the later medieval total. This is a much greater number than the 231 suggested by Domesday, a mere 28 percent of the later medieval total.

The architectural evidence for these early churches has highlighted the difficulties in trying to date the surviving fabric by architectural elaboration and stylistic indicators, when in fact it seems as though Saxo-Norman, Norman and a combination of the two reflect the different skills and influences of the masons. Therefore the obsession of placing a church before or after the Conquest architecturally is not only very difficult, but in fact proves very little, as this event was certainly not a watershed in architectural style and technology. A more constructive way in looking at the architecture of this period in Norfolk is to view both Saxo-Norman and Norman-style architecture as representative of church building up until c. 1200. This broader perspective allows better comparisons to be made with the documentary record.

Closely related to architectural studies are the actual building materials from which these early churches were constructed. The tradition of early church building in the county evidenced from archaeological excavation would seem to be timber in some areas and local materials such as flint and pudding stone in others. These latter two materials are notoriously difficult to date as neither can be carved in a decorative manner and therefore lack any stylistic indicators. Building materials may also be a factor in why there is so little fabric evidence for higher status churches from an earlier period. If there was a predominantly timber tradition in Norfolk it seems logical that early churches may have been constructed from such materials and would not have survived for very long without repair or reconstruction. Therefore the only way in which a church could be discovered now is from archaeological excavation to reveal a diagnostic plan form or other telltale information commonly associated with ecclesiastical sites.

In other Danelaw counties some church plans have often been cited as architectural evidence for potential high status churches. These plans include the transeptal aisleless plan (Blair, 1985) or continuous nave and chancel plan with no division between the two (Parsons, 1995) or simply the elaboration and size of a later church building (Parsons, 1996). In Norfolk this research has shown there is no evidence of any plan form that is indicative of a minster or higher status church. Although there are a number of churches that are grand and elaborate, these appear to have been due to local patronage or the later economic developments in a wealthy region that made such rebuilding and remodelling work possible (Fawcett, 1996:

101). For example, to suggest that all the large and elaborate churches on the fen edge were all minsters is not sensible when their later architectural form was largely a consequence to the prosperity of the area in the fifteenth century. What the plan forms do show is differences in local church building, revealing evidence of regional forms: the round tower churches of northeast Norfolk perhaps show this best. The axial tower churches of the county could also be suggestive of this although due to a poorer rate of survival the original distribution of these churches is difficult to calculate.

11.5 Domesday

The Domesday evidence for churches in Norfolk is exceptionally complex. Churches are listed with single and shared endowments which range greatly in size. There are churches with joint ownership which suggests a pooling of resources, there are a number of vills recorded with one or more churches held by different manors and similarly there are a number of churches that actually share the same churchyard. Clearly by 1086 local churches were deeply embedded in both landscape and society and illustrate that Norfolk was by no means a 'godforsaken' place even after the disruptions of the ninth century.

To add to this complexity it is clear from this research that by comparing the Domesday and fabric evidence that by the late eleventh or early twelfth century there must have been far more churches than those listed in 1086. Plotting Domesday churches through GIS has allowed their positions in the landscape to be viewed. What this pattern appears to show is the administrative variety of Domesday itself rather than any sort of systematic recording process. Some clusters are apparent, for example those on the eastern edge of the fens and other concentrations close to the Bure and Yare valleys, but to suggest there is any logic as to why these churches were recorded and others were not is stretching the evidence too far. All but one church on the eastern fen edge cluster are Norman in design with the exception Bexwell, which is in a more Anglo-Saxon tradition. This may imply that the churches in this particular cluster were timber at the time of the survey, or were built or rebuilt in the years between the Conquest and Domesday. Similarly the churches cluster in the Bure valley area are all very much of a Norman design. Again there are no conclusions that can be drawn from what and what is not recorded by the survey in the context of the architecture. All that can be said is that Domesday is recording a snapshot of time when the landscape was experiencing a period of new church building and some rebuilding of existing structures. It also illustrates that

Domesday does not record any of the county's churches in a systematic way and the reasons for inclusions or omissions in the pages of the survey still remain obscure.

11.6 Minster churches

One aspect that this research has shown that Domeday is almost silent upon is minster churches. The Norfolk evidence demonstrates that the diagnostic evidence for minster churches is not apparent in Little Domesday. There is little that can be taken from the endowments of land, valuations, there are few references to priests and there are no dependent chapelries recorded outside of Norwich. The later church valuations from 1254 and 1291 can add very little to the Domesday evidence. Therefore, at a broad level of consideration Norfolk simply does not have the indicators that Blair's model uses for the identification of minsters in other parts of the country. None of the great estate centres appear to have minster churches associated with them and even at a more detailed local level the case studies seem to confirm these general findings.

There are some tentative suggestions that can be made in the context of Blair's model. All three case studies developed into small towns and they were located in larger parishes than those surrounding them. To claim a minster church from this circumstantial evidence is building speculation on speculation as many small towns must have developed without minsters and large parishes may represent the remnant of an earlier tribal territory or great estate without ecclesiastical significance.

Faced with such extensive but complex evidence of minor local church building recorded in Domesday it is hardly surprising that scholarship has suggested that any minster system that may have existed was masked by these later developments (Williamson, 1993; Blair 2005: 320). This view however is not borne out by the evidence from great estates. If the landscape had changed so dramatically between the ninth and the eleventh century one would expect that the evidence for great estates would also be difficult to trace from Domesday. This research has shown that this is not so. The negative view taken by contemporary scholarship on the lack of minsters in Norfolk has not considered another possibility: that the system of pastoral care in Norfolk was different. Essentially did Norfolk ever have what could be recognised as a minster system or had pastoral care always been based on local church provision?

In support of this view, given that Norfolk is relatively isolated from other parts of the country, and even the east and west seem to have developed separately, it is not inconceivable that a system of minster churches did not develop due to the county's relative isolation. But what could be the alternative? If Norfolk was looking across the North Sea for its inspiration rather than elsewhere in England then perhaps the county may have had a more continental model such as the Frankish one described by Blair in which local churches were founded in great numbers at a local level by nobles on their own estates through the sixth to eighth century (2005: 43). However, in Europe these churches are attested by a large body of archaeological evidence for them being constructed over elite lay cemeteries: this is absent from English church archaeology for the same period (Blair, 2005: 119).

In Norfolk the lack of evidence for such a system at an early period is not evident from the limited nature of church archaeology available in the county. However, this research has shown that such a system of local church provision was evident in the Norfolk landscape earlier than many other parts of the country. What is clear is that manorial ties across the county varied, but in the east particularly they were quite weak. It is in the east predominantly where Domesday records more churches, usually in the smaller parishes indicating estate fission as described above. With no evidence of minsters and a period when the nature of episcopal control is unclear during the period of Viking disruption (c. 845-955) it is possible that church building went unchecked for some time. This may just indicate an extension of a system already present in the landscape. This system was not so obvious in the western half of the county where surviving documentary and fabric evidence indicates less frequent church building (see Chapter Ten). This itself may be due to the character of the social organisation in this half of the county, which had stronger manorial ties and did not allow for the prolific church building and early parish formation evident in the east. This makes the Norfolk evidence for this period far more complex, as it not only shows a different method of pastoral care, but one which was developing at different rates across the region. It also demonstrates that pastoral care in the county may have owed more in its foundation to its contacts across the North Sea basin than it did with its neighbouring counties. The only way that these issues can be resolved is through the use of more church excavations and as this discipline is still relatively young in the county, firmer conclusions about Norfolk's early pastoral care will have to wait until far more churches than at present have been excavated.

11.7 Future Research

This research has demonstrated that a multidisciplinary approach using GIS has the potential to answer questions using different strands of evidence such as fabric evidence with the Domesday data and place-name evidence with parish boundaries for instance. It has also shown that detailed case studies have also proven to be useful in landscape analysis and help identify local circumstances not evident from a more general county study. It also highlights the potential of the neighbouring county of Suffolk for similar research, which would provide both a useful contrast and parallel.

One important area that this research has identified is the importance of the study of the origins of small towns, which are still poorly understood. The potential for the study of small towns has been demonstrated with the chosen case studies that could be used to answer more landscape questions if more research was focussed upon them. Another area that would be promising for future study is the surviving church buildings themselves. This thesis has shown that the number recorded in Domesday could be easily doubled on the ground. Detailed church studies would undoubtedly find more surviving early fabric than has been possible in this research. With a wider, more detailed set of church data broader questions could be asked and local building techniques and styles may be more readily identified.

In a wider context this research has shown that we should not always assume that similar systems of secular and pastoral organisation existed everywhere. Norfolk offers an alternative to the system of pastoral care evident elsewhere in England and shows that the continent may have been more influential in its development than its closest neighbours. This is an important point and demonstrates that in terms of landscape study we should not always look inward for answers but should also consider the possibility that the people we are studying were perhaps looking outwards.

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