

**Patronage, Power, and Identity: the Social Use of Local  
Churches and Commemorative Monuments in Tenth to  
Twelfth-Century North Yorkshire**

**Volume 1 of 2: The Text**

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## ABSTRACT

Though parish churches and funerary sculpture have long been of interest to medievalists, the integrated archaeological examination of these two media has generally been overlooked. This research proposes an examination of the spatial and chronological patterns of early medieval architectural fabric in the parish churches of the North Riding of Yorkshire, in conjunction with the region's Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval commemorative monuments. Analysis is concentrated in the 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the processes of parochialization and manorialization were undergoing significant development, and the northeast of England was subjected to influential political and social transitions punctuated by the Anglo-Scandinavian and Norman invasions and settlements. Church fabric and commemorative monuments were both expensive, tangible, and highly visible forms of ecclesiastical expenditure and display, making them important arenas for competition and social statement among the local elite, especially in turbulent transition periods. This analysis not only helps to establish a more clear regional chronology of church construction and commemoration, but also sheds light on the wider social meanings of ecclesiastical patronage, and on the role that these forms of material culture played in the creation and maintenance of elite authority and identity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### VOLUME I: THE TEXT

<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The local church and funerary commemoration in the Middle Ages: an integrated assessment	1
1.2 History, material culture, and social theory: an interdisciplinary approach to medieval archaeology	3
1.2.1 Social theory and archaeology	6
1.2.2 The archaeology of 'transition'	9
1.3 Construction and commemoration: new avenues in the archaeology of medieval churches	11
<b>CHAPTER 2: Churches and commemoration: a review of relevant study</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Church archaeology: previous work and present direction	14
2.1.1 The use of style	16
2.1.2 The formation of the medieval parish church: minsters, the 'Great Rebuilding,' and churches in context	18
2.1.3 The potential for further research	24
2.2 Funerary sculpture: material culture and commemorative practice	26
2.2.1 Approaches to death and commemoration	27
2.2.2 Monumental funerary sculpture	30
2.3 Social identity and authority in the local church	33
<b>CHAPTER 3: The Historical Context</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Yorkshire and the north of England	37
3.2 Conquests, settlement, and anarchy: the socio-political framework of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman periods	45
3.2.1 The Scandinavian invasions	45
3.2.2 The Norman Conquest	48
3.2.3 The twelfth century	52
3.3 The tenth to twelfth-century landscape	55
3.3.1 Feudalism and the manorial economy	55
3.3.2 Manor, village, and ecclesiastical organization	59
3.4 Land, lordship, and power in transitional England	62
3.4.1 Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman lordship	62
3.4.2 Relationships of authority and patronage	66
<b>CHAPTER 4: The Sample Area and Research Methodology</b>	<b>71</b>
4.1 Geographical parameters and characteristics	71
4.2 The time period	76
4.3 The material evidence	79
4.3.1 Churches	79

4.3.2 Commemorative sculpture	81
4.4 Methods	85
4.4.1 The historical and geographical background	86
4.4.2 Fieldwork and recording	89
4.4.3 Analysis and interpretation	92
<b>CHAPTER 5: Data and Fieldwork Results</b>	<b>95</b>
5.1 Evidence from Domesday Book	97
5.2 Architectural evidence	104
5.2.1 Overall patterns of building	104
5.2.2 Dating and spatial distribution	107
5.3 Anglo-Scandinavian commemoration	113
5.3.1 Stylistic trends, types, and production	113
5.3.2 Sites and spatial patterning	119
5.3.3 Monument densities and distributions	122
5.4 Cross slab commemoration	125
5.4.1 Styles and production	125
5.4.2 Secondary emblems	133
5.4.3 Densities and distribution patterns	139
5.4.4 Chronological patterning	142
<b>CHAPTER 6: The Development of Local Churches and Churchyards: an analysis of the North Riding Evidence</b>	<b>147</b>
6.1 Pre-1100 evidence	149
6.1.1 Categories of evidence and overarching patterns	149
6.1.2 The seventh to ninth centuries: the Anglian period	160
6.1.3 The tenth and early-eleventh centuries: the Anglo- Scandinavian period	167
6.1.4 The later-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries: the Saxo- Norman period	175
6.1.5 Patterns of patronage in the pre-1100 period	184
6.2 The twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries	193
6.2.1 Architectural distributions	195
6.2.2 Cross slabs and commemorative development	205
6.3 A comparative analysis of architectural and commemorative development	209
6.4 A regional assessment of developmental models: parochialization and the 'Great Rebuilding'	213
<b>CHAPTER 7: The Social Implications of Churches and Commemoration: Power, Piety, and Identity</b>	<b>222</b>
7.1 Negotiating transition in North Yorkshire	222
7.2 Motivations for patronage in the local church	228
7.2.1 A confluence of the secular and religious	229
7.2.2 Authority, identity, and patronal choice	231
7.3 Categories of patrons: interests and influences	239
7.3.1 Monastic ownership and patronage by the ecclesiastical elite	240
7.3.2 Secular patronage	245
7.4 Lordship and the expression of patronal identities	250

7.4.1 Cultural and ethnic identities	252
7.4.2 Lordly identities	257
7.4.3 Non-elite identities	264
7.5 Patronage in transition: socio-political change and material culture	270
<b>CHAPTER 8: Conclusions</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>292</b>
 <b>VOLUME II: IMAGES AND APPENDICES</b>	
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Figures to accompany text</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Appendix A: Church sites in the North Riding</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Appendix B: Table of architectural evidence</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Appendix C: Monastic houses in the North Riding</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Appendix D: Castles and fortified sites in the North Riding</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Appendix E: Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Appendix F: Catalogue of cross slabs</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Appendix G: Recording forms</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>CD-ROM: Photographs of cross slabs and catalogue text (In back cover)</b>	

**LIST OF TABLES**  
**(in Volume 1)**

<b>TABLE 1:</b> North Riding demographics, from Domesday Book	99
<b>TABLE 2:</b> North Riding churches in Domesday Book	102
<b>TABLE 3:</b> Architectural evidence in the North Riding	105
<b>TABLE 4:</b> Distribution of architectural evidence by date	112
<b>TABLE 5:</b> Churches with Anglo-Scandinavian monuments	120
<b>TABLE 6:</b> Density of Anglo-Scandinavian monuments	123
<b>TABLE 7:</b> Churches with cross slabs	126
<b>TABLE 8:</b> Cross slab styles, classified by design	128
<b>TABLE 9:</b> Occurrence of secondary emblems on cross slabs	133
<b>TABLE 10:</b> Cross slab emblems by date	138
<b>TABLE 11:</b> Number and density of cross slabs	139
<b>TABLE 12:</b> Cross slab distribution by date	143

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure number and description	Reference in text, volume 1	Page in images, volume 2
<b>FIGURE 1:</b> Church phases, Wharram Percy and Raunds	22	1
<b>FIGURE 2:</b> Examples of cross slabs	31	2
<b>FIGURE 3:</b> Anglo-Scandinavian 'cross slab' tradition	31	3
<b>FIGURE 4:</b> Anglian/Anglo-Scandinavian comparison	42	4
<b>FIGURE 5:</b> Middleton 2, warrior cross	44	5
<b>FIGURE 6:</b> Fylingdales 1, Saxo-Norman cross	44	6
<b>FIGURE 7:</b> Tees Valley vine scroll cross slabs	45	7
<b>FIGURE 8:</b> The ridings of Yorkshire	71	8
<b>FIGURE 9:</b> Comparison, North Riding/North Yorkshire	72	9
<b>FIGURE 10:</b> Regions of the North Riding	72	10
<b>FIGURE 11:</b> Geology of the North Riding	72	11
<b>FIGURE 12:</b> Wapentakes of the North Riding	72	12
<b>FIGURE 13:</b> Deaneries of the North Riding	72	13
<b>FIGURE 14:</b> Wapentake/deanery border comparison	72	14
<b>FIGURE 15:</b> Churches and chapels of the North Riding	79	15
<b>FIGURE 16:</b> Kirkdale 7, Anglian grave slab	82	18
<b>FIGURE 17:</b> Semi-effigial cross slabs	90	19
<b>FIGURE 18:</b> Effigy and low-relief effigy examples	91	20
<b>FIGURE 19:</b> Possible cross slabs and later alterations	91	21
<b>FIGURE 20:</b> Late-medieval reuse of early work	91	22
<b>FIGURE 21:</b> Reset grave slabs, Northallerton	92	23
<b>FIGURE 22:</b> North Riding topography and deaneries	97	24
<b>FIGURE 23:</b> Domesday settlements	98	25
<b>FIGURE 24:</b> Domesday plough-team densities	98	26
<b>FIGURE 25:</b> Domesday population densities	98	27
<b>FIGURE 26:</b> 'Waste' in Domesday Book	99	28
<b>FIGURE 27:</b> Soke and chapelries of Gilling West	101	29
<b>FIGURE 28:</b> Map, Domesday churches and priests	103	30
<b>FIGURE 29:</b> Twelfth-century fonts	104	31
<b>FIGURE 30:</b> Map, pre-1200 architectural fabric	104	32
<b>FIGURE 31:</b> Map, pre-1100 architectural fabric	105	33
<b>FIGURE 32:</b> Interior, St. Mary's, Whitby	106	34
<b>FIGURE 33:</b> Saxo-Norman reuse of Anglian fragments	108	35
<b>FIGURE 34:</b> Examples of Saxo-Norman architecture	109	36
<b>FIGURE 35:</b> Examples of twelfth-century architecture	109	37
<b>FIGURE 36:</b> Preservation of twelfth-century architecture	110	38
<b>FIGURE 37:</b> Reset chevron arch, Brompton	110	39
<b>FIGURE 38:</b> Map, twelfth-century fonts	110	40
<b>FIGURE 39:</b> Cleveland square fonts, twelfth century	111	41
<b>FIGURE 40:</b> Twelfth/thirteenth-century aisles	111	42
<b>FIGURE 41:</b> Chart, architectural fabric by date	111	43
<b>FIGURE 42:</b> Distribution and density of hogbacks	114	44
<b>FIGURE 43:</b> Distribution of Allertonshire work	116	45
<b>FIGURE 44:</b> Composite grave marker, Whitby Abbey	118	46
<b>FIGURE 45:</b> Coped monument examples	118	47
<b>FIGURE 46:</b> Twelfth-century hogback, Scotland	118	48
<b>FIGURE 47:</b> Map, Anglo-Scandinavian monuments	120	49
<b>FIGURE 48:</b> Table of Anglo-Scandinavian monuments	122	50

<b>FIGURE 49: Density of Anglo-Scandinavian work</b>	123	52
<b>FIGURE 50: Distribution of cross slabs</b>	125	53
<b>FIGURE 51: Distribution of pre-1200 cross slabs</b>	125	54
<b>FIGURE 52: Cross slab styles</b>	127	55
<b>FIGURE 53: Middleham 1, unclassifiable cross design</b>	127	56
<b>FIGURE 54: Bracelet and circle-cross examples</b>	129	57
<b>FIGURE 55: Straight-arm cross slab examples</b>	129	58
<b>FIGURE 56: Thormanby 1, bracelet/straight-arm cross</b>	129	59
<b>FIGURE 57: Maltese and cross patee slabs</b>	129	60
<b>FIGURE 58: Wheel-cross and interlaced-diamond slabs</b>	130	61
<b>FIGURE 59: Map, wheel-cross/interlaced diamond slabs</b>	130	62
<b>FIGURE 60: Map, striated bracelet cross slabs</b>	131	63
<b>FIGURE 61: Geometric cross slab examples</b>	131	64
<b>FIGURE 62: Map, abstract geometric grave slabs</b>	132	65
<b>FIGURE 63: Emblem-only grave slab examples</b>	132	66
<b>FIGURE 64: Map, cross slabs with emblems</b>	134	67
<b>FIGURE 65: Examples of cross slabs with emblems</b>	135	68
<b>FIGURE 66: Cross slabs with hunting/forester emblems</b>	135	69
<b>FIGURE 67: Effigy of knight with hunting horn</b>	136	70
<b>FIGURE 68: Map, hunting emblem slabs</b>	136	71
<b>FIGURE 69: Possible tool/trade emblems</b>	137	72
<b>FIGURE 70: Stanwick 38, unusual emblems</b>	137	73
<b>FIGURE 71: Table of cross slabs</b>	139	74
<b>FIGURE 72: Densities of medieval cross slabs</b>	140	77
<b>FIGURE 73: Chart, cross slab commemoration by date</b>	142	78
<b>FIGURE 74: Chart, cross slabs by deanery</b>	143	79
<b>FIGURE 75: Coped, gabled cross slabs of twelfth century</b>	144	80
<b>FIGURE 76: Table, combined pre-1100 evidence</b>	153	81
<b>FIGURE 77: Map, combined pre-1100 evidence</b>	154	84
<b>FIGURE 78: Medieval church and chapel sites</b>	156	85
<b>FIGURE 79: Medieval communications</b>	156	86
<b>FIGURE 80: Churches and communications</b>	156	87
<b>FIGURE 81: Pre-1100 evidence and communications</b>	156	88
<b>FIGURE 82: Anglian evidence and communications</b>	158	89
<b>FIGURE 83: Anglo-Scandinavian evidence and communications</b>	158	90
<b>FIGURE 84: Saxo-Norman evidence and communications</b>	158	91
<b>FIGURE 85: Anglian evidence</b>	160	92
<b>FIGURE 86: Anglian evidence and Domesday manors</b>	165	93
<b>FIGURE 87: Extent of Pickering and Falsgrave manors</b>	170	94
<b>FIGURE 88: Continuity of Anglian churches</b>	172	95
<b>FIGURE 89: Saxo-Norman evidence</b>	175	96
<b>FIGURE 90: Pre-1100 architecture and communications</b>	177	97
<b>FIGURE 91: Saxo-Norman architecture and sculpture</b>	180	98
<b>FIGURE 92: Saxo-Norman sculpture and communications</b>	181	99
<b>FIGURE 93: Anglo-Scandinavian continuity</b>	183	100
<b>FIGURE 94: Saxo-Norman slabs, Wharram Percy and Raunds</b>	186	101
<b>FIGURE 95: Sundials, Kirkdale and Old Byland</b>	188	102
<b>FIGURE 96: Raskelf church</b>	189	103
<b>FIGURE 97: Evidence in the northern Vale of York</b>	189	104
<b>FIGURE 98: Evidence, c. 1100 to c. 1200</b>	193	105
<b>FIGURE 99: Architecture, c. 1100 to c. 1200</b>	195	106
<b>FIGURE 100: Architecture, indeterminate twelfth-century date</b>	195	107
<b>FIGURE 101: Architecture, early-twelfth century</b>	196	108
<b>FIGURE 102: Evidence from the Honour of Richmond</b>	197	109
<b>FIGURE 103: Architecture, mid-twelfth century</b>	198	110



<b>FIGURE 104:</b> South doorways of the mid-twelfth century	200	111
<b>FIGURE 105:</b> Architecture, late-twelfth century and Transitional	201	112
<b>FIGURE 106:</b> Examples of Transitional architecture	202	113
<b>FIGURE 107:</b> Breakdown of twelfth-century architecture	203	114
<b>FIGURE 108:</b> Twelfth-century rebuildings	203	115
<b>FIGURE 109:</b> Cross slabs, twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries	205	116
<b>FIGURE 110:</b> Cross slabs, mid-later twelfth century	206	117
<b>FIGURE 111:</b> Examples of mid-twelfth-century cross slabs	207	118
<b>FIGURE 112:</b> Cross slabs, late-twelfth/early-thirteenth centuries	207	119
<b>FIGURE 113:</b> Timeline of architecture and commemoration	209	120
<b>FIGURE 114:</b> Chart, architecture and sculpture comparison	209	121
<b>FIGURE 115:</b> Contemporary architecture and commemoration	211	122
<b>FIGURE 116:</b> Map, contemporary aisles and cross slabs	211	123
<b>FIGURE 117:</b> Chapels with pre-1100 evidence	216	124
<b>FIGURE 118:</b> Chapels, evidence <i>c.</i> 1100 to <i>c.</i> 1200	216	125
<b>FIGURE 119:</b> Table, contemporary aisles and cross slabs	237	126
<b>FIGURE 120:</b> Elaborate twelfth-century architecture	242	127
<b>FIGURE 121:</b> Monastic influence in architecture	242	128
<b>FIGURE 122:</b> Conisbrough monument, twelfth century	247	129
<b>FIGURE 123:</b> Monument of Sir Simon de Drayton	249	130
<b>FIGURE 124:</b> Monument of Sir John de Cobham	249	131
<b>FIGURE 125:</b> Sigurd-legend stones, Kirby Hill	253	132
<b>FIGURE 126:</b> Bayeux tapestry, Bosham hall and church	261	133
<b>FIGURE 127:</b> Sinnington, possible medieval hall	261	134
<b>FIGURE 128:</b> Medieval churches and castles	262	135
<b>FIGURE 129:</b> Bowes church and castle	262	136
<b>FIGURE 130:</b> Castles and churches, eleventh century to <i>c.</i> 1200	262	137
<b>FIGURE 131:</b> Castles and military cross slabs, up to <i>c.</i> 1200	263	138
<b>FIGURE 132:</b> Castles and military cross slabs, late-medieval	263	139
<b>FIGURE 133:</b> Examples of the status of huntsmen	268	140
<b>FIGURE 134:</b> Agricultural emblems on cross slabs	268	141
<b>FIGURE 135:</b> Richmond 1, late-medieval abbot's monument	269	142
<b>FIGURE 136:</b> Reuse of Anglo-Scandinavian work, Sinnington	272	143

## ABBREVIATIONS

**Full references given in bibliography, published primary sources section**

*BGB*—Bartholomew's Gazetteer of Britain

*BD*—Bulmer's Directory

*SBC*—Chartulary of Stoke-by-Clare Abbey

*CWA*—Chartulary of Whitby Abbey

*WN*—Chronicle of William of Newburgh

*DB*—Domesday Book, complete edition

*DB Yorks*—Domesday Book, Yorkshire

*EEE*—Bede's Epistola ad Egbertum Episcopum

*OV*—The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis

*WM*—Gesta Regum Anglorum of William of Malmesbury

*HH*—Historia Anglorum of Henry of Huntingdon

*SD*—Historia Regum Anglorum et Dacorum of Simeon of Durham

*LHP*—Leges Henrici Primi

*LDC*—Livre de Chasse

*NGBI*—National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland

*PL*—The Paston Letters

*PE*—The Poetic Edda

*VCH NH*—Victoria County History, Northamptonshire

*VCH NR*—Victoria County History, North Riding

*VCH Yorks*—Victoria County History, Yorkshire

*VS*—Volsunga Saga

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## ***Chapter 1: Introduction***

As an institution, a physical building, and a social space, the local church was a dominant force in the Middle Ages. Its spiritual and temporal authority translated into a permanence and prominence afforded to few other structures, so that churches and their churchyards became focal points of settlement, social interaction, and material display. Eventually, through the parochial network that formed around them, local churches bound communities of people to specific locales for religious worship, burial, sacraments, and various administrative necessities. Over time, originally private churches and chapels became increasingly public spaces that were closely connected with the settlements that surrounded them, and the geographical proximity of church and community ensured that the fates of the church and the manorial settlement became intimately tied together. Thus, long before there was a codified parochial system in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the fundamental basis of ecclesiastical administration and influence, and of religious life in medieval society, had shifted to the minor, 'local' churches. The complex social, political, and religious forces that underpinned parochial development, and the patterns of patronage and expenditure which shaped its churches and burial grounds, took hold well before the full flourishing of the later medieval period. The early social use of church buildings, and of the commemorative monuments that defined their burial grounds, can thus reveal much about the formation of social structures, both ecclesiastical and secular, that shaped the medieval landscape.

### **1.1 The local church and funerary commemoration in the Middle Ages: an integrated assessment**

More than any other structure in the medieval rural settlement, the local church represented a confluence of the primary forces that shaped medieval society. Religious belief, the manorial economy, lordly authority, the village community, and social and cultural identity were amongst the many factors bound up in the foundation, construction,

and utilization of a church, and it profoundly affected people from every level of society. It was one of the few structures that was subject to both secular and ecclesiastical influences, and that might lay claim to a comparable degree of significance for both the elite and those they ruled. Functionally, it was a public building open to all and a focal point of the community, but it might also be the legal possession of a local manorial lord, or reside in the care and patronage of a large, wealthy, and often distant monastic house. In addition, the physical appearance of the rural community church was controlled chiefly by the patronage of the landed elite (Morris 1989, 352). The land granted to a church, as well as the numerous duties, tithes, and obligations it required of the community, made it a lucrative mechanism in the manorial system and a potent symbol of wealth and authority (Pounds 2000, 202). The local church was not only the product and embodiment of these social forces, but an agent through which those same forces were shaped and redefined. Its presence in the cultural and physical landscape provided a prominent and largely permanent arena for social interaction, expression, and display.

Unfortunately, the material remains of the church building have received far more scholarly attention than the commemorative monuments which lay inside the church and in its graveyard. The churchyard should be considered as integral a part of the 'local church' as the building itself, and its foundation and development considered in conjunction with the church structure, as it can be connected to wider considerations of settlement, tenurial geography, and the power and influence of the patron and congregation. Medieval burial and commemoration were complex affairs which perpetuated in death a number of the social issues of life, such as status, wealth, profession, and gender, among other things (Hadley 2001b, 9). The monuments inside the church and in the graveyard, as much as the fabric of the church, were arenas for competition and social statement. Patronage of the church fabric and of a commemorative monument were both expensive, tangible, and highly visible forms of ecclesiastical expenditure and display, which had the potential to communicate both explicit and implicit meanings and intent to the community at large. However, the two

media are certainly not direct parallels, nor do they necessarily mirror each other in developmental trends, effects, or significance. Their relationship is and was complex and at times ambiguous. Nevertheless, churches and commemoration are undeniably closely related and vastly important for an understanding of how the church and its components were created, used, and perceived in medieval society. They demand exploration in an integrated manner if we are to examine the local church as a complete entity.

The integrated assessment of churches and commemoration bears significant potential as a means of insight into medieval society, and is a largely unexplored avenue of research. This thesis will examine the funerary commemoration and churches of the North Riding of Yorkshire in conjunction, to determine the role played by the material components of the church in shaping medieval society, particularly during the tenth to twelfth centuries. The study undertaken here proposes an archaeological approach, firmly grounded in the material remains of church construction and commemoration, but the reasons behind church-building and monument commission will also be addressed, rather than merely establishing a chronology of development. Framed within a defined region and over a limited, but historically significant time period, the study should elucidate a wide spectrum of social meaning, including the social implications of the patronage of churches and monuments, and how the meanings and effects of that expenditure transformed over time.

### **1.2 History, material culture, and social theory: an interdisciplinary approach to medieval archaeology**

While the military, political, and economic developments of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries have in the past been studied extensively by historians, and the stylistic developments of the church building analyzed by art and architectural historians, the period has on the whole been given less attention by archaeologists. Generally, the tenth and early-eleventh centuries have received more archaeological treatment, falling as they do within the more traditional and favoured bounds of 'pre-Conquest' and 'Anglo-Saxon' studies. Some

of the most notable recent work in this area has been on the Anglo-Scandinavian period in northern and eastern England, which has enjoyed a resurgence of archaeological study in the last decade (e.g. Everson and Stocker 1999; Hadley 2001a; Hadley and Richards 2000; Lang 1991, 2001; Richards 2000). However, once the threshold of the Norman Conquest has been crossed, the eleventh and twelfth centuries have often been perceived as the purview of historians, and not archaeologists.

The prominent Anglo-Norman historian R. Allen Brown, even while praising the importance of archaeology to historical studies, neatly summarized the misconception of the discipline which has hampered its advancement in historical time periods: 'The historian is concerned with the totality of evidence and with the totality of the past; the archaeologist, if he sticks narrowly to his trade, is concerned only with bits and pieces of one and a small part of the other. It follows that whereas the historian ought to be an archaeologist also, the archaeologist, *tout court*, can never be an historian' (Brown 1969, 132). Archaeologists, however, have sometimes been complicit in perpetuating this misunderstanding, by asking questions that are framed solely around the landmark events and personages of the historical record, and by forcing evidence to fit into the chronologies and labels of culture history. David Austin famously attempted to resolve this problem by establishing medieval archaeology as an independent discipline, particularly advocating explicit theoretical paradigms, a break from the labels imposed by documentary history, and a divorce from the discipline of history itself (Austin 1990, 12-13). While his defense of medieval archaeology was landmark, his isolationist approach to history now seems ultimately counterproductive. Documents and artefacts can be considered equal components of material culture; they are both manifestations of human agency, and are expressive media through which meaning was created and defined (Carver 2002, 489; Driscoll 1988, 165). Austin's view has been convincingly countered by a number of studies which advocate the use of documentary sources in conjunction with archaeological material, as long as they are used critically and appropriately to the inquiry (e.g. Carver 2002; Driscoll and Nieke 1988; Moreland 1988).

The written record cannot be abandoned as it provides essential context, enabling us to understand in greater depth the values and meanings a society ascribed to the material world (Driscoll and Nieke 1988, 2; Moreland 2001, 31).

Likewise, we cannot wholly forsake the cultural labels of history, though they have been misused in the past. Certainly we must debate the terminology critically, and perhaps abandon or change our terminology if it is found to be inaccurate. Such debates have been carried out and changes in terminology successfully implemented, for example the relatively recent shift from 'Viking' to 'Anglo-Scandinavian' (Hadley and Richards 2000; Richards 2000). It is also possible that these terms are not just 'labels,' but were real concepts, categories, and identities, with meaning for the people who experienced them. The term 'Anglo-Norman', for example, did not exist in the medieval period, but there is documented reference in the twelfth-century chronicles of Henry of Huntingdon to a '*gens Normannorum et Anglorum*,' which expresses much the same concept (Gillingham 2000, 126; *HH*, 716). While the level to which such terms were understood or widely used in contemporary contexts is debatable, to omit their discussion completely from our analyses would be to deny the people of medieval England a social consciousness and an awareness of their world.

Several successful interdisciplinary, yet explicitly archaeological and material-based studies have been conducted in recent years. Steven Driscoll (1988), Pam Graves (1989), Kate Giles (2000), and Jonathan Finch (2000a, 2000b), for example, have all incorporated and critiqued documentary sources and secondary historical research within the framework of archaeological investigations, and have grounded their assessments of material culture and spatial patterning in theoretical explorations of social identities and strategies of power. Most studies of this type, however, tend to focus on the later centuries of the medieval period (from the thirteenth century onward), and considerably less work has been done on earlier periods, including the Saxo-Norman transition. This is partly due to the quality and quantity of sources available for the later Middle Ages, but the comparative scarcity and



inconsistency of the earlier medieval sources does not diminish their importance as remnants of the cultural past. Regardless of time period, we must critically assess not just the contents of the individual documents that are left to us, but also examine their presence, absence, and consequence. Neither artefacts nor documents nor theoretical models of society alone are sufficient for a total understanding of the medieval period.

### 1.2.1 Social theory and archaeology

Despite their disagreement over the role of history, both Austin and Driscoll support the diversification of archaeology into the methods and theories of allied social sciences (Austin 1990, 33-35; Driscoll 1988, 163). As a result, medieval archaeology has in recent years made great theoretical strides, moving well beyond descriptive, functionalist, and reductionist explanations towards a socially meaningful interpretation of past material culture. In the wake of some explicitly 'New Archaeology' work (e.g. Hodges 1982; Rahtz 1983; Randsborg 1980), many medieval archaeologists began looking instead to post-processual theories in attempts to explain medieval society with greater depth and sophistication. By far the most influential post-processual theory for medieval archaeology has been contextualism (Johnson 1999, 107)—the notion that the significance of physical remains is not inherent to the object, but depends entirely on historical, locational, and cultural contexts (e.g. Hodder 1986). In broad terms, this thesis works within the contextual paradigm, but incorporates the critiques of scholars such as John Barrett and John Moreland, who have rejected the notion of material culture as a static, passive reflection of society, and adopted the position that artefacts were active, dynamic, and meaningful role-players in the construction, negotiation, and manipulation of the society that created them (Barrett 1988 7; Moreland 1991, 20; Moreland 1998, 102).

As such, the sociological theory of structuration and the related concept of *habitus*, both of which emphasize the active, reflective, and conscious character of human conduct (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1981, 1984), form the primary theoretical framework for the

thesis. Structuration and *habitus* are valuable to archaeological interpretation because of the theories' emphasis on human agency and its fundamental relationship to social institutions. Society and its material components, the very foundations of archaeology, do not exist without human action. Furthermore, Bourdieu has explicitly stated that the knowledge and understanding involved in day-to-day practice and understanding of society are generated in part through the creation of and interaction with the objects, divisions, and spaces of the tangible world (Bourdieu 1977, 89).

A pioneering adaptation of structuration and *habitus* theories to archaeology was carried out by John Barrett (1988) in his article 'Fields of discourse.' The core of Barrett's argument lies in the rejection of the long-standing concept of an archaeological *record* — a 'recoverable pattern of things' that represent past social systems, beliefs, or ideologies (Barrett 1988, 6). He proposes instead that material culture is evidence for past social practices, the surviving fragments of the active and recursive media through which society was constructed (Barrett 1988, 9). Barrett also stresses that the material world is invested with meaning by human action, and that because of this it is 'a potentially powerful system of signification' (Barrett 1988, 9). However, there is no single, objective, or inherent significance to items of material culture. Context and point of view are of primary importance in codifying and communicating these meanings to different individuals or collectives in society, whose understanding of the meanings depends on their relationship to the discourses (verbal, active, or symbolic communication) created and maintained by these material objects (Barrett 1988, 9-10, after Bourdieu 1977).

Barrett's work is particularly useful to this study, and to the understanding of patterns of patronage and elite identity, as discourse and action are structured by access to cultural resources, and any action necessarily involves the negotiation of power. By his very ability to carry out a task, an agent implies power (Giddens 1984, 9), and the more cultural resources he is able to draw upon, the more effectively he retains his authority (Barrett 1988, 10). These negotiations of social power are embodied in arenas which exist and are

occupied by virtue of the practice of a particular social interaction, which Barrett terms 'fields of discourse.' These fields may crosscut, subordinate, or overlap each other, can share material or social components, and can transform from one into another. They are all open and changeable, depending on the contexts of time, location, and the cultural resources involved (Barrett 1988, 11). Fields of discourse provide an area in space and time within which authority, material culture, and social practice all combine to create meaning.

Several archaeological studies have been based on the concepts developed by Barrett, exploring the use of buildings and social space in maintaining dominant forms of discourse and power (Gilchrist 1994; Giles 2000; Graves 1989; Grenville 1997; Johnson 1993). Outside of buildings archaeology, the explicit implementation of structuration-based theories has been less frequent, but the studies that have been carried out are both significant and highly relevant to this thesis. Tom Saunders (1990, 1991, 2000) has explored the spatial relationships of the medieval village with reference to 'feudal' social identities and authority, and Jonathan Finch (2000a, 2000b) has analyzed the role of strategies of funerary commemoration in social status and identity. Recent archaeological studies have focused on the creation, definition, and negotiation of social identity as a fundamental driver of human action (Frazer and Tyrell 2000; Jones 1997), and more specifically, Steven Driscoll (1988, 2000), has explored the relationship between lordly identity and monumental sculpture, and others have shown how vitally important the expression of ethnic and social identities was in the Anglo-Scandinavian period (Innes 2000; Sidebottom 2000; Stocker 2000). The potential for an exploration of social identity and the role of patronage and material display in archaeology is vast, especially in the rapidly changing Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman worlds. In times of stress and tension, such as in a transition period, social identities and allegiances were consciously and deliberately manipulated, changed, and maintained. They were integral to communicating with the different constituents of society, and they drastically affected and reinforced how people chose to represent themselves in the material world.

### 1.2.2 The archaeology of 'transition'

The archaeology of transition periods is still a developing field, which is unsurprising considering its elusiveness as a theoretical concept. It can be argued that social structures and systems do not experience periods of stasis punctuated by transition periods, but instead are continuously experiencing processes of development and change that might be termed a constant state of transition. While we must acknowledge the constancy of modification and adaptation, there are nevertheless periods within the chronological and developmental continuum that are clearly marked by intrusions of new or external forces or major internal shifts, which provoke an intensification of the characteristics of 'constant transition.' These internal and external forces — such as invasions, political changes, cultural influxes, economic fluctuations, or population shifts — may cause the processes of development and change to happen more quickly, or on a larger scale, for a certain period of time. These changes are visibly manifested in both the documentary record and the physical world, and can be termed, for lack of a better word, identifiable *transition periods*. From an archaeological standpoint, it is worthwhile to examine these transition periods in terms of meaningful social actions and material manifestations, which may indicate people's conscious creation, negotiation, and adjustment in response to transformations in their world.

Though transitions have long been of scholarly interest, their study has in the past frequently concerned the dichotomy of continuity and change on either side of a major historical event, such as the Norman Conquest. The 'transitions' have often been viewed as moments of instantaneous and drastic alteration, with the preceding and succeeding years two wholly separate entities, unequivocally divided by the momentous incident (see discussions in Chibnall 1999). Historical disciplines have begun to realize that it is the process of adaptation and negotiation involved in transition that is more important and

revealing. This thesis will look toward recent sociological and anthropological work on social structures and ethnic identities (e.g. Hutchinson and Smith 1996), as well as some explicitly historical explorations of social identity, cultural contact, and assimilation (e.g. Gillingham 2000; Potts 1995; Short 1995; Townend 2000), as they have the potential to greatly inform and advance the archaeological study of transition periods. In every transition period there will be both continuity and change; they are not mutually exclusive, but intimately interrelated. The society that underwent a transition in effect also created it, through their constant negotiation, manipulation, and action. A transition is not an 'event,' but rather a process of people, individually and collectively, constructing and dealing with significant modifications and transformations to their world within the mechanisms of society. This approach forces us to examine not just the fact that there *was* a transition, but *how* people interacted with each other and with the material world in response to it.

Significant archaeological work has been conducted on the cultural contact and transition of the Anglo-Scandinavian period (e.g. Hadley and Richards 2000), and the medieval/post-medieval and Reformation transitions (e.g. Gaimster and Gilchrist 2003; Gaimster and Stamper 1997), but the Saxo-Norman transition still finds itself chiefly the domain of historians. While archaeological findings have frequently illustrated and punctuated the accounts of historians of the Saxo-Norman transition (e.g. Brown 1985; Chibnall 1986; Williams 1995), only a few overtly archaeological studies have focused on issues pertaining specifically to the time period (e.g. Liddiard 2000, 2003; Rowley 1996; Saunders 1990, 1991, 2000).<sup>1</sup> On the whole, archaeology focused specifically within the Saxo-Norman and Anglo-Norman periods is a rarity. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries do not fall comfortably into the designations of the 'early' or 'late' Middle Ages, and the period is positioned squarely on the boundary between the largely undocumented early Middle Ages and the truly historic era – just outside the realm of what is still often

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, many individual site reports do discuss the Saxo-Norman and Anglo-Norman periods as part of the entire chronology of a site. See for example Beresford and Hurst's work at Wharram Percy (1990).

seen as 'pure' archaeology. While the documentation of the later pre-Conquest period is by no means inconsequential, the sheer volume of literary, ecclesiastical, chronicle, and administrative sources that appear in the wake of the Norman Conquest have contributed both to the period's primarily historical treatment and to the perpetuation of the monolithic dividing line of 1066 (Keen 2002, 2). Even while acknowledging the artificiality of such dividing lines as imposed by modern historians, scholars have still often decided that the number of changes brought by the Norman Conquest qualify it as a legitimate 'epoch-divider' (e.g. Hall, R.A. 2000, 312; Higham 1997, *xvii-xviii*).

The insistence on dividing the study of England's history into camps of pre- and post-1066 scholars (e.g. Hayward 1999, 67) has on the whole been unhelpful to the study of the period. This long-standing bias has resulted in uncritical attributions of social change to the Norman invasion and settlement, politically and ethnically-charged stances on the relative merits and accomplishments of 'Saxons' and 'Normans' (Chibnall 1999, 59), and the popular and scholarly championing of the Anglo-Saxon era at the expense of the Anglo-Norman one (Ferne 1999, 3). It is instead far more beneficial to reintegrate the whole period from the tenth to the beginning of the thirteenth centuries as a chronological continuum — punctuated and influenced, but not divided — by events like the Scandinavian settlement or the Norman Conquest.

### **1.3 Construction and commemoration: new avenues in the archaeology of medieval churches**

The theoretical underpinnings discussed above, with their emphasis on active material culture, social identity, and the negotiation of transition, are clearly expressed in the design of this project. Churches and funerary monuments clearly have great potential to contribute to an enhanced understanding of the complex relationships between material culture and the fundamental social issues of status, perception, and identity. This thesis therefore proposes a regionally coherent archaeological assessment of the construction and

expression of social identity, social structures, and power in a transition period, grounded in an examination of the materially and culturally significant media of ecclesiastical building and commemoration. The study plays an important role in the present direction of church archaeology. In its examination of churches and commemorative monuments within the North Riding of Yorkshire, it espouses the vital importance of regional and local studies within the context of a tightly defined data set, and a critical and archaeological methodology (Finch 2000a, 2000b; Hadley 2001b; Morris 1996). The results will offer the opportunity for an exploration of geographical and chronological patterning both within smaller, local groups and in the wider milieu of regional development. Comparisons of these inter and intra-regional trends can then be paired with a socially meaningful interpretation of the material culture and its historical context.

The central role of churches and commemoration in the effective establishment of Anglo-Scandinavian rule and socio-political culture has been identified (Stocker 2000), and churches have been recognized as an especially revealing form of material culture for the study of the Saxo-Norman transition (Ferne 2000, 19, 208), but no similar claims have been made for the commemorative monuments of the period. By integrating the study of churches with an examination of the burial and commemorative strategies of the elite, a continuous chronology of patronage can be formed. The tracing of changes in churches and commemoration over time and through developing social circumstances illuminates the role of patronage in the lives and deaths of the local elite, and enables us to pose questions about the expression of cultural affinities and social status, and the creation and maintenance of social identity through material culture. No analysis has yet considered these issues expressly within the proposed region or time period, and as such a large body of evidence has gone unutilized in light of these vital questions.

The study also bridges long-standing gaps in medieval archaeology. We can no longer justify a divide between commemorative monuments and the churches in and around which they were located if we intend to fully understand the role of the medieval church, nor

can we perpetuate the divorce of churches or commemoration from their chronological and cultural framework. The material and geographical contexts enable the study to reintegrate the concepts of 'early' and 'late' medieval, and 'Saxon' and 'Norman' within the framework of a defined data set and an archaeological interpretation. No such attempt has been made previously for this chronological period, and therefore the study undertaken here intends to partially redress some of the long-standing theoretical and methodological imbalances that persist even in some of the most recent research: namely the dominance of purely historical studies for the Saxo-Norman transition and Anglo-Norman periods; the lack of any thorough archaeological assessment of the North Riding of Yorkshire (which has often been overlooked in favour of the more wealthy and compact East and West Ridings); and finally, the almost wholesale neglect of the corpus of transitional and post-Conquest non-effigial funerary commemoration (i.e. chiefly 'cross slab' grave covers). On more specific levels, the thesis aims to establish a regional chronology of parish church construction and commemoration, as well as highlight the patronal role of North Yorkshire's minor and local lords, a section of elite society that is often overlooked (Hunt 1997, 11). The study will thus shed light, often for the first time, on the interwoven power relationships, material demonstrations of cultural and political authority, and expressions of collective and individual social identity as they were manifested in expenditure on the local church.



## ***Chapter 2: Churches and commemoration, a review of relevant study***

Having defined the direction the study is to take, a more specific review and critique of the relevant areas of research is now required. The proposed study utilizes as its foundation many of the concepts discussed in Finch (2000a, 2000b) and Stocker (2000), but very little work of a similar nature to the proposed inquiry has been carried out. This chapter will attempt to illustrate where the study fits within the research directions of both church archaeology and commemoration as they stand at the present time, and where it has potential to advance the fields into as yet unexplored avenues of research. It will also briefly discuss the archaeological study of churches and commemoration as they have pertained particularly to the years from the beginning of the tenth to the end of the twelfth centuries, and will address some of the possible relationships between social mechanisms and the commission and construction of ecclesiastical media.

### **2.1 Church archaeology: previous work and present direction**

The establishment of an independent discipline of church archaeology, particularly that of the parish church, has occurred only fairly recently. In the long history of ecclesiastical scholarship, it is only in the past few decades that the study of churches has become truly 'archaeological' at all — not necessarily in the sense of excavation, but in looking beyond the superficial stylistic 'handwriting' of successive generations (Pounds 2000, 371) for the societal impacts and developmental processes associated with the foundation, construction, and use of medieval churches. Though much has been learned about the origins and development of parish churches since its inception (Schofield and Vince 2003, 177), there is much yet still to be discovered and better understood. Local churches have historically been given very little scholarly attention in comparison with cathedrals and abbeys, chiefly because the great churches are more architecturally significant, and as they had ties to higher levels of medieval society, they have been

perceived as more socially significant as well. In addition, the bias towards documentary history has also played a role in the favouritism shown to great churches. The building programmes of cathedrals and abbeys were frequently documented in charters or chronicles, which provided dates and names of abbots and bishops to which building phases are often, rightly or wrongly, attached. Apart from Domesday Book and incidental references in abbey or cathedral charters, extensive documentation of the parish church is rare before the thirteenth century.

Cathedrals and abbeys generally feature far greater stylistic and chronological cohesion than local churches, a result of their design and construction by master masons or journeymen familiar with the canonical styles of architecture (Blair 1988b, 9). They were also more often built or remodelled in large, and sometimes comprehensive, single phases, especially during the country-wide building programme that followed the Norman Conquest (Ferne 2000, 20; Plant 2002). Thus, great church architecture has facilitated absolute dating and the creation of typologies, but the advancement of the study of the local church has been hampered by the view that cathedrals and abbeys were the centres of technology and craft production, from which all other churches drew their inspiration directly. While it is true that stylistic and technological innovations often occurred at the major churches before they reached the minor ones, the process was by no means a simple and linear 'trickle down' effect (Gem 1988, 29). Local churches were subject to a far greater variety of influences, patrons, and stylistic idiosyncrasies than the major ecclesiastical structures, and the complexities of their constructional phases defy the simplistic labels of style chronologies. In recent years, local churches have come to be recognized as a separate stylistic, social, and cultural entity, inviting much more scholarship dedicated particularly to the minor church and its development (e.g. Morris 1989; Rodwell 1989; Ryder 1993).

### 2.1.1 The use of style

The dominant role of the medieval Church and the modern survival of innumerable stone churches, cathedrals, and abbeys has meant that ecclesiology has played a central part in the development of medieval archaeology. In early scholarship, the architectural features of churches, such as windows, arcades, and decorative motifs provided antiquarians with a means of classifying and ordering medieval architecture and its development geographically and over time. Early studies like Thomas Rickman's (1848) on English medieval architecture used stylistic features to label and create chronologies for the introduction, dissemination, and modification of the various styles of ecclesiastical architecture (Romanesque, Gothic, Perpendicular, etc.). Though we are still largely dependent on these established chronologies when working with art and architecture, additional knowledge from excavations and detailed fabric analyses has frequently resulted in emendations and corrections to these thorough but feature-based stylistic timelines. Determining dates for phases of local churches has in the past been based largely on stylistic considerations, though the techniques of excavation and standing fabric survey developed by buildings archaeology have aided in understanding the use of style more completely, supporting and augmenting stylistic typologies with relative dates, phasing, and concrete stratigraphic evidence. Though buildings archaeology has developed its own theoretical and methodological approaches (see Giles 2000; Grenville 1997), the discipline has generally seen churches as outside of its domain, leaving their examination to those who might define themselves more specifically as church archaeologists. The most significant methodological advances in the archaeological study of churches and their architecture have been made by Warwick Rodwell and Peter Ryder (Rodwell 1989; Ryder 1993). Both Rodwell and Ryder have advocated the assessment of buildings as a whole, recording not only the architectural and stylistic features, but also masonry types, changes in wall thickness, and the stratigraphic relationships between portions of the fabric, in order to produce more accurate phasing and more complete architectural histories.

Nevertheless, a partial reliance on stylistic typologies and dating cannot be avoided in much of archaeology, so it is fortunate that the theoretical approaches to architectural and artistic style have matured considerably in the intervening years (e.g. Conkey and Hastorf 1990). While the use of style in the service of chronologies is not inherently flawed, the shortcoming of much typological work is that it failed to see style as particularly meaningful (Conkey 1990, 3). In early studies, if explanations were attempted at all, the patterns of distribution and chronology were employed in a very straightforward manner to illustrate a disembodied 'spread' of particular types of architectural knowledge. Sometimes, as in the case of Norman Romanesque architecture, stylistic diffusion was associated with a specifically ethnic or cultural transmission. In culture historical analyses, no effort was made to explain why or how stylistic types appeared distributed in such a way over time and space. The fact that there were traceable distributions at all was sufficient for the scope of their studies (Conkey and Hastorf 1990, 5).

Archaeology is now moving beyond this formalist view, seeking deeper social meanings in the implementation of styles and their impact. Post-processual archaeology treats style not just as a signifier of one culture or another, but as a medium of social practice which does not exist or diffuse on its own, but requires human agency and conscious choices (Conkey and Hastorf 1990, 7-8). The use of a certain style has the potential to bear meaning within specific contexts, and its use must be negotiated within the same societal structures as other elements of material culture. Conkey and Hastorf suggest that highly visible artefacts that were regularly encountered in social contexts were those most likely to have borne meaning through their style (Conkey and Hastorf 1990, 11). The prominence of churches in the physical world and their importance to medieval social life suggests that they would certainly have fallen within this meaning-bearing category. There is a valuable opportunity, and perhaps an obligation, now that the fundamental elements of architectural style and chronology have been fairly well established, to discuss these churches in meaningful historical and social contexts.

### 2.1.2 The formation of the medieval parish church: minsters, the 'Great Rebuilding,' and churches in context

Once it obtained a firmer methodological and theoretical grounding, church archaeology rapidly developed as a focus of scholarship, though it is still emerging from the long shadows of architectural and documentary ecclesiastical history. Warwick Rodwell, Richard Morris, John Blair, and Richard Gem led the resurgence of church archaeology in the 1980s and '90s, emphasizing the importance of returning the church to its proper historical, geographical, and social contexts. Richard Morris, in his work *Churches in the Landscape* (1989), advocated new research directions for the young discipline of church archaeology, and brought to scholars' attention the enormous archaeological potential of the local church. Following archaeology as a whole, Morris embraced contextualism, but he was the first to explicitly advocate it for church archaeology, and for local churches in particular. Most significant was Morris' insistence that church archaeology abandon the previous (and sometimes still prevalent) tendency to discuss the church building as a discrete architectural entity, in detachment from its surroundings and previous history. We must instead acknowledge its importance as a locale in both a physical and cultural sense, inseparable from its environment, and particularly from its place in the medieval landscape, both as a component of and in relation to settlement, and together as a pattern of structures across the country (Morris 1989, 2). The church can and must be examined on several contextual levels: the 'life history' of both the site and the building, noting changing influences and events in the church's history; the site and the church's relationship to wider geographical regions or chronological trends; and also its connections to more immediate areas, such as surrounding religious institutions, foci of political power, its settlement, and even its own graveyard.

Parallel with Morris' work, Richard Gem and John Blair were advancing the study of churches on a more specific level, exploring the foundation, building, and rebuilding of

churches on major and minor levels across England (Gem 1986, 1988, 1996), and proposing trajectories for the transition from Saxon-period churches to the parochial system of the later Middle Ages (Blair 1988b, 1996, 2005; Blair and Sharpe 1992; for early document-based work see Addleshaw 1954, 1970). Their scholarship is significant for focusing on the materiality of the church building, but instead of discussing it in isolation, they relate the changes seen in churches to political, economic, and social trends, and demonstrate the centrality of the church's role in these wider secular developments. The studies conducted by Blair, Gem, and Morris are of fundamental importance for the research proposed in this thesis, not only for their emphasis on the wider implications of the church, but also because they each address changes that took place within the formative period of the local church's development — the tenth to twelfth centuries.

An explanatory framework of early church development, frequently referred to as the 'minster model,' has been created out of John Blair's thorough examinations of the early church. Generally, the theory defines the Anglo-Saxon system of ecclesiastical organization as a network of important collegiate churches, or minsters, which oversaw large pastoral districts known as *parochiae*. Minsters were often associated with royal estates, and were tended by teams of either secular or monastic clerics who were assigned the pastoral care of the district. From the seventh to tenth centuries, the powerful minsters controlled these large proto-parishes, either serving the entire district on their own, or commanding burial rights, tithes, and other tribute payment from dependent churches within their *parochiae*. In the tenth century, however, changes in systems of local government, land tenure, and the territorial aristocracy brought modifications, and ultimately decline, to the minster system (Blair 1988b, 2). Tenorial changes facilitated the advancement of a large class of sub-royal landholding lords, or thegns, who built their own small, private churches within the *parochia* boundaries. From this period onwards, local lords, rather than royalty and high ecclesiastics, became the prime movers behind changes in the local church, and they would remain so for the whole of the Middle Ages (Mason 1976, 18). As the number of local churches grew, so

did their importance in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The minor churches began competing with minsters for burial and baptismal rights, tithes, and congregations, marking their transition from private establishments to public, local churches. By the eleventh century, most pastoral duties had shifted from the old minster churches to the local churches, and they formed the basis of the developing parochial system (Blair 1996, 12).

Blair's overall paradigm of increased manorialization and the introduction and rise of the patronal church is generally accepted, though the author has recently advocated an abandonment of the 'minster model' label because of its implied inflexibility (Blair 2005, 5). The term 'model' has been particularly unhelpful because different geographical regions have exhibited substantial variations in minster development. For example, it appears that despite the evidence for an early and dense population of churches in the northern Danelaw and East Anglia, the traditional minster framework does not hold as well in the northern or eastern parts of England as it appears to in the South and West (Blair 1998b, 2). Several articles have reviewed the development of minsters in the North (Cambridge 1984; Cambridge and Rollason 1995; Hadley 2001a; Morris 1988; Palliser 1996), and a similar reconsideration has been conducted for East Anglia (Williamson 1993). Unlike Wessex, where designated minster churches survive long enough to appear in the documentary record (Blair 1988b, 15), it is more difficult to identify early minsters and their territories in other regions (Morris 1988, 197; Williamson 1993, 150). Instead of the complex, multi-tiered structure of old minsters, subminsters, and smaller dependant churches seen at southern centres (Blair 1988b, 7), it appears that many other parts of the country featured a simpler ecclesiastical organization (Morris 1988, 197; Pounds 2000, 25). It may be that mother churches which fit the 'minster' designation were on the whole earlier and more numerous in southern England than they ever were in the North and East (Pounds 2000, 18), and they certainly appear to have retained their power longer in southern regions (Blair 2005, 302, 320). The decline of the minsters and the devolution of their authority also seems to have varied regionally, and may have been closely tied to specific political and social conditions.

It has been argued that in northeastern England, new local churches were built and old minsters adopted as patronal churches, as part of a deliberate 'dissolving' of the minster hegemony by Anglo-Scandinavian lords, in order to effect a more privatized, secular religious hierarchy which enabled the lords to closely control the territories they had acquired (Carver 1998, 24-26).

The shift of focus from minster to patronal churches may have played a significant role in the physical changes that the local churches underwent during the same time period. As the local churches gained rights and authority, expenditure on the physical structure of the church almost certainly followed. Most local churches had been founded by lordly patrons and initially built, probably in wood, at an early date, and then were replaced at some time in the eleventh or twelfth centuries with a stone church on the same site (Gem 1988, 23; Morris 1988, 191). Great wealth was required to rebuild a church in stone, and this effort and expenditure demonstrated the power and resources of the benefactor, as well as the value of the church to the patron. A rebuilding in stone would not only signify the importance of the relationship between patron and church, but would solidify the status of the church in the community, and establish it as a permanent place in the social and ecclesiastical landscape.

The pattern of rebuilding in stone noted by Gem and Morris has been formulated by Richard Gem into an overarching hypothesis of an ecclesiastical 'Great Rebuilding' in England, on both great and minor church level, that took place from c. 1050-1200. The programme of Romanesque rebuildings across England began with Edmund the Confessor's Westminster Abbey in c. 1050, and soon accelerated to include every cathedral, as well as numerous old and new abbeys in England by c. 1100 (Ferne 2000, 27).<sup>2</sup> However, the clear-cut pattern of English cathedral rebuilding is not so easily seen in the local churches. Their fabric histories are far more complicated and piecemeal, making precise dating

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<sup>2</sup> Information taken from tables 3 and 4 in Ferne (2000, 27). Hereford, Exeter, and Peterborough are the only churches which appear to have been rebuilt after 1100, with speculated dates of 1107, 1112, and 1118 respectively.



difficult, but even where this has been possible, it seems that the cathedral and local church rebuilding programmes may not have been synchronous at all. Where the rebuilding of the cathedrals was generally quick and complete, the local churches' rebuilding appears to have been conducted over a much longer and less intense period of time (Gem 1988, 24; Morris 1988, 191), and may have been carried out for reasons not entirely parallel to those driving the cathedral-building programme.

Excavations at parish churches have confirmed Gem's hypotheses, revealing evidence that previous structures were often replaced by a larger, stone building at some time in the eleventh or early-twelfth centuries. Excavations at Asheldham and Rivenhall (Essex) (Drury and Rodwell 1978; Rodwell and Rodwell 1973, 1985), Barton-upon-Humber (Lincs) (Rodwell 1982), Wharram Percy (N. Yorks) (Beresford and Hurst 1990), St. Mark's, Lincoln (Lincs) (Gilmour and Stocker 1986), and Raunds (Northants) (Boddington 1996) all substantiate the early foundation and stone rebuilding hypothesis [Fig. 1]. Though the number of churches is not yet large enough to indicate a nationwide rebuilding programme on local levels, it does indicate that similar patterns of church building may have been in effect at least for eastern England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. However, comprehensive excavations are not generally feasible, and further study on the Saxo-Norman transition must be conducted through non-destructive methods such as fabric analysis. One of the chief drawbacks to testing Gem's theory is that it is almost impossible to date the rebuild from wood, or indeed the first stone phases of a church, without excavation. The earliest visible phase of building at a church is not always its first stone incarnation, and early architectural evidence has often been wiped out by later medieval expansions and alterations. Though the excavated churches have generally supported an early or mid-eleventh century transition from wood to stone, this stage of building may have varied greatly from church to church, and some churches could have remained wooden even after the Norman Conquest (Morris 1989, 149).

Another significant difficulty in this method is that it necessitates some dependence on stylistic assessment to date construction phases, and with transitional period work, a primitive-looking mix of 'Norman' and 'Anglo-Saxon' features does not necessarily indicate an early date, but possibly a less competent attempt at fusion (Gem 1988, 27). Gem's case-study on three churches with Saxo-Norman fabric in East Yorkshire (Kirby Grindalythe, Wharram-le-Street, Weaverthorpe) demonstrates his rebuilding hypothesis, but also illustrates the issues and difficulties involved with stylistic assessment of the overlap period, and the non-correspondence of some stylistic and absolute chronologies. The study confirmed the persistence of conservative architectural and decorative traditions and technologies in the local churches long after their abandonment on higher levels, and reinforced the argument that the dating of many 'late-Saxon' style churches should be pushed forward, into the ostensibly 'Norman' period (Gem 1988, 28-9). It is now often thought that much Saxo-Norman work is most likely post-Conquest, dating to the late-eleventh or even early-twelfth centuries (Blair 2005, 416; Cambridge 1994, 143; Fernie 2000, 219; Morris 1988, 195).<sup>3</sup>

Gem's findings also raise the question of whether pushing forward 'late-Saxon' and 'Saxo-Norman' architecture past 1100 must necessarily push our assumed dates for the 'early-Norman' style forward as well. Recent work has forced an examination of the linearity of progression which dominates stylistic chronologies (with one style completely replacing another), and obliges us to rethink our assumptions about architectural sequences, and the relative social currency of 'Saxon' and 'Norman' styles in a transition period. If the two styles were coexistent, we must explore the ramifications that such a situation might have for the relationship between social meaning and the architectural form of a church, and we must consider the symbolic power of deliberately chosen styles. Overall, though, it

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<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, evidence dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries and the Saxo-Norman period has generally been classified as 'pre-1100,' as a replacement for the rather inaccurate 'pre-Conquest' that is often employed. While 1100 is not a precise end-date for all Saxo-Norman churches and monuments in the North Riding, it rectifies Norman Conquest-based assumptions of date, and acknowledges the long transition period favoured by modern scholarship.

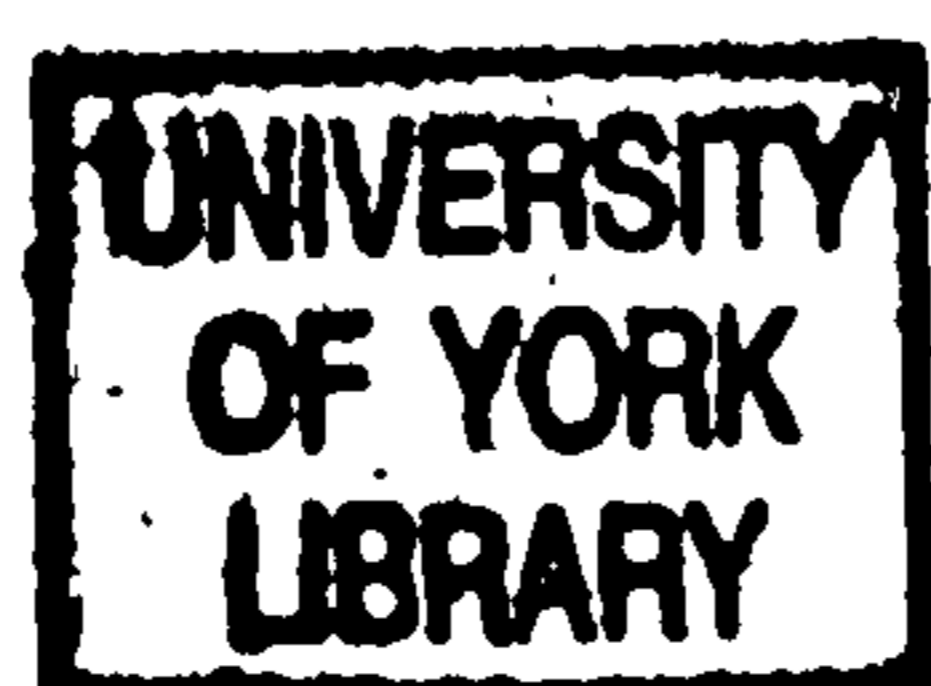
should be remembered that change came slowly to the minor churches. Architecture and style developed over time in response to circumstances of patronage or a cumulative weight of stylistic and technical knowledge, which could be consciously accepted or rejected for various reasons (Gem 1988, 29). The style of architecture in which a church was built was not determined solely by technological ability or skill or the proximity of a major ecclesiastical centre, but through conscious social choices and human action.

### **2.1.3 The potential for further research**

The scholarship discussed above notwithstanding, further archaeological work on the local church is essential. Though the studies carried out by Gem and Blair are of fundamental importance for a discussion of the development and significance of the parish church, there is much to be done to build on and improve our understanding of the early parochial system and the Great Rebuilding. Critiques of the 'minster model' have already been discussed, and the Great Rebuilding theory must also be refined for regional and even smaller local groups of churches. For example, evidence for multiple complete stone rebuildings within the eleventh and twelfth centuries at certain churches in Ryedale (N. Yorks) indicate that the 'Great Rebuilding' was by no means a simple wood-to-stone transition or a single-phased undertaking (McClain 2001, 92). Also, while many wooden churches were indeed being replaced by a single stone phase in the eleventh or early-twelfth centuries, some churches were already built in stone from before this period, and they too seem to have been subjected to the same rebuilding programme (e.g. Raunds, Wharram Percy). The Great Rebuilding was not solely a product of ecclesiastical fervour or the necessity of enlarging or making permanent a previously wooden structure, but frequently involved a conscious overwriting of the previous architectural incarnation of a church (McClain 2001, 93). Discoveries such as this remind us that the idea of a 'Great Rebuilding' is important as an architectural and historical blueprint of church development, but that the process must not be thought of as solely technological or stylistic, and cannot be separated

from the social changes and important formative aspects of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The rebuilding of a church may have taken on different characteristics contingent on the intents and motivations of individual patrons, and the geographical, tenorial, and cultural milieu within which a church was built.

Certainly the historical, geographical, and social contexts for any particular church or group of churches' development are of vital importance, because they provide parameters within which we can attempt to determine the agents and choices that were involved with the foundation, building, or rebuilding of a church. That in turn helps us to shed light on the various motivations and perceptions bound up in that church and its role in medieval society. Along those lines, this study intends not only to assess the churches under consideration in light of Gem's and Blair's developmental hypotheses, but to carry those findings further, assessing the consequence of these processes in the social arena. The relationship between churches and social identity is an avenue that is only beginning to be explored (e.g. Graves 1989), and is an area of immense potential. Though Graves' work is concerned specifically with interior social space and actions directly related to ceremony and liturgy, the theoretical basis concerning the church's potential for social meaning and for structuring identities is crucial. While Graves discusses the vital role played by the entirety of the material culture of the church in communicating social cues and reinforcing identity (Graves 1989, 303), she does not explicitly extend this approach to the burial monuments that populated the church interior and churchyard. As will be seen below, funerary commemoration is an equally promising resource for the understanding of medieval society, and studies that fully integrate church buildings and monuments can provide a point of reference for future research in church archaeology.



## **2.2 Funerary sculpture: material culture and commemorative practice**

While the study of burial, especially with regard to skeletal remains and grave goods, has long been an important part of medieval archaeology, the modern archaeological study of the funerary monuments which marked those burials has been comparatively overlooked. Commemorative sculpture has long drawn interest and often appeared in antiquarian records, particularly if it was effigial (incised or in relief) or somewhat exotic (e.g. the interlace beasts of Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian monuments), but the general attitude towards funerary monuments seems to have been to draw first and ask questions later, if at all. This approach resulted in a preoccupation with more impressive examples of sculpture and a general disregard for any wider context of the monuments. Jonathan Finch has referred to this pervasive attitude, seen frequently in art history (e.g. Panofsky 1964), as a 'gallery' mentality, wherein the sculpture becomes an isolated piece of art, completely disengaged from its original location and purpose (Finch 2000a, 1-2).

Even when studies of commemorative art became more systematic (e.g. Collingwood 1907-15, 1927), they were still predicated on the progression of stylistic features and the establishment of a linear chronology of development. As it had been with churches, particular styles or designs became lifeless entities, devoid of meaning and important solely for fitting artefacts into timelines or diffusion patterns. The studies ignored the fact that these funerary monuments were physical remnants of a distinct social practice, encompassing in their creation and display a complex web of religious belief, memory, mourning, expendable wealth, power, and individual and collective identity. Fortunately, a more critical attitude toward the study of death and burial has emerged both in archaeology and in other disciplines, taking as its starting point that however it may be manifested socially and physically, the cultural reaction to death is never random, but always meaningful and expressive (Chapman and Randsborg 1981).

### 2.2.1 Approaches to death and commemoration

One of the most important bodies of work on the cognitive aspects of death and burial is that of the historian Phillipe Ariès. His work is an ambitious attempt to categorize and explain Western European attitudes towards death and burial from the medieval to the modern period (Ariès 1974, 1983). The attempt to define the social motivations and attitudes lying behind commemorative practice is admirable, but because of the broad basis of the study, it can be accused of over-generalization (Finch 2000a, 3), and the shortage of documentary sources and named burials in the early Middle Ages results in a far more vague treatment of that era (Crouch 1997, 157). Ariès focuses on the rise of individuality as the chief factor in the development of commemoration and burial, and that the discovery of a sense of self can be seen in the rise of epitaphs, effigies, and other specific representations of the deceased (Ariès 1983, 204; Binski 1996, 92). Because of his insistence on a realization of individuality as the prime mover behind attitudes towards death, Ariès considers the pre-inscription, pre-effigial monuments of the earlier Middle Ages as too anonymous to shed significant light on people's attitudes to death (Ariès 1974, 48), and goes so far as to say that the anonymity of the markers puts in doubt their effectiveness as commemorative symbols (Ariès 1983, 209). This view has been echoed in other studies, where non-effigial work has been dismissed as 'unrevealing about the background and identity of the commemorated' (Saul 2002, 171). The critique of Ariès' focus on individuality lies not with the concept of individuality itself, which is closely tied to identity in terms of people's perceptions of themselves in relation to others in the world, and the personal choices made about how and with whom or what to align themselves. The difficulties occur when 'individuality' is linked solely to the common use of names and the explicit expression of an individual's personal accomplishments (as with epitaphs). While these are indeed important markers of both individuality and identity, the existence and construction of these notions is dependent on much more than concrete identifiers.

For the early medieval period, which Ariès defines as before the thirteenth century, primacy is given to the graveyard itself, rather than to the 'accumulation of stones' within it (Ariès 1973, 47). Ariès argues that the cemetery's close association with the church, physically and spiritually, was what was important, rather than the individuality of either the grave markers or the deceased. In the early period, burial *ad sanctos* or *apud ecclesiam* was the chief requirement for heaven, and the concern for this had overridden all other factors (Ariès 1983, 215). This interpretation, however, does not do justice to the great variety of commemorative monuments and styles that existed between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. They may have lacked inscriptions or effigial images, but that does not necessarily equal either homogeneity or anonymity. Subtle factors of style and design may have been equally effective communicators of identity or purpose to the monument's intended medieval audience. The meaning-bearing potential of a sculptural monument for methods of identification cannot be limited to figural or textual representation. Though Ariès' explanation of the importance of burial location is valid, such an interpretation does not require the complete subordination of a sense of self and identity in the early medieval period, nor indeed of any other of the complex network of social issues that had bearing on death, burial, and commemoration.

Ariès' purely historical approach also colours his view towards the early Middle Ages. Christopher Daniell, in *Death and Burial in Medieval England*, notes that in the historical record, there is substantial early evidence for burial practice in monastic communities, but almost nothing for lay practice from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (Daniell 1997, 31). This illustrates the vital necessity of material-based studies of death and burial, especially for the earlier medieval period. Paul Binski (1996) and J.S. Curl (1993) have conducted important art-historical studies on the social context of medieval funerary monuments, though they too are concerned mostly with the large monuments and interior tombs of the later Middle Ages, with only passing references to earlier forms of commemoration. However, both authors' theoretical stances on the significance of

commemoration are highly relevant, with both works emphasizing monuments' importance as a (relatively) permanent object and an active agent in the social arena of the church. Binski writes that 'the chief character of any memorial, one which lent it its validity, was stability and permanence, and also accessibility' (Binski 1996, 71). Memorials were individually visible and meaningful objects, yet they were also fully integrated into the life of the church and people's use of it, especially with interior burials (Curl 1993, 75). People did not just see monuments, they interacted with them. When monuments were encountered, they served as reminders to pray for and remember the person buried, and thus the material object served as a bridge, creating a dialogue between the living and the dead, and provoking both memory and action in the audience (Binski 1996, 71; Parker-Pearson 1999, 193).

In the archaeological examination of death and burial practice, the discipline has managed to largely keep itself free from historical and art-historical paradigms, chiefly because of its concentration on excavations of cemeteries and human remains. However, it is the archaeological studies of funerary practice that have integrated multiple avenues of evidence that have been most successful. Michael Parker-Pearson's *The Archaeology of Death and Burial* (1999) has conducted a chronologically and geographically wide-ranging archaeological study of death and burial practice. Though he does not often discuss medieval burial practice and commemoration specifically, his useful theoretical approach is informed by post-processual concerns of power, ideology, legitimation, and the active negotiation of social roles and identity (Parker-Pearson 1999, 33, 85). Parker-Pearson emphasizes the complexity of burial ritual and the importance of context and perception for an individual's relationship to the event. He writes that burials were 'lively, contested events where social roles are manipulated, acquired, and discarded,' and within the framework of that ritual, material culture is part of 'an active manipulation of people's perceptions, beliefs, and allegiances' (Parker-Pearson 1999, 32). Recently, Dawn Hadley has written from an explicitly archaeological perspective on the attitudes and practices



surrounding death and burial in medieval England (Hadley 2000, 2001b). She adopts a regional approach, limiting the study to the East Midlands and Yorkshire, and considers all categories of evidence for funerary practice, including documentary and artistic sources, monumental commemoration, and excavated human remains (Hadley 2001b, 13-15). Most importantly, though, she emphasizes the links and influences present between burial practice and identity (Hadley 2000, 200), tracing the changing roles of cultural, economic, and social display throughout the early and later Middle Ages.

### 2.2.2 Monumental funerary sculpture

In her article on medieval urban cemeteries, Julia Barrow writes, 'The twelfth century was, relatively speaking, a low point for funerary art, coming between the sculptured crosses and hogbacks of preceding centuries and the increasingly generous supply of monumental representations of the deceased which are characteristic of the later Middle Ages' (1992, 79). Because of artistically and aesthetically value-laden biases such as these, the post-Saxon, non-effigial tradition of funerary commemoration has been almost entirely ignored. In fact, the vast majority of archaeological studies on commemorative sculpture have focused on pre-Conquest monuments, and no work on post-Conquest funerary sculpture can match the comprehensive series of regional *corpora* of Anglo-Saxon sculpture carried out by the British Academy (e.g. Cramp 1984; Everson and Stocker 1999; Lang 1991, 2001). These systematic studies catalogue all known fragments of pre-Conquest sculpture for the various regions, and also present analysis on stone types, geographical distribution, stylistic schools, and spheres of export and influence. By nature, these syntheses offer limited space for the discussion of wider social implications. However, important recent articles by Steven Driscoll (2000), Phil Sidebottom (2000), and David Stocker (2000), have greatly advanced the study of the social implications of early medieval commemoration, exploring Scottish and Anglo-Scandinavian commemorative monuments. The studies suggest that funerary monuments played important roles in church foundation

and the legitimation of political affiliations and lordship, and could also serve as powerful signifiers of components of social identity, such as ethnic and cultural affiliation, wealth, and social status.

Since most comprehensive studies of funerary sculpture have tended to stop at the Norman Conquest, the significant body of later stone commemoration has been the subject of far less scholarship. The majority of post-Conquest sculpture takes the form of 'cross slab' grave covers and headstones, which are generally stone slabs carved (incised or in relief), usually with a cross as the primary motif, that either lay recumbent over the grave or stood to mark it. They also occasionally feature secondary emblems, the most common of which are swords, shears, chalices, and books (Ryder 1991, 61) [Fig. 2]. The significance of cross slab symbolism has been debated (cf. Butler 1987; Edwards 1981; Finch 2000a; Fyson 1956), but the emblems are generally agreed to be signifiers of a badge of identity of the deceased, be it occupation, rank, or gender. Monuments that fit the description of 'cross slabs' do appear before the Conquest [Fig. 3], but the vast majority of the monuments and the most prevalent stylistic types date from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries (Ryder 1991, 1). They exhibit a great variety of form and design both regionally and chronologically, and are by far the most numerous monument-type in medieval commemoration, at least in the north of England (Ryder 1986, 33).

Perhaps because of this, most antiquarian and even some recent work has been of a cataloguing nature (e.g. Badham, et al. 1994; Boutell 1854; Cutts 1849; Edwards 1977; Greenhill 1958; Maher 1997; Styan 1904; Walter 1874), doing little more than attempting to list, illustrate, and possibly date the chosen slabs, though few of the surveys were made systematically. More significant, detailed surveys of cross slabs have been carried out by Peter Ryder in County Durham, West Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Cumbria (Ryder 1985, 1991, 2000, 2002a, 2005), and Brian and Moira Gittos have done the same for the East Riding of Yorkshire (1989). While these surveys often go into only limited analytical depth, they are nonetheless exceptionally useful and necessary sources. Such comprehensive

surveys have been desperately needed because of the long-standing tendency to ignore cross slabs almost entirely. Of the regional surveys conducted on churches, only J.E. Morris's *North Riding of Yorkshire* (1904) makes any attempt to systematically list the slabs preserved at each church, though his listings, too, are incomplete. Pevsner and the *Victoria County History* make only sporadic reference to their existence in surveyed churches, and printed church guides frequently omit reference to them entirely, even when they are obviously displayed in the church.

Archaeological analysis of cross slabs has been slight, chiefly because it was necessary to acquire the basic data before any interpretative study could be embarked upon. The scholarship that has been carried out, however, demonstrates the enormous potential of this class of monument. Cross slabs had been ignored archaeologically until the field was advanced considerably by the work of Lawrence Butler (Butler 1957, 1965). His analyses of the stones of Cambridgeshire and the East Midlands traced a stylistic chronology through the medieval period for slabs in these regions, establishing local schools of sculpture, and laying out the trade routes by which central workshops, like that at Barnack (Northants), exported their wares across the country. More recently, Jonathan Finch has discussed a sample of pre-1400 Norfolk commemoration, including brasses, effigies, and cross slabs, focusing on their role in the changing ethos of medieval commemorative practice and religious belief (Finch 2000b). He charts the distribution of commemoration in the region by type and over time, and connects patterns of monuments to other facets of medieval society, such as parochial formation, manorialization, elite competition, and the social structure of the community. Significantly, he makes the first foray into correlating the patterns, dates, and meanings of cross slabs with those of the churches in which they are found, an area of study that has been heretofore neglected almost entirely, especially in the transitional and post-Conquest periods. He suggests that their distribution may represent the use of slabs to commemorate important individuals at specific and equally important times in the development of the church, a striking parallel of person and place which attracted substantial

investment in both the building of churches and the commissioning of commemorative monuments (Finch 2000b, 36).

### **2.3 Social identity and authority in the local church**

The discussions above have demonstrated that churches and commemoration were powerful, meaning-bearing agents in medieval material culture and society. However, when discussing ecclesiastical media and social significance, it is not enough to say that they possessed it. We must also discuss the kinds of social significance, its incidence, and why a person or social group might want or even need such signifiers. The relationship between churches and commemoration must also be considered. The church existed as one arena of discourse and expression, and commemorative monuments as another. They can be considered separate entities with discrete roles and meanings, but they also overlap on both a spatial and material plane. With regard to social implications, churches and commemoration could work independently, in conjunction, or perhaps even be antagonistic, dependent on external circumstances and attitudes. To shed light on this relationship, we must take into consideration how they operated for different strata of people, as well as what monuments could provide in the social arena that churches could not, and vice versa. Most of all, however, we must be aware that the relationship was never static. The passage of time and the constant changes wrought by human agency and discourse ensured that the relationship, meaning, and social implications that churches and commemoration had at the beginning of our period were not necessarily the same ones they bore by the end of it.

Like no other media, churches and funerary monuments encompassed both the spiritual and temporal worlds. They were powerful because of ties to secular lords and patrons who hailed from the elite classes, or because of affiliations with large and wealthy religious institutions, but they were also powerful on other, less overt levels. Their prominence constantly reinforced the pervasiveness of Christianity, and its tenets of

morality, worship, and the afterlife. It is easy, when discussing the use of churches and monuments as tangible symbols and enforcers of hierarchy, authority, and status, to forget the driving force of religious belief in the medieval period. Piety and the requirements of the afterlife played a substantial role in the commission of churches and commemorative monuments. It is highly significant that even from the early medieval period, churches and funerary monuments were frequently being constructed in a largely permanent medium, a luxury afforded to only a very limited class of objects in the medieval material world. In the church, the expense and permanence of stone is evidence for a degree of importance and prominence shared by few other sites or structures in the medieval settlement. In commemoration, the use of stone may show a concern for the long-term remembrance of at least one class of the dead, and perhaps the growing emphasis placed on thinking about them and praying for them as they made their way through the afterlife.

On both medieval grave slabs and some Anglo-Scandinavian markers, the dominant motif of the cross, the iconic symbol of Christianity and resurrection, speaks plainly about the primacy of religious symbolism over other considerations of monument design. However, the crosses are sometimes paired with signifiers that may have defined an individual as part of a group or collective identity, by citing military, trade, and other symbolic elements on one's monument (Binski 1996, 102). These secondary emblems, where present, seem to give overt reference to a more individualistic identity than the shared one of Christian ideology professed through the use of the cross motif. However, secondary emblems and non-Christian motifs are far from ubiquitous on funerary sculpture, and perhaps simply the possession of any stone monument was sufficient indication of a social identity shared with a well-defined elite group (Finch 2000a, 31). By the very presence of a stone monument, regardless of design or style, commemorators were differentiating themselves from the masses who shared their Christian identity, but had no such marker to memorialize them.

The multiplicity of identities and meanings contained in one funerary monument illustrate the importance of recognizing that there is no single, objective meaning for an object or building. The temporal and social context and the point of view of both the creator/actor and the audience are inseparable from the article of material culture. For example, a new church founded by a manorial lord in the early-twelfth century would bear quite different meanings, for both the lord and the manorial community, than one first founded in the tenth century and later rebuilt. The communicative power of the monument or structure is affected by the character of the ecclesiastical and tenurial landscape (e.g. is it one of many or few stone structures or monuments?), as well as by the commissioner or viewer's place in the authoritative culture of society. A church or a grave marker would communicate very different things to a lord and a peasant, but even a shared social status is no guarantor of a shared point of view. The significance of his own church to a lordly patron was quite separate from the meaning understood by the lord of a neighbouring manor. The building of a church (and likewise a commemorative monument) could express dominance over a person in a hierarchical relationship with the patron, but it could also express class recognition, pride, and ambition to competitive peers, or even aspiration to those who were above him in social standing (Graves 1989, 305).

A specific example of the use of churches and commemoration in the expression of status and identity is found in David Stocker's study of Anglo-Scandinavian churches and funerary monuments (Stocker 2000). In tenth and eleventh-century Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, the new ruling class of Anglo-Scandinavian lords and merchants adopted an already-established material language of authority by founding churches and adopting the practice of stone sculpture. However, these lay lords adapted pre-Scandinavian styles of sculpture to their own particular cultural and political needs, thereby creating a new and highly distinctive class of individual commemorative monuments (Stocker 2000, 193). They then used these monuments as symbols of legitimation, associating them with their newly-founded churches, which were another adopted symbol of the newly status and power (Stocker

2000, 197). In this case, churches and commemoration were used in conjunction to achieve an end, communicating socio-political status and cultural affinity, and reinforcing social identities, in both life and death, to both a newly conquered populace and to other Anglo-Scandinavian lords.

Status clearly played a significant role in both the perception of social identity, and the use of material culture in constructing and maintaining that identity. Since the lordly elite had the resources to command expensive and highly visible forms of material culture, they had access to the tangible means by which status, authority, and social identity could be constantly presented and reinforced (Graves 1989, 311). Contributing to this constant reinforcement was the process of creating socially significant material culture, which should also be seen in terms of continual practice, and not just as an end result (Conkey and Hastorf 1990, 12). The creating patrons were aware of their authority and power of discourse, and material culture played into that awareness. Each commissioned object was a conscious act of creation which had specifically intended outcomes, not least reinforcing his social position and identity. The patron's social self was not a static entity, but a continuous process of creation and recreation, which was expressed through the material culture that he employed to communicate and structure that identity.

### ***Chapter 3: The Historical Context***

The discussions in the previous chapters on theories of social meaning and identity, and on the importance of churches and commemoration, can be of little interpretative significance unless they are placed within a detailed and well-defined historical and geographical context. It is imperative not just to discuss the influence of churches and monuments on medieval social life in generalities, but to realize that they were materials built and used by specific people at specific times, and that an interpretation of their meaning depends heavily on an understanding of the particular social, political, and cultural character of the region at that juncture. Between the tenth and the early-thirteenth centuries, North Yorkshire and its region were subject to major developments in civil, tenorial, and ecclesiastical organization, as well as significant political turbulence created by military invasions and cultural settlements, all of which had great bearing on the roles that churches and commemoration were able to play. This social milieu shaped the intents and actions of the people who lived in it, in turn affecting the ways in which they created, utilized, and perceived their material culture.

#### **3.1 Yorkshire and the north of England**

Between the years 866 and 1200, the northeast of England was subject to at least five separate and influential political upheavals that drastically shaped the land, lordship, and people of the region: the coming of the Danes with the *micel here* in 866 and their subsequent settlement; the takeover of the kingdom of York by the Hiberno-Norse Vikings under Ragnald in 918; the 'reconquest' of the area by Wessex after 954; the Norman Conquest in 1066, which itself was followed by the 'Harrying of the North' in 1069-70; and finally the anarchy of King Stephen's reign and the subsequent dynastic change that eventually took place in 1154. Despite this, traditional scholarship and popular knowledge have almost always given pre-eminence to the Norman Conquest, and for Yorkshire particularly, the post-Conquest rebellions and Harrying have long been a source of scholarly



preoccupation (e.g. Bishop 1948; Lennard 1959; Palliser 1993; Roffe 1990; Wightman 1975). It is undoubtedly more productive, and more accurate in terms of understanding the historical trajectory of the region, to consider the Norman victory as just one change in a turbulent 300 years of power struggles, and as no more of a 'defining moment' than any change that came before or after it.

While the Norman conquest and settlement certainly had a great effect on the region and its people, the land that they took over was certainly not a blank slate within which the Normans could operate unfettered by history and the developments of the foregoing centuries. Nor were those remnants of the past, despite the Norman enthusiasm for building and administration, so easily overwritten. The overall significance of Scandinavian raiding, settlement, and rule to the medieval Northeast should not be underestimated, nor indeed should the influence of the enduring civil and ecclesiastical framework of the pre-Viking period (Hadley 2001a, 279; Richards 2000, 42). These elements played just as formative a role in the northern regions of England as the Norman Conquest did, extensively shaping the land and people into which the Normans would settle some 200 years later (Hadley 2001a; Kapelle 1979). The Yorkshire that eventually emerged in the later Middle Ages was not simply or mainly the product of one event or people, but rather a complex result generated by the combination of all of these forces over time.

In terms of its historical chronology and socio-cultural characteristics, it is clear that the north of England was a region distinct from the rest of the country. Geographically distant and politically separate, the lands north of the Humber were always far less subject to the southern centres of Roman, Wessex, and Norman royal power (Kapelle 1979, 11; Williams, A. 2003, 17), and they enjoyed a long-standing autonomy that determined how the events of the tenth to twelfth centuries played out within the region. Up until the Viking invasions, Northumbria had been a virtually independent territory, and after the Scandinavian settlement, Yorkshire especially was central to Danelaw England (Kapelle 1979, 9). Though Wessex officially took control of the region in the mid-tenth century,

Scandinavian influences had already merged with and altered the area's pre-existing Anglian traditions, forming a new amalgamated culture that was neither English nor Viking, but distinctly 'Anglo-Scandinavian' in its political, economic, linguistic, religious, and artistic practices (e.g. Hadley 2001a; Richards 2000; Sawyer 1971). The Northeast's historical development thus created an entity that was fundamentally different from the southern regions of England, and even from the Danelaw regions of East Anglia and the Midlands (Davis 1955, 38), resulting in a separate regional identity that would persist long after the Norman Conquest. Even in the mid-twelfth century, the *Leges Henrici Primi* reveal a three-fold division of English law that was still attuned to pre-Conquest divisions, recording that '*alia enim Westsexia, alia Mircena, alia Denelaga est*' (Le Patourel 1971b, 21; *LHP* 6, 2).

Though it is important to remember that the North itself was not geographically or ethnically homogeneous (Hadley 2001a, 1; Kapelle 1979, 10), there is definite evidence during this time period for the region being treated as a unified polity, separate from the rest of England. In 962, King Edgar had granted autonomy to the Danelaw, which while technically under central rule, was allowed to carry on with its own political, legal, and landholding customs (Kapelle 1979, 11). Even when Wessex had been in nominal control for over a century, it seems that the king still had very little effective power in the northern Danelaw areas. Though Edward the Confessor did hold control over York, beyond it his authority seems to have been relatively limited, especially in comparison to the earls, who though appointed by the king, far outstripped him in land and power (Kapelle 1979, 11). In the mid-eleventh century, Edward is documented as holding five extensive manorial sokes in demesne, which together were worth £137, but the northern earls, together with the North Midlands and Wessex lords who held land in the county, oversaw 30 demesne manors worth a combined £1,237 (Dalton 1994, 8). Royal weakness in the northern territories is also evident in the difference in the amount of tax levied on the Danelaw areas, which in the eleventh century was still much lighter than in the rest of the kingdom (Kapelle 1979, 97). It was probably Earl Tostig's attempt to raise taxes, perhaps to no higher than the national

average, that resulted in the men of Northumbria's revolt against him in 1065, the success of which allowed the Anglo-Scandinavian system of taxation to survive well into the Norman era (Kapelle 1979, 96). Though the northern uprisings of 1068 and 1069 are often the most well-remembered, simply because of the retribution they provoked from William, the revolt of 1065 is perhaps more telling, providing further evidence that the post-Conquest northern uprisings were an effort to reject southern, not just Norman, impositions on the region's independent tradition.

The Domesday survey, carried out in order to assess land and taxation values throughout the kingdom, holds more evidence that the North persisted as a marginal region to which the king had difficulty extending his grasp. Yorkshire is the extreme northerly point covered by the survey, indicating that the king and his inquisitors did not have the means or authority to assess the extensive lands of Durham, Lancashire, Westmorland, Cumbria, or Northumberland, which throughout the eleventh century were under constant threat from outlawry and further Viking invasion, and the Crown was forced to contend for control of the area with native and Scottish lords (Griffiths 1992, 69; Kapelle 1979, 132). Even in Yorkshire, where 90% of the lands were in the possession of Norman magnates (Dalton 1994, 19), and a handful of royal castles and an Archbishop were tangible presences of central control, the recording in the survey is patchy and incomplete compared to other counties, and the county is full of waste land, low manorial values, and native-named subtenants (Darby and Maxwell 1962; DB Yorks). This is a strong indication that even twenty years on, the 'Norman Conquest' of Yorkshire, and certainly the North as a whole, was still a work in progress. The existence of native subtenants may mean that Norman landlords had not yet been able to enfeoff their own men on all levels of the tenorial ladder. The North's social and political instability during the eleventh century may have prevented them from doing so, or else forced them into negotiating a sort of balance with the native elite. As a result of this more tenuous grasp, Normans may not have been able to fully develop administrative control or maximize agricultural production on their new holdings by

the time of the survey, and thus had less knowledge of the value and resources of their lands with which to inform the inquisitors (Dalton 1994, 22).

Culturally, the inhabitants of northern England also seem to have retained a regional individuality. Scandinavian place-name elements are prevalent in northern regions, though the well-rehearsed arguments on toponymic studies caution that the distribution and frequency of place-names cannot always be used to determine the extent of the Viking settlement nor pinpoint dates of village foundation (e.g. Abrams and Parsons 2004; Gelling 1976; Lund 1976; Richards 2000; Watts 1976). However, their prominence in the landscape and in the written records *does* show the heavy influence of the Scandinavian language on northern dialects and the presence of an Anglo-Scandinavian populace in charge of manorial lands. Scandinavian-influenced personal names also feature prominently in the North, with a very wide variety recorded throughout the ninth and tenth centuries (Townend 2001, 98). However, like place-names, personal names were not simply or necessarily an ethnic signifier. They were not just a product of first-generation Scandinavian invasion and settlement, but were subject to cultural trends of fashion, adoption, and adaptation, and became an integral part of the new and long-lasting Anglo-Scandinavian culture that was created by the North's peculiar situation. There were, for example, Scandinavian names in use in England that are not found recorded in contemporary Scandinavia, and Scandinavian-influenced names also persisted well after the Conquest, such as in the moneyers of York (Rollason, et al. 1998, 192), and in some manorial families.<sup>4</sup> Their users may not have considered the names to be a badge of Scandinavian ethnicity at all, especially after several generations of settlement and integration (Hadley 2000, 124). There is support for this to be found in the inscription from St. Gregory's church, Kirkdale, which states that the Scandinavian-named Orm Gamalson bought and rebuilt the church at some time between 1055 and 1065 ('in the days of King Edward and Earl Tostig'), yet it does so in the 'native'

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<sup>4</sup> The tenancy at Manfield provides an example of the persistence of native names: tenant Hermer was succeeded by his daughter Guthefrith at some point before 1137, and in the mid-twelfth century, the manor was confirmed to Torphin son of Robert son of Copsi (VCH NR I, 187).

language of Old English (Lang 1991, 164). According to William of Malmesbury, writing in the mid-twelfth century, the dialect spoken in Yorkshire east of the Pennines was still unintelligible to men from southeast England (Kapelle 1979, 11).

The tenorial and linguistic evidence provides ample support for claims of a distinct regional identity, and political reality, in the early medieval Northeast, and the peculiar character that is preserved in the written record is also seen reflected in its material culture. England in the Scandinavian era is not generally characterized by diagnostic 'pagan' and 'Viking' remains, so instead of archaeology serving to identify ethnic divisions, the interpretation has instead focused on assimilation, seen in a general similarity between excavated 'Saxon' and 'Scandinavian' settlements, in the relative scarcity of pagan burial evidence in the Danelaw, and in the proliferation of Christian funerary sculpture (Richards 2000, 58, 142, 159). Integration and regional individuality are best seen in the artistic forms and styles of the period, particularly in terms of the sculpture that occurs across the northern Danelaw. These stone markers are one of the most durable and frequent forms of evidence of Anglo-Scandinavian England, and they were a clear product of integration. Stone monuments were not a part of a native Scandinavian tradition, which had no stone sculpture until the end of the tenth century (Richards 2000, 159). The monuments found in northern England are a complex mixture of traditions, as the settlers borrowed the Anglian monumental form, and then decorated them with primarily Scandinavian motifs that were nonetheless significantly influenced by pre-Viking Northumbrian styles (Lang 1991; Richards 2000, 159). Though the new sculptural tradition was based on pre-existing practices, it took on a distinct, Anglo-Scandinavian character of its own. Unlike Anglian crosses, which could sometimes be massive and were relatively sparsely distributed, Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture is much smaller in size, seems to be frequently affiliated with secular individuals, and is found at five times as many sites as its Anglian predecessors (Lang 1991; Richards 2000, 159-160) [Fig. 4].

The northern Danelaw accounts for far more early sculpture than the southern reaches of the country (Richards 2000, 162), perhaps because of both the Scandinavian influx and strong Anglian stone-carving traditions. However, regional stylistic, formal, and chronological differences do prevail even within the Danelaw. Intensive stone sculpture production came later to Lincolnshire and Derbyshire than to Yorkshire and the North, and the Midlands practice was probably derived from northern prototypes and political and cultural influence (Richards 2000, 161-162). However, there were still considerable regional differences. The warrior portraits and ring-headed crosses of Yorkshire and Cumbria do not extend to the Midlands Danelaw, where motifs were less overtly secular, and demonstrate more continuity with pre-Viking ornament (cf. Everson and Stocker, 1999; Lang 1991; Sidebottom 2000). In some regions like Kesteven (Lincs), coped grave chests instead of standing crosses were the common form (cf. Everson and Stocker 1999), and the East Anglian Danelaw, it appears, had no significant Viking Age sculpture at all (Richards 2000, 162). Dawn Hadley has suggested that regionally differing sculpture styles, which persisted into the eleventh century, were an ongoing way for northern lords to declare their acceptance of, or their separation from, southern rule (Hadley 2001b, 137-138). The Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture of the northern Danelaw may not have been a particularly cultural or ethnic expression, but it was perhaps a regional one.

This theory is supported somewhat by differences that continue to be seen between northern and southern commemoration through the Saxo-Norman transition, and even into the later medieval period. Though cross slabs were sometimes mass-produced (Butler 1965; Finch 2000), they have often appeared to be intensely provincial, and even parochial, in terms of style and production (see examples in McClain 2001; Ryder 1985, 1991). Nevertheless, the monuments do seem to exhibit some broader regional trends. Secondary emblems on cross slabs are one example, being a feature whose frequency seems to coincide directly with location. They are almost entirely absent from southern examples (Butler 1957, 1987; Finch 2000), slightly more common in Midlands pieces, especially

Nottinghamshire (Butler 1965, 1987), and very frequent in the northern reaches of the country (Ryder 1985, 1991). Another significant difference seems to be the incidence of plain tapered grave covers, as seen in Jonathan Finch's study of Norfolk (Finch 2000, 24). There, half of the total of 34 slabs were blank, a very high proportion compared to the northern county surveys that have been conducted, where all but a very small minority of slabs are decorated in some manner. It is possible that these blank slabs were painted rather than carved, but there is no conclusive physical evidence that the slabs were coloured.

Butler has suggested that the stylistic range and prevalence of secondary emblems might not be solely regional preference, but may have some foundation in the North's cultural history. He proposes that swords, shears, and keys, three of the most common emblems found on cross slabs, may be remnants of the practice of burial with simple grave goods. These objects were frequent accompaniments in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian burials, and their use on the burial slabs may represent a continuation of the tradition, either symbolizing what was once there, or maybe what actually was buried with the body (Butler 1987, 248). He also suggests a certain continuity with northern Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, proposing that the central cross on most cross slabs may have served as a substitute for the human figures that sometimes featured on earlier grave markers, and who were often pictured with similar accoutrements like swords or other elements of military authority (Butler 1987, 248) [Fig. 5].

These proposed elements of regional continuity in the sculptural tradition, while speculative, are lent some support by the clear influence of pre-Conquest sculptural styles on later cross slabs. Yorkshire and the North have been particularly noted for transitional and early-twelfth century standing monuments, which may have once been used as head or footstones in combination with recumbent markers (Cambridge 1995; McClain 2001; Ryder 1985, 2001) [Fig. 6]. Anglo-Scandinavian monuments of similar form have been found throughout the Danelaw regions, and have been excavated *in situ* at sites such as St. Mark's, Lincoln and in the eleventh-century graveyard at York Minster (Lang 1995; Stocker 1986;

Stocker and Everson 2001). The existence of elaborate foliated scrolls, which fill the spaces on either side of the central cross shaft on four slabs in North Yorkshire, may also lend support to the continued use of regional stylistic elements. The slabs, probably dating to the thirteenth century, are found at Scruton, Middleton Tyas, Bolton on Swale, and Ellerton Priory, and parallels to the vine scroll motif are only known at a few other sites. These include a crude and simple variation at Eryholme (North Riding), fine ornate examples at Laughton-en-le-Morthen and Wakefield (West Riding), and a variant with downward-turned leaves from Gosforth (Cumbria) (Ryder 1986, 35) [Fig. 7]. The restriction of the style to areas which would have featured strong Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian traditions, both of which employed the vine scroll motif, has implications for stylistic continuity in the region's art. While its use may not indicate unbroken stylistic continuity or direct reproduction, which would be practically impossible to sustain over so many centuries, it may be an instance of the long-standing cultural memory of a locally popular style, and a physical manifestation of regional identity.

### **3.2 Conquests, settlement, and anarchy: the socio-political framework of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman periods**

#### **3.2.1 The Scandinavian invasions**

When the Danish leader Healfdeane and his army finally capped 70 years of Scandinavian raiding with the settlement and 'sharing out' of the land of Northumbria to his military followers, they made a significant contribution to a process of manorialization and land division that would greatly affect the character of medieval northern England (Richards 2000, 42). Upon moving from coastal and river raiding into the interior of the country, they focused their attacks on the weakest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, finding much success in Northumbria, where internecine conflict made the task of conquest easier, enabling them to set up a kingdom centred on York in 876 (Richards 2000, 27). Though the settlers famously used their new landholdings 'to plough and to support themselves,' settlement did not bring



a total halt to military activity. Opportunistic attacks from the occupied lands into Wessex-held territory continued into the 890's, after which the Viking armies finally dispersed, accepting the English offer of the lands above Watling Street (Richards 2000, 29).

Though the cessation of Viking raids in the tenth century brought a period of relative peace to much of England, allowing the Wessex kings to gain strength and begin their piecemeal reconquest, the political situation in the Anglo-Scandinavian North was rarely completely stable. The early years of the tenth century were marked by the invasion of the Dublin Viking Ragnald, who presumably brought with him not only a new band of Hiberno-Norse landowners and military elite, but also the cultural influence of the Irish Sea area to the eastern core of the Scandinavian kingdom, which heavily influenced the cultural and material environment of pre-Conquest Yorkshire (Lang 1991, 8; Richards 2000, 161). In the following three decades, the Northeast would be fought over by various Scandinavian war-bands, petty kings, and the lords of Wessex, changing hands several times, with control especially tenuous during the turbulent time of 939-954 (between the death of King Aethelred and the expulsion of the last Scandinavian king Eric Bloodaxe), during which English, Dublin Vikings, other Scandinavians, and even long-settled Anglo-Scandinavians competed for the throne of York.

Though the north of England was 'under Scandinavian rule,' from the late-ninth century, the Scandinavian conquerors were never a single group with a united purpose. Their rule over York, much less over the whole of the Danelaw, was never as firmly established, overtly administrative, or explicitly king-dependent as that of the late-Saxon southern rulers or the Normans. Thus, a lesser, regionally-based elite played an extremely important role in the North Riding throughout this period. Earls, housecarls, and other landholding lords like thegns and drengs would have gained power due to the political instability above them, and jostled with each other, the English, and Scandinavian newcomers for land and authority. Despite the relative absence of large landholders at the earliest stage of Scandinavian tenurial organization (Hadley 2000, 121), this does not mean

that the Viking elite were too politically insecure to effectively shape the tenorial landscape to their liking, or that they were any less in control of the population that they ruled.

Certainly the landscape, sculptural, and excavated settlement evidence for takeovers of existing estate centres, as well as for massive privatization of land ownership and the acceleration of nucleation and estate fragmentation (Brown and Foard 1998, 91; Hadley 2000, 121; Richards 2000, 42), is testament to their political strength over the conquered populace.

The Scandinavian tenorial reorganization may have overwritten the earlier territorial landscape to some extent, but it was not the only shaping force in the Northeast's landscape. There is evidence that it also merged with or simply adopted earlier estate centres and landholding patterns (Richards 2000, 42), and that the civil wapentakes of the North Riding, though bearing a Scandinavian moniker, may not have necessarily been wholly Scandinavian institutions. The administrative divisions may have been framed around units or estates of long-standing antiquity, which had been recognized in form if not in name before the Viking invasions (Hadley 2001a, 105). The period of Scandinavian settlement in the Northeast also coincides with a trend of estate fragmentation throughout England, though the direct role of the Scandinavian lords and settlers in this long-term process is a question for debate. The tenth and eleventh centuries appear to herald the breakdown of the 'multiple estates' — large territories encompassing numerous vills and their inhabitants — in favour of individual, one-vill manorial holdings of the kind often seen in Domesday Book records across the country (Faith 1997, 154; Hadley 2001a, 85). Archaeological evidence for this trend has been discovered in excavations at Raunds (Northants), and possibly at Wharram Percy (N. Yorks) (Richards 2000, 51). Estate fragmentation has been attached to a number of other reorganizations within the landscape, including the growth of nucleated and planned settlements (Brown and Foard 1998; Pounds 2000, 26), the breakdown of the minster system, and parish formation (Blair 1988, 7), but it is a hypothesis that must be considered carefully in the northern Danelaw (Hadley 2001a, 162). Although there were certainly

single-vill manors by the Domesday era, and there is some archaeological evidence for fragmentation, large multi-vill manors (e.g. Pickering, Gilling West, Northallerton) were a persistent feature of the Northeast well into the later Middle Ages (Hadley 2001a, 35).

In Domesday Book, the entries for the Danelaw regions are distinct from many other regions of England. In these territories, far more land was held in extensive estates, with large amounts of outlying attached land known as sokes or berewicks, contrasting with the consolidated manor that was far more prevalent elsewhere in England (Hadley 2001a, 109; Williamson 1993, 114). The Danelaw was also notable for its large free peasant class, known as 'sokemen' and *liberi homines* (Stenton 1969, 1). Though in the past much has been made of the coincidence of soke and freemen with the area of Scandinavian settlement, Yorkshire has proved an interesting anomaly. As a centre of Viking kingship, the county was certainly well-settled by Scandinavians, but where East Anglia and the Five Boroughs list thousands of sokemen, the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire have only 123 and 281 respectively, and the North Riding merely 44 (Hadley 2001a, 23). Work by Davis (1955) and Hadley (2001a) has emphasized the non-Scandinavian origins of the free peasant class, and has suggested instead that the Scandinavian system of tenurial and social organization may not have created such a class, but instead preserved the status of free peasants that already existed (Hadley 2001a, 23). Whatever the origin of the sokemen in the rest of the Danelaw, it appears that Yorkshire had only a minimal free peasant class, and that the subtle gradations of status that came with these free and semi-free classes (Williamson 1993, 158) were not an issue in Yorkshire's manorial and social system. A more standard structure of local and regional landholders and tenants seems to have defined Yorkshire's Anglo-Scandinavian tenurial structure.

### 3.2.2 The Norman Conquest

In contrast to the Scandinavian takeover, the Norman Conquest, though certainly a more protracted process than victory at Hastings, was a much more overwhelming military

action than the 250 years of Viking violence and appeasement. After the battle, the majority of England readily acquiesced to William's kingship, and though there were various skirmishes across the country, the Normans encountered their only significant resistance in Yorkshire and the North (Rowley 1997, 54). Perhaps because he sensed the tenuousness of his grasp on the North, William at first attempted an inclusive tenurial organization, with the great English earls Edwin, Morcar, and Waltheof retaining their lands after they had sworn allegiance (Chibnall 1986, 16), but he was repaid only with rebellion. Edwin and Morcar led the two northern revolts of 1068 and 1069, in which Morcar was killed and Edwin imprisoned and his lands forfeited (Chibnall 1986, 18). Though Waltheof successfully held his land until 1075, he too was eventually caught up in rebellion with the Norman earl of Norfolk, and was forced into forfeiture as well (Chibnall 1986, 22).

The lack of success of English earls in the Norman landholding scheme may be due not only to the relative power of the men to which William decided to give land (Edwin and Morcar having previously held two of the largest English territories (Chibnall 1986, 12)), but also to the fact that they were Mercian and Northumbrian, and not Wessex lords. Even before William arrived, the northern lords had been fighting against Wessex and southern power, and it is likely that the revolts were incited more by objections to higher taxation and to the installation of Copsig, an associate of Tostig, who had been driven out the year before, as the new Earl of Northumbria (Kapelle 1979, 106), than to any sense of English nationalism against foreign invaders. The revolts were certainly a rejection of William's authority, and perhaps an offensive to drive the Normans out of the North, but not necessarily out of England (Kapelle 1979, 109).

These revolts were followed first by William's installation of Norman lords and two castles in the city of York, followed by the infamous 'Harrying of the North' of 1069-70 (Rowley 1997, 58-9). Most of the Saxon and later historical sources (e.g. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Orderic Vitalis, Hugh the Chanter) decry William's barbarity and insist on long-term ruin and famine in the northern lands, especially Yorkshire, which as Symeon of

Durham relates, was uncultivated for nine years afterwards (Palliser 1993, 3; *SD*, 137).

Though the harrying undoubtedly occurred, the fact that Simeon claims that there was no village inhabited between Yorkshire and Durham in the aftermath of William's attacks clearly demonstrates the probability of bias and exaggeration in such accounts.

Archaeological evidence to refute these claims has been highlighted in the excavations of Anglo-Scandinavian York, which revealed no layer of destruction that would equate with the chronicled burning and wasting of the city of York in 1069 (Rollason, et al. 1998, 184, 190 193), and which demonstrate that Coppergate and other areas remained thriving market, craft, and domestic sites into the twelfth century (Bond and O'Connor 1999; MacGregor, et al. 1999; Mainman and Rogers 2004). It is also unlikely that William would have chosen to spend Christmas of 1069 in York, as is recorded, if it had indeed been a burnt wasteland (Palliser 1993, 5). Though the severity and impact of the harrying have been a source of much scholarly debate (cf. Allerston 1970, Kapelle 1979, Palliser 1993), the fact that it had to occur at all is significant evidence for the internal disunity of England, and that William had underestimated the region's perception of itself, and the persistence of the northern legacy of autonomy.

The violent nature of the northern Conquest has led some to attribute the medieval organization of northern settlement, especially the high number of planned villages (e.g. Allerston 1970), to a deliberate Norman policy of estate reorganization (Everson, et al. 1991, 15). However, even if the destruction caused by the harrying played some part, it was certainly not fully responsible for these complex and multi-faceted settlement developments. For example, planned villages that appear to date from the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries occur across England, the majority in areas that never incurred any Norman attack (Everson, et al. 1991, 16; Palliser 1993, 7). In northeastern England, though there is evidence for eleventh and twelfth-century replanning, the initial Scandinavian settlement and reorganization, as well as the later Anglo-Scandinavian period, may also have been responsible for some regular village toft and croft layouts (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 84;

Everson, et al. 1991, 17). It has also been suggested that previous subdivisions for geld assessment, the consolidation of independent holdings, and increasing population and manorialization in the eleventh and twelfth centuries may have played a major role in planned village formation (Everson, et al. 1991, 16; Platt 1978, 38-9). Undoubtedly, the Norman lords of Yorkshire did rearrange and affect some aspects of tenurial organization, but the Norman lords were no more wholly responsible for the North's settlement patterns than the Scandinavians had been (Hadley 2001a, 204). The later medieval outcome was rather the complex product of many diverse shaping factors, a number of them originating before the arrival of the Normans, and perhaps even before the Vikings.

Though the scale and complexity of Norman landholding was remarkable, it must be remembered that in 1066 the Normans were not imposing themselves on a primitive landholding system. The 'sharing out' of the land by the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian lords had progressed into a network of earls, thegnly subtenants, landholding freemen, and bound peasantry (Dalton 1994, 8-9). The Normans worked their hierarchies and lordships into this pre-existing tenurial system, complicating the bonds of tenancy and vassalage and redistributing land, while at the same time maintaining some of the most basic manorial institutions, organizations, and divisions (Loyn 1991, 327). They retained, by choice or by necessity, some of the pre-Conquest landholders as subtenants (Chibnall 1986, 52; Dalton 1994, 44), and even kept some as important lords, such as Gospatric. He remained in charge of the vast majority of his territory and was even given additional property, holding land in 38 Yorkshire vills as tenant-in-chief. He also held a further eighteen vills within the Honour of Richmond, a huge compact lordship encompassing the whole of the western North Riding, as a sub-magnate below Count Alan (DB Yorks).

The chief difference in the Scandinavian and Norman landholding systems seems to have been in the complexity of the tenurial hierarchy and overlordship. The relatively fragmentary nature of the early Anglo-Scandinavian political system probably meant that the initial distribution of land was on a smaller geographical scale, and simpler in terms of the

overall chain of lordship. The more centralized nature of Norman government meant that most land was distributed by the king to a select group of baronial tenants-in-chief, who held numerous estates throughout the country and on the continent (Dalton 1994, 113; Loyn 1991, 327). These men in turn distributed land to their own followers, who even at this lower level could hold large numbers of estates in multiple counties (Dalton 1994, 51; Lennard 1959, 28). The need to manage extensive amounts of land and the increasing pressures to provide knight service necessitated further and further subinfeudation, but even at Domesday, up to four levels of lordship and tenancy were occasionally recorded above the villeins and other peasants who worked the manorial land (Lennard 1959, 22).

### 3.2.3 The twelfth century

Throughout the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Norman kings sought to more firmly entrench their rule over England and its landholders. William Rufus and Henry I made great efforts to strengthen central administrative and judicial control, using the tenants-in-chief to whom they had granted land as a means by which to exercise authority over the most distant reaches of the country. However, there was a fine balance to strike between baronial and royal authority, and in the marginal northern lands, where autonomy was traditional, the threat of wealthy, powerful, and virtually independent militarized barony would have to be taken seriously. Paul Dalton argues that as ultimate tenorial lord over the land in England, Henry I engaged in a deliberate scheme to divide up the large magnatial estates of Domesday, supplanting the barons' land monopolies with smaller, regular tenancies overseen by his 'new men' (Dalton 1994, 88), simultaneously tightening his administrative and judicial grip on the country while keeping the *de facto* power, if not the ambitions, of the magnates in check (Dalton 1994, 96).

The effects of early-twelfth century tenorial and legal reorganization can be seen in Yorkshire, where 175 tenants-in-chief held land in the county, but also elsewhere in England and Normandy, preventing them from capitalizing on a sizable but compact land base from

which to gain localized wealth and military power (Dalton 1994, 113). By 1135, much of Henry's reorganization had been accomplished. The number of subtenants beneath the magnates had risen dramatically, and many of the subtenants now possessed subtenants of their own (Dalton 1994, 107, 113). How much of this increased manorialization and subinfeudation was due specifically to William II and Henry I's direct control is difficult to say, as the inquests and records that document the changes were produced primarily by and for the royal court. Henry's drive for an increase in central control cannot be questioned, and his long-term success is testified to in the legacy of laws and privileges left by his reign to later-medieval England (Barlow 1988, 170), but it is less likely that he would have been able to carry out such a complex and involved scheme of tenurial manipulation across the country. Judging from the complexity of twelfth-century landholding in documentary sources, it is nearly impossible to imagine the successful management of the tenurial system in which some significant devolution of power had not occurred.

Despite Henry's attempts to curb them, the trends of the twelfth century point toward the growing numbers and influence of the sub-magnatial landlords and knightly classes (Dalton 1994, 287; Lennard 1959, 53). The growing complexity of manorial tenure was produced out of the demands of heredity and the payment of followers, as well as increasing population and agricultural demand. This created the need for cash, and thus cash rents, from more subtenants (Britnell 1993, 46; Dalton 1994, 285; Dyer 1989, 5), and placed tenants-in-chief under great pressure to alienate their lands. This pressure may have been even stronger in Yorkshire, where post-Conquest magnates were compelled to grant out more and larger portions of land to attract and satisfy followers, as the county's agricultural economy was relatively poor and the political and military situation more unstable, thus ensuring the continued importance of local landholding lords in Yorkshire's tenurial structure (Thomas 1993, 57). Regionally-specific economic and political forces probably played a greater role in manorial devolution and the growing importance of minor lords than did any direct manipulation of estates by the Crown. In any event, the high aristocracy was



soon forced to reckon with an ascendant lesser elite whose political and tenurial leverage became particularly significant during the events of the mid-twelfth century.

For all of Henry I's efforts to secure royal power in all corners of the kingdom, it was truly lost only a few years into the rule of his successor Stephen. Up to 1139, he tried to continue Henry's work of restoring and maintaining the rights of the crown, and he was somewhat successful in these endeavors until his questionable succession was challenged by the Angevins, leading to the dynastic war that hampered the effectiveness of his reign (Barlow 1988, 204). While the struggle was hard-fought and occasionally devastating to parts of the country, Stephen's reign does not warrant the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's description of his rule as 'nineteen winters during which Christ and his saints slept' (King 1994; Rowley 1997, 64). During this period, existing towns continued to grow and new towns were created; villages grew and were reorganized; churches, castles, and monasteries continued to be founded and built; and though it was probably dented by the anarchy, the whole of the twelfth century can generally be considered an age of economic expansion and rapid population growth, which lead into the heights of the thirteenth century (Dyer 2002, 102; Newman 1988, 21). Though the anarchy probably did relatively slight damage to the economic situation of England, the institution of kingship suffered more. During the struggle, Stephen was forced to court the major landholding lords throughout the country in order to gain military support to fight off the challenge. But by appealing to the lords, and installing them strategically around the country, such as the appointment of William le Gros as Earl of York in 1138, Stephen was granting them the independence and the territory that they needed to undermine royal authority and gain the upper hand (Dalton 1994, 146).

In the twelfth century, Earl William had been granted control of the royal demesnes at Falsgrave and Pickering, and held all of the royal wapentake, hundredal, and soke manors in Yorkshire except for Pocklington, Kilham, and Tickhill (Dalton 1994, 157). Being more concerned with his private ambitions than preserving the king's control of the region, William's management allowed the lesser lords to become more free from seigneurial

control as well (Dalton 1994, 147). But facing significant antagonism outside of the city of York itself, William was forced to appeal for the support of the local and semi-local lords of Yorkshire. The lesser elite who held lands in subtenancy became especially important, as they possessed smaller amounts of land in only one or two counties, and were more often than not resident in their Yorkshire manors. Thus empowered, the local elite gained the power to administer their estates more directly, building their own castles and churches, establishing their own courts, commanding the allegiance of lesser families and landholders, and taking secure control over social and tenurial relationships (Dalton 1994, 178). The post-anarchy reign of Henry II returned the Crown to its previous administrative dominance, and controlled the barony through inquests into their magnatial estates and through the imposition of new regulations on taxation and service (Dalton 1994, 231). Nevertheless, the rise of the local elite had begun in earnest. The lack of cohesion in the baronial community, which had been lessened by the anarchy and severely damaged by Henry II's enthusiastic assertion of administrative control (Dalton 1994, 232), only contributed to the influence of the lesser elite on both the local and national stage.

### **3.3 The tenth to twelfth-century landscape**

#### **3.3.1 'Feudalism' and the manorial economy**

The introduction, development, and nature of medieval England's feudal society is a subject of long-running debate, the intricacies of which do not need rehearsing here (e.g. Aston and Philpin 1987; Bloch 1962; Maitland 1897; Reynolds 1994; Round 1895; Stenton 1961). It is useful, however, to discuss some of the characteristics of English 'feudalism' as revealed in these studies, in an effort to see how they affected the land and people who lived within the economic and social system, and how that in turn shaped their relationships to wealth, authority, and material culture. Despite the efforts of past scholarship to shoehorn the construct of feudalism into strict political and legal (e.g. Round 1895; Stenton 1961), demographic (Postan 1983; Postan and Hatcher 1987), or economic (Aston 1983; Brenner

1987) definitions, it is now generally realized that the structure of medieval English society, and thus feudalism, was of course a far more complex and multifaceted reality that fully encompassed legal, social, and economic aspects.

Some scholarship has argued for the abandonment of the term 'feudalism,' as it has become so bogged down in semantic debates that it has lost all use outside of a strict legal and proprietary context (e.g. Brown 1974; Reynolds 1994). However, a total abandonment of the word 'feudalism' need not be instituted if we take care to define our use and interpretation of the term. Marc Bloch, in searching for the 'ambience sociale totale' of feudal society, has provided one of the more broad and balanced definitions of the characteristics of 'feudalism' seen in various incarnations across medieval Europe: 'A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement instead of salary; supremacy of a class of specialized warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man; fragmentation of [central] authority; and, in the midst of all this, survival of other forms of association, family, and state' (Bloch 1962, *xiv*). This definition overrides the absolute association of feudalism with knight service, while still acknowledging that the fief and military landholding were an important part, but only one element, of the overall structure. It also emphasizes the importance of land in the economy and in social terms, and recognizes the growing power of sub-royal landholding lords, though perhaps the devolution of royal authority was less strong in Anglo-Norman England than is implied here (Bates 2001, 84). Importantly, Bloch's definition gives due to the vertical and horizontal bonds between levels of society, but without the restrictive confines of the overarching narrative history of traditionalist Marxism, which requires medieval society to fit into the pattern of class warfare and the eventual downfall of capitalism (e.g. Brenner 1987).

When analyzing feudalism in early-medieval England, the debate about the system's origins has been unavoidable. Often tied to issues of Saxo-centric historical and cultural bias, William the Conqueror and his successors have frequently been blamed for imposing a 'Norman yoke' of feudalism on the country (Chibnall 1999, 6, 55). The view that

dominated early scholarship saw landholding in pre-Norman, and thus pre-feudal, England as a system of relative personal and economic freedom, with landowning men claiming full rights to their property and acknowledging no lord below the king (Aston 1983, 1; Stenton 1971). Norman bureaucracy and administration, which introduced new legal notation of the obligations of fealty and 'feudal' vassalage, and reams of charters, laws, and other documentation, are visible signs of alterations to pre-Conquest forms of land tenure and government. But whether these changes substantially affected the nature of English lordship is less certain. In fact it appears, both archaeologically and historically, that a very similar administrative organization — land tenancy on a manor in return for labour service, military loyalty, and kind or money rents — had existed in England from at least middle Saxon times, and the manorialization of the landscape continued to progress throughout the late-Saxon period (Abels 1988, 146; Bloch 1962, 181; Brown and Foard 1998, 91; Saunders 2000, 209).

Bloch also makes the important point that 'feudalism' as seen in England was not the same as that on the continent (e.g. concepts of nobility, the warrior life, and classes of tenement all differed), yet he still refers to the feudal concept in England as a Norman importation (Bloch 1962, 187). David Bates, on the other hand, reassesses the importation theory, arguing for an abandonment of the concept of the classic 'feudal pyramid,' and claims that Norman feudal society, as it was manifested in England, was not truly 'Norman' at all, but a response and adaptation to specific circumstance and necessity (Bates 1982, 247). While the introduction of the word 'fief' and new legal definitions of property rights seem genuinely to be due to the Norman Conquest, it did not introduce feudalism in terms of highly specialized and regulated lordly and tenurial relationships (Reynolds 1994, 394). The concept of feudal relationships, even if the Norman version was more strictly defined, would have been far from alien in late-eleventh century England.

The basic structures of lordship and power have recently been emphasized as a more useful line of enquiry than strict feudal models (Bisson 1995a, 1995b; Chibnall 2002; Frame

2001, 45), and certainly these fundamental social mechanisms and identities are more appropriate to an archaeological approach than the narrow, document-based concept of feudalism. It seems likely that the endurance of pre-Conquest concepts of land distribution, militarization, and lordship ensured that any Norman feudal system was only a thin veneer on already existing tenorial organization (Roffe 1990, 172), and the daily administration of agrarian life was probably relatively undisrupted by the Norman Conquest (Aston 1983, 3). Lordship and tenure were just as integral to the Saxon, Scandinavian, and Anglo-Scandinavian rulers of the ninth and tenth centuries as to the Normans and Anglo-Normans of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Bean 1989, 2; Chibnall 1999, 86; Loyn 1991, 327; Richards 2000, 41), and the tenorial organization that emerged in medieval England was undoubtedly a product of integration rather than imposition.

As the manorial and feudal relationships of early medieval England developed in size and complexity, a period of economic growth was also taking place. Between the years 1000 and 1300, many new towns and markets were established throughout the kingdom, money circulation increased, and market commerce expanded in both absolute size and relative importance (Britnell 1995, 7; Britnell and Campbell 1995, 1), though there also appears to have been significant inflation during this time (Harvey 1976). The expansion is most readily visible in the increase in cash rents, or the substitution of cash rent for service or produce, that occurred in many twelfth-century villagers' tenures (Britnell 1993, 45). It is likely that a substantial part of this cash increase went to the manorial lessees and minor lords, rather than to the magnates, because of their more direct interests and control over demesne agriculture (Britnell 1993, 46). This development may have been attached to an increased demand for cash amongst the nobility for raising armies for fighting and for carrying out building projects, and despite the presence of inflation, there was no widespread economic crisis or check in expenditure (Bolton 1992). Instead, elite society was becoming progressively more ambitious and acquisitive, confirming material display as an effective means of maintaining and advancing one's social position (Carpenter 1980, 349-352).

However, in order for the lords to demand cash rents and use them, villagers had to be able to pay them, which meant that they were at some point receiving cash, maybe in the form of wages (Britnell 1993, 47). As craftsmen or tradeworkers were still often under feudal bond to a lord, they may have been the best means by which to insert commercial transactions into the tenurial system (Britnell 1993, 7). This availability of money, combined with the economic expansion of 1000-1300, may have paved the way for the rise of local lords and wealthier villagers, who could acquire, and then spend, surplus cash on material goods that helped to signify, maintain, or even raise their status (Duby 1974, 195). Chris Dyer has argued that the consumer has been neglected in traditional economic studies, which have concentrated on modes of production, but not the end product, seller, or buyer (Dyer 1989, 7). This concept of feudalism as a 'consumption-oriented society' is especially important in terms of the displays of real and symbolic power that were integral to lordly authority, and how intently those in turn depended upon the acquisition of material wealth and the prestige goods that it could buy.

### **3.3.2 Manor, village, and ecclesiastical organization**

The organization of land ownership in Yorkshire, both before and after the Norman Conquest, was based on the institutions of manors and vills (or townships). Each vill was assigned to an ecclesiastical parish, and then parishes were grouped together into civil divisions called wapentakes, a political entity characteristic of the northern Danelaw that was equivalent to the 'hundred' found in the Midlands and South of England (Hadley 2001a, 104). While the parish was the basic unit of ecclesiastical administration, it was often closely related to the nucleated vill, which at least by the twelfth century, but probably long before that, had become the economic basis of settlement (Everton, et al. 1991, 9). In many places the parish and the vill are synonymous, and sometimes coterminous, but more often, at least in this region, ecclesiastical parishes are composed of far more than just one township (Everton, et al. 1991, 9; VCH NR). Generally, the coincidence between manor and

vill is very high (Lennard 1959, 214), and in Domesday Book it is presumed that each lord holding in an independent (not soke or berewick) vill would also have there a manor, as evidenced by the survey's tendency to note when they do not (e.g. Startforth, DB Yorks). However, it is also worth noting the frequency with which entire vills in the Northeast were classified as sokeland or berewicks, with no manor of their own and subject to the administration of a larger landholding (Hadley 2001a, 108-9). This pattern of economic and administrative dependence is also sometimes preserved in the ecclesiastical layout between mother churches and chapelries (Hadley 2001a, 279), further illustrating the close bond that existed between local churches and landholding (Pounds 2000, 29).

The close correlation between ecclesiastical and secular land organization is also seen between the church and the vill. It has been noted across Europe, and not just in England, that the church was a strong nucleus for rural settlement, and that the fusion of the ecclesiastical parish and the nucleated village often began in the tenth century (Chapelot and Fossier 1985, 134). Tom Saunders argues that the construction of churches in nucleated, often planned villages, was 'highly indicative of feudal power,' and that they lent stability and permanence to the landscape and were symbolic of dominant lordship (Saunders 1990, 224). There is a certainly a large number of closely-spaced local churches in the northern Danelaw region, which may be due to the fragmented landholding pattern in the area. The manorial framework had been complicated by several tenurial reorganizations and the piecemeal break-up of the large estates (Brown and Foard 1998, 91; Hadley 2001a, 287), which from a fairly early date left many local landholders competing with each other to secure their places in the elite hierarchy, and may have brought about the high frequency of church foundation.

Although the popular image of the Vikings is one of pagan church-destroyers, it appears that Anglo-Scandinavian culture did much to contribute to the ecclesiastical development of Yorkshire and the Northeast. The early importance of the local, secular church may have been a feature of the northern Danelaw particularly (Hadley 2001, 273),

and the ecclesiastical situation in the Northeast on the eve of the Conquest appears quite different from that of the rest of England. On the whole, the northern Danelaw had far fewer houses of secular and monastic clergy than southern and midland England (Hadley 2001, 37), and there appears to be a virtual absence of monastic houses from the tenth century Benedictine reformation (Hadley 2001, 191). Generally, the amount of land held by the Church, as listed in Domesday, is far less in the Northeast (one-tenth of all land on average) than in the south of England (one-third to one-fifth) (Hadley 2001, 37). The apparently weaker position of the institutional Church in the northern Danelaw is often attributed to Viking looting and devastation of religious houses (Pounds 2000, 25), but this is too simplistic an explanation. Other forces beyond Viking raids must have been affecting patterns of Church landholding and wealth, and the coincidental rise of the lordly, secular church in the tenth and eleventh centuries should not be overlooked.

Comparison of the northern Danelaw with East Anglia, which had also been subject to Scandinavian conquest and Danish law, casts further doubt on their responsibility for the weakness of the northern Church. Similar to the Northeast, the identification of early East Anglian minsters and their territories is difficult, and the establishment of local churches there seems just as early and extensive as in the northern Danelaw (Williamson 1993, 150). However, in Norfolk and Suffolk the Church held significant amounts of land, and the region is notable for its strong monastic culture (Blair 1996, 14). The trend of secular church foundation in East Anglia was accompanied by numerous small monastic foundations in the tenth century (Hadley 2001, 292), which is the chief contrast with the northern ecclesiastical structure. Though accused by the southern Archbishop Wulfstan of 'heathen practices' in the early-eleventh century (Davis 1955, 36), it appears that Yorkshire and the Northeast were not lagging behind the rest of England in local church provision by that time (Morris 1988, 191). Land and power may not have been in the hands of the greater ecclesiastical institutions, but money had certainly been spent on significant amounts of both religious building and commemoration throughout the tenth century.



Churches continued to be founded throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Morris 1989, 28, 141), and while much of the medieval provision was probably in existence before the Norman Conquest, some were certainly post-Conquest foundations. Though determining a church's foundation date, as opposed to building dates, is a difficult prospect, excavated evidence can help, and occasionally the documentary record provides clues as to how and when local churches came into existence. A part of the *Vita Wulfstani* provides an excellent example when it notes Wulfstan's dedication of the church built by Ailric at Frampton (Gloucs). The Domesday Book entry for the vill records a church *quae non fuit*, fixing a foundation and building date at some point in the twenty years between the Conquest and the survey (Lennard 1959, 296, n. 4), though Domesday's particular mention of this church may mean that it was fairly unusual to find an entirely new parish church at that time. The increasing complement of churches finally slowed by the twelfth century, when the formalization of canon law played an important role in limiting new church foundation and solidifying the boundaries of the parochial system (Hadley 2001a, 294; Morris 1988, 198, n. 5). It made official the customary stratification of local churches, often differentiated by the antiquity of their foundation, into those with and without rights of tithe and sacrament, thereby establishing the primary layout of parish churches and dependent chapels. However, parochial boundaries were often fluid well into the later Middle Ages, as new chapels were founded on recently settled or assarted land (Owen 1976, 67), and other chapels were integrated into the overarching parochial system as they gained independence and rights (McClain 2001, 47; Owen 1976, 67).

### **3.4 Land, lordship, and power in transitional England**

#### **3.4.1 Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman lordship**

The levels of society in tenth to early-thirteenth century England could be divided into three categories, not the traditional 'three orders' of those who fight, those who pray, and those who work, but rather a more subtle tripartite division based on economic and

social stratification. In the top level are found the high nobles and gentry: those who followed a military ethos, rode horses in battle, owned substantial amounts of land, and lived off those who worked it. Higher clergy and monks also fall into this category because of their means of subsistence. In the bottom group were those who worked on the land, owed rents and services to the top group, and were more or less unfree to determine where and how they laboured or what they earned. But it is the middle group, the largest and most ill-defined, whose role in the complex medieval hierarchy deserves closer scrutiny, and which is the most rarely addressed. These were the people who probably did not farm themselves, but had to earn their own livings in some way, at least more than the top group. They were more involved with the direct supervision of labourers, and many of them owed rents and services to members of the high nobility, but they were lighter than those borne by the people of the bottom rung. Probably all of the men of this group carried arms and some even rode horses, but they were perhaps not raised and trained to think of fighting as their sole job, and their equipment would have been less extensive and valuable. Most of them were free, had some degree of leverage with their lord over land, and had recourse to the courts for justice (Reynolds 1994, 39).

It has been persuasively argued that medieval society was primarily composed of infinite gradations and layers rather than wide social gulfs (Reynolds 1994, 39), and there certainly existed within the middling group further stratification, with some nearer to the bottom group, like high level peasants or wealthy craftsmen, and with others, like significant manorial subtenants, perhaps bordering on the top level. Importantly, it seems that before the thirteenth century, when the standards of elite definition became more regulated and legally bound (Bloch 1962, 120, 329), medieval England's concept of nobility was based more on wealth, standard of living, and particular obligations than on birth. The determination of the *wergeld*, for example, in the eleventh century, was based on the amount that a man was worth and the number of men whose loyalty he commanded, rather than any innate sense of elite standing (Reynolds 1994, 41). Also, the rules of society explicitly

allowed for aspiration and social climbing, as in the laws of Canute that explain what one must acquire (five hides, a kitchen, a bell house, a burh-geat [fortified lordly residence], and a church) in order to be promoted to the rank of thegn (Williams 1992, 225).

Much has been made in the past of the revolutionary changes in landholding and lordship brought by the Conquest, and though there may indeed have been changes in the amount and nature of the specific services due, and the ceremonies of homage required, these aspects of the lord-vassal relationship would seem to have little bearing on the elemental nature of lordship. While the late-medieval lord may have been substantially different from the middle-Saxon one, any changes to the concept of lordship in the late-eleventh century, Norman Conquest notwithstanding, were probably minute in comparison. Paul Dalton states, 'On many estates, the native peasants and lesser landholders must have found it very difficult to distinguish between the authority exercised by their new Norman lords, and that which had been imposed by their pre-Conquest masters' (Dalton 1994, 143). On either side of 1066, whether Anglo-Scandinavian or Norman, the manorial lord was still a land holder, master of the peasants of his estate, yet simultaneously bound himself to a more powerful land giver. Both pre- and post-Conquest lords were concerned with the economic management and defence of their estates, and the use of their wealth and resources to secure and advance their place in society.

Even within the ranks of the lordly elite, there were degrees of wealth. In the tenurial distribution of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, beneath the king was arrayed a substantial and varied group of tenant-in-chief landlords, who held directly from the Crown. Two relatively restricted strata of this group controlled three-quarters of the wealth in England in Domesday Book, with about 100 priories, abbeys, and bishoprics receiving 26% of the profits from the assessed land, and 170 lay barons accounting for 49% (Miller and Hatcher 1978, 16). Though perhaps relative equals in social status, the tenants-in-chief were far from equals in economic terms. Some extremely wealthy lords, such as Robert of Mortain, had manors worth as much as £2,500, but only ten barons had manors worth more

than £750, and over 150 had manors worth far less than that. Some men, such as Robert of Aumale, whose lands in Devon were valued at only £26, were undoubtedly no better off than many subtenants (Miller and Hatcher 1978, 16).

The vast majority of landholders, however, were not the tenants-in-chief, but their subtenants. Some subtenants of the greater tenants-in-chief could be exceptionally wealthy and hold land in different parts of the country (two of William of Warenne's knights in 1086 were worth between £50-100), but most held relatively small estates in limited numbers, their interests were generally localized, and they were more often than not resident in the area (Dalton 1994, 178; Miller and Hatcher 1978, 18-19). Both archaeological and documentary evidence indicates the emergence and growing importance of these lesser, local lords from the tenth century, who wielded substantial power, though generally in a confined regional sphere. This has been shown to be the case in the Northeast of England (e.g. Saunders 2000, 221; Hadley 2001a), and is a trend that seems to have been mirrored in northwestern Europe as a whole (Bloch 1962, 50; Chapelot and Fossier 1985, 140). This group continued defining itself throughout the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, through tenurial relationships, manorial landholding, and the wealth and authority that came with them (Crouch 1992).

Local lords thus seem to have become the driving force behind settlement organization and village planning, estate administration, local church building, and motte and bailey castle construction. In 1086, lesser tenants (beneath tenants-in-chief) controlled 50% of manors and 40% of the manorial wealth (Palmer 2000, 287), and further subinfeudation in the following centuries only increased these proportions. The control of the local lord over demesne agriculture may have been almost complete. Relations between absentee magnates and their local or semi-local tenants would have often been distant, and treatises of the thirteenth century on estate management and husbandry, such as the books of Henry de Bray and Walter of Henley, emphasize the role of local lords in the minutiae of the daily running of estates (Miller and Hatcher 1978, 189). Estate organization in the eleventh

and twelfth centuries required little direction from overlords, and as long as the rents were paid on time, administration could be chiefly left to local initiative (Britnell 1993, 60).

The tenants-in-chief were also probably only marginally involved in village planning. The execution of complex planning or building schemes would be more practically carried out by mesne lords than by absentee magnates with numerous estates, as they were more familiar with the agricultural production, peasant tenure, and layout of the vill and manor (Everson, et al., 1991, 16). The involvement of local lords in settlement nucleation, village planning, and church building has also frequently been noted (Bloch 1962, 251; Saunders 2000, 221, 224; Williams 1992, 233). That local churches had often been founded as privately owned chapels has been well-established, but it seems that sometimes the manorial lord could remain the owner of the church, not just its patron, as churches were often leased with and included in the value of the manor well into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Lennard 1959, 316). Indeed, the tenth to twelfth centuries probably feature the closest affiliation between the local lord and the local church. The period comes after the Anglo-Saxon system defined by royal and ecclesiastical minsters, but before the steadily increasing canonical strictures of the late-medieval period. These parochial rules limited church foundation and extra-ecclesiastical control, and accompanied the passage of many churches from lay ownership into the hands of ecclesiastical institutions (Morris 1988, 198, n. 5; Pounds 2000, 202).

### **3.4.2 Relationships of authority and patronage**

The complex gradations of tenurial and social hierarchy that were in evidence from the tenth to twelfth centuries necessitate discussion in terms of the vertical and horizontal bonds, both social and economic, that tied landholders to one another and the lords to those they ruled. The hierarchy of lordship was not a simple ladder leading from king down to minor landholder, but was instead a complicated network of relationships that became more dense and intricate as the Middle Ages progressed. The late-Saxon and post-Conquest

period was characterized by heavy subinfeudation and enfeoffment, particularly in the twelfth century, and Britnell notes that no subsequent generation gave away so much land so quickly (Britnell 1993, 54). The practice of subinfeudation created several tiers of landholders: baronial magnates who held lands of the king and sometimes as subtenants of each other (Lennard 1959, 28, n. 3); several gradations of semi-local seigneurial lords who held territory in more than one place, and sometimes in several counties, but may have had a concentration of property in one region of the country (Lennard 1959, 28); and the truly local, mesne lords, who took their family names from their home vill or manor (VCH NR I), and exerted a significant amount of direct control over the day-to-day running of the estate (Everson, et al., 1991, 16). Beneath them all lay the gradations of the peasant classes and land-lease farmers, who worked for or paid for their land through a variety of labours, rents, and services.

It is the relationship between lord and peasant that has most often been discussed in medieval feudal society, particularly after the Norman Conquest, when it has been examined in terms of Norman overlords and Saxon peasants (e.g. Chibnall 1986, 208-221). Conversely, the Scandinavian-Saxon situation is only infrequently addressed as a power relationship between rulers and ruled (e.g. Innes 2000, 67), though that must certainly have been the case in most Danelaw manors. J.C. Holt quite rightly states that studying the eleventh and twelfth centuries from the viewpoint of 'Normans versus English' is an artificial mode of argument (Holt 1997, xvi), and the same can be applied to our assessment of the Saxons and Scandinavians in the tenth and eleventh centuries. However, that should certainly not dissuade us from looking at the complex and revealing relationships that developed *between* Normans and English and Scandinavians and English, and the way these relationships might have manifested themselves in material culture and identity. It should also be remembered that there was most likely an expression of lordly identity, tightly bound up with material culture, that went far beyond the bounds of ethnicity, and probably exhibited significant continuity throughout the tenth to twelfth centuries. Our most

productive analysis may not come from thinking of the lords as Scandinavian or Norman, and the peasants as English, but rather considering their actions in terms of privilege, power, wealth, and culture, which may have played a much greater role than simple ethnic divisions in determining how and when these identities were expressed.

The social identities of feudal lords as they are expressed towards each other, and to other equal or higher members of the lordly class, are also worth examining. Saunders argues that the physical manifestations and displays of these identities were directed as much towards each other as to the subordinate peasants, borne out of and perpetuating their constant conflicts for wealth, authority, and position in the social hierarchy (Saunders 2000, 224). The large tenant-in-chief holdings of the early Norman period were let to many different men of roughly the same rank, resulting in a large number of subtenants holding land in a compact area from the same magnatial lord (Lennard 1959, 57). They would have been jostling for favour, status, and land, and competing against each other to demonstrate their social relevance and ambition. While the tenorial hierarchy would not have been as complex, the distribution of land by Viking warlords to their followers probably created a similar situation. This tenorial landscape is probably preserved in the dense coverage of parishes and churches seen in many northern counties (e.g. Lang 1991, 27; Owen 1976, 67), and it created equally ideal circumstances for fostering inter-lordly rivalry and competitive display.

Both horizontally and vertically directed acts of social display were manifested in physical trappings, which were a means by which wealth and power could be translated into the material of status (Crouch 1992, 15). Banners, devices, social titles, luxury clothes and food, seals, and prestige residences marked the magnate of 1100, and further down the social scale, the knights and lesser lords were aspiring to these symbols. They used their considerable material wealth to co-opt the trappings of the upper echelons as best they could (Crouch 1992, 134), and probably developed their own particular types of material expression as well. This emphasis was long-standing, as is seen in the Scandinavian

emphasis on the establishment of private churches and personal commemoration, which were substantial investments in the tangible symbols of lordship and power. The numerous crosses and hogback gravestones that cover the Danelaw, as well as the stone sundials proclaiming church patronage and piety, prove that they knew the value of material culture in establishing and legitimating authority (Hadley 2000, 110), and its ability to underscore both group and individual identities.

The Normans, too, were no strangers to the benefits of a unified cultural identity as well as ease of adaptation (Davis 1976), and they were certainly skilled in their use of material culture as a means of expressing their own individual authority. The castles and great churches that they built were hallmarks of Norman rule, both in France and across Europe (Chibnall 2000, 24-27). Their building projects were 'an exercise in conspicuous consumption' (Holt 1997, 7), and it is hard to argue that the size and scale of the construction programmes were not a deliberate attempt to impress their culture and authority. Since Normans and English had broadly similar cultures in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we can expect little of the basic physical record (e.g. tools, pottery, domestic structures) to have been significantly different (Holt 1997, 3; Rowley 1997, 12). Thus, stone architectural work provides one of the few examples of specifically 'Norman' evidence. However, the level to which the Romanesque style indicates an expression of Norman ethnic identity is debatable. It was certainly the primary mode of building for the Normans' myriad castles and churches, but it was also heavily adapted and influenced by each culture to which the Normans brought it. The 'Norman' churches of the Continent, England, and Sicily each bear their own significant stylistic idiosyncrasies (Davis 1976, 93). In England, lords were building major and minor churches in stone for centuries before the Norman Conquest, demonstrating the authority, wealth, and resources that they commanded. From the earliest royal minsters, secular affiliation with churches had been a signifier of lordship, and it is worth debating whether the newcomers deliberately adapted this practice as a unified front, especially in terms of the local churches, to make it a signifier of a



culturally defined 'Norman' lordship. Or instead, perhaps each patronizing lord was more concerned with establishing and maintaining his own social and elite identity, rather than that of a culture or overarching group.

Marc Bloch writes that in hierarchical medieval society, 'no clear distinction was made between the concrete image of the chief and the abstract idea of power' (Bloch 1962, 410). Though he refers here specifically to kings, it can be argued that this idea was present at all levels of authority. Power was effective only so long as the lord was active and visible. Thus in a social milieu filled with absentee magnates and multi-estate local lords, defining one's presence and authority through tangible material culture was paramount, and this necessity would only have been heightened by the turbulent political and social dynamic of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. The vast amounts of expenditure that can be seen, in terms of personal effects, castles, manors, village organization, churches, and funerary monuments, throughout this time period is surely indicative of the importance of patronage, and its role in determining the character and maintenance of both the inter- and intra-class relationships of the elite.

## ***Chapter 4: The Sample Area and Research Methodology***

Now that the historical framework of the study has been established, it is possible to proceed with a more specific discussion of the chosen sample area, chronological span, and material evidence, as well as an explication of the methodology which guided the research. As has been pointed out in previous chapters, North Yorkshire's churches and commemoration are a vastly underused source of information about the medieval past, and bear enormous potential for archaeological study. Since very little research has considered North Yorkshire's churches from a truly archaeological perspective, and post-Conquest commemoration has been almost entirely overlooked, there is a demonstrated need for an investigation that takes these materials into account as part of the region's historical development into and through the transition period of the tenth to twelfth centuries.

### **4.1 Geographical parameters and characteristics**

The data set is comprised of the architectural and commemorative evidence found in the medieval churches of the historic county of the North Riding of Yorkshire, one of the three ancient divisions of Yorkshire that existed from at least the Anglo-Saxon period until the 1974 reorganization of counties (Hey 1986, 4) [Fig. 8]. Though technically an administrative region, the North Riding is also a distinct geographical entity, being divided from its neighbouring territories by natural boundaries, and not just arbitrary borders. It is bounded on the east by the North Sea, divided from the East Riding in the southeast by the River Derwent, from the West Riding in the southwest by the River Ure, from County Durham in the north by the River Tees, and from Westmorland (now Cumbria) in the west by the fall line of the Pennine chain. The modern county of North Yorkshire covers a similar, though larger, area to the North Riding. A significant amount of the northern parts of the East and West Ridings now fall under North Yorkshire's scope, as well as the whole of York and the Ainsty (which were previously independent of the riding divisions), and a sizable number of the parishes and villages south of the city of York. The North Riding also

differs from North Yorkshire along the northern border, where the riding has conceded a sizable amount of its territory to the new county of Cleveland and the redrawn boundaries of County Durham [Fig. 9].

The North Riding encompasses within its boundaries a striking variety of topographical zones, geological formations, and soil types. It can be divided into four main geographical regions: the Pennines, the Vale of York, the North Yorkshire Moors, and the Vale of Pickering. There are also three additional areas, the Howardian Hills, Cleveland, and the Coastal Fringe, with recognizably individual characteristics (Darby and Maxwell 1962, 159) [Fig. 10-11]. The North Riding is also separated into a number of ecclesiastical and civil units, many of which correspond quite closely to the geographical regions. In the medieval period, the chief functional divisions within the county were the civil wapentakes and the ecclesiastical deaneries, and the basic units of both these divisions were the parishes, of which there were at least 190 once the medieval parochial system was fully formed (Harvey and Payne 1973). The parochial system seems to have been crystallizing at much the same time as the five rural deaneries, which emerged at some point in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries (Thompson 1913, 80). However, these ecclesiastical divisions almost certainly came about later than the riding's twelve wapentakes, which dated to at least the Anglo-Scandinavian period, and may have been *de facto* administrative units long before that (Hadley 2001a, 105) [Fig. 12]. The deaneries of Richmond, Catterick, Bulmer, Cleveland, and Ryedale formed the chief part of the county, though two parishes from Boroughbridge deanery (mainly in the West Riding) and five from Dickering (mainly in the East Riding) are also included within the North Riding's territory [Fig. 13].

Throughout Yorkshire the boundaries of ecclesiastical divisions seem to have been determined by major geographical features, as well as the borders of the pre-existing wapentakes. Though this generally holds for the North Riding, there is never the direct correspondence between wapentake and deanery territories that is seen in the East Riding (Thompson 1913, 80) [Fig. 14]. The relationship between the civil and ecclesiastical

divisions is more complex in the North Riding, where the ecclesiastical divisions often adhered to neither civil nor manorial boundaries. There are a number of manors divided between parishes (e.g. East and West Ayton in Hutton Buscel and Seamer), wapentakes that fall within multiple deaneries (e.g. Hallikeld, Birdforth), and a considerable quantity of detached parishes, outlying berewicks and sokelands, and extra-parochial peculiarities. In the North Riding, only Ryedale and Bulmer wapentakes share their names with deaneries, and in both cases another wapentake comprises a substantial part of that deanery's territory (Pickering-Lythe in Ryedale, and Birdforth in Bulmer.)

The topographical character of the North Riding varies widely, consisting of areas of stone-rich highland and moor, upland meadow and pasture, woodland, low-lying agricultural land, and access to the sea and a number of navigable rivers (Lang 1991, 8). The highest and most inhospitable land in the riding is to the west, in the far reaches of Catterick and Richmond deaneries, where the terrain rises from the relatively low western edge of the Vale of York to over 2000 feet in the highest peaks of the Pennines (Maxwell 1962, 159). In the east are the highlands of the North Yorkshire Moors, comprising the southern parts of Cleveland and the northern half of Ryedale deaneries. These highlands range from 800 to 1400 feet above sea level, and like the Pennine region, are sparsely inhabited and characterized by poor soils and harsh climate. Both the Pennines and the Moors are cut by deep, narrow river valleys and dales, which provided small amounts of good land for cultivation and settlement (Morris 1904, 8), but the regions were probably more often utilized by the nearest vills for pasture land and for the readily accessible supplies of workable Millstone Grit, Magnesian limestone, and various sandstones (Maxwell 1962, 161). These stones were quarried throughout the county and used in building from the Roman period onward, as seen in the forts and civil settlements at York, Catterick, Malton, and Middleham, and in the medieval churches and abbeys throughout the country, which were most often built of local North Yorkshire stone (Lang 1991, 2001). The ready supply of quality stone throughout much of the county seems also to have provided for a strong

tradition of local quarrying and sculpting (Senior 2001, 14), with much less importation than is seen in the stone-poor southeastern areas of Yorkshire (cf. Lang 1991).

Contrasting sharply with the eastern and western highlands are the wide, flat, alluvial plains of the Vale of York and the Vale of Pickering, comprising the main bulk of Ryedale and Bulmer deaneries, and forming the junction between eastern Richmond and Catterick and the western portion of Cleveland. At the Domesday survey these areas featured the densest settlement and agricultural production in the riding (Wilson 1948, 13), though even they compare poorly with the best agrarian regions in the rest of Yorkshire (Darby and Maxwell 1962, 431-433). Both vales are characterized by land not higher than 200 feet above sea level, with clay soils and alluvial deposits providing good meadow, pasture, and cereal cultivation, though the Vale of York's higher population and plough-land density is testament to the Vale of Pickering's occasionally marshy lowlands and tendency to flooding (Maxwell 1962, 161). Dividing the Vales of York and Pickering are the uplands of the Howardian Hills, which rise to 600 feet and run north into the higher Hambleton Hills, eventually joining the North Yorkshire Moors. These uplands seem to have been a relatively poor region compared to the surrounding plains, and were useful mainly for pasture, meadow, and stone (Maxwell 1962, 162). The final topographical areas within the riding are the low-lying, boulder clay regions of Cleveland and the Coastal Fringe, covered by the northern part of Cleveland deanery and the whole of Dickering. These areas were relatively populous and characterized by some cultivation and fair amounts of wood and meadow, but were notable more for their access to the waterways of the Tees and Esk and the ports of the North Sea coast (Maxwell 1962, 162).

Communication between the various parts of the riding was probably based around the Roman roads and navigable waterways that ran throughout North Yorkshire. The river systems of the Ouse, Derwent, Ure, Esk, and Swale would have connected much of the county and been responsible for significant amounts of intra-regional trade, as they were probably navigable even to their upper reaches, and would have been the most efficient

mode of transport of heavy or large amounts of goods (Senior 2001, 19). Three major Roman roads also ran north-south through the county: Dere Street, which ran along the eastern edge of the dales to the Tees, and also branched off west to the Stainmore pass near Catterick; a parallel road a few miles east, which crossed the Tees at Sockburn and ran through the centre of the Vale of York; and in the eastern part of the riding is Wade's Causeway, which runs from Middleton up through the North Yorkshire Moors to Whitby (Senior 2001, 5; Senior 1991, 14). Connecting these major arteries would have been a number of Roman and medieval minor roads and trackways, though their locations are more conjectural (Senior 2001, 16).

Despite its clear archaeological potential, there is a lack of any kind of systematic survey of the North Riding's churches and commemoration. Studies of medieval Yorkshire have often favoured the East and West Ridings over the North, perhaps because their greater population, prosperity, and agricultural productivity (Darby and Maxwell 1962) have been thought to be more interesting and to hold more potential. The fact that the North Riding exhibits such sharp geographical and social differences to its surrounding areas, however, is all the more reason for it to be studied. These social and geographical criteria will undoubtedly have helped to shape its material culture and society, and analysis of the variations between neighbouring civil and geographical divisions reveals similarities and differences that can be used to present a more comprehensive view of the character and development of the region as a whole.

The North Riding's large size may also have been a deterrent, as recent Yorkshire surveys have focused on the more compact East Riding (Lang 1991; Wilson 1989), or on the considerably smaller modern counties of West and South Yorkshire (Ryder 1982b, 1991, 1993). However, the large size of the North Riding presents the researcher with an opportunity: a clearly defined and enclosed region that bears meaning on both topographical and political levels (both in the present and in the medieval period), and also a territory substantial and far-reaching enough to offer significant geographical, environmental, and

socio-cultural variation within its bounds. Regional studies have been cited as the way forward in church, and indeed all, archaeology (Morris 1996, xv), and they have been stressed as necessary for refining overarching models of ecclesiastical development (Blair 1996, 13; Gem 1988, 29). Such surveys provide a basis from which to analyze intra-regional patterning, as well as inter-regional contrast between larger zones (e.g. north vs. south), counties, or even adjoining parishes (Morris 1996, xv), and recent work has clearly demonstrated the advantages of a focused regional approach that samples areas with distinct geographical, geological, and agrarian characteristics (e.g. Finch 2000a, 2000b; Hadley 2000, 2001b). These underlying factors did much to shape the development of settlement, social structure, and prosperity in the region, and thus impacted its material culture as well.

Since the focus of analysis will be on the power, patronage, and social mechanisms based around the rural manorial economy and its lordship, the survey has been restricted to rural churches. The sample thus excludes the urban centre of York, though the implications of the city's political and economic presence and influence on the surrounding regions will be taken into account. That notwithstanding, the churches and commemorative monuments found in the market and shire towns of the North Riding, such as Richmond, Northallerton, and Pickering (VCH NR I), will be considered. Since local market centres still operated primarily within the bounds of the authoritarian and economic structures of the manorial system, especially in the early Middle Ages (Dyer 2002, 69), their evidence should be examined in any comprehensive study of the rural social landscape. Usefully, market sites also provide a point of contrast to the wholly rural and agricultural settlements that were less open to external trade and influence, and may demonstrate how such increased accessibility and opportunity could impact the development of the local church.

## **4.2 The time period**

Chronologically, the study focuses on the period between the Scandinavian settlement and political takeover of the Northeast of England and the end of the Anglo-

Norman era, a span which runs roughly from the late-ninth/early-tenth centuries to the beginning of the thirteenth century. Despite these important historical landmarks, the time span has not been chosen solely for the documented events that mark its beginning and end, but for the fundamental alterations to medieval society that took place within it. The developments of the tenth century in North Yorkshire became the foundations of its later medieval society, and they resulted in a profound break with the character of the early and mid-Saxon periods. Though there were, as always, significant areas of continuity (Hadley 2001a, 23, 131), the dramatic changes seen in the ecclesiastical layout, tenurial geography, settlement patterns, and the status of the local lord within the authoritarian hierarchy were substantial and lasting (Brown and Foard 1998, 67; Hey 1986, 16; Lang 1991, 8). Despite the undeniable impact of the Norman Conquest, it might be argued that on a fundamental level in North Yorkshire, the difference between the socio-political landscape of the early and late-Saxon periods was far greater than the gap separating the late-Saxon/Anglo-Scandinavian period and the early centuries of post-Conquest England.

The twelfth century has also been recognized as a time of formulation and propagation, and the foundation of many 'classic' medieval social, religious, and governmental patterns (Crouch 1997, 180). By the year 1200, the Anglo-Norman political transition was long complete, and the dichotomy of 'Saxon' and 'Norman' had been distilled into a single, assimilated culture (Short 1995, 155). The political union with Normandy had been weakened throughout the twelfth century and was eventually lost near its close, and documentary sources reveal that despite the persistence of the French language, there was a substantial blurring of separate English and Norman identities, and a gradually growing notion of a unified 'Englishness' (Gillingham 1990, 4; Short 1995, 155). In addition, a protracted succession crisis, the resultant anarchy of Stephen's reign, and the replacement of the royal dynasty had all affected the political climate by the closing of the twelfth century. On the religious front, there was an intensification of the influence and practice of canon law, the dissolution of the minster system and the solidification of the parochial framework



(Blair 1988, 7; Morris 1988, 198), the official recognition of Purgatory (Le Goff 1990), and the firm establishment of the attitudes towards death and burial practice that would characterize the later medieval period (Crouch 1997, 177). The tenorial geography of later medieval England was also entrenched by the end of the twelfth century, and the tenets of the archetypal feudal system had been firmly established in law and practice. This expansion and crystallization of the twelfth-century manorial economy resulted in a further stratification of the elite and free classes into the complex hierarchy of tenancy, wealth, and authority that would characterize the later Middle Ages (Bloch 1962, 120).

On a more specific level, the period around the year 1200 also brought noticeable changes in the material culture of religion. The late-twelfth and early thirteenth centuries saw the incorporation of Gothic architecture and technology at local church level, replacing the distinctive 'Norman' styles and decorations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Ferne 2000). Also, the end of the twelfth century is generally recognized as the time when the basic parochial system had solidified and the full complement of medieval parish churches had been reached (Blair 1996, 12; Morris 1988, 191), and the late-twelfth century also marks the upper limit of the time period proposed for the local phase of the 'Great Rebuilding' of churches (Gem 1988, 23-24). In terms of commemoration, the twelfth century was entirely the domain of recumbent and headstone slabs. The thirteenth century saw the emergence of effigial sculpture and brasses at a local level (Crouch 1997, 180), though these monuments would not seriously challenge stone slabs as the popular form of elite funerary sculpture until the fourteenth century (Butler 1957, 99; Finch 2000a, 28).

The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries were clearly turbulent and influential times, marked by significant cultural contact with foreign invaders, multiple socio-political transition periods, the growing importance of the local church, and a rapidly changing political, social, and physical landscape. While the developments of these centuries are worth studying in their own right, they must also be considered as an integral part of the

medieval continuum and as constituent aspects of a key formative period, an approach which the chronological framework and methodology of this study will facilitate.

### 4.3 The material evidence

#### 4.3.1 Churches

The sample group for the study comprises not only the 190 parish churches of the North Riding, but also its numerous medieval chapelries and dependent churches, totaling 254 religious sites in all (Carter 1976; Harvey and Payne 1973; Pevsner 1966; VCH NR I, II) [Fig. 15; see Appendix A, B].<sup>5</sup> Despite the extensive renovations of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the vast majority bear substantial architectural remnants of their medieval past, but not all of the 254 churches under consideration are still in their original medieval form. A total of 47 churches and chapels (19%) have been replaced by entirely modern structures. This seems to have been especially common in those churches that were smaller and less important in the medieval period, and were thus more likely to have fallen out of frequent use and care, and may have required more drastic repairs at a late date (e.g. Goathland, Leeming). Sometimes written or pictorial evidence can help in determining the appearance of the church before its refurbishment, such as in the pre-restoration report indicating a Norman doorway at Wath, and a photo showing a now-lost Norman chancel arch at Kirby Misperton. Also, a wholly modern church, while it preserves no architectural evidence, might preserve a font (e.g. Nether Silton) or monuments from the Middle Ages (e.g. Bilsdale) as testament to its presence as a religious site in the medieval period.

The 254 churches in the sample are by no means a comprehensive list of all the churches once extant in medieval North Yorkshire. Though we can be fairly certain that all of the medieval parish churches and the most significant chapelries have been included within the survey, the total number of chantry or private chapels and dependent foundations that existed at any point during the medieval period cannot be accurately determined. The

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<sup>5</sup> Despite historically falling within County Durham, the trans-Tees parish of Sockburn has been included in the survey because it lies partly within the North Riding, as seen on the parochial map.

loss of chantry chapels to the Reformation is well known, and there may have been any number of subsidiary parochial chapels that faded in importance not long after the close of the medieval period and have since disappeared completely. Hutton Conyers, for example, gained a chapel in the thirteenth century, but lost it before the end of the sixteenth century (VCH NR I, 405). Other documented chapels have disappeared entirely at some unknown point between their foundation and the present (e.g. Sinderby and Allerthorpe), and an untold amount may never have been recorded in the medieval documents which survive today.

Determination of the sample group has been based chiefly on the map of Yorkshire parishes and chapelries (Harvey and Payne 1973) that has been compiled from two nineteenth-century sources, George Lawton's *Collections Relative to Churches and Chapels within the Diocese of York* (1842), and Henry Teesdale's map of Yorkshire (1817-28). These sources constitute the most accurate representation of the late-medieval parochial layout, since they record the structure as it existed before the mid-nineteenth century introduction of civil parishes, but the limitations of late documentation should be noted, and the evidence must necessarily be considered in conjunction with that of the physical record. The late-medieval layout is not always an accurate representation of the parochial and proto-parochial structure as it developed and formalized, which must be taken into account when studying churches and chapels in the transition period. Both archaeological and documentary sources indicate that many of the chapels listed on the map may only have been founded late in the Middle Ages (e.g. Harome, Wilton), and alternatively, an early foundation date is occasionally recorded for a chapelry, such as at Bilsdale in the twelfth century (VCH NR I, 502), though now no architectural evidence remains to attest to its early origins. There are also instances of apparently early and important chapels, confirmed by twelfth-century and earlier fabric and commemorative evidence, that do not appear on the map (e.g. Amotherby, Snainton, Yafforth).

The abbeys and priories of the North Riding, unless they later became parochial churches (e.g. Old Malton, Lastingham), were excluded. Though the great churches do feature both pre-Conquest and cross slab commemoration, as can be seen from the collections at Byland and Rievaulx abbeys (Ryder n.d.), these institutions fell outside the parochial layout and generally did not directly affect the lives of most parishioners. Monasteries were often the owners of the local churches, and in wealth and congregation they occupied a different plane of the ecclesiastical and social hierarchy. The material patronage of monasteries was also basically restricted to the magnatial elite, though occasionally smaller grants of land and rent were made by lesser lords (Crouch 1997, 173). Although the study focuses on the patronage carried out by the elite, it also seeks to understand how that patronage affected their social status and identity both among their peers and those they ruled. Such a relationship is much more difficult to access in the elite and sequestered environment of the abbey. Monastic institutions are also by and large a post-Conquest development in the north of England, as evidenced by the surge in Yorkshire from no monastic institutions at all in 1066 to more than 80 institutions by the later Middle Ages, most of which had been founded by *c.* 1200 (Hey 1990, 57; Waites 1997, 29; VCH Yorks III, frontispiece map). Monasteries and abbeys thus lie outside the stated intent of this thesis to examine aspects of medieval material culture that spanned the transitional period, rather than those that remained isolated to either side of it. However, a separate study comparing the elite patronage of parish churches and monasteries would be welcomed, as it could shed light on the patronal choices available to different strata within the elite, and highlight the effects of competition and aspiration on lordly strategies of expenditure within the ecclesiastical milieu.

#### **4.3.2 Commemorative sculpture**

Concomitant with the tenth-century changes in the character of the local church came a shift in the nature of funerary commemoration in the North Riding and surrounding

areas of the northern Danelaw (Richards 2000, 159). The Anglian tradition of stone sculpture, used for marking important ecclesiastical burials or perhaps simply designating churchyards (Stocker 2000, 193), was adapted by patrons into small, individual burial markers, and the occurrence of multiple contemporary monuments in local churchyards suggests the commemoration of lay individuals. The Anglo-Scandinavian practice of commemorating the deceased lay individual through a sculpted stone marker corresponds directly with later medieval concepts, even though the specific forms are somewhat different. The distinctive standing crosses and hogbacks of the Anglo-Scandinavian period were a product of that particular cultural and chronological context, but the cross slab tradition was certainly influenced by tenth and eleventh-century styles (see above, 31), and it even harks back to older forms such as the early-ninth century Anglian tomb covers at Kirkdale [Fig. 16]. Despite the eleventh-century decline in funerary sculpture (Lang 1991, 43), transition period grave covers used in conjunction with standing cross headstones in the Northeast (Cambridge 1995, 119; Lang 1995, 443; Ryder 1985, 1991) clearly show that the sculpture created in the Anglo-Scandinavian period was a forebear of this style of commemoration. As such, it seems that the development of these traditions should be considered a continuous process, and they should not be treated as entirely separate and unrelated bodies of material.

The Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture of northeastern England has been heavily studied in the past (e.g. Bailey 1980; Collingwood 1907-15, 1927; Cramp 1984; Everson and Stocker 1999), and Yorkshire has been particularly well-covered by James Lang (Lang 1973, 1991, 1995, 2001). However, no such far-reaching work has considered cross slabs either in Yorkshire or England as a whole, and no published survey has been produced for the cross slabs of the North Riding, though Peter Ryder has carried out some preliminary work on the county (Ryder 1986, and unpublished work). However, good comparative material for the North Riding slabs can be drawn from the previously mentioned surveys that have been conducted in several areas of the North and Midlands.

Cross slabs, like their Anglo-Scandinavian counterparts, are a very prevalent type of monument in North Yorkshire, and thus both provide statistically significant data sets for spatial and chronological analysis. Rates of survival must of course be considered in any study of material culture, but they are particularly crucial when dealing with relatively small pieces of sculpture that are easily broken, moved, or reused. Some have maintained that the current provision of monuments is far less, perhaps only 10%, of what originally existed (Badham 2005, 184; Ryder 1991, 5), but David Stocker has convincingly argued that the remains of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in Lincolnshire are an accurate reflection of original numbers (Stocker 2000, 180). There are consistently low numbers of monuments per site, and they are evenly distributed across the county, making the random loss and destruction of slabs unlikely. The relevance of this argument to the North Riding's Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture and cross slabs will be discussed in more detail later (see below, 125, 141), but interpretations must be based on the evidence that survives, rather than speculation on what monuments may have once existed.

Significantly, both Anglo-Scandinavian and cross slab monuments seem to be particularly associated with local churches, being found much more often in parochial churches and churchyards than in burial sites at monasteries, cathedrals, and castles (see distributions in Lang 1991; Ryder 1985, 1991), making them especially appropriate for this study. These types of commemoration also appear to be primarily connected with a particular class of society — the local and minor elite (Butler 1987, 250; Finch 2000a, 31; Richards 2000, 250). Since these members of medieval society were generally not prominent in the documentary record, did not found monasteries, and were not commemorated with elaborate effigial or inscriptional tombs (at least before the mid-thirteenth century), they are a more difficult group to access and understand. As a result of this, their profound influence on the development of certain aspects of medieval society, the local church and commemoration amongst them, has often been overlooked. They are occasionally lumped together with other elite groups into a singular, homogeneous class of

'lords,' or more frequently they are mentioned, but effectively ignored in favour of the great magnates who owned land throughout the country, patronized on a larger scale, and are named in chronicles and administrative documents. As one of the principal locales of expression available to the minor elite class, the local church and its graveyard provide a tangible means by which to access the mentality and practice of a certain strata of society, and to discover how their actions influenced the local church's religious, political, and social development.

Because the lesser elite are less frequently mentioned in documents, and because Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and cross slabs only occasionally have identifying inscriptions, it is difficult to directly relate the products of patronage to specific individuals further down the social scale. However, the individuals of the lesser elite are not wholly lost to us. Their names are documented as the tenants of manors, sometimes associated specifically with churches, and the iconography and emblems found on many Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and cross slabs can help to identify classes of patrons and the identities they chose to express, facilitating discussion of the social group as a whole (see Chapter 7 for further discussion). In addition, the patronal actions of the high aristocracy *are* often documented, and their funerary monuments inscribed, allowing us a glimpse of the types of expenditure that were common to the upper echelons of elite society. By examining other sorts of patronage such as monasteries, castles, and effigies alongside local churches and non-effigial commemoration, we can contrast the patronage of the structures and monuments favoured by the high elite with expenditure that was likely to be carried out at a lower, but still significant level, and which would bear significance for those whose identities were constructed in a local milieu.

Based on previous studies that have been carried out on its churches and commemoration, the North Riding bears ample potential for data collection and analysis. It can be expected to produce a significant amount of evidence for early pre-Conquest church foundation and commemoration (Lang 1991; McClain 2001; Morris 1985, 54; Stocker

2000), a substantial body of late-Saxon, Saxo-Norman, and Norman architecture (Ryder 1993; Taylor and Taylor 1965-78), and active participation in the programme of church rebuilding and its relevant pre- and post-Conquest social implications (Gem 1988; McClain 2001; Morris 1988). Surveys of the other Ridings of Yorkshire and the surrounding counties, as well as Peter Ryder's preliminary work on the North Riding, suggest that the corpus of grave covers in the county will compare favourably with the surveys that have already been compiled. Also, the high proportion of Saxo-Norman and twelfth-century commemorative monuments found in Durham and West Yorkshire (Ryder 1985, 1991), which seem quite rare elsewhere, indicates that at least some parts of the North Riding participated in a similar commemorative tradition in the eleventh to twelfth-century overlap period. It is imperative to collect a full catalogue of cross slab commemoration for North Yorkshire, which will facilitate an examination of patterns of types of sculpture and its distribution, as well as allow a regional investigation of funerary sculpture from the tenth to the twelfth centuries as a continuum, neither stopping at the Conquest nor beginning after it. Anglo-Scandinavian monuments, transitional sculpture, and later cross slabs need to be considered as a continual and evolving commemorative tradition, both affecting and affected by the contemporary social milieu. No study has yet taken into account how changes in commemoration over this turbulent time might respond to and create social trends, nor how they worked independently and together with their associated churches as active and vital components of the medieval material world.

#### **4.4 Methods**

The methodology that guides the study was designed around providing a sample set that would be tightly defined and manageable, yet large enough to provide statistical significance on both an intra- and inter-regional level. It was desired that the body of data could be compared with other regional studies that were conducted on a similar scale, and would also provide an idea of broader trends that might be occurring both within the sample



area and over time. Because of the large sample size and joint focus on two classes of data, the exhaustive recording and archaeological drawing of either architecture or funerary sculpture on a church-by-church basis was precluded. In any event, the highly detailed reproduction and discussion of the media as individual items is outside the intents and purview of this thesis. However, all of the architectural and commemorative evidence being taken into account was systematically visited, recorded, sketched, and photographed. As architectural surveys of varying thoroughness have already been conducted on the vast majority of churches (e.g. Carter 1976; Pevsner 1966; VCH NR I and II) and pre-Conquest sculpture in the North Riding (Lang 1991, 2001), more effort was directed towards the recording and presentation in catalogue form of the post-Conquest commemorative sculpture than on the other types of evidence.

#### 4.4.1 The historical and geographical background

Before pursuing fieldwork, descriptions and histories of the churches and sculpture were obtained from a variety of sources. Architectural assessments were gathered from the *Victoria County History* for North Yorkshire (Page 1914-25); *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire, The North Riding* (Pevsner 1966); the first two volumes of Taylor and Taylor's surveys of Anglo-Saxon Architecture (1965a, b); *A Visitor's Guide to Yorkshire Churches* (Carter 1976); other parish and local histories discussing churches within the North Riding (e.g. Hey 1990; McCall 1907, 1910); and pamphlet guides or archaeological and fabric survey reports from individual churches where available. A thorough architectural history was compiled for each church, concentrating in particular on the earliest phases of building, and scaled plans and drawings were collected from the sources and from archival holdings of church faculties. Comparative material for architectural technology and style was taken from *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (Taylor and Taylor, 1965-73); *English Romanesque Architecture, Vol. II* (Clapham 1934); and *The Architecture of Norman England* (Ferne 2000), as well as from regional studies conducted in recent years periodizing and revising

the chronologies for specific churches (e.g. Gem 1986, 1988; Morris 1985, 1988, 1989; Ryder 1982, 1993).

Information on the pre-Norman funerary sculpture was chiefly provided by the two volumes of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* covering York and Eastern Yorkshire and Northern Yorkshire (Lang 1991, 2001), and further descriptions and drawings were obtained from R.N. Bailey's work *Viking Age Sculpture in Northumbria* (1980) and W.G. Collingwood's early series of articles in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* (1907-1915). However, Lang's dating is adhered to in all cases, as his is the most recent and authoritative work on northeastern Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture (cf. Bailey 1980; Collingwood 1907-15; Collingwood 1927). Preliminary research for the presence of post-Conquest commemorative sculpture at individual churches was compiled from a number of sources. The primary source was Peter Ryder's unpublished scale drawings and discussions of slabs at various churches throughout the North Riding, though he has not recorded the whole of the county, and the depth of analysis on each slab varies from church to church. Further evidence on monuments was collected from mentions of slabs in secondary literature such as the *Victoria County History*, Pevsner, and various church, parish, and North Riding guides. Apart from Ryder's work, which focuses on the cross slabs, the older sources are concerned chiefly with architectural study of the church, and are very unreliable in their recording of the monuments. Only J.E. Morris, in the Little Guide series volume *Yorkshire: the North Riding* (1904), makes any concerted attempt to find and mention the slabs at each church. He notes that out of 197 churches that he visited in the North Riding, whole or fragmentary slabs were found in 73 (Morris 1904, 34), though it should be noted that he did not visit every medieval church, nor did he always notice every slab, and a considerable number have since come to light to add to that corpus (cf. Morris 1904; McClain 2001). Several works were referenced for comparative material to aid in the stylistic description and dating of slabs, including *A Manual for the Study of Sepulchral Slabs and Crosses of the Middle Ages* (Cutts 1849); *Christian Monuments in England and Wales* (Boutell 1854); *History of*

*Sepulchral Cross-Slabs* (Styan 1904); and various studies of Yorkshire and regional cross slab typologies (Butler 1957, 1965; Gittos and Gittos 1989; Ryder 1985, 1992, 2000, 2002, and unpublished work; Walter 1874).

To establish the historical and geographical context of the region and time period in which these items of material culture were created and functioned, various sources of medieval documentation were consulted in compilations such as the *Victoria County Histories* (1914-25) and Lawton's *Collections* (1842) on North Yorkshire. These documentary sources provide important information about the manorial layout and tenurial geography; relationships between manors, vills, and outlying sokelands; and about status, dependency, and obligations between parochial churches and chapelries.

Domesday Book (Faull and Stinson 1986; Williams and Martin 2002) has been used as a valuable source of social, tenurial, and economic background for the Saxo-Norman period, but it has also been employed as a main component of the primary dataset. The presence of churches or priests is frequently recorded in manorial entries, and can be taken as evidence of a church at that site in the late-eleventh century. The information is of vital importance, considering that the survival of architectural fabric from this period is often compromised by later-medieval rebuilding. While it is clear that the Domesday survey has not recorded churches systematically, and that it cannot be taken as an authoritative representation of all churches in existence in 1086, it does provide a valuable *terminus ante quem* for the foundation of many churches. When combined with the archaeological evidence for Saxo-Norman churches and commemoration, the evidence from Domesday Book can be used to construct the best possible approximation of late-eleventh century ecclesiastical provision in the North Riding.

Critical interpretations of Domesday Book have also been crucial to the study (e.g. Darby 1977; Darby and Maxwell 1962; Palliser 1992). The analysis and resulting historical geography based on Domesday Book produced in Darby and Maxwell's *A Domesday Geography of Northern England* (1962) is a valuable and statistically thorough survey of the

available evidence and the limits of interpretation. Darby and Maxwell's entry for the North Riding details the county's areas of waste and population and settlement density, densities of plough-lands and teams, and mills and churches that were in existence and cited in the 1086 survey. For the North Riding in 1086, the general layout of nucleated and dispersed settlement and intensive agriculture versus unfarmed land seems to have held broadly true to the patterns suggested by the topographical discussion above. As might be expected in a generally poor county, especially one that was subject to several post-Conquest rebellions and the Harrying of the North (whatever its actual severity), there are substantial amounts of documented waste and a generally low population density throughout the riding. Around 57% of the Domesday villis in the North Riding are cited as wholly or partially waste (Maxwell 1962, 139), and the population density only rises above one person per square mile in five parts of the county (Maxwell 1962, 121). Unsurprisingly, the most densely settled and populated areas were those where agricultural land was best, but the 0.9 and 1.3 population/sq mi densities in the Vales of Pickering and York contrast sharply with the 2.1 density on the southern Pennine fringe and the remarkably high 3.8 density in the region just south of Richmond (Maxwell 1962, 121). These ratios also match the densities of plough-lands and plough teams recorded in Domesday (Maxwell 1962, 109, 115), though admittedly the correspondence still does not explain *why* the settlement patterns occur as they do. Nevertheless, the regional characteristics provide a framework in which to operate, and a backdrop upon which to place the collected material culture evidence.

#### **4.4.2 Fieldwork and recording**

The unreliability of sources and lack of a comprehensive survey made it important to visit all the churches to examine them architecturally and to determine the existence and incidence of cross slabs. All of the churches and chapelries that are listed on the Yorkshire parishes map were included in the sample, and were visited and assessed regardless of the presence or absence of medieval fabric evidence given in secondary literature. Of the

chapels and dependent churches that are not listed on the parochial map, twelve that display surviving medieval architectural evidence were included (e.g. Yafforth, Amotherby).

However, a large number of sites are simply recorded as having had a medieval chapel, but now possess either a wholly modern church or no church at all, and so were excluded from the surveyed group of churches.

Funerary sculpture of the late-ninth and tenth centuries plays an important role in the analysis and interpretation of the material gathered here, but thorough surveys including their stone composition, measurements, styles, dates, and photographs have been conducted and published, and there was no need for this study to duplicate that work. However, all possible examples of medieval non-effigial sculpture were taken into account and recorded, which resulted in a corpus of 703 total monuments. Within this type of commemoration (generally referred to here as ‘cross slabs’ because of the most common motif) fall the Saxo-Norman and later-medieval grave covers, standing crosses, and headstones, which can be either coped or flat, incised or relief carved, and either plain, or decorated with abstract or representational designs, with or without a cross and/or secondary emblem. Brass indents, even if in cross shape, were not considered to fall within the sample, because they were primarily the product of a separate, urban industry of brass-makers and alabasterers, rather than stone sculptors (Badham 1990; Badham and Norris 1999). Brasses also do not occur in any number until the fourteenth century in North Yorkshire, and there is little evidence to link the production of cross slabs in northern areas with the workshops that produced other monuments (Badham 2005, 184).

Fully sculpted effigial monuments, whether low or high relief, have not been included in the sample. They, too, are rare until the late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, are much less numerous than cross slabs, and their production was apparently both more skilled and more centralized (Tummers 1980). However, the North Riding’s semi-effigial slabs, such as those at Gilling East and Melsonby, have been recorded [Fig. 17]. These monuments are relatively rare, with only five examples in the North Riding. They appear

most frequently in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire (Tummers 1980, 4), and served as a transitional form between cross slab grave covers and figural sculpture. In most cases they seem to bear more similarity to cross slab motif and design than to the full effigies that do occur in the riding (cf. Gittos and Gittos 2002a), and are more appropriately considered as part of the grave slab tradition (Tummers 1980, 4) [Fig. 18]. Unusual or questionable pieces, such as the fragments at Kirby Misperton and Lastingham, that might or might not have originally been grave covers were taken into consideration and recorded as ‘possible grave slabs,’ and cross slab monuments that appear to have been altered or reused later in the medieval or modern period through the addition of brasses, inscriptions, or recarvings were also included in the sample [Fig. 19].

At the visited churches, a full examination of the interior and exterior was undertaken, with notes and sketches of relevant architectural fabric, features, and decoration recorded systematically [see Appendix G]. Relevant photographs were also taken. Copies of ground plans were annotated with architectural or other built-in features, and if no ground plan could be obtained for the church, a rough plan (not to scale) was drawn on site and annotated. Only architectural work dating from the early-thirteenth century or before was recorded systematically, though close attention was paid to later medieval and modern fabric dates throughout the church, particularly when the later architectural work included reused earlier medieval sculpture or fabric fragments [Fig. 20]. Fragments of diagnostic architecture were given equal weight with standing features, as even the smallest piece of architectural work indicates that a stone church existed at that time, and that there was patronage at the site.

The absolute and relative dating of features and phases of the churches was based on information from the previously conducted architectural surveys combined with visual assessments of the churches, though overly specific dating, especially when based on stylistic criteria, was avoided. The tripartite classification of architecture to the early, mid, and late periods of a century has been adhered to by the majority of architectural sources and

is used in this study, and when more accurate dates have been proposed, they have generally been broadened and integrated into the tripartite dating division. Thus Pevsner's 'c. 1140 North arcade' at Middleton (Pevsner 1966, 254) is categorized as 'mid-twelfth century.' Where sources disagreed on dates, the physical examination of the fabric was used to decide on the more appropriate designation, and where the remnant fabric was not sufficiently diagnostic to be placed in one of the three categories, the evidence is simply referred to by its century or is classified as undatable.

The interiors and exteriors of each church were also examined for loose, displayed, or incorporated grave slabs. When sculpture was found, its location was noted, and it was recorded, described, measured, and sketched on a formatted recording sheet designed for the fieldwork [see Appendix G]. Each monument was given a unique identification number for cataloguing, and photographs were taken with a 6 inch (15 cm) scale. Monuments were occasionally inaccessible or very difficult to photograph, and where available, Peter Ryder's unpublished drawings were used to supplement the photographic catalogue. Wherever possible, fragments that once belonged to the same original monument were identified and counted as a single slab, rather than as two separate pieces. After comparison with other materials, each slab or possible slab fragment was dated, preferably to within half a century or a century. As with architectural features, slabs that were blank, too fragmentary, or lacked sufficiently diagnostic features were classified as undatable, even when a broad *terminus ante quem* was obtainable from context (i.e. a slab built into fifteenth-century fabric must predate that period, but nothing more specific can be determined) [Fig. 21].

#### 4.4.3 Analysis and interpretation

The study intends to address church building and commemoration jointly between the tenth and early-thirteenth centuries, so the intensive study of architectural fabric has been limited to evidence up to and including the first quarter of the thirteenth century. However, all non-effigial commemorative stone sculpture dating from the late-ninth to the fifteenth

century has been taken into account, in order to establish a complete picture of the development over time of a specific type of commemoration. The context that such an integrated approach provides is invaluable to the purposes of this thesis, which intends to base its arguments on the chronological and spatial patterning of the types of material culture. Thorough typologies and chronologies have been established for both the ecclesiastical architecture and pre-Conquest sculpture of North Yorkshire, but no such comprehensive corpus has been compiled for the cross slabs of the North Riding, and if we are to assess each category of evidence equally, the backdrop of context and development must first be supplied. While the tenth century to *c.* 1200 does provide the chronological focus for the study, the beginning and ending dates will not be enforced with a heavy hand. The importance of examining the time period within the context of both the preceding and succeeding centuries is wholly acknowledged, and the analysis will address aspects of the preceding centuries that helped shape the period, and will make reference to the material culture and wider developments and patterns of the later Middle Ages as appropriate.

Analysis of the data will concentrate on the chronological and spatial patterning of both architecture and commemorative sculpture, within groups of parishes, deaneries, and at the overarching level of the North Riding of Yorkshire. Spatial analysis will be implemented primarily through GIS mapping, which is particularly useful for comparison of various architectural and commemorative factors, and for the integration of material culture with topographical features. Also, stylistic features of architecture and commemoration at groups of churches will be considered and discussed in terms of the importation and trade of raw materials and finished products, as well as local production and distribution.

Interpretation will focus on establishing chronologies of church foundation, building, and commemoration, and comparing and contrasting models at both local and regional levels, with reference to shaping forces such as the tenorial layout or the economic and agricultural prosperity of the area, and what these may be able to tell us about parochial formation and settlement. The relationships between the presence of Anglo-Scandinavian and post-



Conquest commemoration at churches will be examined, as will the implementation of pre- and post-Conquest building and rebuilding programmes. Both of these patronal actions have the potential to illustrate the social meanings that were expressed in material display, and were closely allied with the perception and exercise of lordship and authority, and the propagation of social and cultural identities.

## *Chapter 5: Data and Fieldwork Results*

The compilation of data gathered from background research and fieldwork on the North Riding's churches and funerary monuments can now be presented, beginning with an overview of the results from the entire sample area. The nature of the architectural and commemorative data will be discussed, and regional characteristics and possible rates of survival can also be addressed. Due to the large size of the sample, however, the eventual detailed analysis and comparison will be more effective if the data is also broken down into smaller groups, thus allowing the evidence to be assessed on more local levels, yet still against the backdrop of the overall patterns of the North Riding. The seven rural deaneries encompassed by the riding provide convenient contexts within which to discuss the data. They are in the first instance composed of a more manageable number of parishes and churches than the North Riding as a whole, but are still large enough to ensure that the data is statistically significant rather than anecdotal. They may also be historically meaningful subdivisions of the North Riding and reflections of its civil and ecclesiastical organization, a characteristic which may offer a more coherent context to the patterns of data than would arbitrarily drawn divisions. Most importantly, however, the North Riding deaneries appear to be closely tied to topographical and geographical regions, which in other areas of England have been shown to have profound effects on patterns of settlement, land organization, parochialization, and prosperity (Finch 2000a, 8; Owen 1976, 67; Williamson 2003, 23-24).

However, even in the medieval period the deaneries were not monolithic units. They were administrative divisions imposed by the diocese, which may or may not have had significant meaning 'on the ground,' or in determining the nature of patronage of the parish churches that fell within them. Civil and tenorial divisions like wapentakes and vills were often related to the deanery boundaries, but they also frequently crossed or ignored them (see VCH NR I, II). It seems that occasionally even parochial organization did not fully respect the deanery boundaries. One example is the parish of Great Smeaton, which lies in Richmond deanery, but its dependent chapelry of Appleton Wiske falls within Cleveland

(Harvey and Payne, 1973). The deaneries will therefore be analyzed individually, but they will not be viewed in isolation, nor will they be considered to be discrete entities bound by impassable limits. Patterns, clusters, and local groups which cross and overlap the deanery boundaries must be considered in order to develop a true picture of architectural and commemorative patronage in the North Riding.

In two cases, deaneries have been combined under a single heading for data grouping and analysis. The deaneries in question are Dickering and Boroughbridge, which are located primarily in the East and West Ridings, respectively, with only a few of their churches falling within the boundaries of the North Riding. Boroughbridge's North Riding parishes are in the southwest corner of the riding, next to Bulmer, and Dickering's northernmost parishes along the east coast also fall within the North Riding. In both Boroughbridge and Dickering, it was thought that the patterns of data in each partial deanery would be misleading due to the small number of churches involved (two and eight, respectively), so they have been combined with geographically contiguous larger deaneries for analytical purposes. The Boroughbridge parishes have been joined with Bulmer, as that is the only North Riding deanery which they abut. However, the Dickering parishes could have been joined as easily with Cleveland as with Ryedale, since both deaneries are adjacent and topographically similar. Ryedale was eventually chosen on the basis of tenurial bonds between the two deaneries, exemplified by the Domesday manor of Falsgrave (in the parish of Scarborough). Before and after the Conquest, this large estate held much of the land in Dickering deanery, as well as the vills of Wykeham and Hutton Buscel, whose parishes fall within Ryedale (DB York; VCH NR II, 554).

The various types of data available for the parishes and churches have been divided into several categories, the characteristics of which will be discussed for the whole of the riding, as well as for each of the deaneries and geographical regions. These categories consist of historical and landholding evidence from documentary sources and Domesday Book (DB Yorks; VCH NR); architectural evidence gathered from fieldwork and secondary

sources (Pevsner 1966; VCH NR); Anglo-Scandinavian commemorative evidence gathered from the two volumes of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* that pertain to the North Riding (Lang 1991, 2001) [see Appendix E]; and evidence of eleventh-century and later commemoration ('cross slabs') gathered primarily from fieldwork, but also from references in secondary sources (Cutts 1849; Morris 1904; Pevsner 1966; VCH NR), and unpublished field drawings by Peter Ryder [see Appendix F]. All of the categories of data will be assessed individually and compared with each other, in terms of numeric, chronological, and spatial patterning, and through tables, charts, maps, and timelines.

### 5.1 Evidence from Domesday Book

As was discussed in Chapter 4, the North Riding is a large and heterogeneous entity, encompassing a wide variety of geological and landscape types and features, ranging from marshy lowland, to good cultivable land, to desolate highlands [Fig. 22]. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, it was also constantly changing, as the processes of parochial and tenurial organization developed and patterns solidified. It is therefore important to remember that the information in Domesday Book is little more than a snapshot of a region in transition (Platt 1995, 1). As long as it is considered critically, as a record of a moment in 1086, rather than an accurate depiction of the social and political landscape throughout the Saxo-Norman era, it can serve as a valuable background against which the main body of evidence — the material remains of churches and commemoration — can be viewed, compared, and contrasted.

Compared to the other Domesday counties of northeastern England documented by Darby and Maxwell (the West and East Ridings, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire), the North Riding is the second largest in area, after the West Riding. It also has the second highest number of vills (Darby and Maxwell 1962, 497), and by far the largest number of total carucates and plough-lands (Darby 1962, 420). Significantly, though, it also has the lowest number of recorded plough-teams except for the East Riding (Darby 1962, 420), one

of the lowest population densities (Darby 1962, 431), and the highest incidence of waste in all of the northeast (Darby and Maxwell 1962, 445, 499). While the idiosyncrasies of Domesday recording do not enable us to project this data into absolute assessments of the number of people or ploughs present in the North Riding in 1086, the information is valuable in relative terms. When viewed in conjunction with the other northern counties, the high number of villas and plough-lands indicate that the North Riding was very widely settled, if not particularly densely populated. But the few plough teams and high amount of waste show that the economic productivity of these settlements, at least in terms of what the Domesday survey chose to record, was comparatively low.

Within the geographical regions and deaneries of the North Riding, the details of this overall pattern can be seen. Domesday villas were scattered relatively evenly throughout the deaneries, with the only notable gaps being the Pennine scarp in Richmond and Catterick, and the North York Moors of Cleveland and Ryedale, which were both highland regions over 800 feet in elevation [Fig. 23]. It is also noteworthy that while settlements in Richmond and Catterick extended far into the dales that cut into the Pennines, the same did not happen in the Cleveland and Ryedale valleys of the North York Moors. There is a substantial absence of settlement in the mid-elevation lands (*c.* 400 ft) that flank the southern, northeastern, and eastern edges of the moors (Maxwell 1962, 100). However, settlements in 1086 were spread densely and evenly throughout the lowland regions of the Vale of York (covering Bulmer, Boroughbridge, and the western half of Richmond and Catterick); the Vale of Pickering (the southern half of Ryedale and Dickering); and the coastal edge (eastern Cleveland and Dickering).

Like the overall settlement pattern, the recorded rates of plough team and population density also appear to have been affected by the topographical characteristics of the region [Fig. 24-25]. Unsurprisingly, the lowest plough team and population densities are found to the north of the moors and on the western edges of the riding, where the land was generally less cultivable. In the more gentle landscape of the southern and central plains of the Vales

of York and Pickering there are slightly higher rates, which is to be expected considering the land's suitability for cultivation. The highest plough and population density in the riding occurs in the eastern regions of Catterick and Richmond deaneries, around the settlements of Catterick, Richmond, Bedale, and Wensley, producing an interesting pocket of prosperity which cannot be fully explained by topography. While the land there is good, the area is unexpectedly highly populated for its elevation and its location quite close (on its western edge) to the Pennine scarp. There is no indicator in the limited information of Domesday as to why this pocket of high density and productivity may have developed, but it is a pattern worth bearing in mind as the other categories of evidence are explored.

**Table 1: North Riding demographics, from Domesday Book (Maxwell, 1962)**

	Avg. plough-lands	Avg. plough-teams	Avg. population density
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	1.1 - 1.4	0.5 - 0.6	1.1 - 1.3
<b>Catterick</b>	0.6 - 0.7 (west) 1.9 - 2.7 (east)	0.2 - 0.3 (west) 0.9 - 1.8 (east)	0.5 - 0.6 (west) 2.1 - 3.8 (east)
<b>Cleveland</b>	0.8 - 0.9 (south/east) 1.4 (north) 1.2 (west)	0.1 - 0.3 (south/east) 0.3 (north) 0.6 (west)	0.8 (south/east) 0.9 - 1.1 (north) 1.3 (west)
<b>Richmond</b>	1.6 (north) 2.7 (southeast)	0.3 (north) 1.8 (southeast)	0.7 (north) 3.8 (southeast)
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	0.8 - 0.9	0.3	0.9 - 1.0
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>

The occurrence of 'waste' recorded in villis was, as mentioned in Chapter 3, widespread across the North Riding, with over half of its Domesday villis either wholly or partially waste, and a significant number more apparently uninhabited [Fig. 26]. The traditional interpretation of the high rate of waste, and its patterns of distribution, is the devastation caused by the Harrying of the North (e.g. Bishop 1948, 1; Kapelle 1979, 161, 170). However, reassessments of the Domesday evidence have shown that many alternate meanings of 'waste' are possible (Palliser 1993, 12), that it was a feature of the North Riding both before and after the Conquest (Palliser 1993, 10), and that there is no reason to assume that this land was either devastated or deserted (Wightman 1975, 57). Since waste land was

uncultivated, it is understandable that in most cases the concentrations of waste land agree with the other assessments of prosperity. The vills of western Catterick and Richmond, the Tees Valley, and northeastern Cleveland are almost wholly waste, and the strongest rates of non-waste vills are in the western Vale of York and in the south-central part of Bulmer, nearest York. However, the measurements of prosperity and waste are not always directly correlated. There is a significant area of waste around Northallerton, stretching into western Cleveland and northwestern Bulmer, which was not an overly impoverished or unpopulated region, and where land was good. Also of note is the region around the Vale of Pickering, covering most of Ryedale, Dickering, and eastern Bulmer, which was of low to average plough-team and population density. There are in that region a great number of vills that were recorded as partially waste, but populated (Maxwell 1962, 146), which could be an indicator of agricultural regeneration that was in progress in 1086.

When compared with the parish map of the North Riding, the recorded areas of Domesday prosperity match up well with the parochial layout [cf. Fig. 13, 24-25]. The areas with fewer settlements, fewer plough-teams, and lower population in 1086 also feature larger parishes, and those areas which were densely settled and more prosperous have far smaller ones. The highland parishes of Richmond and Catterick deaneries are extremely large, with the parishes of Romalldkirk and Grinton covering over 50,000 acres each, and Aysgarth over 80,000 (VCH NR I, 117, 200, 236). Large and elongated parishes are also found in the moorland-edge parishes of Cleveland and Ryedale, where Helmsley (38,000 acres), Pickering (31,000 acres), and Danby (23,000 acres) all encompass especially large tracts of land. But as the highlands slope down into the western edges of the Vale of York or into the Vale of Pickering and the coast, the parishes become much smaller and more densely packed. This pattern can be seen best in Bulmer and Cleveland deaneries, and is especially pronounced in the region around Northallerton and in southern Bulmer, where the smallest parishes in the North Riding (under 1000 acres) are to be found. Higher settlement density and intensive cultivation is of course not only reflected in the size of parishes, but in

the number of churches per deanery. The vast swathes of uncultivable land in Richmond and Catterick can be seen in their low number of churches (38 and 39, respectively), compared to 57 for Bulmer/Boroughbridge, 67 for Cleveland, and 53 for Ryedale/Dickering.

The 649 Domesday settlements of the North Riding far outnumber its 190 parish churches, so it is worth briefly addressing the nature of the relationship between settlement, manor, parish, and chapelry. In most cases, each parish had as its primary settlement an equivalently named Domesday vill with a parish church and a manor, but often that was not the only settlement within the parish. Frequently there were other settlements within the parochial bounds, which could be other independent manorial vills or appurtenant 'sokes' and 'berewicks.' These subsidiary territories were attached to full manors and valued with them, and could be either contiguous with the manor or outlying. Only rarely, such as at Sutton-on-the-Forest, Bulmer, was a parish's eponymous vill on soke or berewick land, rather than a full manor (DB Yorks). In most cases chapelries were also located in manorial vills, but in several instances they were associated with appurtenant land. In these cases, the parish on which the chapel was dependent was often the same as the manor to which the land was appurtenant. This occurs at Gilling West, where the vills of all six of the parish's early chapels (e.g. Barton, Forcett, Eryholme, Hutton Magna, and South Cowton), four of which are outlying, were also soke to the manor of Gilling in Domesday Book [Fig. 27]. Here, previously existent tenorial geography determined the location of Gilling's chapels, resulting in their geographical removal from the principal manor and church. These connections between parish, chapelry, and settlement clearly demonstrate an early and close relationship between ecclesiastical and tenorial organization, and the associations between secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies undoubtedly had significant impact on the development of medieval settlements and their churches.

While there is almost always a correlation between the name of a parish and an eponymous Domesday settlement, the records are less firm on mentions of churches at those settlements. Across the North Riding, there are mentions of churches, priests, or both at 48



individual sites, which means that only 19%, or about one in five known medieval churches, is referred to in Domesday Book. This is unsurprising, given that Yorkshire as a whole is generally thought to be under-recorded in terms of churches. Richard Morris found that only one out of every three churches with evidence pre-dating the twelfth century can be found in Domesday Book (Morris 1989, 154). No deanery in the North Riding has significantly more than 20% of its medieval churches mentioned in Domesday, with Bulmer the highest at 23%, and Cleveland the lowest at 13%.

**Table 2: Mentions of North Riding churches in Domesday Book (DB Yorks)**

	Total no. churches	No. mentioned in Domesday	Domesday 'church'	Domesday 'priest'	Domesday 'church & priest'
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	57	13 (23%)	2	2	9
<b>Catterick</b>	39	7 (18%)	4	0	3
<b>Cleveland</b>	67	9 (13%)	2	0	7
<b>Richmond</b>	38	8 (21%)	5	0	3
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	53	11 (21%)	1	1	9
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>48 (19%)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>

The majority of mentions in Domesday are of a 'church and priest', though there are sometimes variations. There are two priests at the church of Topcliffe, a situation that may have been a relic of the old minster pastoral system. The three churches listed at Hackness could be due to its status as one of the earliest and most important ecclesiastical sites in the North Riding. Alternatively, it could be a product of the manorial system, where all of the churches that fell within Hackness' sokeland were valued with the manor. The half a church at Kirby Misperton is almost certainly a product of tenurial complexities, probably indicating that the ownership of the church, like other feudal property, could be split between two manors or lords. In many cases only a church is mentioned, for which the presence of a priest can probably be assumed, though at Easington it is specifically mentioned that there is a church without a priest. In three other cases only a priest is mentioned, and all of these fall within Bulmer and southern Ryedale. The most interesting

of these is the priest at Bagby, which was a chapelry of Kirby Knowle. Kirby Knowle, while not mentioned in Domesday, does have ninth-century sculptural fragments and the 'kirby' place-name, so the presence of a resident priest, presumably without a church, in the subsidiary chapelry may be a good indicator of the early parochial layout.

Across the riding, the churches that are mentioned in Domesday are widely distributed, but they appear to fall in clusters rather than being randomly scattered [Fig. 28]. There appear to be three main groups of recorded churches throughout the riding: 1) the large cluster that spreads across central Bulmer and into southern Ryedale; 2) the cluster running north-south along the eastern edge of Catterick and Richmond, and corresponding to the pocket of high prosperity and population mentioned above; and 3) the cluster running east-west across the north of Cleveland. There is also a much smaller group of three churches in eastern Ryedale and Dickering. While these patterns are an important indicator of groups of early-foundation churches, they are almost certainly not an accurate representation of the full complement of churches in 1086. Rather, the documented pattern of churches may represent the recording manner of certain inquisitors, some of whom took more careful note of churches in their surveys, and some who did not.

The recording of churches in Domesday is notoriously inconsistent, due not only to the wide variety of inquisitors carrying out the assessment, but also to the reasons behind the survey's production. The Domesday survey was primarily a valuation of the lands and estates of the country for tax purposes, rather than a listing of a settlement's characteristics. Therefore, only those churches with some substantial value would be likely to be mentioned, and it may not have been seen as important to mention the existence of a church if its worth was included in the value of the manor as a whole (Holdsworth 1986, 59). When other, admittedly circumstantial, evidence like place-names is considered, the Domesday recording of churches again appears inadequate. In the North Riding alone there are 12 parishes/vills with 'kirk' or 'kirby' place-name elements that have no mention of a church in Domesday Book. When these examples are combined with the more substantial material evidence from

below-ground excavations, remnant architectural fabric, and Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian commemorative monuments, it shall be seen that there were far more churches in existence by 1086 than are mentioned in the Domesday survey.

## 5.2 Architectural evidence

### 5.2.1 Overall patterns of building

Over the whole of the North Riding, the evidence for medieval architectural fabric is abundant and widespread. Of the 254 churches and chapels that fall within the sample, the vast majority have remnant fabric from some part of the Middle Ages, and 177 of them, or 70%, have evidence of architecture or a font dating to the early-thirteenth century or before. Fonts of the twelfth century have been used at twelve parish churches and two chapels as evidence for pre-thirteenth century work at those sites.<sup>6</sup> Though a stone font is certainly evidence for a contemporary church, it does not necessarily guarantee that the church was also stone. Nevertheless, contemporary architectural patronage should probably be expected at sites bearing stone fonts. Fonts first become common at the same time that stone churches begin appearing in overwhelming numbers, and stone fonts may have been seen as aiding the 'Great Rebuilding' transition from ephemeral to permanent structures (Blair 2005, 461). In addition, the frequent use of stylistic motifs such as blind arcading, chevron, and chip-carved stars on fonts, all of which are paralleled in twelfth-century architecture, suggests that knowledge of Norman architectural motifs was common to masons and patrons in the area [Fig. 29].

Pre-thirteenth century fabric is very evenly distributed across the riding, with the only noticeable gaps occurring around the North York Moors and the central part of the eastern coast, both areas where churches were relatively sparse anyway [Fig. 30]. The occurrence of pre-thirteenth century work is even higher when only parish churches, rather

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<sup>6</sup> The parish churches are Brignall, Cleasby, Cold Kirby, East Cowton, Fylingdales, Great Smeaton, Kildale, Sneaton, Thornton-le-Dale, Topcliffe, Upper Helmsley, and Wigginton, and the chapels are Gillamoor and Nether Silton.

than chapels or dependent churches, are considered, as can be seen in the table below. The best example of this is Ryedale/Dickering, where 95% of the parish churches have pre-thirteenth century architecture. The incidence of fabric pre-dating the twelfth century is also noteworthy, with 34 churches (13%) across the riding featuring standing fabric or fragmentary pieces of Saxon and Saxo-Norman architecture [Fig. 31].

**Table 3: Architectural evidence in the North Riding**

	No. parish churches	Pre-1100	Pre-13 <sup>th</sup>	No. chapels	Pre-1100	Pre-13 <sup>th</sup>	Total churches	Pre-1100	Pre-13 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	44	6 (14%)	26 (59%)	13	0 (0%)	8 (62%)	57	6 (11%)	34 (60%)
<b>Catterick</b>	27	9 (33%)	22 (81%)	12	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	39	9 (23%)	24 (62%)
<b>Cleveland</b>	49	3 (6.1%)	36 (73%)	18	0 (0%)	8 (44%)	67	3 (4.5%)	44 (66%)
<b>Richmond</b>	29	4 (14%)	24 (83%)	9	0 (0%)	6 (78%)	38	4 (11%)	30 (79%)
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	41	12 (29%)	39 (95%)	12	0 (0%)	6 (50%)	53	12 (12%)	45 (85%)
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>34 (18%)</b>	<b>147 (77%)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>30 (47%)</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>34 (13%)</b>	<b>177 (70%)</b>

The distribution of pre-thirteenth century evidence by deanery is fairly even, though there are outstanding amounts of survival in Ryedale/Dickering and Richmond, at 85% and 79%, respectively. The other deaneries are also significantly represented. Indeed, the levels of pre-thirteenth century evidence are so high across the board, that the absence of twelfth-century architecture in parish churches seems more likely to be an issue of post-medieval survival rather than of an actual late-medieval foundation. It should be borne in mind that significant groups of churches in Catterick, Cleveland, and Bulmer have all undergone major post-medieval rebuildings, in which much standing medieval fabric has now been lost. Bulmer and Catterick have suffered especially from Victorian and early-twentieth century rebuildings. In Catterick, these occurred primarily in the far western reaches, probably due to excessive poverty and dilapidation of the medieval churches. In Bulmer, the southern parishes just north of York were the most affected, undoubtedly because of the population growth and increased wealth associated with the rise of York as a modern city.

Cleveland's churches have also seen a good deal of modern rebuilding, but the most damaging losses of medieval fabric occurred much earlier, in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early-nineteenth centuries. Due to the industrialization of the northeast, the social geography of northern and eastern Cleveland has changed substantially since the Middle Ages, as has the character of its churches. Not only have relatively insignificant medieval villages such as Middlesbrough become major cities, but the population explosion and the growth of a strong low-church Anglicanism resulted in the expansion and complete restructuring of churches. Many churches, especially on the coast, were wholly rebuilt or substantially refurbished, moving away from the medieval chancel/altar-focused orientation to a more centralized 'preaching box' layout, where box pews and pulpits were the core. Churches like St. Mary's, Whitby, where the medieval fabric remains intact behind a 'skin' of box pews and windows, are the exception rather than the rule [Fig. 32]. Many other Cleveland churches, such as Skelton, Fylingdales, Hinderwell, and Marske, were entirely rebuilt in the eighteenth or early-nineteenth centuries, with only fonts or a few mutilated fragments testifying to their medieval past. In many of these rebuildings, the loss of medieval fabric will not have been incidental, but rather a purposeful break with the past and the old style of religion. While medieval building evidence, especially of the twelfth century, does still exist at many Cleveland churches, it is found as standing fabric far less frequently than in other deaneries.

In contrast to parish churches, a significantly lower number of chapels have architecture pre-dating the thirteenth century. Only 30 of the 64 chapels, or 47%, still retain pre-thirteenth century evidence, and none have any architectural evidence that pre-dates *c.* 1100. The lower incidence of early fabric in the chapels is not surprising, given that many may not have come into existence until the thirteenth century or later (Cutts 1898, 116; Mason 1976, 22). When they were founded, they may not have been subject to the same levels of patronage and regular maintenance as the parochial churches, due to smaller congregations and their dependent status. A relative lack of patronage in the medieval

period may have led to the neglect and subsequent decay of the fabric in the post-medieval and early-modern eras, requiring more extensive rebuilding and refurbishment in recent times. Indeed, in the sample area, 38% (24 of 64) of the chapels have been fully rebuilt in the modern era, as opposed to only 12% (23 of 190) of the parish churches.

The lack of remnant architectural evidence in the dependent churches corresponds with equally sparse documentary records for their early existence. While 50 of the 64 chapelries have equivalently named settlements mentioned in Domesday Book, showing that most of the settlements were in existence from an early date, only two, Bagby and Roxby, are listed as having a church or priest. It is also worth noting that apart from Middlesbrough, the chapelries which do not have equivalent Domesday villis are all located on moorland or the Pennine fringe, lending support to the argument that these marginal lands would have been settled later, and any chapels founded on them would have been established later still (Owen 1976, 68). There do not seem to be any significant intra-deanery patterns, with all but Catterick having between six and eight chapels with pre-thirteenth century architecture. However, it is worth mentioning that in Ryedale/Dickering, Richmond, and Bulmer, 50% or more of the deaneries' chapels have solid evidence of existence by the early-thirteenth century. Any negative evidence for early chapels must of course be viewed critically, especially given the nature of Domesday Book's patchy recording, but the comparative lack of documentary and early architectural data is telling. Unlike most parish churches, which seem to have been in existence by the twelfth century at the very latest, a considerable number of medieval chapels were probably not established until later in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

### **5.2.2 Dating and spatial distribution**

The evidence for eleventh to early-thirteenth century architecture manifests itself in a number of ways. The earliest stone architectural evidence dates to the eighth or ninth century, and is very rare, even compared to other early architecture. Only nine churches in

the North Riding have eighth or ninth-century stone architecture, compared to the 30 churches with eleventh-century Saxo-Norman work, and all but four of the churches with eighth/ninth-century evidence (Whitby, Lythe, Wycliffe, and West Witton) also have Saxo-Norman fabric. The early evidence usually comes from *ex situ* fragments decorated in characteristically Anglian style, most of which were probably once architectural pieces (e.g. door jamb at Lastingham) or decorative features (e.g. plaques at Middleton, West Witton) (see entries in Lang 1991, 2001) from early stone churches. However, it is sometimes quite difficult to determine whether the pieces were originally structural or monumental, and while stone monuments may suggest a stone church, in many cases the evidence is not clear-cut. In the absence of standing Anglo-Saxon churches, like those at Escomb and Monkwearmouth (both Co. Durham), the evidence for pre-eleventh century stone churches in the North Riding must remain primarily conjectural.

The two exceptions are at Kirby Hill and Hovingham, where clear elements of a church structure survive. At Hovingham, a large semicircular window head, cut from a single block, has been reused upside down as a quoin in the Saxo-Norman west tower. Together with the ninth-century cross shaft and an elaborate piece that may be a part of a shrine or altar frontal (Lang 1991, 146-148), the window head confirms an early stone church. At Kirby Hill, a decorative impost remains, perhaps *in situ*, in the south exterior wall, beneath the remaining stones of a tall, rounded archway. Though the phasing is complicated due to the insertion of a twelfth-century south doorway, and the subsequent building of the porch, it seems that this was the entrance to the Anglian church, around which the nave was rebuilt in the late-eleventh/early-twelfth century, and where the current south doorway was later inserted. In addition, the south wall of the Saxo-Norman nave reuses a large, monolithic, semi-circular window-head, which almost certainly belonged to the Anglian church [Fig. 33].

While there are few remains in the North Riding from the Anglian period, there is a substantial amount of late-eleventh/early-twelfth century standing fabric still in existence.

This is seen most commonly in tall, thin, unbuttressed towers, narrow, plain arches, and characteristic 'herringbone' masonry, which is rough-hewn and set in a zigzag pattern [Fig. 34]. Inscribed sundials that date to the mid/late-eleventh century are also relatively common in the North Riding, at least compared to other northeastern regions (cf. Cramp 1984, Everson and Stocker 1999). As many as ten churches have possible Anglo-Scandinavian sundials (Haigh 1897; Lang 1991, 2001; Wall 1997), of which seven are in Ryedale (Kirkdale, Great Edstone, Old Byland, Kirkby Moorside, Sinnington, Lockton, and possibly Ellerburn), two in Cleveland (Skelton-in-Cleveland and Leake), and one in Bulmer (Bulmer). The dials at Skelton, Great Edstone, and Old Byland are all inscribed in Old English, Old Norse, or Latin, but the most famous inscribed sundial is at Kirkdale, which dates the rebuilding of the church to 1055-65, and gives important insight into lay ownership and patronage of the local church (Lang 1991, 164). The sundials also suggest that the churches were most likely stone by the later-eleventh century, a hypothesis which has been confirmed by a number of archaeological excavations of churches (see above, 22).

However, one of the churches with a sundial, Old Byland, is also mentioned in Domesday Book as being an *ecclesia lignea*, or a wooden church (DB Yorks). It may be that wooden churches were increasingly rare by 1086, thus provoking a mention by Domesday recorders, but at any rate, the apparent contradiction brings into sharp relief the transitional nature of church building in the eleventh century. The archaeological evidence certainly demonstrates that the preliminary stages of widespread stone building had certainly begun by the later-eleventh century, but the extent to which wooden churches persisted in this period is unknown and difficult to determine.

The evidence for architecture from the twelfth century is extremely common, and is characterized by the bulky towers, patterned doorways and arches, and square-cut, coursed walling that feature in the vast majority of churches in the North Riding [Fig. 35]. Indeed, there is more architecture from the twelfth century in the North Riding than from any other period except the Perpendicular. Nevertheless it is still found primarily in small pieces and



remnant features, rather than whole buildings. Occasionally entire churches still date to the twelfth century (e.g. Salton, Scawton), but much twelfth-century structural work is restricted to a portion of the church, like the nave angles, or a single wall. In many more cases the church has been rebuilt substantially in the later medieval period, but some twelfth-century features, most frequently south doorways, chancel arches, and arcades, have been retained as the church developed around them. Frequently the remaining evidence of twelfth century building is as small as a chevron voussoir or a column capital, since early fragments were often either reused in later medieval building, or discovered at modern restorations and displayed as part of the history of the church building [Fig. 36]. Especially fine examples of twelfth-century architectural sculpture frequently survive as well. Grotesques, beasts, figural sculpture, Zodiac symbols, scrolling foliage, and other elaborate motifs became common in the mid-twelfth century (Zarnecki 1953), and some of the finest examples of architectural carving from the whole of the medieval period can be seen at Barton-le-Street (Ryedale) and Alne (Bulmer), and at a few churches in eastern Richmond and Catterick.

Perhaps because of the quality and intricacy of the decoration, or because of its association with the past and possible legitimacy and legacy, twelfth-century features seem to be retained more often in medieval churches than work of any other date. South doorways are the most common, and are particularly interesting given their possible liturgical and spiritual role (Ryder 1993, 34). They seem to have been very deliberately retained, often being moved out and rebuilt stone by stone when an entirely new aisle or wall was constructed. There are other examples of quite deliberate and iconic reuse as well. At Brompton (Ryedale), the fourteenth-century tower has several chevron voussoirs not just built in randomly to the tower masonry, but reset as an arch over the door to the tower stair, and again over the interior arch of the door in the clock chamber on the first floor of the tower [Fig. 37]. Also, there are at least 55 fonts of twelfth-century date that have been retained in North Riding churches, which might have been preserved, like south doorways, because of a certain cachet associated with their antiquity and liturgical function [Fig. 38].

In general, far more of the North Riding's fonts date to the twelfth century than to any other medieval period. They are most prevalent in the central Vale of York, but there is a noteworthy group of large, square fonts with angle-columns and elaborate geometric carving at three neighbouring parishes (Marske, Upleatham, and Skelton) and one outlier (Sneaton) in northeastern Cleveland [Fig. 39].

From the mid-twelfth century onward, aisles become one of the most commonly added architectural features at local churches [Fig. 40]. In the North Riding, they appear to be added to existing nave and chancel structures more frequently in this period than at any other time in the Middle Ages. In most cases a north aisle was added first, though frequently a south aisle followed later in the twelfth century or *c.* 1200. North aisles dating to the early-thirteenth century or earlier exist on 54 North Riding churches, with nineteen of those also possessing twelfth or thirteenth-century south aisles. Only three churches in the riding have a south aisle only. The distribution map shows that churches with twelfth and early-thirteenth century aisles are scattered fairly evenly across the North Riding, suggesting that even more churches may once have had aisles, only to lose them to subsequent rebuildings or destruction, as at Wharram Percy (East Riding) (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 59).

The architectural evidence, when broken down by date and by deanery, reveals several meaningful chronological and spatial patterns of building [Fig. 41]. The graph shows that the overall rate of stone building rises from extremely low levels before the eleventh century to a fairly steady rate from the Saxo-Norman period to the mid-twelfth century. There is a rise in the amount of architectural evidence from the mid and later-twelfth century, and this would be an especially substantial increase if combined with the architecture classified as 'Transitional,' which dates to *c.* 1200, but is difficult to place on one side or the other of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is clear that the last quarter of the twelfth century was the peak of building for that period, and if combined with the Transitional architecture, would far outstrip the thirteenth-century evidence as well, which is found in abundance throughout the riding, chiefly in aisles and rebuilt chancels and chancel

arches. The large amount of ‘other twelfth-century’ architecture comes from fragments that are too small or not sufficiently diagnostic to assign to a more specific date, for example ashlar walling, plain semicircular windows, or fragments of chevron. There is no reason to believe that closer dating of these features would result in an alteration of the patterns of building currently indicated, but in sheer numbers they bring home the scale and intensity of building that was being carried out in the twelfth century.

**Table 4: Architectural evidence, distribution by date**

	Total no. churches	Pre-11 <sup>th</sup>	Saxo-Norman	Early-12 <sup>th</sup>	Mid-12 <sup>th</sup>	Late-12 <sup>th</sup>	Other 12 <sup>th</sup>	Trans.	Early-13 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	34	1	6	7	5	11	14	6	9
<b>Catterick</b>	23	1	8	4	5	6	13	8	11
<b>Cleveland</b>	43	1	1	6	4	11	37	7	14
<b>Richmond</b>	30	1	3	4	8	7	11	3	17
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	45	4	12	10	17	15	19	16	19
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>70</b>

By breaking down the 176 churches with architectural evidence from the eleventh to the early-thirteenth centuries into individual deaneries, the spatial patterns of eleventh to thirteenth-century building can be seen more clearly. Ryedale/Dickering has by far the most Saxo-Norman evidence, with twelve churches featuring remnant pre-1100 fabric.

Geographically, the Ryedale group is concentrated in the Vale of Pickering, and it appears to cross over into eastern Bulmer, where a group of three contiguous parishes (Terrington, Bulmer, and Crambe) all have Saxo-Norman architecture. There is also a cluster of Saxo-Norman work on the western side of Bulmer, at Alne, Newton, and Kirby Hill. Catterick has a fairly compact cluster of eight parishes with Saxo-Norman evidence, running from Wath in the south through Hauxwell and Hornby. Richmond and Cleveland deaneries, on the other hand, have very little Saxo-Norman fabric. Skelton is the only Cleveland parish to feature any early evidence, and that is in the form of an eleventh-century sundial, rather than standing architectural fabric. The three Richmond churches with Saxo-Norman evidence — Romalldkirk, Sockburn and Gilling West — are not clustered as in other deaneries, but

Gilling and Sockburn do appear to have been important pre-Conquest sites, judging by the large amounts of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture they possess, and Gilling's Anglian sculpture points to its minster origins (Lang 2001, 117). Though pre-1100 evidence is not equally prevalent in all regions of the North Riding, stone church building in some areas had begun in earnest before the year 1100, and probably some time before that.

The rates of twelfth-century architectural evidence are generally high across the board, but as in the pre-1100 period, Ryedale/Dickering has the highest levels of early, mid, and late-twelfth century work, and is strongest in the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century period as well. In contrast to its almost non-existent Saxo-Norman architecture, Cleveland has strong evidence for the twelfth century, with 38 churches featuring architecture from *c.* 1200 or earlier. The deanery has an especially large number of churches with undiagnostic (mostly fragmentary) twelfth-century evidence, indicating that though it is difficult to date precisely, twelfth-century church-building in Cleveland was as intense as in any region in the North Riding. Richmond and Catterick both have good twelfth-century work, with 63% and 56% of churches, respectively, retaining architecture that dates to the year 1200 or before. The evidence is evenly distributed across both deaneries, with even the remote Pennine fringe churches, like Askrigg and Aysgarth in Catterick, and Romaldkirk and Bowes in Richmond, featuring twelfth-century work. Clearly the programme of twelfth-century church building reached across the whole of the North Riding, encompassing an already widespread network of pre-Conquest churches, and adding new ones that filled in any gaps in the rapidly coalescing parochial system.

### **5.3 Anglo-Scandinavian Commemoration**

#### **5.3.1 Stylistic trends, types, and production**

As with the architectural evidence, medieval stone commemoration is prevalent throughout the North Riding. A maximum of 376 Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and

fragments, mainly dating from the late-ninth to the late-tenth centuries, have been found at 67 churches throughout the sample area. In the Anglo-Scandinavian period, the predominant monument type is the standing cross, which accounts for 70% (262 monuments) of the recorded sculpture. The only other monument type of note in the Anglo-Scandinavian sample is the recumbent grave marker, accounting for 24% (91 monuments) of the total sample. The other 6% of the Anglo-Scandinavian monuments are too fragmentary to determine any original form or type, but almost certainly fell into these two groups.

Within the Anglo-Scandinavian recumbent group, there are a few flat or slightly coped rectangular slabs, but the vast majority (69 of 91 monuments, 76%) are the steeply coped, house-like (and possibly skeumorphic) hogback stones, a highly distinctive, but short-lived and possibly colonial sculpture type that is well-known throughout northern England and Scotland (Cramp 1984; Lang 1984, 1991, 2001). Hogbacks, unlike standing crosses and later cross slabs, seem to be found in geographical clusters rather than being evenly spread throughout the sample [Fig. 42]. They occur in the North Riding at 22 separate church sites, but are particularly associated with the Allertonshire region in the Vale of York, apparently centred on Brompton (Cleveland), a chapel of Northallerton (Lang 2001, 2). There are also conspicuous clusters in northern Cleveland, perhaps related to a concentration at Lythe, a small cluster north of Gilling West in Richmond, and a wide scatter, but with only one hogback per site, in Ryedale.

The hogback distribution brings up interesting questions about the modes of sculpture production and distribution in the North Riding, and how such systems of production may have changed from the early period through to the later Middle Ages. It seems that for the most part, Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in North Yorkshire was generally produced by workshops, some large, some smaller, which distributed their wares within regional catchment areas, and occasionally further afield across the riding. When discussing workshop-produced stone commemoration, it is important to address the question of whether production is central, and the stones are distributed to the catchment area, or

whether sculptors are itinerant, taking the knowledge and skill of the workshop into the villages themselves. While it is extremely difficult to answer this question with any degree of certainty, there are several factors that must be borne in mind. The first is that it is extremely difficult and expensive to transport stone, especially in the absence of navigable waterways, and because of this stone-rich regions like the North Riding seem to have favoured local sources of stone at every opportunity (Senior 2001, 18). It is also unlikely that at this early date most small villages would have had a full-time mason, though this may have changed over time as stone became a more popular building and commemorative medium, especially when stone churches became commonplace. If there was no full-time mason, then stonework must be carried out by itinerant masons, most likely versed in the local school's style, or else a part-time village mason, who perhaps carried out other tasks most of the year. It is certain that provincial masons existed in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, as evidenced by local copies of accomplished workshop styles, but how widespread they were at this date is difficult to determine, and this situation was almost undoubtedly changing throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Identifiable schools or workshops in the North Riding are the York Metropolitan School (YMS), the Ryedale school, the Allertonshire workshop, and the Lythe workshop, and while many of the monuments in the North Riding cannot be grouped into one of these categories, there certainly are distinct clusters of sculpture which came from single ateliers or sculptors (Lang 2001, 44). The most prolific atelier was undoubtedly that located at the Minster in York, which specialized in the production of recumbent slabs with complex interlace panels, beast chains, and figural scenes (Lang 1991, 39-40). Over 50 monuments have been found at the Minster and around the city, and YMS work has been found as distant as Gainford-on-Tees, Durham (Lang 1995, 440). Since York itself falls outside the area of study, only three pieces of YMS work are found within the sample, at Easington in Cleveland, and at Old Malton and Sinnington, both in Ryedale.

Most of the Ryedale monuments, however, are products of the region's own local school of sculpture. The style was apparently derived from YMS work, which is unsurprising given the likelihood of cultural and economic ties between York and the region (Lang 1991, 40), but it is certainly distinct enough to be considered an independent school. Ryedale is particularly well-known for its Irish-style ring-headed crosses, which feature long, S-shaped 'Jellinge' beasts in single panels, with roughly-carved interlace that seems to be a cruder adaptation of the York Minster work (Lang 1991, 36, 41). The most distinctive type of the Ryedale school, however, is the group of five warrior portrait crosses, found at Middleton (3), Kirkby Moorside (1), and Levisham (1). These portrait crosses are part of a very localized fashion, and though there are also warrior motifs on sculpture in Allertonshire, the Ryedale crosses are unique in style (Lang 1991, 41). Unlike in York and Allertonshire, it is unclear if there was a specific production centre for the region, though Middleton is a possibility (Lang 2001, 44), especially considering its concentration of warrior crosses. Templates were certainly used, but it appears that the rough and varied carving of Ryedale's sculpture points to production either at small workshops by less skilled sculptors, or else by knowledgeable, but reasonably independent, sculptors working in a common local style (Lang 1991, 49).

Outside of York, the largest single producer of monuments is the Allertonshire workshop, which supplied both crosses and hogbacks not only to the Vale of York, but to a wide area that encompassed most of the North Riding and even some of County Durham (Lang 2001, 44) [Fig. 43]. Allertonshire pieces favoured S-twist braids and panels featuring dogs and stags, rejecting the beast chains and fettered dragons that were popular in Ryedale and York (Lang 2001, 45-46). Some of the most distinctive Allertonshire work originates from a production centre around Brompton, where the standing crosses feature a characteristic interlace dubbed the 'Brompton loop', and the hogbacks are especially fine work, with large bear-like endbeasts (Lang 2001, 47-48). It appears that the Allertonshire

workshop pieces were not only exported to other parts of the North Riding, but their designs were also copied by provincial sculptors, as in Kirkleavington 1 (Lang 2001, 142).

The secular themes of the Ryedale warrior portraits are continued, though less explicitly, in the 'hunting' panels featuring dogs, stags, and other quadrupeds that are seen throughout the northern and western parts of the riding, several of which are identifiable Allertonshire pieces. Though the trappings of a militarized, secular elite appear to be a common theme, there is also substantial religious, and clearly Christian, iconography as well. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the standing crosses with crucifixion motifs, a popular form in Hiberno-Norse Ireland, and one that seems to have come to Yorkshire, along with ring-head crosses, with the Hiberno-Norse settlers who eventually became rulers of York in the early-tenth century (Lang 1991, 30). These crucifixion crosses, of which there are nineteen, occur in all of the North Riding deaneries except for Bulmer, but are most common in Cleveland and Catterick.

The only other identifiable school or production centre in the North Riding is focused on Lythe (Cleveland), on the northeast coast. Unlike Allertonshire and Ryedale, however, Lythe-style monuments are almost wholly located at that site, rather than distributed throughout the riding or even the surrounding region. There are two cruder copies of Lythe-style work at Easington, which is close by, and one distant Lythe hogback located at Ellerburn, in Ryedale (Lang 1991). It is unclear whether the Ellerburn monument is a copy, an import, or just bears a similar style to Lythe hogbacks. The most important aspect of the Lythe monuments, however, is that they give us some insight into how standing crosses and hogbacks were actually situated as grave markers. There are eight simple standing crosses of the first half of the tenth century, all of generally the same style, which are not decorated and only roughly finished below the simple, splayed-arm heads. These seem to match up with seven (possibly nine) type-K, 'enriched-shrine' hogback monuments, and were probably used in conjunction with them, forming composite headstone and recumbent markers (Lang 2001, 49). It also may go some way to answering whether



hogbacks were internal or external markers. While it is probable that standing crosses were external, the more versatile hogbacks could have been used externally as high-profile grave slabs, or internally in the manner of later medieval tomb chests. It has been speculated that most hogbacks would have had a standing marker on at least one end (Lang 2001, 21), suggesting that most Anglo-Scandinavian grave markers were found in the churchyard rather than inside, which is also supported by the monuments found *in situ* in the cemetery at York Minster (Lang 1995, 442).

The practice of marking a burial with both an upright and a recumbent marker seems to have held over somewhat into the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The prevalence of upright markers during that time period may indicate that they too were used in conjunction with early cross slabs (Ryder 1991, 1), as can still be seen in the eleventh-century burials at Whitby Abbey [Fig. 44]. There are also coped monuments reminiscent of hogback shape, though often flat along the top panel, dated to the twelfth or early-thirteenth centuries at the North Riding churches of East Harlsey, Northallerton, and Stanwick. At Yarm, there is a piece, probably of the very late-eleventh or early-twelfth century, which features patterning similar to hogback tegulae on the upper face [Fig. 45]. Even stronger evidence for the clear continuity between Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture and eleventh to twelfth-century work can be found outside of the North Riding. Jim Lang has demonstrated the stylistic connection between Anglo-Scandinavian hogbacks and twelfth-century coped monuments in the Tees Valley, County Durham (Lang 1974), and an exceptional persistence of the hogback form has been found in twelfth-century Scotland, where the hogback shape and roof tegulation of the hogback is amalgamated with fine Norman interlaced arcading [Fig. 46]. It is clear that in terms of style and form, the commemorative tradition begun by Anglo-Scandinavian funerary sculpture persisted into the post-Conquest period, as did the continued use and social currency of external stone monuments, at least until the early-thirteenth century (Curl 1993, 75-76). Medieval commemoration was not a post-Conquest 'break' with Anglo-Scandinavian tradition, nor a Norman importation. Though the production of cross slabs

would rise after the Conquest, gradually replacing the standing crosses which had dominated the early period, they were very much a product of the various stylistic traditions and commemorative practices of the region.

### 5.3.2 Sites and spatial patterning

The incidence of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in the North Riding is comparable to Richard Morris' estimate for pre-Conquest sculpture over the whole of Yorkshire, in which 140 of the c. 550 medieval churches, or 25%, have eighth to eleventh-century commemorative monuments (Morris 1989, 154). However, Morris' estimates would probably have to be revised in light of the more recent Anglo-Saxon sculpture *corpora* for the East and North Ridings. A current count taken from the two sculpture surveys shows that 107 local churches in the East and North Ridings have Anglian or Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture. The early sculpture of the West Riding has never been completely and systematically surveyed, but judging from the size of the riding and the number of churches within it, it should have far more than 33 churches with early sculpture.

At any rate, it is clear that the North Riding has a far higher incidence of sculpture than the East Riding (cf. Lang 1991, 2001), Lincolnshire (Everson and Stocker 1999), and even County Durham and Northumberland (Cramp 1984). Anglo-Scandinavian monuments of the late-ninth, tenth and earlier-eleventh centuries occur at 67 separate sites in the North Riding. Unsurprisingly, 59 of those sites eventually became medieval parish churches, but the other eight sites were later dependent chapels, indicating that the status of churches could sometimes change significantly over time. Because of the nature of the documentary evidence that informs the parish map, and the complex formation processes of the parochial system, we cannot be certain that those churches which are listed as dependent in the later Middle Ages also bore that status at their foundation, and vice versa. Certainly not all later medieval parish churches came into existence as fully independent entities. While it is likely that the later parochial layout has its basis in the relationships between mother/minster

churches and dependent chapels of the early period (Pounds 2000, 21, 29), it is feasible that a subsidiary church of the thirteenth century had once possessed full or partial rights, and was only subordinated later in its history. This could be argued for all of the eight chapels that possess Anglo-Scandinavian monuments, as they once possessed the right of burial on that site; a right which was generally reserved to independent churches. However, it was in some cases granted to subordinate churches that still paid dues to a mother church (Morris 1989, 120). Full early independence is almost certainly the case at Brompton, a chapelry of Northallerton in the medieval period, where there are 26 possible monuments, many of the very highest workmanship. This seems to indicate a church of some wealth and status, that was not only permitted to carry out burial, but was apparently also a desirable location.

**Table 5: North Riding churches with Anglo-Scandinavian monuments**

	No. parish churches	No. with 10 <sup>th</sup> c. monuments	No. of chapels	No. with 10 <sup>th</sup> c. monuments	Total churches	No. with 10 <sup>th</sup> c. monuments
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	44	3 (7%)	13	2 (15%)	57	5 (9%)
<b>Catterick</b>	27	16 (59%)	12	2 (17%)	39	18 (46%)
<b>Cleveland</b>	49	18 (37%)	18	1 (6%)	67	19 (28%)
<b>Richmond</b>	29	7 (24%)	9	2 (22%)	38	9 (24%)
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	41	15 (37%)	12	1 (8%)	53	16 (30%)
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>59 (31%)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>8 (13%)</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>67 (26%)</b>

Over a quarter of the North Riding's churches have late-ninth to eleventh-century sculpture, and it is widely distributed across all regions [Fig. 47]. There are only two significant pockets of absence, in southern and central Bulmer and Dickering. Only four of Bulmer's churches possess Anglo-Scandinavian monuments, with two of those occurring as part of the extremely high-density Ryedale cluster along the Vale of Pickering. The Dickering churches, on the other hand, are entirely devoid of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, which is especially surprising considering the high rates very nearby in Ryedale. Richmond also has a fairly low incidence, with only nine sites, but Catterick, Cleveland, and Ryedale all have more than fifteen sites with monuments. Cleveland has the highest number of sites

overall, but the large number of churches in the deanery means that the percentage is misleadingly low, as is Ryedale's, which is brought down by the lack of sculpture in all eight Dickering churches. Also, no deanery has more than two chapels with monuments, reinforcing the theory of later foundation for the majority of medieval chapels.

Within each deanery, there are also significant spatial patterns of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture. In several places, sculpture sites occur in obvious clusters, the most notable being the Vale of Pickering concentration in Ryedale, the Richmond cluster around the early monastic site of Gilling West, and the sizable Catterick group encompassing the region around Catterick, Bedale, and Wensley, and extending as far east as Pickhill and Wath. In Cleveland the monuments are more widely distributed, ranging from the northeast coast down through the Vale of York, but there is certainly a noticeable grouping focused around Northallerton and the central plain. Most importantly, however, there is also significant correspondence between these clusters and patterns of Domesday recording and Saxo-Norman architecture. The Ryedale and eastern Bulmer grouping also has very high rates of Domesday churches and Saxo-Norman architecture, as discussed earlier, and the Richmond cluster of sculpture occurs in a region where many churches were recorded in Domesday. The most interesting grouping is that of western Catterick, which not only corresponds with high levels of Domesday churches and abundant Saxo-Norman architecture, but also with the pocket of high population, high plough-team, low-waste prosperity that is evident in Domesday Book. In strong contrast to these regions, however, the central Vale of York has a noteworthy *lack* of correspondence between the types of data. While the region around Northallerton has one of the highest concentrations of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in all of the riding, the area is almost completely devoid of Domesday-recorded churches and Saxo-Norman architecture. While this could of course be put down to the fickleness of Domesday recording and wholesale later-medieval rebuilding, the other correlated groups make this less likely, and all the more confusing. The full import of these patterns will of course be discussed in more depth later, but it appears that at least in

some areas of the North Riding, there is a significant correlation between the early foundation indicated by Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, and the propensity to rebuild those churches in stone at an early date.

### 5.3.3 Monument densities and distributions

As was mentioned earlier, there are at most 376 Anglo-Scandinavian monuments at 67 North Riding churches, though it should be noted that some of these fragments almost certainly belong to single original monuments. The Yorkshire volumes of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* have noted this possibility in eleven cases, which would reduce the number of monuments to 340, but generally it appears that no concerted attempt has been made to reconstitute fragments into a minimum number of monuments. In his article on Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, David Stocker has made an attempt to do this, and in many cases this has reduced the number of monuments per site by over 50% (Stocker 2000, 200-201). If Stocker's calculations are taken as valid, it substantially reduces the total number of monuments to 250 [Fig. 48]. However, Stocker himself has admitted that the Yorkshire figures are 'much more unstable and untrustworthy' than those he used for Lincolnshire, and since the North Yorkshire volume of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* has been published, this has been shown to be true. Stocker was working from Collingwood's early-twentieth century catalogue (Collingwood 1907-15), without the benefit of the completed North Yorkshire sculpture survey (Lang 2001). So while his figures for Ryedale-area churches (which are covered in Lang 1991) are probably more or less accurate, his figures for the rest of the North Riding seem incomplete, and are occasionally obviously incorrect. He does not, for example, list monuments at fourteen North Riding sites for which the sculpture corpus has entries, and in many cases it is difficult to tell whether his reduced numbers of monuments are due to fragment consolidation or simply incomplete records. At Upleatham, for example, where Stocker has one monument listed, and the sculpture corpus has recorded seven quite distinct monuments, the latter is

certainly the case. The actual number of original remnant monuments in the North Riding therefore probably falls somewhere between Stocker's calculations and those of the sculpture corpora, but it seems likely that well over 300 monuments of Anglo-Scandinavian date survive.

If the total of 376 monuments is accepted, it calculates to an average density of 5.6 monuments per site, compared to the 3.8 monuments per site that can be calculated from Stocker's figures. It is therefore probable that the actual density of monuments per site for the North Riding lies somewhere around 4.5 to 5.0. This is significantly higher than both the Lincolnshire average of 2.0 per site (Stocker 2000, 184), and the somewhat more dubious average of 3.1 for the whole of Yorkshire (Stocker 2000, 201).

**Table 6: Number and density of Anglo-Scandinavian monuments**

	No. of sites with monuments	Maximum no. of monuments	Average density of monuments/site
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	5	14	2.8
<b>Catterick</b>	18	50	2.8
<b>Cleveland</b>	19	159	8.4
<b>Richmond</b>	9	71	7.9
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	16	82	5.1
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>5.6<sup>7</sup></b>

The densities in individual deaneries vary greatly, with only Ryedale/Dickering relatively close to the North Riding average of 5.6 monuments per site [Fig. 49].

Bulmer/Boroughbridge and Catterick both have very low densities of 2.8 monuments per site, and Cleveland and Richmond both have around eight per site. Ryedale has only one church, Sinnington, with an exceptionally high number of monuments (20), so its number of monuments per site is probably the most accurate of the high densities, and is certainly the most evenly distributed. Richmond and Cleveland's densities, on the other hand, are slightly

<sup>7</sup> In the average densities of both Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and cross slabs, there are slight discrepancies between the overall average and the average calculated through the deanery densities. This is due to the rounding of deanery densities for simplicity of presentation.

misleading, as they have been driven up by the extraordinarily high numbers at Sockburn (25 monuments) and Stanwick (18) in Richmond, and in Cleveland, Kirkleavington (24), Brompton-in-Allertonshire (26), and Lythe (35). No other site in Cleveland contains more than ten monuments, and Richmond has eight each at Forcett and Gilling West. The four churches with monuments in Bulmer have but one piece of sculpture each, which is quite low, but more in line with the majority of North Riding churches, which possess between one and five monuments. This backs up David Stocker's claim that Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture would have been restricted to a small elite group of commemorators, probably local landholding lords who were founding private chapels (Stocker 2000, 182). It must be noted, though, that Stocker's argument is based primarily on Lincolnshire monument populations, where one to three monuments per site is the norm (Everson and Stocker 1999; Stocker 2000, 184). In the North Riding, however, there are sixteen sites which have between six and ten monuments, and of course the five sites mentioned above which have substantially more than that.

Stocker has explained the large concentrations of sculpture at Lythe, and possibly at Kirkleavington and Sockburn, as churches related to beach-strand markets, where large numbers of Anglo-Scandinavian mercantile elite would have been living, working, and commemorating (Stocker 2000, 200-203). The waterfront market theory will of course not explain the high levels of commemoration at Brompton, which lies well inland. It was, however, in close proximity to the market town of Northallerton, which may have provided a similar merchant class. Difficulties with this explanation arise primarily because there is as yet no evidence of pre-Conquest origins for Northallerton's market. It is also unclear why the merchants would choose to bury at Brompton, when the presumably senior church of Northallerton (which has as many as six Anglo-Scandinavian markers of its own) clearly had burial rights at the time (Stocker 2000, 206). Comparisons with patterns of architectural and cross slab evidence will no doubt provide further insight into the precise meanings of Anglo-Scandinavian monument density and sites with outstanding numbers of monuments, as there

do appear to be concrete relationships between some aspects of tenth-century commemoration and later building and monumental patronage. Whatever the reasons behind the numbers of burial monuments, the North Riding's Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture provision is the most widely and evenly distributed collection in the Northeast, and often features high numbers of monuments at each church site. This can only mean that throughout North Yorkshire, Anglo-Scandinavian settlement, churchyard burial, and concomitant patronal chapel foundation were all widespread by the end of the tenth century. A large number of what would later become the North Riding's parish churches have their origins at this early date, indicating that this part of Yorkshire may be one of the most important regions for early parochial development in all of England.

## **5.4 Cross slab commemoration**

### **5.4.1 Styles and production**

Like Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, cross slabs are prevalent and widely distributed across the whole of the sample area, with 703 cross slabs at 137 churches [Fig. 50]. In the North Riding, 54% of medieval churches have cross slabs, and as can be seen from the map, the monuments are quite evenly distributed. All of the deaneries except for Bulmer/Boroughbridge have cross slab commemoration at 50% or more of their churches, and in Richmond and Ryedale/Dickering, it rises to 60% or more. There is also substantial and well-distributed cross slab evidence for the key period of the eleventh to early-thirteenth centuries, with 239 monuments at 73 parish churches, and 28 slabs at eight chapels [Fig. 51].

An overwhelming majority of sites with cross slabs are at parish churches rather than chapels, which is to be expected considering that the reservation of burial rights to the parish church, and not the chapel, was common throughout the medieval period (Pounds 2000, 36). However, as the Middle Ages wore on, many chapels were conceded rights of burial, baptism, tithe, and marriage, and often became elevated to full parochial status. Even when parochial status was not granted, pressure by parishioners, benefactors, and



landowners could often win rights such as burial (Pounds 2000, 113). The existence and the date of slabs is important at chapels, not only because it indicates when burial rights were gained, but also the growing social importance of the subsidiary church, as it had become an attractive locale for elite display, competition, and establishing a legacy.

**Table 7: North Riding churches with cross slabs**

	No. parish churches	No. with cross slabs	No. of chapels	No. with cross slabs	Total churches	No. with cross slabs
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	44	19 (43%)	13	2 (15%)	57	21 (37%)
<b>Catterick</b>	27	20 (74%)	12	2 (17%)	39	22 (56%)
<b>Cleveland</b>	49	32 (65%)	18	5 (28%)	67	37 (55%)
<b>Richmond</b>	29	22 (76%)	9	3 (33%)	38	25 (66%)
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	41	29 (71%)	12	3 (25%)	53	32 (60%)
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>122 (64%)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>15 (23%)</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>137 (54%)</b>

There are obviously far more cross slabs at far more sites when they are compared to the densities of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture (703 at 137 churches and *c.* 300 at 67 churches, respectively). Given that cross slabs were in general use from the eleventh-sixteenth centuries, while Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture was in use for only two early centuries, the statistic is not surprising. As with the ninth and tenth-century monuments, the two most common forms of 'cross slab' were the upright marker, often a standing cross, and the recumbent slab. However, the dominance of the standing cross in the Anglo-Scandinavian period had been emphatically reversed by the twelfth century. Standing crosses and markers do occur throughout the cross slab sample, but they are chiefly limited to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and they only comprise about 8% of the total monuments. Recumbent monuments, on the other hand, make up the other 92%, and though some of the markers are coped, the vast majority are flat slabs, carved with either incised, relief, or sunk relief designs.

As the name implies, the most common motif on post-Scandinavian funerary sculpture is the cross, which generally occupies the main central panel of recumbent slabs.

In North Yorkshire, most of the monuments which are able to be assigned a style fall into six broad groups, which have been defined most systematically in work by Lawrence Butler and Peter Ryder (Butler 1965; Ryder 1985, 1991): bracelet and bracelet-derivative crosses; straight-arm crosses; splayed-arm crosses; multi-armed wheel and interlaced-diamond crosses; geometric designs; and emblem-only slabs [Fig. 52]. The dating provided by Butler and Ryder for these types is based on their relationship to other sculptural and architectural work, and while Butler generally attempts much closer dating than Ryder, they are generally agreed as to broad dates. The earliest types to appear consistently are the geometric designs and splayed-arm crosses, along with some straight-armed crosses, which are generally used in the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries. Straight-armed crosses, however, are also prevalent in the very late period of cross slab production, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The bracelet head emerges in the late-twelfth century, is used consistently throughout the thirteenth century, and occasionally persists long beyond that. Bracelet derivatives make up much of the work of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with multi-armed wheel and interlaced-diamond crosses particularly diagnostic of late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth centuries. Emblem-only slabs appear throughout the medieval period, and are generally difficult to date, though occasionally the style of the emblem can provide some clue as to a broad period of origin.

Most slab designs can be placed under one of these stylistic subsets, and though there are occasionally unclassifiable designs (e.g. Middleham 1) [Fig. 53], the majority of the unidentifiable slabs are merely too fragmentary, rather than too obscure, to classify. Though most slabs can be grouped under one of these broad headings, the variation of style and decoration within these categories, especially with the most popular bracelet and straight-arm styles, is astonishing. The sheer variety of North Riding slab motifs suggests that they cannot have been supplied by large workshops, even in the small 'schools' of carving that will be discussed in depth below. Most cross slabs are likely to have been the work of either very small provincial sculpting workshops or village masons and possibly

even woodcarvers, though the popularity of the bracelet cross and its variations indicates that some may have worked from templates or copy books of designs that were popular on a national scale. The organization of medieval cross slab carving is somewhat different from the way in which Anglo-Scandinavian monuments had been produced in the North Riding. There are often groups of extremely similar cross slabs at single churches, like the idiosyncratic petal and bracelet crosses at Kirby Misperton (Ryedale), the very unusual inverted bracelet crosses at Myton-on-Swale (Bulmer), and the large numbers of almost identical standing cross patee markers at Kildale (Cleveland), suggesting that provincial sculptors, rather than regional workshops, were more common by this time.

**Table 8: Cross slab styles, classified by design**

	Bracelet and derivatives	Straight-arm	Splayed-arm	Wheel/Inter. Diamond	Abstract Geometric	Emblem Only
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	13	8	3	1	0	4
<b>Catterick</b>	30	13	2	9	1	1
<b>Cleveland</b>	57	42	45	4	12	6
<b>Richmond</b>	62	29	8	25	7	3
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	31	19	9	0	7	5
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>18</b>

The most common North Riding types by far are the bracelet-head cross and its derivatives, and the straight-arm cross. The bracelet cross is the most common cross slab motif throughout England (see Butler 1965, Ryder 1985, 1991), and is a design used primarily on recumbent slabs, but is also seen on a significant number of standing crosses (e.g. Amotherby 3, 4, 5; Newton 3, 4). Bracelet or bracelet-derivative heads, which are often enhanced with foliate terminals, buds, and incised decoration such as striated lines, occur on 193 North Yorkshire slabs. This total includes the seventeen occurrences of the 'cross botonee' style, which is a bracelet-derivative generally characterized by an expanded centre/diamond-shaped cross with budded or foliate terminals. The category also encompasses the sixteen cross heads made of four closed or just-broken circles, which are

very likely either a predecessor or a contemporary variation, or both, of the bracelet head [Fig. 54]. There are also 111 straight-arm crosses on slabs and markers in the North Riding, which include designs ranging from plain, simple 'Latin' crosses, to derivative styles such as cusped arms (e.g. Hutton Magna 1), equal-armed Greek or hammer-head crosses (e.g. Stanwick 14), or the very popular derivation that features clustered foliate terminals (e.g. Sutton-on-the-Forest 2, Easby 4, Forcett 2) [Fig. 55]. There are also nine slabs which fall somewhere between straight-arm and bracelet derivative designs, either because of curving terminal foliage which gives a bracelet-like shape to the arm angles, or else the rare slab that actually fully combines both motifs (e.g. Thormanby 1) [Fig. 56].

The next most common type is the splayed-arm cross, which occurs 67 times on North Riding slabs. The vast majority of these are generally of the 'maltese' or heraldic 'cross patee' styles, and though both terms refer generally to a short, thick, splayed-arm cross, the terms here have been used to describe two different but related styles of cross head. 'Maltese' has generally been reserved for plain, splayed-arm crosses, while 'cross patee' has been used to describe either a splayed-arm cross inscribed within an incised or sunk circle (and thus often with curved terminals), or a circle with 4 sunken angle panels (which form a *de facto* splayed-arm cross, usually within an enclosing circle to help define the arms). Several of the cross patee slabs might even be termed 'proto-bracelets' (e.g. Kildale group), because the curve of the circle and their splayed terminals make wide bracelet-like shapes in the cross angles, but they are without the standard foliage terminals and buds that characterize the fully developed bracelet style. A few more crosses have slightly splayed or expanded terminals, but would be more properly classed in the 'straight-arm' rather than 'maltese' category (e.g. Kirkleavington 9) [Fig. 57].

Occurring in considerably smaller numbers are the four other major styles of cross slab, which are the multi-armed wheel-cross (17 examples), the interlaced-diamond head (22 examples), geometric-based designs (27 examples), and emblem-only cross slabs (18 examples). The wheel-cross and interlaced-diamond styles are two closely related cross

designs, generally dated to the later-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries. They are some of the few North Riding cross slab types which can be attributed to an identifiable 'school' of carving, along with the striated bracelet cross of the late-twelfth or early-thirteenth centuries. But even slabs such as these, which are quite localized, do not appear to be the work of mass-producing ateliers. Even though the general type is adhered to, the carving tends to vary quite widely within the groups, from fine to very crude and rough, and there are often design variations from slab to slab that minimize the likelihood of centralized production.

Wheel-cross and interlaced-diamond head slabs are scattered across only the north of the North Riding, and are primarily found in Richmond deanery [Fig. 58]. Of the 40 examples of these two types of cross slab, five are found in Cleveland, nine are found in Catterick, and 25 are from Richmond [Fig. 59]. The high concentration in northern Richmond and Cleveland has led Peter Ryder to label this slab tradition a 'Tees Valley type.' This is confirmed by the surveys of Durham and West Yorkshire, where wheel and interlaced-diamond crosses appear on 36 Durham slabs, but on only two in West Yorkshire, and both of those are multi-armed, rather than interlaced-diamond, crosses (Ryder 1985, 1991). Of the North Riding Tees Valley slabs, particularly notable are a Catterick-Richmond group of four highly elaborate interlaced-diamond head slabs with foliate scrolls, found at Bolton-on-Swale, Scruton, Ellerton Priory, and Middleton Tyas. While the distribution and variation of the Tees Valley slabs seems to preclude a central workshop for the whole group, these four slabs, which lie in close proximity and have a relatively high standard of craftsmanship, may have originated from a single workshop or mason (Ryder 1986, 33). The one outlying interlaced-diamond slab is found in the church at Bulmer, in the far south of the riding. It is particularly fine work, carved in crisp relief with very naturalistic foliage terminals, in contrast to the often highly stylized or clumsy fleur-de-lis more commonly found on the slabs. In terms of decoration, it does not much resemble the northern interlaced-diamond examples, but it is unclear whether the Bulmer slab is a local

mason's interpretation of the northern style, or whether it is an import from elsewhere, perhaps Durham. Its very fine carving and distinct style may indicate the latter.

Like the wheel-head and interlaced-diamond crosses, bracelet or circle crosses with incised line decoration ('striated') are another very localized group [Fig. 60]. These slabs are clustered along the western edge of the Vale of York, just below the dales, again located primarily in the deaneries of Catterick and Richmond. Of the 34 examples, ten are in Catterick, and 23 are in Richmond. Some churches have more than one striated slab, and Forcett and Stanwick have five and six, respectively. Here again there is an outlier, at Barton-le-Street, in Ryedale. It is unclear whether the Barton slab is an import from the western parts of the riding, but it is worth noting that it does bear a substantial similarity to Kirkby Fleetham 1. From this geographical distribution it can be plainly seen that striated bracelet crosses were a popular local style, but not one produced by a single atelier. Apart from the shared feature of striated decoration, the designs vary so substantially from monument to monument that it is impossible that they were produced in a centrally organized manner. The multiple examples of striated bracelet crosses at individual churches support the possibility that many North Riding slabs were carved by a single sculptor that worked for a single church or a small group of neighbouring churches.

The final two main types of North Riding slab are the geometric and emblem-only slabs. The category of 'geometric' slabs in the sample encompasses both the abstract geometric designs of repetitive chevron and lozenge patterns, as well as the 'petal' crosses that take on straight-arm, six-arm, saltire, or multi-petal 'marigold' forms [Fig. 61]. Both forms appear to occur quite early in the cross slab tradition, though emblem-only slabs probably persist for some time longer than the geometric examples. The abstract geometric slabs almost certainly date to the late-eleventh or early-twelfth centuries, soon after the Norman Conquest and the introduction of the chevron, lozenge, and other geometric motifs into the architectural and sculptural repertoire (Zarnecki 1951, 17; Wood 2001, 3), though it should also be considered that these simple and regular designs are perhaps the most likely

to be used and adopted by woodcarvers in their first forays into stone carving. The fourteen abstract geometric examples occur at eight churches, and their distribution is limited to the northern part of the riding [Fig. 62]. Most of these slabs occur in Cleveland and Richmond, though there is a possible one at Lastingham, in the very north of Ryedale. Instead of being limited to a local area, these seem to be a slab type primarily associated with relatively marginal, high-elevation land. All of the churches, except for Northallerton and Crathorne, lie in the Cleveland Hills, the Pennine Ridge, or the North York Moors, and Kildale, Stanwick, and Forcett, three of the most remote parishes, each have three abstract geometric slabs. The distribution of these geometric slabs is indeed unusual, and no clear explanation immediately presents itself. It cannot be that geometric slabs were being produced solely out of a lack of knowledge about other cross slab styles, as more popular and widespread styles like bracelet heads and cross patees appear in abundance at Kildale, Stanwick, and Forcett. It may instead be related to social and cultural issues that will become more clear as relationships between the various types of evidence are analyzed.

The final overall type of slab is the 'emblem-only' style, which is found on at least 19 slabs in the North Riding, and appears to be evenly distributed across the sample area, with one found in Catterick, three in Richmond, four in Bulmer, five in Ryedale, and six in Cleveland [Fig. 63]. Comparatively, only three of West Yorkshire's 185 slabs (Ryder 1991, 66), and only six (possibly eight) of County Durham's 550 (Ryder 1985), featured only an emblem. The Durham figures are particularly interesting, given Ryder's observation that emblem-only slabs are more common in more northerly areas, becoming more popular close to the Scottish border, and quite common in Scotland (Ryder 1991, 61). In this case the more southerly North Riding outstrips Durham in the use of emblem-only slabs. Of the nineteen North Yorkshire slabs, eleven featured a sword, though in three cases it was paired with other emblems, once with a bow and arrow, once with a spear, and once with a book. The other designs were three croziers, another bow, a chalice, a pair of scissors (*not* shears, unusually), and a knife or dagger. Though 233 slabs and fragments throughout the whole of

the North Riding feature at least one emblem, slabs were adjudged to be ‘emblem-only’ designs when no cross was visible, or when the emblem or emblems appeared to be the primary, central focus of the monument, apparently replacing the customary cross.

#### 5.4.2 Secondary emblems

Generally, the popularity of secondary emblems is a feature of northern England’s funerary sculpture. Over 50% of slabs in Durham (Ryder 1985, 17) and 33% of West Yorkshire slabs (Ryder 1991, 61) possess them. This is in contrast to the Midlands (below the Trent) and South, where far fewer secondary emblems, and far fewer slabs overall, have been found (Butler 1965, 134). There was only one slab with a secondary emblem in Jonathan Finch’s survey of Norfolk (Finch 2000, 31), and Lawrence Butler notes that emblems occur on between 1% and 3% of slabs in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire (Butler 1987, 247).

**Table 9: Occurrence of secondary emblems on cross slabs**

	Slabs with military emblems	Slabs with female emblems	Slabs with priest emblems	Slabs with trade/ occupation	Slabs with crosses/ roundels	No. with emblems	Total slabs
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	6	1	3	0	1	11 (26%)	43
<b>Catterick</b>	24	11	11	4	0	42 (46%)	92
<b>Cleveland</b>	46	12	7	7	4	67 (28%)	240
<b>Richmond</b>	66	23	11	10	5	101 (45%)	223
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	4	0	3	3	2	13 (12%)	105
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>234 (33%)</b>	<b>703</b>

At least 33% of North Yorkshire’s slabs bear emblems, and that number may originally have been greater, considering the number of fragments that are now too incomplete to determine the original design. The table above shows the frequency of emblem slabs and the percentage of the total number of monuments, as well as the incidence of the most common secondary emblems and their locations. It should be remembered that



many slabs have multiple emblems, so a slab with blacksmith tools and a sword, for example, will be counted once among the military emblems, and once among the occupational emblems. Slabs with two emblems of the same class (e.g. sword and shield, chalice and paten) will only appear once in that category. The main categories are: 1) military emblems, including swords, shields, axes, knives, daggers, and one instance each of a war hammer and a spear; 2) probable female emblems, mainly shears and keys; 3) priestly emblems, including books, chalices, patens, croziers, mitres, and hands in benediction or blessing; 4) trade or occupation emblems, chiefly the hammers, tongs, and horseshoes of the blacksmith; the hammers, chisels, and squares of the mason or carpenter; and a few other emblems which may be tools; and 5) roundels and crosses, which are often marigolds, saltires, petal-crosses, and cross patees, and almost certainly serve as additional religious symbolism on the cross slab.

Slabs with emblems are widely distributed across the riding, though they are obviously concentrated in the western and northern regions [Fig. 64]. Bulmer, which has far fewer monuments overall, unsurprisingly features low numbers of secondary emblems, but the lack of emblem slabs in Ryedale, where there is a substantial corpus of cross slabs, is very unusual. Secondary emblems are generally more common in northerly areas, so it may be a matter of regional preference, but it is notable that the bulk of the variation lies in the disparity of military emblems. The fact that these symbols are so overwhelmingly prevalent in the border regions of the Honour of Richmond and Cleveland, particularly in the castle-rich and presumably heavily subinfeudated northwestern areas of the riding, suggests that the patterning could be closely related to social and tenorial pressures, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The most common emblem by far is the sword, which appears on 141 slabs, and undoubtedly denotes men. In many cases, the sword is a likely symbol of elite or knightly rank, but on some examples, the emblem is found paired with others (trade/farming implements) that suggest men of humbler status. The sword is often paired with other

emblems, and while these symbols are often military, most frequently the shield (e.g. Hauxwell 3, 7), the sword is occasionally paired with symbols denoting a trade, such as a blacksmith (e.g. Well 3, Hutton Magna 1). There is one pairing of a sword with a chalice, on the late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth century slab Hornby 1, and on Thornton Steward 2, from the later-fourteenth century, there is an unusual combination of military and ecclesiastical imagery. A shield lies atop a sword in the normal manner, but on the shield are three chalices with indeterminate objects, perhaps eucharistic hosts, inside. While it could be a rebus of a secular lord's name (e.g. three cocks for Sawcock, East Harlsey 1), it is perhaps more likely to be an ecclesiastical coat of arms or a priest displaying knightly rank or lineage (Hadley 2001, 147) [Fig. 65].

The second most popular emblem is a pair of shears, which occurs on 45 different slabs. The shears are generally taken to be the symbol of a woman, and the appearance of shears on a double-cross slab (East Harlsey 1), on which the other emblem is a sword and shield, can be taken as some confirmation of its meaning. This is further strengthened by the appearance of shears on the fourteenth-century Wycliffe 1 and twelfth-century East Harlsey 2, which both have inscriptions specifically mentioning women. Following shears in popularity are the emblems of the priest, which are most commonly found as chalices or books, and with the croziers and mitres obviously indicating a priest, an abbot, or a bishop. These often appear individually, especially croziers and chalices, but are also frequently paired, such as the book and chalice on Kirklington 2, and the clasped book, chalice, and paten on Kirkleavington 28.

Other weapon emblems, such as daggers, axes, and spears, occur on North Riding slabs in much lower frequencies than swords. The bow appears five times, though it is unclear whether the emblem is military, related to the occupation of forester or hunt official, or simply representative of the elite pastime of hunting [Fig. 66]. The presence of hunting horns paired with bows at both Kirby Ravensworth 31 and Bowes 6 indicates that forestry or hunting is more likely than a military significance, and a horn appears on its own on

Aysgarth 2 and Romaldekirk 31. However, the symbolism of bows and bugles is certainly not incompatible with the lordly, military ethos. A fourteenth-century effigy at Pershore (Worcs) features a knight in full armour, with sword, shield, and a horn in his right hand (Coss 1993, 76) [Fig. 67]. Peter Coss argues that this was the effigy of a knight-forester, indicating the important service aspects of knighthood which still existed in the fourteenth century (Coss 1993, 72). In certain cases, well-regarded non-noble huntsmen could aspire to the rank of squire, and presumably that of knight, by virtue of their close involvement with elite society and their intimate knowledge and skill in a pastime that was of great symbolic importance to the ethos and identity of lordship (Almond 2003, 120). However, it may also be that the commemorated knight felt that hunting was as important an aspect of the elite ethos as military service, and chose to have that represented on his monument. It is likely that whether the slabs commemorate knightly hunters or professional foresters or huntsmen, they pertain to members of the higher social ranks.

Spatially, the distribution of the seven hunting emblem slabs is not clearly meaningful, though they are certainly concentrated in the far west of the North Riding [Fig. 68]. None of the slabs are found in the main area of royal forest land, the Forest of Galtres, which covered much of Bulmer, but the concentration in the remote west may bear some significance. In the Pennine moorlands, there were vast areas set aside for the hunting of deer, and there were also the forests of Wensleydale, centred on Middleham, Bishopdale, and Coverdale (Dormor 2003, 79). It is worth noting that hunting emblems are particularly common on slabs in Cumbria as well (five examples) (Ryder 2005, 19), where there would have been ample open land for hunting. Perhaps significant is that castles are found more frequently within the western half of the North Riding as well, and Kirby Ravensworth, Bowes, and Melsonby churches are all located very close to castles. While the pastime of hunting or the occupation of forester were certainly not limited to one region, they may have been more prevalent or important in the western North Riding because of the probable park-land and lordly culture associated with a castle-rich landscape. Hunting and its associated

trappings may thus have become a more obvious component of identity there than elsewhere.

The emblem of a key or keys appear on four slabs, and on the double slab at Forcett the use of a key apparently signifies a woman, a trend that has been noted in other surveys. In County Durham, Ryder found a key in conjunction with a pair of shears seven of the eight times that the emblem occurred (Ryder 1985, 25), and Butler thought that the instances of keys on Peak District slabs may have indicated female burial as well (Butler 1965, 134). Obviously trade-oriented emblems in North Yorkshire seem to be limited to blacksmiths and masons (e.g. Stanwick 22, Scarborough 1), yet the pair of scissors on Kirby Wiske 1 may be the emblem of a cloth worker. There are also a few other indeterminate emblems, such as staffs and possible tools, that could be related to occupation (Middleham 4, Whitby 3 and 4) [Fig. 69]. Roundels with secondary crosses or marigolds appear on twelve slabs, often with multiple roundels on a single slab. There are also a few other emblems that appear only once or very occasionally, such as a glove and hawk, a horse head, and even an indeterminate fish/alligator-like creature on the very unusual Stanwick 38 [Fig. 70].

While emblems appear on slabs throughout the medieval period, they only appear in significant numbers from the middle of the twelfth century, and reach a peak of popularity in the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries, mirroring the overall trajectory of cross slab monuments. Predictably, the bulk of the earliest emblems are swords and shears, probably representing lords and their wives, with a few priestly emblems first appearing in the middle of the twelfth century. Secondary crosses and marigold roundels also appear fairly early, and may be related to the geometric patterning found on contemporary Norman architecture and some grave slabs. Emblems began to become truly widespread in the late-twelfth century, when trade symbols started to appear, and the use of military emblems increased steadily. The high rates of military emblems suggest that even though the range of patrons was expanding, it seems that the lordly and knightly elite were responsible for the bulk of cross slab patronage throughout the medieval period.

Table 10: Cross slab emblems by date

	Late-11 <sup>th</sup> / early-12 <sup>th</sup>	Other 12 <sup>th</sup>	Late-12 <sup>th</sup> / early-13 <sup>th</sup>	Other 13 <sup>th</sup>	Late-13 <sup>th</sup> / early-14 <sup>th</sup>	Other 14 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup> / 16 <sup>th</sup>	Uncertain date
<b>Military emblems</b>	3	11	25	22	30	17	8	30
<b>Female emblems</b>	2	8	6	5	12	2	5	7
<b>Priest emblems</b>	0	2	7	5	7	2	6	6
<b>Trade emblems</b>	0	0	3	1	4	7	1	8
<b>Crosses/ roundels</b>	0	4	3	2	2	0	2	0
<b>Total emblems</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>51</b>

Some have argued that if only a well-established and defined elite was commemorating, their need for identifying emblems would be obviated, as the very act of commemoration was sufficiently distinctive (Finch 2000, 31). This may well have been true in areas of the country where stone was less prevalent, cross slab production was more limited, and centralized workshops provided most monuments (see Butler 1957, 1965), and might explain the general lack of emblems on southern slabs. But the range and frequency of emblems, even in early periods when commemoration was likely to be restricted, shows that this was not the case in the North Riding. Peter Ryder speculates that the frequency of secondary emblems on slabs in the north may be due to the widespread use of locally, rather than centrally, produced monuments (Ryder 1991, 61). In the Midlands and South, where centralized production and distribution from workshops like Barnack was more common, impersonal monuments would have been the norm. Butler has noted that in his study of the East Midlands, none of the slabs from Barnack or Purbeck bore secondary emblems, except for a very few which had emblems added after delivery, plainly carved in a different style and hand (Butler 1965, 134). Indeed, two slabs in the North Riding which are obviously imported from marble workshops, Old Malton 1 and Spennithorne 1, bear out this claim. They are made of Purbeck and Frosterley marble, respectively, and both have simple, standard cross botonne designs and no secondary emblems. Given the widespread

distribution and frequency of emblems on the North Riding's slabs, these signifiers must have been a popular, important, and meaningful aspect of commemoration in the region.

#### 5.4.3 Densities and distribution patterns

North Yorkshire's 703 cross slabs at 137 churches are the highest numbers produced by a single county in any cross slab survey that has been conducted to date (cf. figures from Butler 1987, 247; Ryder 1985, 1991) [Fig. 71]. County Durham is most comparable, with 550 slabs at 75 sites, and West Yorkshire has 185 slabs at 47 churches. Durham has an extremely high average density, with 7.3 monuments per site, but the North Riding is not far behind, with 5.1 slabs per site, and West Yorkshire (n.b. *not* the entire West Riding) has a density of 3.9 slabs per site. It should also be noted that the Durham survey includes monasteries, castle chapels, and the very large collection of monuments at Durham cathedral, sites of a type that have not been included in the North Yorkshire survey, given this project's focus on patronage in the rural, parochial church. Unfortunately, it is impossible to perform such calculations on the cross slabs of the East Riding, as the only systematic survey (Gittos and Gittos 1989) was presented as a general overview rather than a full catalogue. However, J.E. Morris' study of the riding's churches and monuments revealed that only 41 of 188 churches (22%) contained cross slabs (Morris 1906), clearly demonstrating that the overall number of monuments and the probable density of monuments per site is considerably lower in the East than in the North Riding.

**Table 11: Number and density of cross slabs**

	No. of sites with cross slabs	No. of cross slabs	Average density of monuments/site
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	21	43	2.0
<b>Catterick</b>	22	92	4.2
<b>Cleveland</b>	37	240	6.5
<b>Richmond</b>	25	223	8.9
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	32	105	3.3
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>5.1</b>

The variations in density by deanery are not as sharply defined as in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, with Bulmer/Boroughbridge, Catterick, and Ryedale/Dickering all having averages of between two and four slabs per site [Fig. 72]. Cleveland is slightly higher at 6.5 monuments per site, and Richmond is the highest with an 8.9 average. Richmond is the most exceptional deanery for cross slabs in all of the North Riding, with 223 monuments at only 25 sites. It has nearly the same number of monuments as Cleveland, but at one-third less sites, and Richmond has far fewer churches overall. The slabs per site density is inflated by the large numbers of slabs at Forcett (29), Kirby Ravensworth (33), and Stanwick (38), but nevertheless cross slabs are encountered in high numbers throughout the deanery. Four more churches have ten or more monuments, and a further nine have between five and ten, and surprisingly even the churches deep in the dales all have between seven and ten monuments. Cleveland also has an extremely high incidence of cross slabs, both in sites and density. Many churches in the deanery have particularly high concentrations of monuments, especially Northallerton (21), Kildale (19), Ingleby Greenhow (21), and Kirklevington (32), and seven other churches also have more than ten slabs.

Catterick and Ryedale/Dickering have average densities, with no particularly high concentrations. Several churches in Catterick have more than five slabs, but none has more than ten, and in Ryedale, only three churches have more than six slabs — Amotherby (7), Kirby Misperton (9), and Slingsby (11). In Ryedale/Dickering the slabs are spread quite evenly throughout the deanery, and this is generally true of Catterick as well. However, in contrast to the other western deanery of Richmond, monuments are not so common in Catterick's far western reaches. Of the far western churches, only Aysgarth has a single slab. Bulmer has the lowest monuments per site ratio in the whole of the riding, and while the slabs are fairly evenly distributed spatially, there are only two churches with more than three slabs (Foston with 6; Myton with 4). Overall, the vast majority of the North Riding's churches possess less than 10 monuments, but it is notable that the four churches with

exceptionally high numbers of slabs are all located very close to the border with Durham. While the Ryedale and Catterick churches provide a few examples of high slab numbers in more southerly areas, there is a distinct trend in the North Riding which equates more northerly locations with higher rates of cross slab occurrence.

While it is feasible that these numerical distributions could be due solely to factors of survival, it is highly unlikely that the patterns would be so geographically concurrent if that were so. Also, if survival were such a pivotal factor, it is unlikely that the distribution of sites that have cross slabs (discounting how many they have) would be so even across the whole of the sample area. Indeed, there are no real gaps in the spatial distribution of cross slabs apart from the North York Moors and the upper east coast, where church provision on the whole was more sparse due to the rough terrain and unproductive land. Also, the 41 sites with a sole cross slab that are scattered fairly evenly across the North Riding are an important indicator. Even distributions and low densities of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture have been said to indicate an accurate representation of the original provision (Stocker 2000, 180), and the high number of single slab/site survivals across North Yorkshire also seems to preclude random rates of destruction or loss.

The low density of slabs throughout Bulmer may provide the best evidence for strong cross slab survival and accurate patterning. If most churches once had far more slabs than those that now survive, churches might retain these high numbers of slabs if they were reused, and thus preserved, in late-medieval fabric. These slabs are then only discovered during rebuilds or restorations, such as at Brancepeth (County Durham), where nearly 100 slabs built into the fifteenth-century clerestory were discovered when the church burnt down in 1998 (Ryder and Williams 2004, 121). However, Bulmer's high rate of Victorian rebuilds and low rate of cross slab incidence contradicts this argument, and supports suggestions that what now survives is a fair representation of what once existed (e.g. Stocker 2000; Finch 2000). Particularly, it puts prime importance on social influences, which varied from region



to region and even church to church, as the controlling factor for the number of monuments at a site.

#### 5.4.4 Chronological patterning

In addition to the spatial patterns, there are also recognizable patterns of cross slab provision by date [Fig. 73]. The graph shows a steady rise in cross slab production from the Saxo-Norman monuments of the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries, through the main part of the twelfth century, and into one of the highest periods of production, the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth centuries. This period was characterized by the flourishing of the bracelet-cross design, and has been cited as a high point of production in other regions (Butler 1965, 95). In West Yorkshire, Peter Ryder notes that cross slab production seems to peak around the year 1300 (Ryder 1991, 56), and this is true also for the North Riding sample, seen in the large numbers of wheel-head, interlaced-diamond, and clustered foliate crosses. The fairly steep drop off between the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth and the late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth production peaks should probably be more level than it appears on the graph. This steep drop will be due partly to the necessarily broad stylistic dating techniques, particularly the difficulty in assessing the exact date of a bracelet cross-head if it is unaccompanied by other diagnostic decoration.

The use of the bracelet cross does seem to have been most common in the last quarter of the twelfth and the first quarter of the thirteenth centuries (Ryder 1991, 52), but its appearance with mid/late-thirteenth century diagnostic elements such as fleur-de-lis and ogee arches (e.g. Kirkby Fleetham 1) shows that it had enduring popularity throughout the century. Because of a lack of diagnostic dating features, it is certain that some of the bracelet crosses which have been assigned to the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth blanket date actually belong to the later years of the thirteenth century. The sharp drop-off into the later-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, appears to be an accurate pattern. While the use of cross slabs persisted for far longer in the North than in southern areas, with slabs

(especially floor slabs) being used at the same time as effigies and brasses, rather than being replaced by them, the slow-down in production after the early-fourteenth century has been noted in West Yorkshire as well (Ryder 1991, 56). Nevertheless, the 64 slabs that date from the later-fourteenth to sixteenth centuries show that cross slabs continued to be viewed as a monument of high status throughout the late Middle Ages, probably more so if they were placed internally. They were obviously sometimes chosen over effigies or brasses by such late-medieval patrons as knightly lords (e.g. Kildale 1-4) and abbots (e.g. Richmond 1).

When the date distribution is divided by deanery, interesting spatial patterns of commemoration begin to emerge [Fig. 74]. As seen from the North Riding graph, late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth century slabs are the most prevalent in the sample, and this is mainly due to the particularly high concentrations in Cleveland, Richmond, and to some extent, Catterick. Richmond and Cleveland, undoubtedly due to their high number of slabs generally, are the only deaneries to have relatively high levels of cross slab production across every date range. Cleveland drops off somewhat in the thirteenth, leaving Richmond as the only deanery with a significant number of solidly datable thirteenth-century slabs. However, Cleveland is the only deanery with large amounts of fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth-century work, which seems to have fallen off quite sharply in the other deaneries. Cleveland and Richmond also have very high levels of late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century commemoration, with Ryedale also contributing a substantial amount.

**Table 12: Cross slab distribution by date**

	Late-11 <sup>th</sup> / early-12 <sup>th</sup>	Mid/ later-12 <sup>th</sup>	Late-12 <sup>th</sup> / early-13 <sup>th</sup>	Mid- 13 <sup>th</sup>	Late-13 <sup>th</sup> / early-14 <sup>th</sup>	Mid/ late-14 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup> / 16 <sup>th</sup>	Uncertain date	Total slabs
<b>Bulmer/Boro</b>	1	3	6	8	10	1	0	14	43
<b>Catterick</b>	1	11	13	11	32	5	5	14	91
<b>Cleveland</b>	13	55	37	11	44	16	11	53	240
<b>Richmond</b>	10	18	46	32	47	13	5	52	223
<b>Ryedale/Dic</b>	9	13	25	10	20	7	2	19	105
<b>N. Riding</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>703</b>

The patterns of pre-thirteenth century commemoration are of the most interest, and several North Riding deaneries exhibit high levels of early commemoration. Bulmer has the fewest, with only six possible twelfth-century slabs, mostly late-twelfth bracelet heads, and only one eleventh/early-twelfth century monument, a standing marker at Felixkirk.

Catterick's twelfth-century monuments are also chiefly bracelet heads, but there is also an interesting group at Hauxwell and Finghall (and Middleton Tyas in Richmond) of steeply coped slabs with gables, ridge crosses, and frequently military emblems that can be dated to some time in the twelfth century [Fig. 75]. Though there are some early-twelfth century examples in the deanery, there is little Saxo-Norman work. Even the early pieces are fully part of the cross slab tradition, with only the strange standing cross at Wath serving as a possible transitional example. Ryedale displays a similar distribution to Catterick, with much twelfth-century work, found chiefly in late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century bracelet crosses, but also in a significant number of cross patees and petal crosses. Here again, Saxo-Norman transitional monuments are limited, with Ryedale displaying little commemoration to compare with its strong building traditions at this date. Strangely, the only four transitional examples occur at Bilsdale, a small and remote chapelry in the moorlands above Helsmley.

Richmond and Cleveland obviously possess the highest numbers of twelfth-century and earlier work, with Cleveland in particular having the highest concentration of Saxo-Norman and twelfth-century monuments in the riding. In Cleveland the cross patee is a common motif, seen on both recumbent slabs and on a substantial number of standing markers, but as in most places, the bracelet head dominates the late-twelfth century. Richmond also has a strong representation of twelfth-century monuments, with many bracelet crosses and several examples dating to the late-eleventh/early-twelfth centuries. Several of these early examples are located in the remote parishes of the far west near the border with Durham, and many can be placed firmly in the post-Conquest period because of decorative motifs (e.g. the geometric slabs at Forcett and Durham). Generally, early

monuments, like cross slabs in general, seem to be more prevalent closer to the Tees and the Durham border, but whether this is simply a case of 'northern' versus 'southern' fashion, influential social and economic factors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or perhaps both, is yet to be seen.

This large and disparate collection of evidence will be analyzed and discussed in depth in the following chapters, but the results presented above demonstrate the overwhelming amounts of useful data that are available to the scholar of churches and commemoration, as well as the great potential that these buildings and monuments have for illuminating the social, political, and economic currents that defined the years of the tenth to thirteenth centuries, and irrevocably shaped later-medieval society. From all regions of the North Riding there are significant amounts of pre-thirteenth century evidence from documentary, architectural, and commemorative sources, which can and must be examined in conjunction in order to formulate informed ideas about the character, use, and impact of tenth to thirteenth-century churches and monuments on both the people who patronized them, and on those who experienced these acts of patronage. When these strands of data are combined, both spatially and chronologically, they can reveal when and where elements moved in unison, as has already been seen in the Ryedale and Catterick clusters, and when they did not, as in the Northallerton Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture group. The question of why these patterns appear as they do, the relevance they have to our understanding of parochial and commemorative development, and the relationships between material culture and society, will be the focal points of the following chapters.

Our understanding of Yorkshire and the north of England during the turbulent eleventh and twelfth centuries is a subject that has too long relied on the documentary evidence of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, Domesday Book, and the other administrative and literary records that the Normans so prodigiously produced. An over-reliance on these sources has often resulted in a view of the period that focuses on the actions of kings and the very high elite, and the building of monasteries, cathedrals, and major castles. These

structures were undeniably affected by the Conquest, but the neglect of less prominent sources of evidence like England's parish churches and minor funerary monuments has furthered the assumption of an irreparable break in social, cultural, and political life in 1066. This outlook has shaped the archaeological and historical approach to the Saxo-Norman and Anglo-Norman periods for too long, forcing us to view them as two distinct entities rather than the deeply connected transition period that they were. The evidence presented above allows us the opportunity to re-examine Yorkshire at this crucial time, reopening the study of the entire Saxo-Norman period to a social, cultural, and material analysis that goes beyond the history of great men and the art history of great buildings, and helps not only to redefine and clarify the concepts of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman transitions, but also to illuminate how they were made manifest in the churches, monuments, and the lives of the people.

## ***Chapter 6: The Development of Local Churches and Churchyards: an analysis of the North Riding evidence***

Through an analysis of the architectural and commemorative evidence presented in the previous chapter, the developmental trajectory of the North Riding's churches and churchyards in the early Middle Ages can now be traced. In order to gain an insight into the value of churches and monuments as socially generated material culture, and to understand the ways in which they helped to create and maintain the structures of medieval cultural, spiritual, and social life, we must first understand the trajectory of their development, and the part that human agency, in the form of ecclesiastical patronage, played in it. Thus, this detailed examination aims to clarify the processes of parochial formation, church building in both wood and stone, and commemorative practice in the tenth to twelfth centuries, and put forth explanations as to why and how churches and monuments developed as they did in the North Riding.

It was proposed that the tenth to twelfth centuries be chosen for study because they appear to be particularly formative and consequential years in the political, tenurial, and ecclesiastical development of northeastern England. But since all imposed chronological boundaries are in some sense artificial, it has been stressed throughout that developments that occurred both before and after the centuries under discussion are also of consequence, and must be addressed if we are to accurately situate these churches and monuments within the chronological continuum of religious material culture. Though the primary focus lies on the architectural and commemorative evidence dating from c. 900-1200, an analysis within the context of the preceding and succeeding periods should help to demonstrate, in material terms, the fundamental importance of the Saxo-Norman and Anglo-Norman eras to parochialization, local ecclesiastical patronage, elite burial practice and commemoration, and the establishment of the parish church as a focal point of the medieval manorial settlement.

Also, in light of the study's defined geographical parameters of the North Riding, the analysis will propose a regional refinement of the overarching chronologies and models that previously have been proposed for the development of early medieval churches and funerary monuments (e.g. Blair 1988b; Blair and Sharpe 1992; Butler 1965; Gem 1988; Lang 1991, 2001; Ryder 1985, 1991), as well as assess these models' usefulness as interpretative tools when wider questions of social and cultural meaning are posed. Once the developmental processes of churches and monuments in the North Riding are understood in greater detail, and their location in the topographical and social landscape is clarified, the analysis can then be expanded beyond the initial geographical parameters to encompass the role of local churches and monuments in the socio-political sphere of the early medieval Northeast, and how they compare with developments taking place in other parts of England.

The documentary and material evidence for churches and commemorative monuments was presented in detail by type in the last chapter, but it has been argued that while each form of evidence is useful in its own right, they must be integrated for a more comprehensive understanding of the medieval local church. In isolation, the documentary, architectural, and commemorative data of the North Riding provide important developmental timelines which form fundamental bases to any wider questions which may be asked. But each type also has inherent weaknesses, and on their own, would result in significant lacunae if not supplemented with the other forms of evidence. As will be shown below in sections on the pre-1100 evidence, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the later-medieval period, developmental timelines of architecture and commemoration must be analyzed in conjunction, and their chronological, spatial, and topographical distributions combined and compared, in order to reveal meaningful patterns of patronage which inform our understanding of the social significance of church building and commemoration throughout the time period.

## 6.1 Pre-1100 evidence

As was discussed in chapter 5, the North Riding's churches exhibit substantial evidence for the period pre-dating c. 1100. Domesday Book records, architectural fabric, and funerary monuments all appear in sufficient numbers to indicate that local church and churchyard development was well advanced in the pre- and immediately post-Conquest period. However, if considered in isolation, these forms of evidence produce an incomplete picture of the extent and distribution of early local churches (cf. Lang 1991, 2001; Maxwell 1961; Taylor and Taylor 1965). This study of the North Riding redresses these imbalances of evidence, and in the process, generates specific examples of church development which establish the importance of integrating sources. In many cases, looking across the individual evidence types reveals important correlations of expenditure on monuments and architecture in the local church.

### 6.1.1 Categories of evidence and overarching patterns

In the pre-1100 period, Domesday Book references and Saxo-Norman architecture are the most incontrovertible proof for the existence of churches, but because of the inconsistency of Domesday recording (e.g. Holdsworth 1986, 59), and the probable loss of much above-ground Saxo-Norman architecture to later medieval rebuilding, they are comparatively scarce. Thus, where the pre-Conquest sculptural tradition was strong, as in the North Riding, early sculpture is often the most prevalent surviving evidence. This appears to be the case for much of northeastern England, as well. In one specific example from the Tees Valley in northern Yorkshire and southern Durham, 37 churches possessed Anglian or Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, but only eleven of those had any other form of pre-Conquest evidence (Morris 1989, 153). The same pattern appears in West Yorkshire and may also hold true in Lincolnshire (Everson and Stocker 1999, 1, 23; Ryder 1993, 1, 14), though it should be noted that in the East Riding, Domesday Book recording is



extensive, and the 56 church references far outnumber the nineteen sculpture sites (cf. Allinson 1976, 58; Lang 1991).

In addition to Domesday Book and architecture, there are three types of sculpture which have been considered as evidence for pre-1100 churches — Anglian monuments and architectural fragments (seventh to ninth centuries), Anglo-Scandinavian funerary sculpture (tenth/early-eleventh centuries), and Saxo-Norman cross slabs (late-eleventh/very early-twelfth century). But as with Domesday Book and pre-1100 architecture, some caveats must be added to the distributions of sculptural evidence. With both early sculpture and architecture, there is no way of telling how much evidence has been obscured or lost by later-medieval and modern activity. Many churches that now appear wholly late-medieval or modern may once have had pre-1100 evidence, and some may have evidence that is as yet undiscovered. Sculpture is particularly vulnerable, as it is movable, and also very likely to be reused in fabric as convenient pieces of stone (Stocker and Everson 1990, 87). Many pieces were discovered and displayed during the widespread Victorian renovations, but late-medieval builders were not always so conscientious. In North Yorkshire, Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture has frequently been reused in Saxo-Norman or early-twelfth century fabric (e.g. Sinnington [Ryedale], Kirby Hill [Boroughbridge], Terrington [Bulmer]), and due to the frequent rebuilding of Saxo-Norman and early-Norman structural fabric in the later Middle Ages, Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture may never come to light unless excavations or restorations are carried out (e.g. Sockburn [Richmond], VCH NR I, 450).

When unaccompanied by stone architectural evidence, sculptural monuments are not unassailable evidence for a contemporary church. However, it seems that some Anglian pieces were churchyard crosses or other markers of worship sites, such as the very large standing cross at Lastingham, which did have a church from at the time (Lang 1991, 168; Stocker 2000, 193). Nevertheless, most Anglian stone sculpture, and all post-tenth century work, is funerary, indicating Christian burial and commemorative practice which was probably carried out under the aegis of an attached church. Funerary sculpture of the

seventh to ninth centuries seems to have been restricted primarily to religious elite or special 'saints' burials,' such as the two elaborate eighth/ninth-century slabs at Kirkdale (Lang 1991, 162-163; Stocker 2000, 193), and these would surely have been connected with a religious building nearby. After the ninth century, commemoration was no longer the preserve of ecclesiastics, and was frequently a monument to a member of the secular elite. But it is highly likely that lay burial in the tenth and eleventh centuries was also connected to a contemporary church and priest (Morris 1989, 153), both for the performance of the funeral rite, and for the collection of the mandatory 'soul-scot' burial fees (Loyn 2000, 119; Owen 1981, 3; Pounds 2000, 36).

It has been proposed that the presence of tenth and eleventh-century monuments at known Anglian-foundation churches might indicate survival of the hallowed ground of the churchyard, but without an active, staffed church alongside (Lang 1991, 27). While this is possible, the explanation owes something to the assumption that Anglian churches were destroyed by invading Scandinavians, and ignores the possibility that these churches may have been appropriated directly by elite landholders, or refounded as private churches with no loss of rights (Pounds 2000, 23). Indeed, in laws of the tenth and eleventh centuries, a private church with a graveyard was a standard designation in the hierarchy of churches, ranked beneath superior churches, which had burial rights and commanded dues, and above field chapels (*feldcirca*), which were dependent, owed dues to a mother church, and did not have graveyards (Lennard 1959, 299; Owen 1976, 66). There is no explicit mention of graveyards separate from churches in these laws, and while this does not mean they did not exist, it seems that an attached church and churchyard was the common arrangement in the seventh/eighth century, and continued once the proliferation of local churches began. Though it provides no evidence about the accompanying church structure, early funerary sculpture can be considered fairly firm evidence for the existence of a pre-1100 church on or nearby the site, as well as a form of material culture that was closely related to the founders and patrons of any attendant church building (Stocker 2000, 197).

In the northeast, sculpture of the Anglian period has come to be considered not only a firm indicator of contemporary worship sites, but in many cases it has also been presumed to mark the sites of collegiate 'old minster' churches (Cambridge 1984; Morris 1989, 133-139; Ryder 1993, 12). Though it has been argued that sites with Anglian sculpture did not always indicate a mother church, but perhaps a subsidiary church within the minster system (e.g. Pickles 2003), it is generally agreed that these churches were served by religious communities.<sup>8</sup> Anglian sculpture seems likely to be linked to minsters both because of the usually religious nature of its iconography (in contrast with the secular themes found on ninth/tenth-century monuments), as well as the elaborate architectural fragments which are occasionally found with Anglian monuments (Lang 1991, 147, 216). These pieces do not indicate that all minsters were built in stone, but it does appear that many identifiable minster churches did have stone fabric from a very early date, perhaps from their foundation. While it may be that stone architecture was simply the common medium for churches at that time, the prevalence of stone in these centuries as opposed to the rest of the pre-1100 period may have much to do with the comparatively low number of churches, and also the wealth available to religious institutions. No Anglian stone churches still stand in the North Riding, but judging from the remains of door jambs, baluster shafts, and other surviving fragments, they were substantial and highly decorative structures.

Unlike in the Anglian period, there is no architecture datable to the tenth century in the North Riding to accompany the extensive amounts of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture. There are 82 churches which have tenth or eleventh-century sculpture, but only nine of those also have stone architectural evidence pre-dating the twelfth century. The vast majority of sculpture dates to the tenth century, but there is no extant architectural evidence that is likely to pre-date c. 1050. The earliest evidence is the group of eleventh-century Anglo-

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<sup>8</sup>The semantics of the terms minster and *monasterium* have been debated thoroughly (e.g. Blair 1995; Cambridge and Rollason 1995; Foot 1992; Hadley 2001), and it has been widely acknowledged that all 'minsters' were not necessarily alike. The term is used here to denote seventh to ninth-century churches housing pastoral religious communities, regardless of any individual church's status within the Anglian ecclesiastical hierarchy (after Foot 1992, 225), which lies outside the purview of this study.

Scandinavian sundials mentioned in the previous chapter (see above, 109), and though it is difficult to date them precisely, they probably belong to the second half of the eleventh century rather than to the tenth-century height of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture (Lang 1991, 2001). Unlike Anglian minsters, it seems that the majority of tenth and eleventh-century churches were either built in wood, or were of such modestly proportioned and undecorated stone fabric that their remains were easily swept away in later rebuildings (see Wharram Percy's mid-tenth/mid-eleventh century phase, Beresford and Hurst 1990, 61). This may in part be due to changing architectural fashion and cultural influences, as churches in Scandinavia were built in wood well into the Middle Ages. But it may also be that in comparison with religious institutions, local elite patrons possessed relatively minor wealth, and may have lacked access to large quarries and sufficiently skilled masons. These factors, coupled with the sheer number of new churches being brought into existence, may have resulted in the abandonment of stone building as seen in the Anglian era.

In the absence of comprehensive excavations, which are the only way to firmly establish the early sequences of church building and churchyard burial, an integration of the documentary, architectural, and commemorative evidence discussed above is necessary to assess North Riding church provision and development before *c.* 1100 [Fig. 76]. There are 48 sites in the riding which have a church, a priest, or a church and priest in Domesday Book, and 34 churches which have architectural fabric or fragments that indicate a stone church before the twelfth century. When these two forms of evidence are combined, there are 73 churches with pre-twelfth century documentary or architectural evidence, accounting for 29% of the medieval total of 254 churches. There are also 81 North Riding churches (32%) which possess Anglian or Anglo-Scandinavian monumental sculpture,<sup>9</sup> and 23 (9%)

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<sup>9</sup> Though this is a study of local churches rather than monasteries, Whitby has been included in the tallies of churches with pre-1100 architecture and sculpture. Whitby was obviously a monastic site in the Anglian period, but its status during the Anglo-Scandinavian period is unclear, and it probably did not operate as a monastery again until the Norman refoundation (Pevsner 1966, 388). The presence of typical Anglo-Scandinavian funerary sculpture on the headland, as well as the very close physical association with the parish church, which is at least of late-eleventh/early-twelfth century date, further clouds the distinction. Though the sculpture has been said to belong to the abbey rather than the

which have Saxo-Norman cross slabs. When these churches are added to those with Domesday and architectural evidence, it appears that at least 123 North Riding churches, or 58% of its parish churches and 48% of the total medieval provision of churches and chapels, were in existence by c. 1100.

The spatial distribution of all pre-1100 evidence clearly demonstrates the advanced nature of local church development in the North Riding at the beginning of the twelfth century [Fig. 77]. Indeed, it is likely that this amount of early churches is lower than the historical reality, since the use of funerary sculpture evidence skews the pattern towards churches that had burial rights. There were undoubtedly additional churches in existence before 1100, but since they did not have burial rights or stone fabric, their numbers and distribution must unfortunately remain unknown. The distribution of churches also sheds light on the extent of settlement and manorialization in the North Riding at this time. The presence of an active church, especially the kind which would be built in stone, in use for burial, and/or recorded in Domesday Book, can usually be taken as an indicator of established, nucleated settlement (Owen 1976, 66). It is clear from the church distribution, and confirmed by Domesday records of manorial vills, that by 1100, the vast majority of the North Riding had been settled and integrated into the tenurial system. The advanced development and extensive presence of tax-valued stone churches and stone commemorative monuments also seems to contradict the picture presented by some Domesday Book scholars of a relatively bleak, economically depressed, and sparsely populated region (Darby and Maxwell 1962, 431, 433). Even if North Yorkshire was not as agriculturally prosperous or densely peopled as other areas, the highly developed system of local churches indicates that its elite were not only in touch with wider national trends of church building and commemoration, but actively and intensively pursuing them and expending significant amounts of money on church patronage.

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parish church, none is *in situ*, and all that is known for certain after the ninth century is that the pieces were in use on the headland (Lang 2001, 253).

While pre-1100 church provision was not nearly as dense as it was to become in the later Middle Ages, there are very few significant gaps in the overall coverage of the North Riding. Substantial absences are limited only to the main body of the North York Moors, most of the Pennines, and the central and southern parts of the east coast, in the deaneries of Dickering and eastern Ryedale. It has been shown in the Kesteven region of Lincolnshire that church foundation was closely tied to the agricultural landscape, with the oldest foundations on the best land. Then, as population increased and settlement spread, late-foundation churches and chapels occupied the poorer, less-favourable land (Owen 1976, 67). The topographical character of the moors and the Pennines thus goes some way toward explaining the lack of early churches, as these areas were probably settled and nucleated later than the rest of the North Riding (Harrison 1990, 19). On the coast, the steep, craggy topography of much of the area between Whitby and Scarborough may also have discouraged dense settlement to some extent. However, eastern Ryedale and Dickering appear to have been settled as early as the main part of the riding, and were no less populous than most of the region. Very specific social and political factors may have played a significant role in church foundation and development in the area, and some possible tenurial and ecclesiastical influences on the lack of early churches and monuments in eastern Ryedale and Dickering will be discussed in detail later.

Church provision had extended onto the edges of marginal land before the twelfth century, though it would take until the end of the medieval period for churches and chapels to extend into the deeper recesses of the Pennines and moors. Pre-1100 churches are found along the northern edge of the moors in the Cleveland Hills at Bilsdale, Whorlton, Westerdale and Danby, and into the western highlands at Romaldkirk, Bowes, Castle Bolton, and Aysgarth. However, the vast majority of early churches are found in the main body of the North Riding, including the whole of the Vale of York, the western and central Vale of Pickering, and the Cleveland Plain. A substantial part of the later medieval parochial system was obviously established by this time, and a comparison with the

distribution map of medieval churches shows that in most of the North Riding, post-1100 churches did not colonize new, churchless regions, but rather filled out an already-present framework [Fig. 78].

Since early-foundation churches have such close ties with primary settlement and good agricultural land, they might also be expected to be located along major communication routes of roads and waterways [Fig. 79-80]. As can be seen from the map of all the churches in the sample, the vast majority of medieval churches were located along or very nearby a road or a major or minor river. Not surprisingly, this is a relationship that was also well established in the period before 1100 [Fig. 81]. A considerable number of pre-1100 churches are found along the North Riding's medieval roads, many of which originated in the Roman period (Daniell 2003, 102). There is a particular concentration of churches on the central north-south road that runs through the Vale of York, from Boroughbridge north to Northallerton and Darlington, which takes in at least ten early churches on the North Riding portion of its route. There are also a number of churches along the main western roads. Dere Street, which runs from Boroughbridge to Catterick and then branches off to Richmond and Startforth has at least ten early churches along it. Another road running southwest from Richmond has fewer churches, but it demonstrates the antiquity of certain settlements by kinking deliberately to take in Wensley and West Witton before continuing into the West Riding dales. Though most settlements gravitated toward established routes of communication, it seems that pre-existing, important settlements might have occasionally influenced the placement of later roads.

Judging by the pattern of settlement and church placement, there were probably two other substantial roads running through Ryedale, though they are not marked on Christopher Daniell's map of medieval roads in Yorkshire (cf. Daniell 2003, 102; Lang 1991, 27). There was almost certainly a significant road running east-west between Helmsley and Scarborough, along the current line of the A170, following the northern edge of the Vale of Pickering and serving an unbroken line of settlements with early churches, including

Helmsley, Kirkdale, Kirkby Moorside, Sinnington, Middleton, and Pickering. Smaller, but also likely, is a street preserved in the parish names of Barton-le-Street and Appleton-le-Street, that ran from Malton west to Hovingham. Early churches at Old Malton, Slingsby, Appleton-le-Street, Amotherby, and Hovingham were found along its route. Both roads are present on 1787 and 1817-18 survey maps of the North Riding, though at that time the Malton road appears to have been very minor compared to the Helmsley-Scarborough one (Cary 1787; Greenwood 1834). However, the number of closely spaced churches and settlements directly along the Malton-Hovingham route suggests that it may have only lost its relative importance after the medieval period. It is unclear when the roads were first established, but they were obviously growing in importance as the Middle Ages wore on. By the late medieval period, there were at least seventeen churches and chapels along the Helmsley-Scarborough road, and ten on the Malton-Hovingham road, the majority of which had been established by *c.* 1200.

Rivers may have played an even more significant role than roads in the North Riding's early church and settlement patterns. Many early churches occur away from the paths of the major roads, but they are almost inevitably found near either major rivers or their tributaries. In fact, all but a few pre-1100 churches lie very close to a river or the coast, regardless of the presence or absence of a road. In terms of the number of churches, the most significant waterway in the riding seems to have been the River Tees. By 1100, the Tees had at least eight churches located on its banks, and by the later medieval period this number had risen to fifteen, as trade increased along the length of the river. High concentrations are also found along the Leven, Ure, Swale, and Wiske, and there are several churches along the Rye and Derwent as well. There are a number of churches all along the Wiske, but especially where it runs in parallel with the Vale of York road. The Swale flows through the important centres of Richmond and Catterick, and the Ure, which has been noted as a pre-Conquest routeway of great importance (Lang 2001, 5), serves a number of pre-1100 churches in the Wensleydale region. Not all of the Wensleydale cluster lies directly on



the river, however, with several to the north lying on a smaller tributary of the Swale. The Wensleydale church group is flanked by the Ure to the south, the Swale and its tributaries to the north, and by the two major western roads on the east, west, and north, so it is consistent that settlements and many churches were founded there from an early date.

The communications system in the central Cleveland Plain seems to have been even more dependent on waterways than other regions of the North Riding. It is surprising that a region with so many early churches appears to have had no major road apart from the Whitby-Guisborough route that cuts through the northeast of the region. Of the approximately twenty pre-1100 churches in the non-coastal areas of the Cleveland plain, only Guisborough, Ormesby, and West Acklam lie directly on the road. However, of the remainder, all but Kirkleatham, in the northeastern corner, lie directly on a major or minor river. The River Leven seems to have been the primary waterway in the area, flowing down from the Tees at Yarm into the body of the plain. Along its valley there are no less than six early churches, including Kirkleavington, Crathorne, Rudby, Stokesley, Great Ayton, and Kildale.

During the pre-1100 period, the relationship between church sites and the communications system was undergoing substantial change, as can be seen from the series of Anglian, Anglo-Scandinavian, and Saxo-Norman maps [Fig. 82-84]. The correlation between Anglian church sites and major roads and rivers is very strong, a pattern which has been noted previously with Anglian sculpture distributions in the eastern part of the North Riding (Lang 1991, 16), and in minster studies in other parts of England (Blair 1988c, 1992). All but a few Anglian churches lie directly on the chief routeways. It has been suggested that the apparent seclusion of Hackness and Lastingham may be explained by the ideals of 'Lindisfarne monasticism' that emphasized isolation (Lang 1991, 16), or else a more functional desire for inland sites less vulnerable to raiding and attack (Burton 1994, 44). Even so, Hackness lies near the confluence of a river. Given Anglian minsters' status as ecclesiastical and social foci which probably oversaw large swathes of land, and their

association with extensive, wealthy manorial centres and primary settlement on good agricultural land (Pounds 2000, 24; Owen 1976, 66), it follows that they were often located along major avenues of communication. In the tenth century, though, the pattern of church sites begins to spread out from the main thoroughfares, and this pattern of dispersion would continue and broaden even further in the eleventh century, producing the widespread coverage of churches seen by the end of that century. By c. 1100, however, even those churches that were situated away from major rivers and roads still usually lay beside minor rivers, tributaries, and presumably tracks. The evolving distribution of churches in the North Riding demonstrates the importance of topographical characteristics and routes of communication, and it is indicative of a diffusion of manorial settlement and church foundation from early centres, as the extensive manors and *parochiae* of the Anglian period disintegrated. From the tenth century onward, the riding was moving progressively towards a network of local churches tied to smaller manors, which were established in the now fragmented hinterlands of the earliest estates and religious sites.

When discussing the provision and distribution of early churches, it must be remembered that the overall pre-1100 patterns are a combination of churches with heterogeneous origin, differing foundation dates, and diverse patrons. The discussion above has focused on the churches that were in existence *at any time* between the seventh century and c. 1100, but the data can also be broken down in order to further refine the trajectory of church development. Anglian sculpture and architectural fragments do indicate churches founded in the seventh to ninth centuries, but they do not reveal whether the church was also active in either the tenth or the eleventh century, or if its status had changed by that time. Likewise, Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture suggests the existence of a church present and active for burial, and most likely worship, in the tenth century, but it does not elucidate the origin of the church, nor does it ensure that a church was still present or in use on that site c. 1100. Domesday Book and Saxo-Norman evidence provide us with information about the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries, but these churches cannot necessarily be

extrapolated back to previous centuries. The time-lag between each form of evidence is such that a church could easily have fallen out of use or changed drastically in status or jurisdiction in the intervening period, and thus it is worth breaking down the chronological patterns of pre-1100 churches for examination in greater detail, in order to clarify the patterns of patronage and their effect on the development of early churches.

### **6.1.2 The seventh to ninth centuries: the Anglian period**

Since the North Riding sites featuring Anglian ecclesiastical evidence later became parish churches, some level of continuity with the medieval period must be assumed. But even if their locations remained the same, early minster churches may have been very different institutions to the later local churches that form the basis of this study. The parochial system was undergoing substantial change during this time, and the alterations to territorial jurisdiction and pastoral role may in some cases have extended to the physical state of the church and churchyard. Even on the few sites where Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, Saxo-Norman architecture, and Domesday Book references can be combined to definitively prove four centuries of continuous worship, burial, and patronage at a church site (e.g. Gilling West and Hovingham), it is likely that the ownership, administration, and function of the church and churchyard had been fundamentally altered between the Anglian period and the eleventh century (Barrow 2000, 165).

It is worth addressing here some of the intricacies of the relationship between Anglian church sites, those of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the fully-developed medieval church. In the North Riding, 33 sites have definite architectural or monumental remains, or both, dating from *c.* 900 or earlier [Fig. 85]. Of the 33 churches, funerary or monumental work is found at 29 sites, and nine have architectural fragments. Four churches have architectural pieces, but no monumental sculpture. There are also an additional five churches (Topcliffe, Coxwold, Pickering, Catterick, and Easington), denoted by question marks on the distribution map, which have no Anglian material evidence, but have

documentary references which suggest their existence at the time (Morris 1989, 135; Pickles 2003). There are thus at least 38 churches in the North Riding that have their origins in the Anglian period. The Anglian evidence is quite evenly distributed by deanery, with nine sites in Ryedale/Dickering and Richmond deaneries, and eight in Cleveland. Though there are slightly less in Catterick and Bulmer/Boroughbridge, with six each, most parts of the riding are broadly, if sparsely, represented.

Though we cannot be sure that this was the full complement of churches in existence by the end of the ninth century, the distribution as it stands confirms expectations of the northern minster system (Blair 2005, 313-315; Morris 1988, 197). The density of distribution and the complexity of organization cannot challenge that of the Wessex heartland (Blair 2005, 300-302), yet the wide coverage and clustered groups of Anglian churches visible here suggests that the North Riding minster system was more intricate than the simple-two level structure of major minsters (e.g. Ripon, York, Beverley) and small independent minsters that has sometimes been proposed (Pounds 2000, 18, 25). The most notable pattern in the distribution is the strong correlation of Anglian churches with agrarian topography, similar to their connections with communication routes. All of the churches are located in the fertile agricultural areas of the North Riding, with particular concentrations throughout the best land in the middle and north of the Vale of York, in the western Vale of Pickering, and at the mouths of the dales, in clusters surrounding the early centres of Gilling West, Catterick, and Wensley. The vast majority of the churches lie on land either below 400 feet, or upon the scarp of that elevation, with only a few of the westernmost churches lying on the fringes of the 800 foot line. These western churches — Barningham, Brignall, Marrick, and West Witton — lie on the very edge of the good land, but they are located directly on Roman roads, and Barningham and Brignall are very near the Roman settlement of Greta Bridge (Pevsner 1966, 311). The early origins of these churches may have had less to do with topographical factors or pastoral necessities, but were instead dependent on

Roman associations, as has been shown to be the case in studies of Anglian churches in other regions (Blair 1988c, 44; Blair 1992, 235-46; Hall, T.A. 2000, 21).

Predictably, there is no trace of Anglian evidence in more marginal, agriculturally poor areas like the North York Moors, the Pennines, and the Cleveland and Hambleton Hills, a pattern of topographical distribution which has been observed in other regional studies (Blair 1995, 201). However, there are also other areas lacking churches where topography provides little explanation. There is a distinct lack of Anglian evidence in the Cleveland Plain apart from Yarm and possibly Easington, and both of these churches surely owe much to their locations by river and sea. Topographically, Yarm should probably be associated with the Tees group which includes Croft and Wycliffe rather than with the Cleveland plain, and Easington seems to belong to the Whitby-Lythe coastal cluster. There are also no early churches in the areas closest to York, and Hackness is the lone representative for eastern Ryedale/Dickering and the southern east coast.

The lack of churches near York may have been due to proximity to the Minster, as its powerful reach probably extended well into the surrounding countryside. It may have inhibited the foundation of churches by other entities, or at least kept any churches that were in existence from becoming significant enough to feature stone monuments or imposing architecture. The Minster certainly owned much land in these parishes at Domesday and in the twelfth century (DB Yorks; VCH NR I, II), and it is probable that this landholding arrangement was one of great antiquity. It may well be that the extent of the Minster's jurisdiction was even greater in the Anglian period than at Domesday, before Anglo-Scandinavian settlement, estate fragmentation, and church-founding had altered the tenorial and parochial landscape (Hadley 2001, 35). A similar pattern has been noted around Chertsey Abbey (Surrey), where the outlying manors of the abbey were well-provisioned with churches, but those lands in its immediate vicinity were devoid, suggesting a coherent effort to keep the pastoral organization in the area focused on the abbey (Blair 2005, 394-395).

The presence of the abbey at Whitby, and its cells at Lythe, Hackness, and Middlesbrough (Hey 1986, 59; Lang 2001, 167; Raine 1898, 2; VCH NR II, 268), may explain the lack of evidence in the northeastern and coastal regions of the riding. Whitby was the most important monastic site in Anglian Yorkshire (Thacker 1992, 150), and during that time its landholding and pastoral jurisdiction may have encompassed a significant part of eastern Cleveland and Dickering. Most of the seaboard region that later became known as 'Whitby Strand' was in the hands of the abbey before 1100 (Atkinson 1878, *xxix*), and perhaps had historically fallen within its purview. Hackness was an ecclesiastical force in its own right by 1086, with three churches listed in the vill (DB Yorks). But the association between Whitby and Hackness persisted into the eleventh century and through the Conquest, as both the pre-Conquest landlord and the Norman abbey had an association with the land and a church in Hackness parish (DB Yorks; VCH NR II, 506, 529). The extent of Whitby's reach into eastern and northern Cleveland is less certain, but the existence of a cell at Middlesbrough suggests that the abbey's authority may have extended some distance into inland Cleveland. Though Middlesbrough church is first documented in the twelfth century (*CWA* I:cxi, 95ff.), its relationship with Whitby is traditionally held to be of Anglian origins, for which the Saxon place-name and the dedication to St. Hilda provide some circumstantial support.

It has been debated to what extent early monasteries such as Whitby would have fulfilled an active pastoral role (cf. Blair 1988c, 37-39; Cambridge and Rollason 1995, 96; Thacker 1992, 143), but the monastery's ecclesiastical jurisdiction is likely to have extended even beyond the bounds of its extensive landholding (Thacker 1992, 147). In ecclesiastical terms, most of Dickering would have been ministered to by Whitby and Hackness (Thacker 1992, 145), and the minsters at Whitby, Lythe, and Middlesbrough, together with Easington and its extensive manor at Loftus, may well have dominated the pastoral and tenorial landscape of much of nearby eastern Cleveland. Thus, the influence of an extremely powerful *monasterium* such as Whitby, which between the abbey and its cells was provided

with a multitude of priests to send out into its pastoral area, may have made unnecessary, or even actively restricted, the establishment of other minster churches (Blair 2004, 394), especially if the initiative for these foundations was non-monastic.

Alan Thacker has maintained that the coverage of Anglian churches in Whitby's ambit was actually comparatively dense (Thacker 1992, 145, 151), but his supposition is based on the fact that three churches at Hackness and six dependent chapels belonging to St. Mary's, Whitby (Aislaby, Dunsley, Sneaton, Ugglebarnby, Hawsker, and Fyling) are recorded in the late-eleventh century — for Hackness, in Domesday Book, and for Whitby, in a charter of 1096-7 (VCH NR II, 524, 529). However, there is no earlier documentary evidence for the origin of these churches, and it is unclear whether any are actually of Anglian foundation. Some or all of them, especially those immediately around Whitby, could have been new seigneurial establishments in the tenth or eleventh centuries, when the abbey's estate appears to have fragmented (VCH NR II, 502). A significant argument for the latter is that these chapels do not belong to the abbey itself, but rather to the parochial church of St. Mary, which was only given to the monastery in the same 1090s charter, and for which the earliest archaeological evidence are fragments of late-ninth/tenth-century sculpture.<sup>10</sup> The only early archaeological evidence for any of the subsidiary chapels is a tenth-century cross shaft in the village at Hawsker (Lang 2001, 123), which suggests a post-Anglian foundation date at that site. In addition, the place-names of Aislaby, Ugglebarnby, Sneaton, Fyling, and Gnipe<sup>11</sup>, which was the eleventh-century name for Hawsker (VCH NR II, 519), may also point, though obviously less firmly, to an Anglo-Scandinavian hand in the foundation of the chapels. Indeed, of Whitby's extensive holdings listed in the c. 1180 'Memorial of Benefactions' from the abbey's chartulary, all but two had place-names of

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<sup>10</sup> Thacker (1992, 144) argues that at Whitby, St. Mary's and St. Peter's (the abbey) could together have formed an Anglian religious complex, with the abbey for the nuns and St. Mary's for the priests. There is no concrete evidence for this, but Blair (1992, 253-4) gives examples of several Anglian churches (e.g. Canterbury, Jarrow, Wells, Malmesbury) where a main church with an apostolic dedication later acquired a subsidiary church dedicated to Mary.

<sup>11</sup> *Gnipa* is Old Norse for 'peak' or 'summit,' and must refer to Hawsker's elevated setting. It may have been symbolic as well, as *Gnipa* was the name of the entrance to the Norse underworld, and also appears as a place-name and battle site in *Volsunga Saga* and the *Poetic Edda* (PE, 185-188; VS, 49).

Scandinavian origin, suggesting that the monastery's lands had become the seat of a number of independent Scandinavian settlements at some time after the ninth century (Atkinson 1878, *xxi-xxii*; *CWA* I:i, 1-7). One of these settlements was referred to as *Thingwala*, revealing that the Anglo-Scandinavian presence was not just widespread in the area, but that these settlements held amongst them an important site of secular, Scandinavian administration (Atkinson 1878, *xxii*). It appears that the tenth-century secular elite took advantage of the dissolution of what had been extensive tenurial and pastoral dominance by Whitby.

The North Riding's Anglian churches not only occupy the most productive, favourable land in the riding, but their siting emphatically supports the relationship between minsters and major estates [Fig. 86]. There are ten North Riding manors listed in Domesday Book that have sufficiently extensive subsidiary territories to suggest that they were survivals of earlier 'multiple estates,' and the vast majority of them have known or possible minsters on or very nearby the central manors. Nine of these extensive manors belonged to earls before the Norman Conquest, and one (Kirkby Moorside) belonged to Orm, who was a major pre-Conquest landholder in the North Riding (DB Yorks). Four of the manors (Easingwold, Northallerton, Falsgrave, and Pickering) passed from the hands of an earl directly into those of the king. Six of the ten manors have a seventh to ninth-century church on site (Northallerton, Pickering, Whitby, Gilling West, Coxwold, Kirkby Moorside), and three have known or possible minsters only one parish distant (Easingwold has Crayke, Loftus has Easington, Falsgrave has Hackness). A few of the manors, such as Kirkby Moorside, Gilling West, Northallerton, and Coxwold not only have minsters on site, but appear to be centres of seventh to ninth-century church clusters. This may well have been a feature of the *parochia* system in Yorkshire, and could represent a hierarchy or chronology of foundation in the minster organization (Pickles 2003). Of all the extensive Domesday estates, only West Acklam does not have a minster on or very nearby its manor, though Yarm is not far distant. There are only two other areas where there seems to be no



correlation. The first is the cluster around Topcliffe and Kirby Hill, but they may have been tied to Ripon, which lay just over the boundary into the West Riding. The second is the area around Wensley, which has no apparent multiple estate, though the manor of East Witton may have filled this role. East Witton was not a large manor in 1086, it was not the site of a minster, nor was it in the hands of the king or an earl in the late-eleventh century, but it was worth the not inconsequential sum of £4 in 1066, and it held the settlements and Anglian churches of both West Witton and Wensley in its soke (DB Yorks).

The distribution of Anglian evidence demonstrates that the earliest phases of church provision were located in the main settlement foci of the riding, or else that the primary administrative sites were established on the endowments of the minsters. Even at this early date, the most basic framework of the medieval parochial system was undoubtedly present, with the skeleton of later church organization extending through the Vale of York, the Ryedale valley, and the eastern parts of the dales. However, church sites at this time were still very much limited to primary settlement areas, the best agricultural land, and the main routes of travel and communication, with little of the colonization of more outlying lands that would be seen in the patterns of tenth and eleventh-century foundations. The lesser lands of the riding would have fallen within the wide-ranging *parochiae* of the minsters, and those living on these lands, most without churches of their own, would have come under the pastoral care and ministerial jurisdiction of the mother churches.

Associations with extensive manors of the pre-Conquest period indicates that in some cases minsters were closely associated with royalty and the higher ranks of secular elite (Blair 1985, 104; Blair 2005, 102), but despite complaints by contemporary theologians such as Bede, it appears that the churches did operate as monastic institutions rather than private chapels (Blair 2005, 107). Certainly, the iconography of the sculpture produced for Anglian churches seems in the main ecclesiastical, as opposed to the obviously secular bent of many Anglo-Scandinavian monuments. Minsters may have been located on the lands of the secular elite and benefited from the wealth of their manors, but in operation, they were

primarily the preserve of monks and priests. Even with the broad distribution and probable secular input that characterized the North Riding's seventh to ninth-century minsters, it was only in the centuries ahead that truly local, secular, and eventually parochial churches were to come into being.

### **6.1.3 The tenth and early-eleventh centuries: the Anglo-Scandinavian period**

By the end of the Anglo-Scandinavian period, there is evidence for twice as many churches (81) as there had been in the Anglian North Riding, and they covered a much wider area [see Fig. 47]. Of these Anglo-Scandinavian churches, as many as 44 (54%) may have been newly founded in the tenth century, as they possess no evidence from the Anglian period, though the possibility of a loss of Anglian evidence must be acknowledged. A solid basis for the medieval parochial layout can now be seen, spreading through much of the riding, and some of the medieval density of church foundation is hinted at, with the heaviest clusters in the Wensleydale-Bedale area and the Vale of Pickering, where almost every medieval church now existed. Including the Anglian foundations, 73 of the eventual 190 parish churches of the North Riding had been established by the tenth century, and at least eight of its 64 chapels, though these were only those subsidiary churches which had managed to procure burial rights, and therefore an enduring form of evidence. There was still much to be done before the full complement of medieval churches was reached, but compared to the previous era, the developments of the tenth century were a significant step toward that end.

In the areas where Anglian churches had been prevalent, the remaining gaps in the distribution were filled in the Anglo-Scandinavian period. This is most notable in the group of ten churches near Wensley, which by the tenth century extended in an unbroken line from the Anglian cluster eastward to Bedale. Many more churches were added in the central and northern Vale of York, as well as in the Vale of Pickering, where the tenth century saw an eastward extension of the Anglian Ryedale cluster, and southward to Terrington,

Amotherby, and Old Malton. Apart from one piece of sculpture at Haxby, the areas immediately adjacent to York were still devoid of stone commemorative activity in the tenth and early-eleventh centuries. It is difficult to explain this prolonged lack of local church evidence in such an agriculturally important part of the North Riding. It may suggest that the Minster lost none of its power and very little of its reach in the Anglian-Scandinavian transition, and it has been speculated that the archbishops of York had negotiated a balance of power with the Scandinavian kings in York, which ensured that they remained politically and ecclesiastically influential, in return legitimizing the new ruling framework through their support (Barrow 2000, 161). Even if the building itself changed sites during this period (Norton 1998; Phillips and Heywood 1995), the vast amounts of sculpture produced by the York Metropolitan School in the tenth century, and the evidence of burial on the site of the current church in the eleventh century (Lang 1991; Lang 1995, 442), confirm that the Minster was an active religious site throughout the Anglo-Scandinavian period.

The most striking difference between the Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian periods is found in the Cleveland Plain, which saw the establishment of ten churches with burial rights where it seems that previously there were none at all. In contrast to the continuance of York Minster's dominance, the sharp increase in Cleveland churches may be due in part to a tenth/eleventh-century decline of the Whitby-Lythe monastic hegemony. Being on the coast, Whitby suffered at the hands of initial waves of invading Vikings, and is said to have been destroyed in 876. The antiquity, wealth, and religious power of the monastic house make it more likely to have been tied to institutional ecclesiastical authority and landholding patterns, rather than to those of the secular elite (Hadley 2001, 220; Morris 1989, 131). As a result, Whitby's land and church were perhaps less likely to be left unchanged or directly appropriated by lords carrying out the Anglo-Scandinavian tenorial reshuffle. However, a few pieces of sculpture from the tenth century have been found at Whitby, and Lythe has one of the highest concentrations of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in the whole of the Northeast, suggesting that patronage at the churches continued, even if it was no longer

monastic. Lythe's sculpture is almost certainly a product of a large group of secular patrons, possibly wealthy merchants, (Stocker 2000, 200), and since one of Whitby's pieces resembles Lythe work (Lang 2001, 251), it would suggest a similar class of patron. The shift of Whitby-Lythe from powerful monastic entities to independent, perhaps private, churches may have released land that had once been under the control of the religious house. When that land was settled by the Anglo-Scandinavian elite, they were then free to found, patronize, and be buried at the churches that were a potent symbol and necessary requirement of their thegnly status (Williams 1992, 225).

The presumed demise of Whitby Abbey could help to explain the surge in new churches in tenth-century Cleveland, similar to the manner in which the void left by the dissolved minster network in East Anglia enabled its numerous local churches to proliferate unhindered (Blair 2005, 320). But if the loss of the abbey was one of the catalysts for local church foundation in Cleveland, it seems to have had little effect on the southern part of the east coast (eastern Ryedale and Dickering), where churches apparently remained sparse. Pickering appears to be the most easterly Anglian church in Ryedale (Hadley 2001, 206; Morris 1989, 116, 138), and it also has Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture. There are tenth-century monuments found at neighbouring Ellerburn and Levisham, and these churches form the easternmost boundary of Anglo-Scandinavian evidence in Ryedale. But from that point out to the coast, there is no evidence for early churches apart from Hackness, until Seamer and Brompton are mentioned in Domesday Book. The documentary and material evidence indicates that Hackness, which sits at the centre of this region, was one of the North Riding's oldest and most important ecclesiastical sites, with a high degree of continuity between the eighth and eleventh centuries. Together with Pickering, which also has evidence from the Anglian through the Saxo-Norman period, the church at Hackness may have had some bearing on the apparently slow development of local churches in the area.

Topographically, there is little difference between eastern Ryedale and the rest of the Vale of Pickering, and the long, narrow parish shapes that characterize central Ryedale

also extend into the eastern part of the deanery and Dickering. This suggests that the region was tenurially divided in a similar manner and at a similar date to the rest of Ryedale, so the likelihood of tenth-century manorial settlement should be as strong here as anywhere else in the area. In most of the North Riding, early manorialization was usually followed by foundation of local churches and burial on the manors by the landholders, but that does not appear to have happened in this region. It may well be that there were tenth-century churches in the area apart from Hackness, but their patrons were not commemorating themselves in stone, and were not building in it a century later. While negative evidence is always tenuous, the chance that this pattern is due strictly to survival is slim. There are wide distributions of tenth and eleventh-century work at most other non-highland locations in the riding, and also, most of these churches have been restored in the modern period, so the likelihood of remnant sculpture being found is as high as elsewhere. Instead, the tenurial history of these parishes, and the long-standing importance of the mother church at Hackness, and at Pickering to the west, may provide some explanation for the absence of early local church evidence.

In Domesday Book, the royal manor of Pickering encompassed Middleton, Ellerburn, Levisham, Thornton-le-Dale, Lockton, Allerston, Ebberston, and Brompton manors within its extensive scope of appurtenant land, and it has been suggested that Pickering was the chief royal minster in the area, with a *parochia* co-extensive with its manorial soke (Hadley 2001, 206; Morris 1989, 134) [Fig. 87; cf. Fig. 77]. Indeed, Ellerburn was recorded as a chapelry of Pickering before the thirteenth century, along with Allerston, Ebberston, and Wilton (VCH NR II, 423), and though no written evidence exists for Lockton, Levisham, Thornton-le-Dale, or Brompton, a similar pattern may have existed. Of the sokelands, Middleton already had a church in the Anglian period and has Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, and was probably a part of a cluster of minsters in the area. Ellerburn and Levisham also have tenth-century evidence. The proximity of these three

churches to Pickering<sup>12</sup> means that they may have been the first places in the *parochia* to be granted churches, and perhaps because of this early importance to the minster, gained burial rights as well, but they seem to have been the only recipients of these rights within Pickering's holdings.

Hackness, while not the centre of an extensive soke, did in part belong to one. The royal manor at Falsgrave (near Scarborough), held two carucates in Hackness, as well as several other manors, including Wykeham and Hutton Buscel in Ryedale, Cloughton and Scalby in Dickering, and probably all that is now Scarborough (DB Yorks). Since no other Anglian evidence is present in the region, it seems that Hackness could well have been the minster church of Falsgrave manor in the Anglian period, retaining its mother church status and jurisdiction into the tenth century, even after it passed from the hands of Whitby into secular ownership. The part of Hackness' land that did not belong to Falsgrave belonged to the newly restored Whitby Abbey after the Conquest. In the absence of a monastery in 1066, Earl Siward of Northumbria had been lord of Whitby manor, and at the same time, Pickering was held by Earl Morcar and Falsgrave by Earl Tostig, all three of whom were some of the most powerful and wealthy landholders in late-Saxon England (Kappelle 1979, 88). Hackness' landholding situation before 1086 is not explicitly stated in Domesday Book, but it is probable that the tenurial ties to Whitby and Falsgrave that existed after the Conquest had originated before it. While we cannot be certain that landholding patterns in 1066 were precisely those of the tenth century, lands belonging to earls in Domesday Book were probably more likely than others to have a long history of high-elite ownership.

Dominant mother churches like Pickering and Hackness, which were located on major manors held by powerful lords, would have been very difficult to challenge as the local lords sought to win independence and parochial rights for any churches they founded, if they were allowed to found them at all. In eastern Ryedale/Dickering, flanked by two of the most important minster churches in the riding, local churches may have been founded in

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<sup>12</sup> Ellerburn and Levisham were apparently carved directly out of the western side of Pickering parish.

the tenth century, but if they were, they seem to have remained subsidiary to the minsters and have left no material evidence. The lack of sculpture suggests that they conceded burial rights to the mother church, and the lack of architectural evidence may indicate that they were not significant enough, or their patrons were not wealthy, powerful, or independent enough, to effect a rebuilding in stone. Monumental commemoration and stone church building in the tenth and eleventh centuries seems to have depended on a certain class of minor elite — local landholders with sufficient autonomy to establish the independence of their private churches and then freely invest in them. When the autonomy of the minor lords was restricted by the influence of a far more powerful lord and his church, it appears that the culture of Anglo-Scandinavian expenditure on the local church, which characterized much of the North Riding, could be suppressed or delayed.

These examples have illustrated the situations in which new, local churches were established in the tenth century, but we must also consider the changes undergone by churches that were already in existence [Fig. 88]. About 60% of the North Riding's Anglian churches (23 of 38) also have Anglo-Scandinavian funerary evidence. This indicates that in many areas there was definite continuity of site, and probably of the church building, even if the church had shifted from ecclesiastical to private lay ownership in the meantime. It is also significant that, in contrast to Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture sites, all of the churches with Anglian sculpture or architecture later became medieval parish churches, not chapels. This would appear to confirm that sites of early ecclesiastical importance did not lose their status, even if their reach and dominance were blunted by the number of additional churches that were being founded and gaining independence in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Religious memory was undoubtedly long, despite the supposed depredations of the Vikings on eighth-century ecclesiastical institutions. In addition, the continuity between Anglian minsters and parish churches may have been due as much to the long-standing relationship between minsters and the wealthy, extensive estates upon which they stood, as to any reverence for a site of ecclesiastical antiquity. Major manors would have attracted landlords,

and it may have been to their social and financial advantage to appropriate the existing mother church, and the tithes and dues it received from subordinate churches, along with the manor. In this way, many of the minsters of the eighth and ninth centuries could become private, patronal churches in the tenth century, often retaining many of their rights and benefits as mother churches, but forced to share parochial status with a new generation of independent foundations.

There are, however, fifteen Anglian churches which show no evidence of continuity with the tenth century. The apparent lack of Anglo-Scandinavian evidence in these churches may of course be an issue of survival, but it may also be due to the ways in which the minster and parochial systems were changing in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Of those churches without tenth-century evidence, six are either mentioned in Domesday Book or have Saxo-Norman architecture or sculpture, proving that they were in use again at least by the late-eleventh century. The other nine, however, have no material or documentary evidence until the twelfth century, and in a few instances, even that is limited to citations in mid-twelfth century documents. This suggests that in some cases there could have been a period of inactivity on the site between the demise of the Anglian minster and the establishment of the medieval parochial church. The churches without pre-1100 continuity do not display any coherent spatial pattern, save for the fact that they are all in the central or western half of the North Riding. Some lie on the western fringes of early settlement, but others are in the main body of the Vale of York, and on good land. The fortunes of their manors at Domesday vary as well. Some were wholly waste and others had income, though it should be noted that none of the manors was worth more than 20s (DB Yorks). While this may seem quite low, it is fairly average for the manorial values that characterize the North Riding in the post-Conquest period (Darby 1962, 430; Maxwell 1962, 122-123). Most of the manors show a minor decline in value between the pre- and post-Conquest period, though Easby actually increased from 10s to 13s. In a few cases there was severe decline. At Cundall, the value dropped from £4 to 20s, and at Easingwold from £32 to 20s (DB



Yorks), suggesting major reductions in manorial production, and perhaps the attendant opportunity for expenditure on a church.

While topography and economy certainly affected church foundation and patronage, the reasons behind the continuous use of churches in the pre-1100 period were complex and multivariate. They were dependent on specific and deliberate patronal choices that were not solely monetarily determined, but socially and politically motivated. At some minster locations, the tenth-century conversion to a proto-parochial church took place almost immediately, but in other places, the re-establishment of patronal expenditure, or perhaps the church itself, seems to have taken much longer. These churches may have perhaps suffered a temporary setback in status, may have already been out of use by the tenth century, or else they simply did not attract the patronage of the new landowners, possibly for reasons of poverty, disrepair, or an unfavourable manorial site. It may even be that in an era when new churches were being founded in staggering numbers across the North Riding, establishing a wholly new, independent, and private church could have been socially preferable. If a landholder adopted an old minster and founded new churches, the new establishments may have held particular social attractions which drew his attention. In a new church, the owner, his monuments, and his authority would be paramount, and his foundation would be unfettered by any ties, pastoral responsibilities, or past patrons.

It is clear that the tenth and early-eleventh centuries were an era of unprecedented church foundation in the North Riding, when patrons who established churches for both private and public reasons succeeded in expanding the clusters of pre-Viking minsters into a proto-parochial web that extended across much of the region. While the foundations of the tenth century provided the primary basis upon which the medieval system of local churches would be built, the tenth century's contribution to commemorative practice is equally noteworthy. During this time, the right to bury and commemorate in stone extended from a previously limited core of churches to a wide network of independent and semi-independent foundations, patronized by lords who were wealthy and important enough to found stone

markers, yet sufficiently connected to the immediate region to choose burial in a local church. In addition, the time period was a watershed in the tradition of funerary sculpture, when stone monuments became emblems of memory, personal identity, and outward display for the lordly and perhaps mercantile elite. This was a trend that would persist not only for the remainder of the pre-Conquest period, but into the medieval period and beyond. Though the form changed over time, the Anglo-Scandinavian innovation of secular stone commemorative markers established the medieval perception of what elite funerary monuments should be — Christian memorials in a permanent medium, which contained elements of form and iconography that bound the individual to a status, culture, or social group, and which signified patronal authority and identities both personal and public to an audience of peers, subordinates, and betters.

#### **6.1.4 The later-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries: the Saxo-Norman period**

The trends that began in the tenth century continued in earnest in the eleventh century, and at a similar level of intensity. Comparable to the 44 apparently new churches in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, there are 42 churches in the later-eleventh century North Riding which possess either eleventh-century architecture, Saxo-Norman sculpture, or a Domesday Book reference, but have no evidence prior to that date [Fig. 89]. It is possible that these churches were not newly established, but if they were founded previously, they had in the intervening time acquired a promotion in stature or a new significance which caused them to be built in stone, patronized with funerary monuments, or recorded as valued manorial property. In any case, it is certain that the numerous and widely distributed churches of the Saxo-Norman period do not reflect the traditional portrait of Yorkshire as a poor, desolate, and harried land in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest. The presence of newly-built stone churches, commemorative monuments, and churches and priests in Domesday Book seem to represent an active spiritual, economic, and social life throughout the North Riding in the last decades of the eleventh century, rather than the bleak pictures

painted by chroniclers such as Symeon of Durham and Orderic Vitalis (*OV* II:iv, 233; *SD*, 137).

The evidence for local churches that had accrued by the end of the Saxo-Norman period strongly suggests the eventual density and breadth of distribution of the fully developed network of medieval parish churches. The complete parochial map, however, was not yet drawn. It is apparent that while fragmentation of the *parochiae* into parishes had nearly finished by this time, the extensive subdivision of those parishes into chapelries was still some way off. As in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, few chapelries were newly established in the later-eleventh century, with only three (Bilsdale, Bagby, and Roxby) to add to the eight that first appeared during the tenth century. In contrast to many chapels founded later in the Middle Ages, those founded before the twelfth century do not seem to be located in areas of less favourable land or remote settlement. Only a few early chapels — Bilsdale, in the moorland reaches of Helmsley parish; Castle Bolton, in the western uplands of Wensley; and Forcett, north of Richmond — occupy what could be classified as marginal areas. This pattern continues even after the pre-1100 period. In the twelfth century, there is material evidence for a further 21 chapels, but only six occupy obviously remote sites. Most chapels founded in the tenth to twelfth centuries were located relatively close to the parish churches they served, and though they were secondary establishments and may have been situated on land newly cleared for agriculture (Owen 1981, 5), they were not yet relegated to remote territories. Though they were technically subsidiary, the chapels of the early period, like the parish churches, were mainly founded in the primary settlement districts of the riding.

The later-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries are not only noteworthy for the extensive provision of parish churches, but also for the first reintroduction of substantial stone architecture in the North Riding since the Anglian period. Thirty churches possess evidence of stone building at this time. It is difficult to tell whether it was yet the dominant medium for church building, but it was probably even more common than the evidence here

suggests, and was certainly to become the sole building material for churches in the twelfth century. Sundials indicate that the architectural resurgence began around the mid-eleventh century, but most of the remaining standing fabric probably dates much closer to c. 1100. Some Anglian stone churches may still have been standing at this time as well, judging by the remnants that found their way into Saxo-Norman fabric, as at Middleton, Hovingham, and Kirby Hill. But the majority of already extant churches in the Saxo-Norman North Riding would have been the wooden and small stone churches built in the tenth and early-eleventh centuries. While there is no remaining evidence of these churches in the study area, excavation has provided an example of a small, two-celled stone church of the tenth/eleventh century at Wharram Percy (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 64), which any stone church in the North Riding would probably have resembled. In the absence of excavations, the number of North Riding churches in wood and stone before the late-eleventh century is impossible to determine. But regardless of material, it is certain that these churches ended up being comparatively ephemeral, whether or not they were initially thought of in that way by their builders. Patrons of small stone and wooden churches may have perceived their investment in the building and location as contributions to a permanent and lasting legacy, yet these structures were swept away in subsequent rebuildings, whether they occurred in the later-eleventh or the twelfth centuries.

Saxo-Norman architectural evidence occurs almost entirely in the agriculturally favourable areas of the North Riding, but it does not bear as close a relationship to the major routes of communication [Fig. 90]. Fourteen churches with Saxo-Norman work appear along main roads and sixteen do not, but of those sixteen, seven do lie alongside major rivers. It has been observed in West Yorkshire that churches with Saxo-Norman architecture are set back from main thoroughfares, and away from major artistic and architectural centres like major abbeys and priories (Ryder 1993, 25). Ryder proposes that in West Yorkshire, Saxo-Norman architecture was a backwater style, which was used in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries because of a lack of access to the technological and artistic aspects of

fully-fledged Norman Romanesque, which was being produced in the mainstream. In these isolated areas, the traditional 'Saxon' styles and techniques of building persisted for longer, meaning that Norman architecture arrived comparatively late, if at all (Ryder 1993, 25). In contrast, it appears that in the North Riding, Saxo-Norman architecture was not a product of marginal backwaters, but a fairly common and widely distributed building style, located on both the main routes and waterways, as well as off the major thoroughfares.

It should be noted that there are far fewer churches with Saxo-Norman architecture in West Yorkshire (at most twelve) than in the North Riding (30), and it is possible that the numbers and distribution observed by Ryder is a pattern of post-depositional effects and survival rather than original provision. Because of the prosperity of the textile trade in late-medieval West Yorkshire, a great number of churches were rebuilt in the fifteenth century (Ryder 1993, 57), and far more comprehensively than is the case in the North Riding. Saxo-Norman architecture may once have been distributed as widely in West Yorkshire as in the North Riding, but the backwaters, untouched by late-medieval prosperity and rebuilding, and perhaps even extensive twelfth and thirteenth-century remodelings, were the only places to retain any Saxo-Norman work. In the North Riding, which underwent no such dramatic economic boom in the late-medieval period, we are perhaps afforded a slightly more accurate spatial and numerical distribution of the original provision of late-eleventh century stone churches.

Extant Saxo-Norman architecture is remarkably prevalent in Ryedale and northeastern Bulmer and in the Wensleydale-Bedale region in Catterick, though architecture of this period does appear to a lesser extent in most other regions of the North Riding, especially in the southern reaches. When comparing the northern parts of the North Riding with Ryedale and eastern Yorkshire (cf. Lang 1991, 2001), James Lang noted that the northern areas have far fewer churches with Saxo-Norman architecture and eleventh-century sundials. He suggested that the region's distance from York, and its political, economic, and artistic influences, had a detrimental effect on church building (Lang 2001, 43). While

it is true that Saxo-Norman architecture is far more prevalent in the south of the riding, there is no evidence that proximity to York guaranteed eleventh-century stone buildings. The southern-most Saxo-Norman churches of Bulmer, Terrington, Newton-on-Ouse, and Alne were all located within a ten to twelve-mile radius of York, but far closer than these were a large swathe of parishes that had churches in Domesday Book, but which display no material evidence for that period [see Fig. 28]. This is unlikely to be due to solely to survival, as twelfth and early-thirteenth century evidence survives quite well in the area, though not as densely as in the rest of the North Riding, probably because of modern rebuildings that are more common in areas close to urban centres (cf. Middlesbrough environs). The region's churches were being rebuilt in stone in the twelfth century, but in the pre-1100 period, that mode of patronage seems to have been restricted.

The Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian evidence has demonstrated the perils of proximity to a major ecclesiastical or tenorial centre in the earliest periods of church foundation, where its authority could apparently suppress independent church foundation and patronage, or at least slow it for some time. The evidence above shows that this suppression may have continued into the Saxo-Norman period, but to a lesser degree. For the parishes closest to York, any stifling of foundation seems to have been broken by at least the eleventh century, considering the ten churches in the area recorded in Domesday Book.<sup>13</sup> However, the lack of both Anglo-Scandinavian and Saxo-Norman commemoration, and eleventh-century architecture, may suggest that the rights, independence, and significance of many churches in the area were still relatively limited. It is highly unlikely that proximity to York was the only factor determining the provision of stone churches and monuments in southern Bulmer, but the gap in the pattern is noteworthy, especially considering the wealth of material evidence in slightly more distant regions like Ryedale and Wensleydale. If York as an economic, religious, and political centre was affecting the development of North Riding churches in the Anglian, Anglo-Scandinavian, and Saxo-Norman eras, it appears that

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<sup>13</sup> Bossall, Brafferton, Brandsby, Bulmer, Crambe, Crayke, Easingwold, Foston, Huntington, Marton-le-Forest.

these two regions lay at an optimal distance. They were close enough to be aware of, and perhaps associated with, the elite leadership, wealth, and artistic and technical knowledge that such a centre provided, but far distant enough for the manorial landholders and patrons to operate independently, utilizing their tenorial wealth and locally-based power in the ways which most benefited their social status. This pattern has a convincing analogue in the development of the Ryedale school of sculpture during the Anglo-Scandinavian period. There, the artistic influences of the York school of carving clearly aided sculpture production in the region, but they were not so dominant as to prevent the development of a distinct and prolific regional style of monumental art (Lang 1991, 41).

If distance from York was affecting the implementation of stone architecture in the northern reaches of the North Riding, it was certainly not impeding the commission of Saxo-Norman sculpture [Fig. 91]. While Domesday Book evidence is scattered throughout the riding, showing that churches themselves were widely distributed, the Saxo-Norman archaeological pattern is clearly divided between north and south. There are sixteen churches with Saxo-Norman sculpture above the line of the North York Moors, but there are only four that have Saxo-Norman architecture (Romaldkirk has both). In contrast, there are 26 churches with eleventh-century architecture at or below that midline, but only seven with contemporary sculpture (Wath, Kirkby Moorside, Gilling East, and Lastingham<sup>14</sup> have both). Though they were occurring at roughly the same time, eleventh-century stone architecture was primarily the product of well-connected, primary settlement areas, while Saxo-Norman sculpture was far more common on the tenorial and political peripheries.

This supposition is supported by the distribution of the Saxo-Norman sites in relation to the major communication routes of the ND. Despite the relative lack of documentation and inscriptions, the individuals of the lesser elite are not wholly lost to us. Their names are documented as the tenants of manors, and the iconography and emblems

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<sup>14</sup> Lastingham's 'Saxo-Norman' architecture dates to c. 1078, but it is fully Norman in style, because it was a monastic foundation associated with Whitby at this time (VCH NR I, 524). Its Saxo-Norman sculpture, however, is exactly that—a small slab with a simple herringbone pattern.

found on many Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and cross slabs North Riding [Fig. 92]. Of the 23 churches which feature Saxo-Norman monuments, only four lie along major roads, and an additional six are located on major rivers or the coast. In addition, nine are found on land of 400 feet or higher, including two of those sited on major roads or rivers (Barningham and Romaldekirk) [cf. Fig. 22]. Saxo-Norman funerary monuments, usually consisting of standing crosses, simple slabs with geometric patterns, and unusual designs that blend themes from Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval sculptural traditions, seem to have been most common in areas away from economic centres and main communication routes. Since both Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture and medieval cross slabs survive in such large numbers, it is fairly certain that the pattern of Saxo-Norman sculpture is not due to location-dependent survival rates, as it may have been for architecture in West Yorkshire. Also, the amount of late-eleventh and early-twelfth century sculpture in several other regions is fairly consistent with the proportion seen in the North Riding. County Durham has about 20 late-eleventh/early-twelfth pieces, or 4% of its total (Ryder 1985), and West Yorkshire has twelve pieces, or 6% of its total (Ryder 1991). The North Riding has more Saxo-Norman pieces than either (34), but its larger provision of cross slabs overall means that eleventh/early-twelfth century work accounts for only 3% of the total. Exact numbers are not available from Butler's study of the East Midlands, but there too, it appears that pre-1100 cross slabs are quite rare, especially in comparison to the proliferation of twelfth-century slabs from the Barnack workshop (Butler 1965, 112-119). We can be fairly certain that in the North Riding, Saxo-Norman transitional sculpture was rarer than work of other styles and time-periods, and this comparative scarcity seems to have been a trend that extended to much of northern England. In the North Riding, this sculpture was also in many cases sited away from the main centres of communication, and was further distant from hubs of trade and production.

While some Saxo-Norman work is obviously indebted to wider stylistic knowledge (e.g. Norman architectural patterns on some abstract geometric slabs), others are more



clearly products of old traditions. This may have been provoked by a lack of knowledge of artistic trends, less-skilled provincial masons, or more limited patronal wealth, all of which could have been features of more isolated settlements. These factors may also have persisted for longer in remote regions, resulting in the continued use of old styles even once new fashions had been adopted in other areas. All of these features could also have limited the introduction of stone architecture, which would have required masons of some skill, and patrons of some affluence, perhaps explaining somewhat the general lack of coincidence between Saxo-Norman architecture and sculpture.

Further explanation of the north-south dichotomy may be related to the same forces that promoted high concentrations of building and sculpture in Ryedale-Bulmer and Wensleydale. The fortuitous location of these regions may have enabled them to enjoy substantial stability during both the Anglo-Scandinavian and Saxo-Norman transitions that was not as common in other areas of the riding. They lay on good agricultural ground and were close enough to York that they were probably among the first lands distributed to both Scandinavian and Norman lords, so control could be established fairly quickly and easily in these areas, and manorial production could continue with little disruption. This, in combination with the strong traditions of church-building and commemoration in the regions, contributed to the unusually high amounts of Saxo-Norman evidence. However, in other regions of North Yorkshire where control was more tenuous, priorities in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest may have shifted to the more functional concerns of establishing administrative and military power, perhaps through castle-building and manorial reorganization (Dymond 1977, 4). There were undoubtedly castles built in the southern areas of the riding, but the increased stability may have afforded the patrons an opportunity to expend time and money on churches as well, perhaps explaining to some degree not only the high levels of church patronage in Wensleydale and Ryedale, but also the general limitation of Saxo-Norman architecture to southern areas of the North Riding.

Another unexpected discontinuity is apparent in the patterns of Anglo-Scandinavian and Saxo-Norman commemoration. Only seven sites scattered throughout the North Riding have both types of sculpture, of which three are in Ryedale (Kirkby Moorside, Lavingham, Levisham), two are in Richmond (the neighbouring churches of Forcett and Stanwick), and one each in both Catterick (Wath) and Cleveland (Kildale). These sites demonstrate a continuity of stone commemorative practice from the tenth century to the beginning of the twelfth, but they amount to only a small percentage of the total number of churches with pre-1100 sculpture. Survival has undoubtedly played some part in the current pattern of evidence, as has the fact that stone commemorative monuments, for a variety of reasons, were simply less common in the eleventh century, both pre- and post-Conquest. While the existence of an Anglo-Scandinavian commemorative tradition undoubtedly influenced the development of later sculpture, the presence of Anglo-Scandinavian work at individual sites was not always a predictor of places that would be commemorating in stone a century later. The fact that stone commemoration began at a site in the tenth century does not mean that it necessarily continued uninterrupted through to the medieval period. Vicissitudes of fortune, disputes over burial rights, and shifts in tenure and ownership could all affect the attractiveness of a church site to a patron choosing his place of interment and commemoration. In extreme cases, it may have affected the church's ability to carry out burial at all.

While Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture does not appear to consistently presage the existence of eleventh-century monuments, it may have had some relationship to the incidence and distribution of Saxo-Norman architecture in the North Riding [Fig. 93]. Over half of the churches that have Saxo-Norman architecture also feature Anglo-Scandinavian evidence, and here again the Ryedale and Wensleydale clusters are of note, with almost all the churches lying within these two regions. Kirby Hill, a bit further south, may be an outlier of the Wensleydale cluster, or else it may have been tied to a West Riding group based around Boroughbridge or Ripon. Only Gilling West and Sockburn, both in Richmond

deanery, lie any distance from these two areas. The correlation of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture and stone architecture a century later may not be as random as it first appears. The presence of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture indicates not only early church foundation, but a degree of ecclesiastical independence, which was legitimized near the outset with funerary sculpture commissioned by the patrons of the churches. This happened in many areas of the North Riding, but in two regions which seem to have been focal points of church patronage from the earliest period, this independence led to the conversion of smaller structures to stone buildings substantial enough to endure the various alterations of the medieval and post-medieval eras. Where the various forms of pre-1100 evidence have not survived is due to a number of factors, and is somewhat random, but where they do occur is certainly not. The clusters of churches in Ryedale and Wensleydale show a long-standing dedication to the patronage of local church buildings by the secular elite, from their appropriation and conversion in the ninth or tenth century to the stone rebuildings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, local church foundation and commissioning of stone commemoration were widespread phenomena. But early, continuous, and concentrated high-level expenditure throughout the pre-1100 period was restricted to churches in localized pockets of prosperity and authority, where the churches signified the piety, wealth, and power of successive generations of landholding lords and patrons.

### **6.1.5 Patterns of patronage in the pre-1100 period**

In this crucial transitional period, the evidence demonstrates important continuities and discontinuities between various forms of tenth and eleventh-century sculpture and architecture. These are undoubtedly significant and meaningful patterns, which have much to reveal about the forces driving church development. They begin to clarify the roles played by both stone architecture and sculpture as communicators of wealth, authority, and social identity in the pre-1100 period. In almost all cases, stone sculpture seems to have been most prevalent in the time periods and locations where stone architecture was limited.

Commemoration and architecture only received constant and comparable attention in focal points like Ryedale and Wensleydale, which were fortuitously located both topographically and socially. In the tenth century, most Anglo-Scandinavian stone sculpture would have been placed in churchyards attached to new, minor buildings built primarily of timber. These commemorative objects embodied an ideal of permanence, and they transferred that permanence to the authority of the patron. Similarly, in most eleventh-century churches where Saxo-Norman sculpture was found, there was rarely a stone church to accompany it. A related process of augmenting relatively new, possibly more ephemeral foundations with permanent monuments was probably taking place.

In contrast, on many of the locations where significant Saxo-Norman stone churches were being built, monumental sculpture retained less importance as a means of display. The churches were rarely accompanied by contemporary monuments, and the sculpture of previous centuries was often incorporated into the architectural fabric (see above, 150). Where it was possible, the opportunity for architectural elaboration seems to have taken precedence over the commission of stone sculpture, and this holds true for both those churches which had evidence from previous centuries, and those which were apparently newly founded and immediately built in stone in the late-eleventh century. When the church was not only built in stone, but built so much more impressively than previous structures, the permanence embodied by stone burial monuments was perhaps overshadowed. The remnants of late-eleventh and early-twelfth century stone churches indicate that they often dwarfed the structures of previous centuries [see Fig. 1]. They would have done the same to stone monuments, and this overshadowing perhaps limited the effectiveness of monuments as communicators of social meaning, especially when large, new stone churches were first being regularly erected.

It is of course possible that funerary sculpture accompanied the North Riding's Saxo-Norman churches more frequently than is suggested by the evidence, as they seem to in other regions (cf. Finch 2000b). Survival or the incidence of discovery may also be a

factor, as excavations where Saxo-Norman monuments have been found (e.g. Raunds and Wharram Percy) often reveal only one or two monuments of this period, even if several from earlier or later centuries are present [Fig. 94]. However, the North Riding patterns may suggest that stone funerary sculpture rarely accompanied Saxo-Norman churches because it had on some level become redundant. Perhaps the church building itself, newly built or rebuilt in stone, became a kind of enduring monument itself (Hadley 2001, 161), with the burial reduced to a less rich or more ephemeral marker in the churchyard, or maybe a space beneath the stones of the church. The melding of the functions of a communal worship site and permanent patronal monument would have been aided by the fact that before the twelfth century, the primary patron was almost always the outright owner of a church, and canon law had not yet proscribed the burial of secular elite inside church buildings (Addleshaw 1956, 18; Daniell 1997, 96). Though this would change drastically in the period after 1100, there was at this time no bar to the transformation of a church into a permanent and imposing monument to the patron both during his life and after his death.

Even in areas where church foundation and stone building came early and continuity was common, the intricacies of church development between the eighth and twelfth centuries can be difficult to discern. Kirkdale, in Ryedale, is one example of a church with a veneer of continuity, but which may have experienced fluctuating fortunes and a complex history of building, burial, and use. It has fine examples of Anglian funerary sculpture dating from the eighth century, excavated evidence suggesting a stone structure pre-dating the extant eleventh-century architecture, and six standing crosses and one hogback dating to the late-ninth to tenth centuries (Lang 1991, 158-163; Watts, et al. 1996, 17). The evidence appears to show continuity from the Anglian to Anglo-Scandinavian periods, and though Kirkdale is not mentioned in Domesday Book, the Saxo-Norman and Norman fabric implies unbroken use from the eighth to twelfth centuries. However, the inscribed sundial of c. 1060 indicates that the church was acquired at that time by Orm Gamalson, who rebuilt the church 'when it was utterly ruined and collapsed' (Higgitt in Lang 1991, 164). It is possible that

Kirkdale had been destroyed or had fallen out of use in the ninth century, and that the site was only in use for burial during the Anglo-Scandinavian period. However, the number of tenth-century monuments, as well as the possible hunt and portrait scenes on two of the crosses, suggest active elite patronage of a similar calibre to other North Yorkshire churches, which seems unlikely at a derelict church site. There is also the possibility that the ruinous state of the church was exaggerated to some extent, in order to make Orm's donation seem all the more impressive.

A possible scenario is one in which the Anglian church, perhaps once a minster in the Kirkby Moorside cluster (Watts, et al. 1996, 7), was either converted to a private chapel in the late-ninth century, or else its minster status, even if fading, began to attract lay burial. It may then have fallen into disuse sometime in the late-tenth/early-eleventh century, and lay in relative disrepair until Orm's rebuild. The reason for the church's dereliction is unknown, but it could have been related to a shift in tenurial holding or manorial importance, which may have impacted the church if it meant a shift of settlement focus or the removal of a previous patron. Indeed, there is no concrete evidence for domestic settlement or agriculture at Kirkdale until the twelfth century (Watts, et al. 1996, 2, 13), so the church would have been particularly vulnerable to changes in tenure or surrounding settlements. The absence of a manor or vill at Kirkdale in Domesday Book, and the dominance of Kirkby Moorside manor at the time, which held many surrounding lands and was under the ownership of Orm before the Norman Conquest, seems to support this possibility. If Orm had recently acquired the Kirkby Moorside estate, the revival of a previously illustrious Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian church site on his holdings afforded him the opportunity to make a strong statement of lordship, piety, and connection with the locality and its past.

Another example of complex architectural changes in the tenth to eleventh centuries is provided by Old Byland, and the discrepancy between the church's eleventh-century sundial and the specifically 'wooden' church mentioned in Domesday Book. Old Byland has no Anglo-Scandinavian funerary sculpture, but its eleventh-century sundial is similar in

style and inscription to Kirkdale, though less elaborate, and probably dates to the mid-eleventh century (Higgitt in Lang 1991, 195) [Fig. 95]. From this evidence, it would appear that a stone church first appeared here at that time, though its form remains unknown. It may have been originally founded in the eleventh century, or perhaps in the tenth century as a perishable structure without burial rights. By the late-eleventh century, however, Domesday Book records a wooden church on the site, and by the early-twelfth century, a complete rebuild had been carried out, destroying or disguising any previous phases.

There are several possible explanations for Old Byland's sequence of development, though all illustrate the turbulent nature of the intense church-founding and church-building periods of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The first possibility is that the sundial is either earlier or later than supposed, perhaps having belonged to a tenth-century stone structure, or even to the early-twelfth century church (cf. discussion of Weaverthorpe [East Riding] below, 232, 247). The dial is no longer *in situ*, having been built into a wall of the modern porch, and the inscription is very worn, so any interpretation is tenuous. The proposed interpretation of the lettering is '*Sumerledan huscarl me fecit,*' and both the personal name and title in this reading make a twelfth-century date improbable. Though native manorial tenants did sometimes retain land in post-Conquest Yorkshire (Dalton 1994, 9), one was probably unlikely to retain the title of housecarl if he were made a Norman lord's underling. Of the two alternatives, the tenth century therefore seems the more likely date, especially as Lang notes that the meander pattern on the stone would have been old-fashioned in the eleventh century (Lang 1991, 195). However, the precedent of other patronal, inscribed sundials in the region suggests that they were an eleventh-century phenomenon, and the title 'housecarl' was not introduced into England until the reign of Cnut (1016-1042) (Hooper 1985, 161). If the sundial is from the early to mid-eleventh century, and belonged to a stone church of that date, we are faced with a period of considerably less than a hundred years in which the stone church became derelict and was rebuilt in wood shortly after, perhaps around the time of the Norman Conquest. Other possibilities are that there were two

churches in Old Byland, one of wood and one of stone, or a single church, built partly of wood and partly of stone, such as is sometimes seen in late-medieval wooden belfries or arcades used in stone structures (e.g. at Raskelf, and at Bolton-on-Swale and Sutton-on-the-Forest before restoration) [Fig. 96]. Either situation may have been unusual enough to warrant a mention by Domesday recorders.

The examples of Kirkdale and Old Byland highlight the difficulty of deciphering the complex processes that were affecting churches between the Anglo-Scandinavian and Saxon-Norman periods. They also illustrate two pre-1100 churches of markedly different origins — one of Anglian foundation and probable minster status, and one that may well have only come into existence in the later-eleventh century — but both seem to have fallen into a puzzling state of disrepair at some point in their existences, and both were built or rebuilt in stone not only in the eleventh century, but again in the twelfth. Finally, the examples stress the impact that the actions and attitudes of individual patrons could have on the physical development of churches. In both cases, the sundials make it clear that stone church building in Ryedale was occurring at least by the mid-eleventh century, and perhaps earlier than that. Both inscriptions identify the patrons, giving us an idea of the rank of those who were patronizing churches, and allowing us to judge their importance in the secular milieu. Orm was a major landholder and powerful lord in the pre-Conquest North Riding (Rahtz 2003, 307), and Sumerledan bore a title identifying him as a free, and probably landed, military retainer to the king in Anglo-Scandinavian England (Abels 1988, 169). Clearly, lordly expenditure on local churches was not only a commonplace requirement of manorial tenancy in Anglo-Scandinavian England, but it was also a benefit to status and reputation, and a way of ensuring that their place in the social hierarchy was communicated in a permanent medium.

A final example, taken from a compact group of twenty-two churches in the northern Vale of York, allows us to further probe how the changing political and economic climate in the pre-1100 period might have affected churches and their development [Fig.



97]. In this region, there is one mention of a priest in Domesday Book, no Saxo-Norman sculpture, and only one instance of Saxo-Norman architecture. The long-and-short nave quoins at Sockburn are the only standing evidence of Saxo-Norman architecture in the area, and early-twentieth century excavations at the same church revealed a small, pre-twelfth century chancel and nave foundations (VCH NR I, 453). Indeed, apart from Sockburn's architecture and Ainderby Steeple's Domesday church, all pre-1100 evidence in the area comes either from Anglian work, or the Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture that has been found in ten churches.

All indications are that the region's land was as favourable as any part of the Vale of York, and in Domesday Book, the densities of plough-lands and teams were both average to high compared with the rest of the riding (Maxwell 1962, 109, 115). The small size of the parishes and chapelries further emphasizes the likelihood of heavy settlement, manorialization, and agricultural exploitation in the area (Harvey and Payne 1976; Pounds 2000, 86). This, in addition to the importance of Northallerton and Brompton in the pre-Conquest period (VCH NR I, 418; Lang 2001, 47), makes the lack of eleventh-century documentary and architectural evidence particularly puzzling. Why, if the land was good for farming and favourable for settlements, is there very little evidence for Domesday Book churches or Saxo-Norman architecture in the northern Vale of York? Topographically, this region should be as likely as any in the North Riding, and more likely than many areas, to be extensively manorialized and populated with churches c. 1100.

Judging from the amount of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, churches obviously existed in the area from the tenth century and were well distributed. There is almost certainly a level of continuity of site between these early churches and their medieval successors, because all of the sculpture is found displayed in or incorporated into the current churches. It is thus likely that the entire region was not devoid of churches, but that the eighth to tenth-century churches did still exist in the late-eleventh century, when Domesday Book was being compiled and many North Yorkshire churches were being rebuilt.

However, any churches that then stood in the northern Vale of York were not being recorded, nor do they appear to have been rebuilt in stone, at least not in a substantial fashion. It is possible that this was connected to circumstances of tenure and population in the region c. 1086. Domesday Book records many settlements in the area, though the villas are not quite as dense as in the central vale. However, most of these settlements were uninhabited at the time of the survey, and many of them were wholly waste as well (Maxwell 1962, 146). If there were churches on many of these settlements, they may have been omitted by Domesday Book because the manors themselves, and thus the churches, had no monetary, taxable value. Likewise, they may have escaped early rebuilding because the population on many of the sites was negligible and agricultural exploitation was probably at a low. In this situation, the disposable resources needed to contribute to a church rebuilding would be scarce, and it may be that for lordly patrons, there was no immediate need nor social benefit to spending money on churches in an economically depressed, and thus less competitive, area.

The northern Vale of York had obviously been an important region for settlement, church foundation, and elite commemoration in the tenth century, which was probably also when it acquired its parochial and manorial structure. However, it seems to have lost its vitality and apparently much of its manorial wealth by the late-eleventh century. This may have been part of an agricultural and manorial decline that had little to do with the Norman Conquest, but Northallerton's Domesday entry may indicate a direct impact of either the Conquest or any subsequent harrying. In the time of King Edward, the manor and soke of Northallerton was held by Earl Edwin of Northumbria. The demesne had been worth £80 and had 66 villeins in residence, and there had been a staggering 116 sokemen recorded as holding on the manor's outlying lands, which may provide some explanation for the particularly vibrant Anglo-Scandinavian evidence. In contrast, the demesne and soke were held directly by the king in 1086, when both were wholly waste, had no value, and apparently had no population worth recording (DB Yorks). Though there surely must have

been people still living on the lands, it is likely that they were not recorded because as the manor was waste, their function as workers of the land was obviated. Whether this drastic decline was a direct result of any targeted ravaging or suppression by the Normans is impossible to tell, but there was a castle being built by William the Conqueror at Northallerton *c.* 1070 (VCH NR I, 418), presumably as a means of controlling the surrounding region. Despite the eleventh-century decline, the renewal of the area's churches was well on its way by the early to mid-twelfth century, when both church building and commemoration were being carried out at a rate commensurate with the rest of the North Riding. The early importance of the churches of the northern Vale of York, along with its eleventh-century decline and twelfth-century revitalization, were apparently integrally tied to the social, economic, and political conditions of the era.

As has been shown throughout this discussion, the breadth and density of evidence from the pre-1100 period emphatically proves that the local churches, parishes, and tenorial and manorial systems of later medieval North Yorkshire were not in any way an introduction of the Norman Conquest or an innovation of the twelfth century. Though the twelfth century would yet have a powerful and dynamic role to play in shaping medieval churches, monuments, and manors, the stone commemoration and stone building that are such common features of the twelfth and later centuries were based firmly on practices, perceptions, necessities, and elite ideals that had been entrenched in the Anglo-Scandinavian and Saxo-Norman periods. Patrons and founders of the twelfth century were operating within particular social, tenorial, and religious conditions, some of which were manifestly different from those of the tenth and eleventh centuries, but most of which had changed little since secular expenditure on churches had become the norm. The fundamentals of lordly and elite church patronage in the twelfth century were similar to what they had been previously, allowing the later patrons to adopt, expand, and reshape a strong and extant foundation, rather than start anew. In the North Riding, the contribution of the pre-1100 period to the proliferation of local churches in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries cannot be

underestimated. The tenth and eleventh centuries had established a wide network of local churches and graveyards across the region, and more importantly, had made both architectural and monumental patronage a staple of elite social life and death. Ecclesiastical patronage of local churches was not merely an occasional practice or pious diversion of the lordly elite, but a defining and necessary characteristic of their status, social location, and identity. These established principles would only flourish under the patrons of the twelfth century, who adopted and implemented them with an intensity that drastically reshaped the appearance of the medieval local church and churchyard.

## 6.2 The twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the combined evidence of architecture and sculpture illustrates the degree to which the North Riding's parish churches had been established [Fig. 98]. Architecture of the twelfth-century survives more extensively than that of most other medieval periods in the North Riding, matched only by the fenestration programmes of the fifteenth century. There are 149 churches and chapels with twelfth-century architecture, and many more churches probably have a twelfth-century core, even if they are now hidden by later alterations. When the widespread architectural evidence is extended to sculpture, fonts, and documents, there is almost inevitably some level of proof for the existence of a church between 1100 and 1200. There are 174 parish churches (92%) and 28 chapels (44%) with some sort of archaeological evidence (architecture, font, or funerary monument) from the twelfth century, indicating that not only were a large number of churches in existence, but that patronage at parish churches was nearly comprehensive. At almost every parish church in the riding, and at a large proportion of its chapels, patrons were commissioning work in an intense and widespread programme of expenditure. In almost all of those parishes still lacking archaeological evidence for a primary church by the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century (e.g. Wykeham, East Witton, Coxwold, Burneston), either charters, usually from mid and later-twelfth century grants to monasteries, or

circumstantial evidence, such as reports of the twelfth-century nave at Wykeham before it was demolished in 1853 (VCH NR II, 498), denote churches on these sites. The nearly comprehensive level of evidence by this period suggests that in the North Riding, any absence of a stone parish church by *c.* 1200 is more likely to be due to survival.

The material evidence for chapels also greatly increases in the twelfth century, with 21 chapels added to the pre-1100 count, but it does not nearly approach the breadth of evidence for parish churches. The total of 31 chapels at the beginning of the thirteenth century is still just under half of the eventual medieval provision.<sup>15</sup> But unlike the low amount in the pre-1100 period, which was probably a reasonably accurate representation of the proportion of mother to subsidiary churches, the twelfth-century evidence may be somewhat misleading. Many medieval chapels, including a number not included under the rubric of this study, are first mentioned in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though many of these have now lost all traces of their medieval fabric or monuments. Fifteen North Riding chapels that have no material evidence are recorded before the early-thirteenth century, which would bring the minimum total by *c.* 1200 to 47 chapels. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the practice of chapel foundation and patronage was obviously well underway, but unlike parish churches, the full network of chapels was undoubtedly a product of the later Middle Ages.

The evidence above has established the twelfth century as the most influential period in the architectural development of the North Riding's local churches, as well as a substantial contributor to its monumental sculpture. It is therefore worthwhile to look at patterns occurring within twelfth-century architecture and funerary sculpture, establishing relationships between monuments and church buildings, and associating these patterns with the political, social, and cultural climate of the twelfth century. Though it undoubtedly

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<sup>15</sup> The true medieval provision of chapels was undoubtedly much higher, but 64 is the number considered under this study's methodology. Chapels could be tenuous establishments, which often fell out of use long before the end of the Middle Ages. No material evidence, and only scant and frequently obscure documentary evidence, survives for these 'lost' chapels (Blair 1988b, 15), making an accurate total of dependent churches very difficult to acquire (cf. methodology of Owen 1976).

provoked many changes, the aftermath of the Norman Conquest did not dominate the twelfth century; by its later decades, and arguably far earlier, post-Conquest antagonism had certainly ceased (Gillingham 2000, 17). After the first few post-Conquest generations, it is even debatable as to whether 'Norman' was a viable label of culture or identity in what had become an assimilated and profoundly 'Anglo-Norman' society, especially below the ranks of the royal circle and highest elite (Short 1995, 155; Thomas 2003, 1-2). Therefore, social forces that were not driven by ethnicity or conquest must be taken into account for much of the twelfth century architectural and monumental evidence. By examining the chronological patterns of the twelfth-century evidence, we are afforded a clearer picture of what aspects of churches and monuments may be attributed directly to post-Conquest events, and what must be discussed in more complex and varied social terms.

### **6.2.1 Architectural distributions in the twelfth century**

The most remarkable pattern of twelfth-century architecture is that it is so pervasive in the North Riding [Fig. 99]. In the pre-1100 period, many churches were in existence, but there were also clear pockets of presence and absence of stone architecture. By the twelfth century, these regional peculiarities had been entirely overwritten. Almost all topographically-related patterning disappears as well, as twelfth-century churches and chapels cover all the areas of the riding that would be reached in the later medieval period, with the exception of the westernmost Pennine fringe. The widespread architectural provision of the twelfth century can be broken down chronologically into work of the early, middle, and later parts of that period, providing a more detailed clarification of the intense building programme that was undertaken. It must also be remembered, however, that in addition to the evidence that is datable to the three periods of the twelfth century, there are 94 churches with indeterminate twelfth-century work [Fig. 100]. For 44 North Riding churches, undiagnostic architectural features or fragments are their only twelfth-century evidence. Though it cannot be more accurately dated, and therefore cannot be discussed as

part of the internal developmental process of the twelfth century, the indeterminate twelfth-century evidence is still important. The high density and very widespread and balanced distribution of the evidence firmly reinforces the centrality of twelfth-century architecture to the physical development of the North Riding's medieval parish churches.

Architecture from the early-twelfth century is found in 31 North Riding churches (12%), which is similar in density to the 30 churches of the Saxo-Norman period, but far more evenly distributed [Fig. 101]. The discrete regional pockets and the north-south dichotomy that characterized Saxo-Norman architecture are almost entirely eliminated by the first quarter of the twelfth century. Nevertheless, the area with the highest concentration of early-twelfth century work is still the same section of Ryedale and Bulmer deaneries which had featured so strongly in the pre-1100 period. The fact that most churches in the area were already stone was clearly not a deterrent to the new patrons, and may even have been an attraction, as Norman patrons could avail themselves of an established infrastructure, skilled masons, and a quarrying industry that had already been revitalized (Morris 1988, 195). Twenty-four of the North Riding's 30 Saxo-Norman churches were altered at some time during the twelfth century, but significantly, there are seven which appear to have been added to almost immediately, in the first quarter of the twelfth century. Five of these are in Ryedale-Bulmer (Bulmer, Appleton-le-Street, Old Byland, Kirkdale, and Middleton), and the other two are in Wensleydale (Hauxwell, Thornton Steward). Beyond these areas, no other pre-1100 churches were altered until the mid-twelfth century. In addition, there are twelve churches in Ryedale-Bulmer which feature early-twelfth century evidence as a first phase, and one more in Wensleydale. These patterns demonstrate that the factors which had made Ryedale and Wensleydale such compelling foci for architectural patronage in the pre-1100 period continued unabated into the early-twelfth century.

In the western part of the riding, the presence of significant numbers of pre-1100 and early-twelfth century churches may revise traditional interpretations of the early post-Conquest period. It is generally thought that the areas closer to York came under Norman

administrative control relatively easily, but the western reaches of the county proved a problem, due to guerilla-like rebellions based in the wild, hilly region (Kapelle 1979, 114). As a result, compact lordships like the Honour of Richmond, and Pickhill and Pontefract in the West Riding, were established in order to better control these areas. These castleries seem to have been organized somewhat later than other post-Conquest tenurial changes, and out of necessity, it appears that many natives retained local power and subtenant land. Thus, it has been consistently argued that full Norman control in the area was gained only gradually (Fleming 1991, 166; Kapelle 1979, 145; Le Patourel 1971a, 16-17; Wightman 1975, 55).

However, the proliferation of churches in the Honour of Richmond during the Saxo-Norman and early-twelfth centuries seems to contradict both of these statements, as well as the chronicled severity of the Harrying of the North [Fig. 102]. As church-building is most likely to have been the work of the ruling elite, the number of churches established in the honour by the first quarter of the twelfth century would seem to indicate extensive Norman control over the region and its settlements by that time. Against the traditional interpretations, Paul Dalton has argued that when waste entries are discounted, the general maintenance of estate values in Richmondshire before and after the Conquest suggests that Norman control in the area was imposed reasonably quickly and effectively (Dalton 1994, 43). The presence of recently built churches throughout the honour appears to bear this out. That is not to say, however, that the region was not difficult to manage or that there were no rebellious tendencies in the area. That was almost certainly the reasoning behind the creation of Count Alan's compact lordship, and may even have been one of the reasons that churches were so widely built and rebuilt at that time. In a landscape where dominance was not only preferable, but necessary, the earlier that concrete symbols of lordship, wealth, and power could be established, the better.

Paul Dalton proposes that many of Yorkshire's minor pre-Conquest landholders were allowed to keep their lands, but were pushed down the scale of tenurial hierarchy,



below the king, the tenants-in-chief, their subtenants, and perhaps below even their retainers. In Yorkshire, the Anglo-Scandinavian tenants listed in Domesday seem to have been concentrated in the vast honours of Pontefract and Richmond, but this may be because in these frontier territories, the native tenants had only been demoted by one level. The lack of native subtenants in other parts of Yorkshire may indicate a fairly advanced level of Norman knightly subinfeudation by Domesday (Dalton 1994, 44), but in these large and agriculturally poor areas, the baronial lords may have been in control of the region, but had not yet been able to install their own retainers on the lands. Marjorie Chibnall suggests that the high levels of native tenants in marginal areas (such as the highlands of Yorkshire and Lancashire) could be due to the fact that there were not enough Norman knights to comprehensively settle the regions (Chibnall 1986, 52). In any case, this may suggest that the Honour of Richmond's local churches of the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries were not all tied to the efforts of *Norman* local lords. Some could very well have been founded and built by Anglo-Scandinavian subtenants, who now held similar tenorial status with Norman knights. But even if the lords carrying out the building on the ground were ethnically native, such as Gospatric, who held several manors in subtenancy from Count Alan in the late-eleventh century, their work would probably have been under the aegis of overlords, and beneficial to the Norman hierarchical framework.

Architectural evidence from the mid-twelfth century is distributed widely, but only slightly more densely across the North Riding than in the previous period, being found at 39 churches (15%) [Fig. 103]. The period is most notable for the growing popularity of added aisles, as well as for some of the most finely sculptured and decorated stonework of the entire Middle Ages, seen especially in work on south doorways. Especially fine work is present in the massive doorway and chancel arch at the market town church of Helmsley, and there are good examples in Bulmer including Foston, Husthwaite, Kilburn, and in Cleveland at Osmotherley and Faceby. Mid-twelfth century architecture features substantially in most of the deaneries, except for the northern part of Cleveland, and it is

especially concentrated in the Vales of York and Pickering. Though there are quite a few churches with mid-twelfth century work in the central and western part of the riding, again the most concentrated area appears to be Ryedale-Bulmer. There are only six churches with both early and mid-twelfth century architecture, of which four are in Ryedale. But whereas previous concentrations in Ryedale had been centred on its western and central parts, by the mid-twelfth century, there was a distinct cluster in eastern Ryedale and Dickering as well.

The general absence of pre-1100 evidence in this area was discussed previously (see above, 169), and though the three churches with architectural work from the early-twelfth century may show that the social or economic forces restricting stone building in the region were lessening, they would not be removed completely until the mid-twelfth century. At that point, stone church building was obviously prioritized, as five churches between Snainton and Seamer were added to or rebuilt, including two of the three churches that had undergone architectural work just a few decades earlier. All of the mid-twelfth century undertakings appear to have been substantial. At Hutton Buscel a west tower was built; at Brompton, two large capitals suggest the presence of an aisle; and at East Ayton, Snainton, and Seamer, south doorways, and probably the walls around them, were constructed. All three doorways feature beakhead mouldings<sup>16</sup>, a form of ornament which was seen throughout Yorkshire in the mid-twelfth century, and in the North Riding was most prevalent in Ryedale (Salmon 1947, 351). The only church in this grouping that does not exhibit mid-twelfth century architecture is Wykeham, but as the medieval church was entirely demolished in 1853, its full architectural history is obscure. However, the old nave appears to have been of the later-twelfth century, and the church was ceded to Wykeham priory *c.* 1145 (VCH NR II, 498, 501), suggesting that there was probably some form of patronal activity being carried out there in the middle part of the twelfth century.

The motivation for the building surge in the area is not clear, though the tenurial situation a possible solution. While many of the manors in question were in the hands of the

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<sup>16</sup> At Seamer the moulding is abstract, but seems based on beakhead ornament (Pevsner 1966, 336).

king in 1086, by the twelfth century, they were held by various Yorkshire overlords and local subtenants (VCH NR II). There is no evidence for a single twelfth-century magnate pursuing or encouraging a coherent rebuilding programme in all his churches, as could have occurred in areas of compact lordship. However, the plurality of landholders in this tight cluster of manorial villas may have provoked a higher intensity of competitive display. Indeed, the use of beakhead ornament at three of the five churches suggests a common vocabulary of status. The elaborate moulding was an architectural choice that could mark the patron as wealthy, discerning, and artistically aware. This may have been particularly so with the beakhead motif, because of the design's affiliation with York-based craftsmen (Salmon 1947, 352).

A similar form of peer competition may have played an important role in the creation of some elaborate south doorways found in the eastern part of Richmond and Catterick [Fig. 104]. The best and most decorative south doorways in Yorkshire are not to be found in the North Riding, and apart from Alne and Barton-le-Street, which were almost certainly carved by York Minster craftsmen, there are no truly extraordinary doorways in the riding. However, the doorways at Kirby Wiske, Pickhill, Hauxwell, and Kirkby Fleetham are all notable for their fine carving and multiple orders of decoration. Though the churches are not particularly tightly clustered, they are nearby enough for the patrons to have been easily aware of building programmes at the other churches. Subinfeudation had been common in the Honour of Richmond since its creation in the eleventh century, and by the twelfth, it had progressed further there than in other parts of the North Riding (Dalton 1994, 40; Thomas 1993, 33). In the honour, many knights and lesser lords all held land from and were followers of the same overlord, the Count of Richmond. The tenorial situation could create rivalry as the lesser landholders jockeyed for status amongst themselves and for favour in the eyes of their lord. Those patrons who commissioned particularly elaborate south doorways for their churches could stake a claim to one of the most practically and symbolically significant areas of the church building (Ryder 1993, 34; Wood 1994, 69-70),

and simultaneously proclaim the wealth and command of resources that would help to maintain their social place and secure advancement. Whereas the demands of post-Conquest control and lordship may have been behind the establishment of many of the Honour of Richmond's churches in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries, after that command was firmly established, inter-lordly competition, rather than cooperation, may have become a driving force.

An alternative to the argument for elite-driven patronage has been proposed by John Blair and Carol Davidson Cragoe, who have argued for a definition of community responsibility for the nave, or at least its furnishings, from a period earlier than the documented, but sudden, mid-thirteenth century emergence (Blair 2005, 508; Cragoe 2005). Certainly the scale of many of the twelfth-century building projects suggests either a single elite patron with substantial funds, or the collective effort of the parish community. One might argue, however, as to the plausibility of an entirely independent organization of a building project by the non-elite community. It seems likely that the acquisition of resources, both in terms of raw materials and technical knowledge, would have had to be facilitated. The parishioners might have contributed funds to such building programmes, but their donations may well have been extracted by the overseeing elite patron, and the final product could then be associated with his own initiative and accomplishment more readily than with the collective effort of the villagers. Cooperation between lord and villagers in the enlargement and elaboration of their church cannot be ruled out either, but in all of these scenarios, it seems unlikely that the local elite would be far from the planning and execution of church-building programmes, or that they could be prevented from laying claim to sections of the enlarged church for their own use.

There are more churches with evidence from the late-twelfth century and Transitional period (75, 26% of total) than there are in the early and mid-twelfth centuries combined, and if evidence from the early-thirteenth century is included, there are 114 total churches (45%) [Fig. 105]. Sixteen churches have work from both the later-twelfth century

and c. 1200, suggesting that as in the early parts of the twelfth century, pre-existing stone structures were frequently altered very soon after major work had been carried out. At such close intervals, these building phases are unlikely to have been driven by repair or necessity, and are far more likely to be due to the socially and spiritually motivated actions of patrons. Late-twelfth century and Transitional architecture is found in all regions of the North Riding, and there are no perceptible clusters or concentrations of work, but rather a very high level of density across the whole of the sample area. This pattern also supports socially-driven building, rather than programmes determined by technology, opportunity, or necessity. If churches were simply being repaired or expanded as necessary, it is unlikely that the spatial distribution would be either so dense or comprehensive.

The twelfth century as a whole was the period of most significant patronage in the North Riding's churches, but the decades between c. 1170 and c. 1220 were clearly the height of local church patronage before the fifteenth century. The character of late-twelfth century, Transitional and early-thirteenth century work varies across the riding, but it is most frequently found in the form of doorways and added aisles, and early-thirteenth century work is often seen in rebuilt and extended chancels. Only in exceptional churches does Transitional work survive as a substantial portion of the church building, such as in the great west front at Scarborough [Fig. 106]. Though the intensity of building programmes in these years was unrivalled, they were not the high period of wholesale church construction. Up to c. 1150, stone evidence in the North Riding's churches was more likely to encompass a substantial portion of the core or even the entirety of the church. After that time, piecemeal addition, reconstruction, and enlargement were far more commonplace than wholesale rebuilding. Where the cores of churches are dateable to the twelfth century or earlier, they seem to fall between 1050 and 1150, rather than after that time. The great number of aisles that were built between 1150 and 1200 further supports this assumption, even when the core building is not easily datable, as they were almost always added to pre-existing nave-chancel cores, rather than being built integrally with a new stone church.

Intense architectural patronage characterized the twelfth-century North Riding, and it appears to be the only century in the medieval period in which multiple phases of construction were regularly carried out (cf. building phases at Wharram Percy, Barton-upon-Humber). In the North Riding, 40 churches feature datable multiple building phases between *c.* 1100 and *c.* 1200, and three (Pickering, Salton, and Northallerton) have evidence from the early, mid, and late-twelfth/Transitional periods. An additional four churches (Masham, Alne, Stonegrave, and Hackness) have a late-eleventh century Saxo-Norman phase and a further two twelfth-century phases [Fig. 107]. Once again, the primacy of Ryedale churches in programmes of intensive building is clear, as four of the seven three-phase churches fall within the main body of the Vale of Pickering. The fact that twelfth-century architecture is so widespread throughout the North Riding has appeared to eliminate many of the presumably meaningful spatial distributions seen in earlier periods, but the breakdown of twelfth-century architecture reveals that some important regional distinctions still lie beneath that surface. The vast majority of churches with multiple twelfth-century phases lie in the Vales of York and Pickering, including portions of Cleveland, Bulmer, Ryedale, and Dickering deaneries. There are six occurrences of multiple phases in the western areas of the deanery, but it is notable that there appear to be none at all in northern and central Cleveland. While the concentration of twelfth-century building in Ryedale is undoubtedly an accurate representation of the historical reality, the total lack of multiple phases in much of Cleveland is probably more a factor of survival. The extensive modern rebuilding of many churches in that deanery, especially in the northern and eastern parts, has resulted in the severe fragmentation of twelfth-century evidence. The presence of the evidence primarily in isolated pieces has to some extent obscured the original patterns of building and rebuilding.

More evidence of multiple phases falling within the confines of the 'Great Rebuilding' period is seen in the correlations between Saxo-Norman architecture and twelfth-century building [Fig. 108]. Of the 30 churches with pre-1100 fabric, seven were

added to almost immediately, in the early-twelfth century. A further six were altered in the mid-twelfth century, and nine more by *c.* 1200. Gilling West, Wath, and Crambe were all added to at some point in the twelfth century, but their evidence is not more specifically datable. That leaves only six churches with no clear evidence of twelfth-century alterations, though Great Edstone and Skelton have twelfth-century fonts. Newton-on-Ouse has been rebuilt entirely except for its Saxo-Norman tower arch, so original building phases are now impossible to determine. Only Lastingham, which gained an aisle in the early-thirteenth century, seems likely to have had no building activity in the twelfth century. This is not surprising considering that the site was abandoned by the monastic community in the 1080s, and it was not converted to a parochial church until *c.* 1228 (Pevsner 1964, 224-225). It is clear that though some Saxo-Norman churches were altered soon after their initial stone phase, there was no concerted effort by Norman builders to rebuild 'Saxon'-style architecture in the immediate aftermath of the Norman Conquest. This supports the supposition that many Saxo-Norman churches were built primarily *c.* 1100, and probably under the aegis of Norman rule. Unlike the Saxon cathedrals and abbeys, Saxo-Norman parish churches presented the newly installed lords with no collective ideological impetus to rebuild. Any work that was carried out on Saxo-Norman churches, whether it took place in the early, mid, or late-twelfth century, was most likely due to individual desires to promote lordly status through patronage and display, rather than any ethnic or culturally-based imposition of architectural style.

Both the pre-1100 and the twelfth-century architectural evidence for the North Riding demonstrate that any 'Great Rebuilding' carried out in the region was far from a simple process. The region was densely populated with churches by the mid-eleventh century, but early stone rebuilding seems to have been highly dependent on location. Certain precocious areas like Ryedale-Bulmer and Wensleydale featured high concentrations of building, while other areas, especially in the northern reaches of the riding, featured little if any pre-1100 fabric and significant stone rebuilding did not occur until well into the

twelfth century. After the initial phase of building was completed, subsequent alterations and additions were dependent on local circumstance and the motivations, abilities, and social needs of specific patrons, rather than on any organized, concerted effort. Nevertheless, some pockets of early and mid-twelfth century building, and the persistent intensity of church patronage in Ryedale, shows that the social circumstances which drove patrons may have been regionally or tenurially determined. At any rate, it is clear that there is no strictly demarcated period of 'Great Rebuilding' in the North Riding, in which a concerted or organized building effort on the region's churches was accomplished in a fairly short time. Instead, a prolonged programme of church-building began in the mid-eleventh century, and though it fluctuated in intensity at certain times and in certain locations, it was driven by similar social motivations through the Norman Conquest and into the twelfth century.

### **6.2.2 Cross slabs and commemorative development**

During the twelfth century, the distribution of funerary monuments, like architecture, became both more dense and more even than it had been previously [Fig. 109]. After the relatively low provision of the eleventh century, 259 cross slabs of the twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries were found at 75 churches, finally approaching the high levels of commemoration established in the Anglo-Scandinavian period. If only the datable cross slabs in the North Riding are considered, the importance of the twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries to medieval cross slab provision is clear. Though the late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth century is the peak of cross slab production in the North Riding, and the thirteenth century probably marks the true flourishing of cross slabs in the region, the long century between *c.* 1100 and *c.* 1220 accounts for nearly 50% of the datable medieval provision. Twelfth-century cross slabs are found in all areas of the North Riding, but as is generally true of monuments throughout the medieval period, they are more densely distributed in the north of the riding than in the south. Also of note is that eight chapels feature cross slabs from *c.* 1200 or earlier, indicating an early acquisition of burial rights.



Six of those chapels also have Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture (only Bilsdale and Liverton do not), suggesting that there was substantial continuity of church status and rights through the Norman Conquest and its aftermath. The architecture of the twelfth century may have been physically altering the North Riding's churches, and its monuments shaping church interiors and repopulating churchyards, but the organizational system which had long been established was continuing basically unchanged through the Saxo-Norman transition period.

The late-eleventh/early-twelfth century provision of 34 cross slabs at 23 churches increases dramatically by the middle and later parts of the twelfth century, with 100 monuments found at 42 churches [Fig. 110]. The number of church sites is fairly evenly distributed across four of the five deaneries, though the sixteen sites in Cleveland stand out as exceptional. The density of slabs from this period is also heavily weighted towards Cleveland, which has 55 slabs. Richmond, with the second-highest provision of slabs, has only eighteen. Catterick and Ryedale both feature significant amounts, with eleven and thirteen monuments respectively, but Bulmer has only three. The strong northern concentration of cross slabs that featured in the Saxo-Norman distribution obviously continues here, with 73% of mid-twelfth century cross slabs appearing above the line of the North York Moors.

The mid and late-twelfth centuries also mark the first appearance of cross slabs that are part of wider regional and national stylistic trends. Cross patee, maltese, and petal cross heads are all common in the mid-twelfth century North Riding, and there are also a few simple straight-arm crosses and 4-circle cross heads, probably the predecessors of bracelet crosses. In the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries, bracelet crosses become almost ubiquitous, and the basic style was subjected to a wide array of designs and stylistic variations. Though a recognition of wider motifs is demonstrated by the sculptors of the mid and later-twelfth centuries, it nevertheless appears that North Riding cross slab production remained the work of individual sculptors or very small, localized workshops. Throughout the Middle Ages, but particularly in the early period, North Riding churches frequently

feature a number of very similar and idiosyncratic cross slabs on a single site. The mid-twelfth century cross patee/proto-bracelets at Kildale, the unusually small bracelet and petal crosses of the mid and later-twelfth century at Kirby Misperton, and the cross patee/maltese crosses at Normanby are undoubtedly products of highly localized manufacture [Fig. 111]. Larger groups of similar slabs at neighbouring churches, such as the coped, gable monuments at Hauxwell and Fingall, were probably produced by a sculptor or small workshop serving the immediate area.

The continuation of small-scale modes of cross-slab production throughout the twelfth century and beyond probably only reinforced the geographical parameters or limitations that characterized cross slab distribution from the beginning, and the continuation of this pattern can still be seen in the monuments of the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries [Fig. 112]. There are 127 late-twelfth and early-thirteenth century monuments at 58 churches in the North Riding, and though they are very widespread in distribution, the density of monuments is still strongly focused in the northern regions. No deanery stands out as having an unusually large number of sites, as there are six churches in Bulmer/Boroughbridge with monuments of this date, ten in Catterick, eighteen in Cleveland, eleven in Richmond, and thirteen in Ryedale, but Cleveland has 37 monuments and Richmond has 46 from this period. As a result, there are almost double the number of slabs in the northern half of the riding (83) than in the southern part (44). The northern monuments account for 65% of the total provision of late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century sculpture, and demonstrate that though the dominance of the social, topographical, or economic forces which had determined patterns of North Riding commemoration since the Saxo-Norman period had diminished slightly, they generally persisted throughout the twelfth century.

There appears to be a similar north-south divide for sculpture in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, though it is not as strong as that seen from c. 1100 onward [cf. Fig. 49]. In the tenth century, sculpture in Ryedale was widely distributed, with five sites

possessing between seven (Stonegrave, Kirkdale) and twenty monuments (Sinnington). Though there were fewer monuments overall in Wensleydale, the distribution there was equally balanced. However, eleven sites in all, including four in Richmond and seven in Cleveland, had between seven and 35 monuments each, with the highest concentrations found at Lythe (35), Brompton (26), and Kirkleavington (25). Though all the churches possessed large numbers of monuments, the sculpture at each site was not produced in the same way. Brompton and Lythe were major ateliers, while the Wensleydale and Ryedale schools did not have large workshops, but rather small groups of sculptors working in a coherent regional style. Both Stanwick and Forcett, however, seem to have produced mainly rustic work, probably carried out by local sculptors with a passing knowledge of the primary styles, similar to the production of most cross slabs. Kirkleavington seems to have featured a mix of Allertonshire monuments and locally-produced work.

Brompton and Lythe, though the top producers of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in the North Riding, do not themselves feature high numbers of cross slabs in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Stanwick, Forcett, and Kirkleavington, however, all do have considerable evidence for late-eleventh/early-twelfth century sculpture production. While it is not a pattern that holds for all sites of either high Anglo-Scandinavian or cross slab production (e.g. Kirby Ravensworth and Ingleby Greenhow have no Anglo-Scandinavian work, and Kildale has only two pieces, but all have significant numbers of cross slabs), it may be that the decline of major workshops at the beginning of the eleventh century had an impact on later monumental production. It is possible that some remote areas, which had traditionally produced large amounts of sculpture on a local level, continued in that vein through the Saxo-Norman period and into the twelfth century. Wensleydale and Ryedale, which had been served by dispersed regional schools that mixed small workshop and local production, both feature average amounts of cross slabs in the twelfth century. While their sculptural traditions may have been affected somewhat by the decline of Anglo-Scandinavian production, it appears that local production of monuments was revived after a break during

the Saxo-Norman period. By the mid and later-twelfth century, Wensleydale and Ryedale had reached levels of production and distribution comparable with most of the North Riding, though they were still unable to compete in terms of volume with areas where sculpture had apparently never been interrupted.

### **6.3 A comparative analysis of architectural and commemorative development**

The development of churches and commemoration in the North Riding has been summarized in a comparative timeline, which draws out important correlations and disconnects between each form of media between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries, and will facilitate an analysis of how architecture and monuments operated independently and in conjunction in the formation of the medieval church and churchyard [Fig. 113]. When viewed in combination with the graph comparing the two forms of evidence over time, the trajectory of both media is made more clear [Fig. 114]. In terms of architecture, once stone fabric begins to be constructed in the later-eleventh century, architectural evidence rises continually to a peak in the early-thirteenth century, and though it drops off somewhat in the later years of the thirteenth century, the evidence for programmes of building and alteration in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is substantial. Commemoration, on the other hand, reaches a high point as early as the Anglo-Scandinavian period, and it would not achieve that peak of incidence again until the late-thirteenth century. Commemorative monuments fall off considerably in the eleventh century when production of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture declined, but despite the sharp reduction, funerary sculpture did remain in use through the Saxo-Norman period and early-twelfth centuries, often incorporating old forms and new stylistic ideas into unusual transitional monuments. Through the mid and later-twelfth centuries, commemorative production steadily increases, rising substantially c. 1200 and peaking in the late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth centuries. After this, though, cross slab use falls off sharply, and it continues to drop until only a few slabs, noteworthy but sparse, are found dating to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

If the incidences of architectural and monumental evidence are compared over time, it is clear that after the tenth century, there is a broad correlation running up to the early-thirteenth century, as the use of both stone fabric and commemorative sculpture gradually rose from the Saxo-Norman period. Both media also experienced a sharp rise in incidence in the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth centuries, though the increase in architecture was somewhat more dramatic. While the increase in the actual number of monuments between the middle and later parts of the twelfth century and *c.* 1200 was not that great (from 100 to 127 monuments), the expansion in the number of churches that possessed those monuments is clear (from 28 to 58 sites). This finding is significant in that it demonstrates a spread of commemoration to locations, and presumably to patrons, who previously could not or did not choose to commission stone monuments. However, the numbers of monuments being commissioned were not yet extraordinary, suggesting that a certain level of restriction on those able to commemorate still existed. Although Stanwick has as many as twelve cross slabs dating to the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries, this level of density is highly unusual. Even sites like Kirby Ravensworth, Forcett, and Kirkleavington, all of which feature large incidences of medieval monuments, do not possess more than five or six cross slabs from this period. The appearance of trade emblems in this period shows that social strictures were lessening somewhat, but as these monuments are neither frequent nor widespread, it seems that most stone commemoration was still controlled by a certain class of patrons.

The relationship between the rises in late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century architecture and commemoration is worth addressing, as it is the most important point of correlation in the programmes of expenditure. In the eleventh to thirteenth-century period, there is a reasonable level of correspondence between stone churches and sites with contemporary monuments, as 67 of the 177 total churches (38%) in the period also feature cross slabs. When this is reduced to a consideration of just the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries, the association is somewhat increased. Of the 114 churches with

architecture of the period, 49 (44%) also have contemporary cross slabs [Fig. 115]. Significantly, this pattern of correspondence appears to be fairly well distributed throughout the North Riding, though it is unsurprisingly somewhat better in the northern regions, where cross slabs were generally more numerous. These correlations imply that architecture and monuments were being implemented in conjunction in the late-twelfth century, perhaps in order to stake claims over portions of the church or to reinforce after a patron's death the benefactions he made during life. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that one of the most common architectural alterations of the late-twelfth century were aisles, which were not only an expansion of the church building, but which could also be used as private chapels, or as physically screened and bounded space, perhaps reserved for the patron and his family. Of the 57 churches which had aisles added to them in the late-twelfth or early-thirteenth centuries, 22 (39%) have contemporary monuments [Fig. 116], suggesting that at least in some architectural programmes, funerary sculpture was deliberately implemented in order to supplement or reinforce the patron's presence in the church and community.

The timeline and the graph also demarcate points at which investment in monuments and church architecture does not coincide, which may be considered of equal importance with correlations. The most obvious disparity is found in the tenth century, when the lack of stone architectural evidence contrasts with an extraordinary number of funerary monuments. Though the monuments cannot tell us the exact number of stone churches present in the tenth century, they do suggest the number of churches that were probably in existence. The number of presumed tenth-century churches (81) is not matched by stone church evidence until the mid-twelfth century (83 churches), indicating that *c.* 1150 is the likely endpoint of the North Riding's wood-to-stone conversion. The full conversion may have occurred across the riding at an even earlier date, as it certainly did in areas like Ryedale-Bulmer, but it is probably safe to presume that wood had been fully replaced as a church-building medium by the mid-twelfth century. Another obvious discontinuity occurs in the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries, when architectural patronage appears to have

dropped somewhat, but stone commemoration reached its peak. The steady increase in the commission of cross slabs throughout the thirteenth century indicates that successively larger numbers of people were able to avail themselves of this commemorative media. Unlike in earlier periods, where it is more likely that the same patrons were commissioning architecture and sculpture, it seems that the group of commemorative patrons had by this time expanded to sections of society (lesser knights, minor landholders) that were less likely to be able to contribute to churches in a significant fashion, yet still desired to express their status and identity in a permanent medium.

The most important correlation in the timeline, however, is the fact that funerary monuments decline sharply when stone architectural fabric first comes into widespread use, and they do not rise substantially again until the mid and late-twelfth centuries, by which time the primary conversion from wood to stone churches had almost certainly occurred. Considering the Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian traditions of stone sculpture in the North Riding, it might be tempting to attribute the lack of commemoration for most of the twelfth century to Norman unfamiliarity with stone carving or individual funerary sculpture. However, the decline in commemorative sculpture began half a century before the arrival of the Normans (Lang 1995, 442), and cannot be attributed solely to the invasion or a cultural shift. Instead, it must be explained in terms of a shift in patronal focus, and a recognition that attitudes towards architecture and commemoration could change over time, in response to specific social requirements. The fact that stone regained its primacy as a medium of ecclesiastical architecture seems to be one of the primary factors in the shift of favour away from stone commemoration. The perception that stone monuments were a less viable mode of communicating status, authority, and identity seems to have been bound up with the increased command of resources, wealth, and technical knowledge that building a stone church required, and commemoration at this time was apparently limited to regions where stone architecture was not being implemented. But once the majority of churches had been founded and the primary rebuildings of churches had all been undertaken, and strictures of

canon law removed the full ownership of parish churches from lordly hands, commemorative monuments seem to have regained their former importance, and did not relinquish it again for the remainder of the medieval period.

#### **6.4 A regional assessment of developmental models: parochialization and the 'Great Rebuilding'**

The chronological and spatial patterns discussed throughout the chapter have greatly clarified the trajectory of local church foundation, building, and parochialization in the North Riding. As expected, the establishment of local churches was closely intertwined with the decline of the minster-based organization of pastoral care and ecclesiastical administration, and to the growth and solidification of the parochial system of the later Middle Ages, as has been proposed by proponents of the minster theory in general, and in several regional studies (Addleshaw 1954, 1970; Blair 1988b; Blair and Sharpe 1992; Hall, T.A. 2000; Hase 1988). This study does not pretend to be a comprehensive review of the documentary evidence, as that debate is adequately covered elsewhere, but it does bring an important regional perspective, firmly grounded in material evidence, to previous interpretations. Regional variations, and the necessity of examining them, have been recognized as a central aspect of understanding overarching patterns of local church development (Blair 1995, 199; 2005, 295-323). It is hoped, therefore, that this study provides a comprehensive overview of parochial development in one part of Yorkshire, but also that it can serve as a solid basis for comparison with other regions.

All churches in the North Riding with Anglian evidence have been broadly called 'minsters,' and they almost certainly operated within that organizational system, but they were very unlikely to have been a homogeneous group, even at the earliest stages. Classes of 'primary,' 'secondary,' and 'pseudo-minsters' have all been identified in Theresa Hall's work in Dorset, based on royal manors, monastic holdings, and Alfredian burh sites (Hall, T.A. 2000, 28-29, 40, 79). However, such gradations of status and function are much harder



to identify in Yorkshire and the North, as are minsters themselves, where monastic influence and the royal organization of Wessex was weak at the very best. The North Riding certainly underwent no manorial or burghal restructuring under Alfred, Edward the Elder, or Aethelflaed, which in some regions of southern England produced an influential generation of 'hundredal minsters,' whose *parochiae* were congruent with administrative boundaries (Hall, T.A. 2000, 79). The North Riding may even have been under less royal influence than the rest of Yorkshire. Before the Norman Conquest, King Edward held land in only six manors in all of Yorkshire, and none of those were in the North Riding. Though the royal manors at Wakefield, Dewsbury, Aldborough, Knaresborough, Tanshelf (all West Riding), and Howden (East Riding) were undoubtedly important, they pale in comparison to the quantity and value of royal holdings in southern parts of the country (e.g. DB for Wilts, Hants, Berks; Finn 1971, 64; Green 1997, 101). The North Riding was instead the preserve of the Bishops of York and Durham, and the almost independent Earls, who divided between themselves the major manors of the region.

Though the North Riding's provision of minsters has been shown to be more complex than has sometimes been thought, the comparatively low levels of royal influence and monastic power in the region may have made it easier for new churches to draw power and rights away from the old minsters, and impaired the minsters' ability to command tithes and other fees from new churches founded within their ambit. Also, though the distribution of minsters across the North Riding is broad, and the major absences can perhaps be explained by the jurisdiction of powerful churches, there are still significant gaps where a lack of church provision would have left inhabitants very far from a minster church. This may have had implications for the functionality of minster pastoral care in the Anglian North Riding, and indicates that the structure of minsters may have functioned in a less than ideal manner outside of the Wessex heartland. Thus, there was not only greater opportunity for lords to found new local churches in the North Riding, but there may also have been a greater necessity from a purely pastoral perspective.

All of these factors probably resulted in comparatively early parochial formation in the region, as perhaps less fragmentation and reorganization was required than in the more complex and powerful southern minster systems, and what was necessary could be carried out more easily. A corollary of this pattern of development is that the new churches may have enjoyed a greater measure of independence than their southern compatriots, which would have encouraged patronage in form of stone commemoration and stone building from a comparably earlier date. The patterns of fragmentation and church establishment are unfortunately too obscure to trace accurately, but some broad geographical parameters are visible. If the dissolution of the minsters' control was easily accomplished, we might expect a substantial number of new local churches to be found in their immediate vicinity. Indeed, a substantial number of churches with their first evidence in the tenth century are found near established Anglian sites, but they are also found some distance from them. There is no clear pattern that the earliest Anglo-Scandinavian churches were quickly founded on dissolved minster lands. However, there is also no obvious evidence that minsters retained their power over their immediate areas in the tenth century, except possibly in the cases of Pickering-Hackness and York. In the North Riding, minsters did continue as active ecclesiastical sites, often with their rights intact, but they do not seem to have retained enough power to prevent the foundation of new churches, or the loss of burial rights to them.

There was obviously a strong surge in church foundation and patronage during the tenth century throughout the North Riding, which accompanied, and perhaps accelerated, the decline of the minsters. 'Old minster' was still a designation in the tenth century (Morris 1989, 129), but the use of 'old' suggests that while their superior status was still respected and in some cases still enforced, that status was vested in the past, rather than in the present and future of the local, proto-parochial churches. Some minsters, like Pickering, Wensley, and Gilling West, seem to have been incorporated quickly into this changing system, becoming important centres in the parochial landscape of the tenth and early-eleventh centuries. Others, however, may have fallen out of use for some time, only to be refounded

or restored in the Saxo-Norman period or the twelfth century. In a few cases, there may have been a continuation of minster administration and ecclesiastical patronage, such as at Stonegrave. There are several pieces of sculpture at the church which date to the tenth century, but are clear holdovers of Anglian carving styles and ecclesiastical iconography, in sharp contrast to the other Ryedale churches. This artistic conservatism may indicate that in the tenth century, there could still be occasional islands of monastic/ecclesiastical patronage within the growing secular ownership and expenditure on the North Riding's churches (Lang 1991, 27, 216). Similarly, Easby seems to have retained its Anglian character until the twelfth century, when the collegiate priests were replaced by canons from Easby Abbey (Addleshaw 1956, 16), and the lack of Anglo-Scandinavian activity at the site confirms the likelihood of prolonged minster status. However, a 'chapter' of Gilling West is also mentioned in the twelfth century (VCH NR I, 83), indicating that collegiate status was not necessarily incompatible with considerable secular, elite patronage, seen in Gilling's tenth and eleventh-century sculpture. Though the North Riding's patterns of local church foundation in the tenth century and building in the eleventh century are noteworthy, they cannot be considered the 'uncontrolled free-for-all' that has been described for East Anglia, where church foundation seems to have been carried out with complete disregard for any previous ecclesiastical structure (Blair 2005, 302). This was not the case in the North Riding, where there was certainly a persistence of minster sites and some traditional relationships, but it is clear that despite these continuities, the building and burial activity was not conducted within the traditional 'regulated mother-parish framework' that characterized the south and west (Blair 2005, 302).

Though the first stages of the parish system are fairly easily seen in the North Riding evidence, the development of chapels in the early period is less clear, and was undoubtedly a highly complex process [Fig. 117-118]. Eleven chapels have architectural, sculptural or Domesday evidence pre-dating 1100, and there were 31 with architectural or funerary work by the end of the twelfth century. Both before and after 1100, the provision of chapels does

not seem to conform to any noticeable geographical patterns, except for that they are widely distributed, and save for a few notable exceptions (e.g. Bilsdale, Askrigg), they lie close to their parochial churches. The small number of chapels in the pre-1100 period, as well as the greater numbers present before *c.* 1200, should be seen in light of the fluid definitions of parochial status in the early Middle Ages. Before and during the twelfth century, canonical and legal definitions of parochial churches and chapels were still being formulated (Mason 1976, 18). Eventually, the strength of canon law would have a great effect on medieval churches, limiting the number of churches that could be named parochial, and the number of chapels that could be founded (Morris 1988, 198, n. 5; Pounds 2000, 37), but it may have taken some time for these laws to actually affect parochial relationships and church status.

The status of a church or chapel was often unclear even into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the rights of a particular church were often disputed because of the lucrative dues they provided to owners. For example, in the late-twelfth century Myton-on-Swale was claimed by the Treasurer of York Minster as a church dependent on his church of Alne, while the abbot of St. Mary's maintained that it was a mother church within their fee (VCH NR II, 159). At this early stage it was often difficult to draw distinctions between these nominally dependent chapels and officially recognized parish churches, and their status changed easily over time (Cutts 1898, 113; Owen 1976, 67). Some chapels were dependent, and entirely without rights, and remained so throughout the Middle Ages. But others may have begun as dependencies, but later acquired baptism or burial rights, and operated basically as a parish church. This acquisition of rights may have eventually resulted in independence and official parochial status, but sometimes chapels with rights remained technically subsidiary to a mother church.

Eight North Riding sites which were still considered 'chapels' at the close of the Middle Ages have twelfth/early-thirteenth century funerary markers, and sixteen have fonts. Pickering's dependent chapels of Allerston, Ebberston, and Ellerburn became parish churches in the thirteenth century (VCH NR II, 423), but Ebberston and Ellerburn already

had fonts by the early-thirteenth century. Ebberston also has five cross slabs datable to before the early-thirteenth century, and there were funerary markers at Ellerburn in the tenth century. Similarly, Hutton Magna, Barton, Eryholme, Forcett, South Cowton, and Barforth are all listed as dependent chapels of Gilling West in 1396. However, Forcett has exceptionally large numbers of burial markers from the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, and Hutton Magna, Barton, and Eryholme all have fonts by the twelfth century. Another example is Lockton, which was a chapel of Middleton throughout the Middle Ages, but burials, marriages, and baptism had been practised there 'time out of mind' in 1567 (VCH NR II, 460). The dependent status of these chapels in the documentary record belies their prominence as early centres of patronage, pastoral care, and community importance. In many cases, it appears that their importance had been established before the codification of canon law, and regardless of their subsidiary status, once these rights were recognized to be of antiquity, it may have been difficult to reverse them. After the thirteenth century, canon law assured the stability of the parochial system by preventing chapels from usurping parochial status (Owen 1981, 5), and though disputes over the rights accorded to chapels still occurred, there was no major shift in the ecclesiastical structure, as had happened with the patronal churches and old minsters in the ninth and tenth centuries.

In addition to canon law, the widespread introduction of stone to local church architecture undoubtedly had a stabilizing effect on parochialization, and it was probably far more effective than legalities on a practical level. It is debatable whether the presence of stone churches fossilized parishes, or whether the gradual codification of parish boundaries and relationships encouraged patrons to build in stone and thus make their mark on what had by then become a significant reference point in the tenorial and social landscape. At any rate, the substantial and persistent monetary investment in the local church made by the patrons of the North Riding can be seen clearly in a number of phases, from initial construction, through rebuildings and enlargements, and onto the subsequent remodelings and additions to the core structure that followed. The extensive architectural evidence of the

eleventh and twelfth centuries has enabled us to assess how and when local churches changed from wood to stone in the North Riding, how gradual or sudden this process was, and how well the North Riding's churches fit into the previously discussed model of an ecclesiastical 'Great Rebuilding'. This evidence will also, in the following chapter, inform discussions about the role that architectural styles, technological advances, and the political and social developments of the eleventh and twelfth centuries may have played in any concerted process of rebuilding.

The 'Great Rebuilding' theory, as it initially stemmed from an observation of the rapid rebuilding of major stone churches in England, primarily after the Norman Conquest, and across northern Europe in the eleventh century (Gem 1988, 21), often struggles with the complexity and enormous variation present in the architectural history of local churches. Nevertheless, this and other analyses have shown that a process of stone-church building, unallied to the Norman Conquest but exploited by it, did begin in English local churches in the mid-eleventh century. Therefore, the theory should not be dismissed, but rather its applicability to local churches, in terms of the North Riding evidence, must be discussed. A significant problem with analyses of the local church in terms of the 'Great Rebuilding' is that the questions asked have often been functional and stylistic in nature, focusing on the refining of dating by tracing the diffusion of technology and architectural motifs from major churches, or tying the motivations of rebuilding to the size and state of repair of the previous churches (Gem 1988, 23, 25). As a result, social motivations that may have driven the rebuilding, and how those motivations changed in response to various geographical, political, and cultural contexts, have generally been ignored. The evidence provided by the North Riding has clearly demonstrated the necessity of addressing changing social motivations in ecclesiastical expenditure, and the benefits that such an approach provides for the understanding of the patronal actions that determined the trajectory of local church development.

Certainly, the North Riding is one of the best regions for a discussion of the 'Great Rebuilding' period, as it has a large number of churches that were already of long-standing importance by the mid-eleventh century. The primary phase of the Great Rebuilding is usually attributed to the period between c. 1050 and c. 1100, and by this time, a substantial number of North Riding churches had indeed been built in stone. However, this phase was not uniform across the whole of the riding, and the Ryedale-Bulmer and Wensleydale clusters, along with the north-south dichotomy between stone sculpture and stone churches, reveals the level to which regional and even highly local circumstances determined the likelihood of early rebuilding. Many other parts of the region were apparently initially rebuilt as part of a separate, later phase in the early or mid-twelfth centuries, by which time some of the Saxo-Norman period fabric in the early-rebuild churches was already being added to or replaced. It has been proposed that existing minster churches, due to their high status and historical associations, may have been rebuilt more elaborately than other churches, or were the primary targets of rebuilding programmes (Blair 1988b, 14). In the North Riding, only twelve of the region's 38 Anglian churches were rebuilt in the Saxo-Norman period, but seven of these are located in the Ryedale region, and the three churches which feature impressive eleventh-century west towers (Middleton, Hovingham, Stonegrave) were all once Anglian minsters of considerable importance. Thus, the presence of an Anglian minster, and a desire to attach oneself to its history and importance, may have provoked a significant degree of rebuilding in the Saxo-Norman period. But the fact that this trend did not encompass the majority of Anglian churches, and that an additional eighteen churches with no pre-Scandinavian evidence were rebuilt during this phase, demonstrates that it was far from the only impetus for programmes of architectural patronage. It is clear that the 'Great Rebuilding' of local churches, at least in the North Riding, was far more complex, multi-phased, and dependent upon a variety of social circumstances than is often allowed.

It is clear that unlike in great churches, the 'Great Rebuilding' programme of the North Riding's local churches was not a unified undertaking, or driven by an accepted political or cultural expediency. In England, the work at major churches is undeniably tied to the Norman Conquest and imposition of political rule, but was also part of the establishment of a particularly Norman ecclesiastical hierarchy. Gem has even argued that the rebuilding programmes were not due primarily to lordly, secular influence, as to an attempt by the Church to proclaim the equal and independent status of ecclesiastical power (Gem 1996, 5). The close involvement of both new (Norman) and old (English) bishops and abbots in rebuilding programmes at great churches make this highly possible, as they were undoubtedly concerned with the perception of their churches in both a national and even continental context, as well as with the religious messages it conveyed. However, for local churches, it is unlikely that the interest of the great ecclesiastics reached so far down the hierarchical scale, or to such a large number of structures, at a level sufficiently involved to effect rebuilding, particularly when they had rebuilding concerns at their own churches. It is almost certain that the rebuilding of the local churches of the North Riding, and the numerous phases added in the century afterwards, were directed by both English and Norman local lords. Though their cultural contexts may have been different, their expenditure on the church was undoubtedly driven by the necessities of material display and the expression of lordship, which was of paramount importance on either side of the Conquest.



## ***Chapter 7: The Social Implications of Churches and Commemoration: Power, Piety, and Identity***

### **7.1 Negotiating transition in North Yorkshire**

It was argued in the opening chapters that the parish church or chapel was the central focal point for social and spiritual life in the medieval settlement. In the North Riding, the substantial evidence presented for early church foundation, continuity of use, and high levels of architectural and commemorative patronage throughout the pre- and post-Conquest periods are confirmation of the local church's enduring importance. Despite a number of political and cultural upheavals during that time, church building and commemorative monuments demonstrate that for the elite, the social value of investment in the local church remained a constant throughout the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman periods. Indeed, the turmoil of the era may have been one of the reasons that ecclesiastical patronage maintained such a central importance. As a mechanism through which secular, cultural, and religious discourse could be expressed tangibly and experienced by many levels of society, the local church not only survived transitions, but influenced their trajectories, and grew in strength because of its crucial role in the lives of all levels of society.

Throughout this chapter, the significance of architectural and commemorative patronage to the identity and status of various individuals and social groups will be considered. The effects of this patronage, however, will first be set within the specific contexts of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman transitions, and then further elucidated in the wide-ranging discussion of concepts of identity and authority. In both periods, tangible materials were used to define and modulate ephemeral social conditions. In unsettled circumstances, stone buildings and monuments created permanence and stability, and structured the hierarchies and systems of society. Through them, patrons were able to control and transform both the perceptions and realities of the socio-political framework. In the crucible of transition, building churches and erecting monuments

undermined old hegemonies, created new hierarchies, and established a dialogue of authority that most could understand and access. The permanence of churches and monuments ensured their presence and viability even after the transition process was completed, and promoted continued use of these modes of patronage by subsequent generations. The more churches and monuments were recognized as having been effective communicators of status, authority, and identity in the past, the more they were used to those ends, enabling patrons to either reproduce social structures and reinforce hierarchies that had been created previously, or to fashion new ones of their own.

After the Scandinavian invasion, it was vital for the newcomers to establish a dialogue with the conquered populace, which they accomplished through gaining a thorough understanding of the existing systems of power (Hadley 2000c, 125). In addition, they used material culture as an active agent of ethnic fusion and in the creation of a new, northern, Anglo-Scandinavian identity, particularly by adopting and changing those churches and monuments which were already a part of the vocabulary of authority (Hadley 2000c, 133). While the wealthier and more powerful religious institutions often fell at the outset to blunt military force, the Scandinavian conquest and settlement was more effectively achieved through the churches they appropriated and created, rather than those they destroyed. The Scandinavian lords realized that a key to social authority and legitimation lay in the politically and socially formidable ecclesiastical infrastructure (Rollason 2004, 313), so they shifted that influence away from the established powers and into their own hands. By founding new, independent churches that catalyzed the erosion of the old order, and by appropriating the commemorative medium of ecclesiastics for their personal, secular use, they declared their Christianity, but not an acceptance of the institutional version that had dominated the region before their arrival. They used the heavily authoritative discourse of religion as a way of gaining economic and social control over their communities (Carver 2003, 11), but in the process, effected a shift away from an institutional and collegiate

ecclesiastical infrastructure to the privatized basis that would dominate parochial, local churches for the remainder of the medieval period.

By the time of the Norman Conquest, the nascent system of local churches was flourishing in England, perhaps nowhere more than in the Danelaw regions of East Anglia and the Northeast, where the hegemony of the minsters had been weaker, and where lords adopted church patronage with remarkable enthusiasm. Patronage of great churches was a common part of Norman conquest, in France and Sicily as well as England. Cathedrals and abbeys were a compelling means of establishing their rule on conquered landscapes and institutions, and these visible signs of piety and beneficence may even have inspired conquered peoples to identify with and accept the parameters of their authority (Potts 1995, 152). This acculturation may have been augmented by the Normans' willingness to incorporate traditional elements and styles into architecture (Chibnall 2000, 100; Fernie 1986, 77). Norman patronage has frequently been thought of as the triumphant gesture of victorious conquerors (Fernie 1986, 84), or the one-dimensional stamping of authority on a subjugated people (Le Patourel 1976, 353), but it was clearly a far more complex process. The patronage of parish churches in the aftermath of the Norman settlement demonstrates that if castles and great churches were the blunt instruments of domination funded by the high aristocracy (Holt 1997, 6), parish churches were the more understated yet effective purveyors of authority that were necessary for lords to negotiate control at local levels.

Unlike the Scandinavians, the Normans found no ecclesiastical infrastructure that it benefited them to undermine or dismantle, as the dominant role of secular lords in local churches had already been established. Though the Norman Conquest is often considered the more momentous or significant invasion, Normans were actually less revolutionary than the Scandinavians in the changes they made to the systems of churches and manors already in place. It has been argued that after the Conquest, England was a tenorial *tabula rasa* upon which William the Conqueror could freely create his kingdom (Hollister 1980, 94; Holt 1997, xvii; Newman 1988, 17). This was to some extent true, in that William was not

constrained in his choices of to *whom* the land was distributed, but the vills and manors that he conferred on his followers were generally well established components of an organized and utilized landscape (Hatcher and Miller 1978, 18). In the main, the new Norman lords appear to have been settling into a tenorial landscape that was already structured and defined, rather than creating their own.

As with the manorial structure, the ecclesiastical landscape of the late-eleventh century was populated with the churches and commemorative monuments of a previous generation of patrons. Like the Scandinavians, the Norman elite fully understood the existing mechanisms of power and the rewards of respecting them, but they also recognized the need to overwrite the legacy of the previous owners in order to successfully take control. They accomplished this through restructuring the tenorial hierarchy and castle-building, but also by continuing and intensifying a concerted programme of rebuilding in the local churches, which had long been integral parts of the North Riding's communities. The 'Great Rebuilding' of local churches had begun well before the Norman Conquest as a way of materially expressing lordship, but the power inherent in founding, building, and rebuilding local churches was quickly recognized and adopted by both Norman and native landholders. For Norman local lords that had recently been installed, the tenuous state of their control would undoubtedly be strengthened through a new or rebuilt church. It is also possible, especially in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest, that the local lords in charge of church-building and estate management were native landholders who had been pushed down the tenorial hierarchy into tenancy. These demoted lords would have been acutely concerned with maintaining their status and social relevance in the face of the new hegemony, and building large, accomplished churches helped to distinguish them as valuable members of the ruling group (Blair 2005, 417). Church patronage was not only a highly effective means of negotiating a complex socio-political transition, but also a way to ensure that one emerged as a member of the dominant group in its aftermath.

The socio-political and cultural changes imposed by the Norman Conquest had generally resolved themselves by the early years of the twelfth century, but the middle part of that century featured a period of internal turmoil during the anarchy, as well as important developments to the system of landholding. Both of these factors contributed to the increasing freedom and power of tenant lords (Green 1997, 202), and brought on an intense period of change, at least for the elite, that may deserve to be considered a transition in its own right. William of Newburgh wrote scathingly of the weak and decentralized state of England during Stephen's kingship, with particular focus on how upstart lords possessed the power of kings in dictating laws to their dependents, and their constant contention with one another (*WN* I:xxii, 429). The more Stephen was forced to employ favouritism between regional lords in an attempt to secure his footing in hostile territory, the more antagonistically competitive elite society became (Williams 1990, 255).

The autonomy of lesser lords was particularly pervasive in Yorkshire, where royal power had never been as strong, and magnates became involved in intense struggles for political power and tenorial authority. North Riding barons like William of Aumale, Roger de Mowbray, and Count Alan II courted the loyalty of lesser landholders, who were resident in the county most of the time, in order to consolidate power. As a result, the local lords gained a degree of leverage that allowed them to seize control of their social, familial, and tenorial relationships, and build their own castles and churches without the constraints of seigneurial permission (Dalton 1994, 147, 178). The intensification in the patronage of both church architecture and commemoration seen in the mid-twelfth century could be the product of an acquisitive and aspiring lordly society looking to secure its place in a time of social and political upheaval (Coulson 1994, 92). For those opportunistic local lords who availed themselves of the situation, it was a time when individual status and lordly identity could be considerably enhanced, and the social standing they gained here could be carried forward for themselves and their families into the later-twelfth century and beyond.

Along with steadily increasing church-building and commemorative expenditure, castle-building was also a particular feature of mid and late-twelfth century patronage [see **Appendix D**]. Previously, castle-building had been restricted to the king and nominated magnates, but from the 1120s, private individuals took to building mottes, moated sites, and fortifications. These castles were often built without license, due presumably to the weaknesses of central authority (Coulson 1994, 180; Renn 1968, 41), leading to William of Newburgh's comment that there were now in England 'as many kings, or rather tyrants, as there were lords of castles' (*WN* I:xxii, 429). There are a few major castles of the anarchy period in North Yorkshire (e.g. Scarborough, Helmsley, Thirsk, Northallerton) which were built by important secular and religious landholders. But smaller castles which were short-lived and received only minor investment, such as the one that existed at Yafforth between the Norman Conquest and the late-twelfth century,<sup>17</sup> or the timber castle at Catterick dismantled in 1154, probably represent most of the 'adulterine' castles of Stephen's reign. There were probably far more of these castles than the evidence now suggests, and undoubtedly a significant number of fortified manors (e.g. Huttons Ambo) that survive even less frequently. The castles established soon after the Conquest undoubtedly served purposes of lordly identity and display, but they were also functional and strategic tools for organizing military provision and response, and may have carried connotations of ethnic dominance as well (Pounds 1990, 55-56).<sup>18</sup> However, the drivers behind castles of the twelfth century are more likely to be matters of prestige, individual social statement, and local tenorial control. Minor fortifications, especially, were the secular equivalents of local churches. They were likely to be work of the lesser ranks of lords, who had vested interests in controlling a defined local area, and who gained influence as the baronial autonomy fostered in the anarchy filtered down into the lower ranks of the elite (Bloch 1962, 401).

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<sup>17</sup> The castle is recorded in an 1197-98 grant to William de Bretteville, when he received 1/8 of the church, the mill, and the pasture 'where the castle used to be' (VCH NR I, 174). The earthworks 500 metres northeast of the church (Pevsner 1966, 405) probably represent this ephemeral structure.

<sup>18</sup> There were French boroughs around castles at Hereford, Norwich, and Nottingham (Creighton 2005, 280), and a castle on Frenchgate in Richmond (VCH NR I, 23).

The seigneurial independence encouraged by the political climate of the anarchy, together with subinfeudation, multiple lordship, and the freedom achieved through heredity, weakened the personal bonds between lords and subtenants that had controlled the structure of hierarchy (Bean 1989, 140). Accordingly, the pressure on a minor lord to ally himself directly with one overlord's interests decreased, while both the attractiveness and necessity of staking one's own claim to authority and socio-political importance intensified. Nevertheless, multiple lordship and an expanding tenorial structure brought attendant challenges. Maintaining one's standing in the eyes of multiple lords and an ever-increasing circle of patronizing peers was a task that required constantly reinforcing one's presence and importance through material display and expenditure. The progressive increase in the patronage of local churches throughout the twelfth century and into the late-medieval period, in both architecture and commemoration, can be seen in light of the autonomy and social importance that tenorial and political developments had granted to mesne lords. They would retain and expand this power throughout the Middle Ages, but in order to do so, they had to deliberately and consistently engage in certain modes of material display. The possible motivations behind the choice of expenditure, and the particular relationships that material culture had to a variety of social identities, will be explored below.

## **7.2 Motivations for patronage in the parish church**

This section will address the benefits that patrons gained from commissioning church architecture and monuments, and how that expenditure on material culture helped to reify their various social relationships in a time of rapid political and tenorial change. Though the motivations for patronage by the ecclesiastical elite, high secular elite, and non-elite will be discussed, the analysis will focus particularly on accessing the local level of elite society, emphasizing how the findings of the project shed further light on a group of patrons that is often overlooked in the documentary record, but who can be shown to wield particular power in the local sphere. The possibilities of patronal choice will be highlighted

as will the strategic advantages they gained from patronage in the local church, as opposed to grander projects such as castles and monasteries. The dichotomy of public domain and private patronage inherent in the local church made it one of the most effective arenas in which to communicate identities to a wide and socially diverse audience. Though more high-profile patronal projects may have sometimes been attractive and available to the lesser elite, the numerous horizontal and vertical relationships they maintained were particularly well served by social statement made at the local level.

### **7.2.1 A confluence of the secular and religious**

Both secular and spiritual forces helped to define patronal action in the local church. Social display and concerns of locality, lordship, and tenurial status were driving forces of ecclesiastical expenditure (Cownie 1998, 3), but we must not assume that these factors completely superseded pious motivations in the commissioning of church fabric and commemoration (Harper-Bill 1980, 66; Le Goff 1990, 135; Saul 2002, 171). Piety and power were not entirely separate or conflicting concepts in the medieval mind, with both lordship and the military ideal often closely bound to religious legitimization (Bisson 1995a, 5; Cownie 1998, 151; Keen 2002, 1; Potts 2003, 35-36; Van Engen 1995, 207). The striking images of warrior portraits and swords side by side with crosses and saints on medieval monuments speak eloquently to the effective religious and secular amalgam created by patrons (Hadley 2001b, 137), as does the appropriation of spiritual space, through tombs or private chapels, for the privileged.

Displaying spirituality in such a concrete and ostentatious manner could be directly tied to lords' secular ambitions, despite the official view of high ecclesiastics. As early as the eighth century, Bede argued against the 'great wickedness' of lay involvement in monastic affairs (*EEE*, 351), and this mindset drove doctrinal changes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when canon law encouraged alienation of churches to religious houses in an attempt to curb secular ownership and the monetary gains lords made from them



(Addleshaw 1956, 18). Nevertheless, the strict tenor of canon law does not appear to have dented lay enthusiasm for religious patronage, nor ecclesiastics' willingness to accept lay gifts and tolerate their influence (Barlow 1979, 53). The religious and the secular both competed and coexisted with each other in the arena of the local church, and it was by harnessing and coalescing the social importance of both concepts that the elite most effectively exploited the potential of ecclesiastical patronage.

The great strengths of the local church were its ability to effectively combine the secular and the spiritual, and its centrality and authority on an immediate community level, which enabled it to compete with modes of patronage that may have otherwise overshadowed it. The building or rebuilding of castles or manor houses, as well as monetary and material donations to monasteries, contended with the local church for a patron's money and attention, and each presented different social advantages. Obviously, building castles and fortified manors served residential, military, and administrative purposes that churches and commemorative monuments could not, and as highly visible emblems of power and hierarchical domination, they reinforced the military aesthetic of medieval lordship. Alternatively, monastic foundation or endowment had positive spiritual implications, and was thought to be the holiest action a secular patron could take (Addleshaw 1956, 6). But while small-scale contribution to the endowment of a monastery was a common pursuit for most lords, founding a house or building a substantial part of the fabric was an immense financial undertaking that was beyond the reach of the vast majority of the landholding elite (Burton 1979, 24). Likewise, building castles, particularly those on a grand scale, was prohibitively expensive for many lords (Butler 1992, 77). Also, monasteries and castles, while undoubtedly significant symbols of wealth and status, were both less accessible institutions. As tightly regulated spaces, which kept lower levels of society separated and marginalized, castles and monasteries effectively promulgated an ideology of power and control (Austin 1998; Saunders 2000, 218). But by being encountered chiefly from the

outside, they lost some of the depth of interaction offered by more accessible arenas, as well as the potential to communicate more subtle identities and ideals.

Monasteries and castles, as bastions of the high elite, held a high profile and presumably a greater social cachet for the patrons, but the local church offered other distinct incentives. Local church patronage was available to a larger section of elite society, and patronage there could be encountered by, and thus influence, a much broader segment of the community. In the monastery, the local lord's expenditure was dwarfed by that of greater magnates, or its efficacy lost amidst the numerous smaller benefactions of lords of similar station. But when patronizing at the local church, he and his architectural or commemorative material could become the dominant force in that social milieu. Rather than being superceded by effigies and tombs of greater artistry and importance, the stone commemorative monuments of the local elite and his family stood out in a church interior filled with few burials, or in a churchyard featuring primarily ephemerally-marked graves. The ideal for the local lord was no doubt to patronize *both* monasteries and parish churches to the extent that they could, thus establishing their name and reputation in aristocratic, national circles, while securing their local basis of power. As either an alternative or a complement to monastic and military patronage, commemorative and architectural expenditure in the local church was a legitimate and effective option to patrons in need of establishing their place in the social hierarchy. Traditionally, scholarship on elite patronage has focused on greater rather than lesser institutions, but the evidence from the North Riding's clearly demonstrates how attractive parish church patronage could be, particularly for those whose interests and power base were regionally or locally defined.

### **7.2.2 Authority, identity, and patronal choice**

The relationship between medieval architecture, commemorative monuments, and the creation of authority and identity was complex. Patronal choices were determined by what the benefactor wanted, needed, and could realistically afford or command, and one or

both media could be implemented in response to pressures that were social, political, or spiritual in nature. There were particular benefits inherent to church architecture and funerary monuments, and specific motivations may have led patrons to choose one over the other, or even to employ both in conjunction. For example, as an explicitly commemorative medium, funerary sculpture has a more overt relationship with death, memory, and representing a person *in absentia* than does architecture. Church architecture did not always have these particular affiliations, though architectural bequests in wills often commissioned chantries and were almost always made for the benefit of the donor's soul, proving that the church building could serve unambiguously commemorative purposes. The relationship between material culture and memory will not be addressed in detail here, as it has been ably explored elsewhere (Finch 2003; Hallam and Hockey 2001; Valdez del Alamo and Pendergrast 2000a; Williams, H. 2003a), but it must be recognized that memory, in the form of the creation of a legacy, and of leaving a tangible mark that endured beyond the length of a patron's life, was at the foundation of all substantial expenditure on architecture and monuments.

Even when architectural patronage was not explicitly associated with death, it could be primarily concerned with managing the problems of absence, which were often created by distant or peripatetic lordship. In these cases, the building became a material reminder, constantly reinforcing the conceptual 'presence' of a living, but absent, patron. After acquiring the estate of Weaverthorpe in the early-twelfth century, Herbert of Winchester built a church there, in close affiliation with a new manorial enclosure (Morris 1989, 268). This was almost certainly an attempt to impose his authority on an estate in which he knew he would rarely be resident. In absences created by both death and life, architecture and monuments could assume a vital role, embodying the patron materially and promulgating chosen identities that were no longer able to be communicated through normal social interaction.

The structuring of the memory and identity of the deceased was a principal function of funerary monuments and commemorative strategies, but it is noteworthy that the deceased may have played very little part in the definition of their legacy. In late-medieval wills which specify commemoration, the vast majority of monuments were ordered by executors on behalf of the deceased shortly after death, as opposed to commission beforehand (Gittos and Gittos 2002b, 149; Norris 1992, 190; Saul 2002, 182). It seems logical that posthumous commissioning was the common method throughout the medieval period, and it is likely that the commission of most cross slabs, and probably Anglo-Scandinavian monuments, was not wholly in the hands of the deceased, but in those of his family. They defined the ways in which the monument would serve as a link between the living, the deceased, and the memory of the deceased, and they decided which identities were most appropriate for display. And by performing these actions, the family maintained a connection of reciprocal benefit with the deceased (Morganstern 2000, 87). The dead received prayers, and the living not only received heavenly intercessions, but also enjoyed the temporal legacy of power, wealth, and authority that the monument helped to reinforce and preserve.

Commemorative monuments were highly desirable in terms of social status, but they were also increasingly necessary in religious terms from the twelfth century onwards, as purgatory became firmly entrenched in religious thought (Le Goff 1990, 4, 289). The historical record makes clear that by the twelfth century, the demands of purgatory were being cited as a crucial driver in lay patronage. In the mid-twelfth century writings of Orderic Vitalis, a lord is encouraged to found a monastery because the monks 'in filial piety, will pray for you after your death' and 'their prayers...rise immediately to the throne of God, and that whatever they ask of the King of Hosts they surely receive' (*OV* III:v, 145, 147). The material record, however, does not necessarily suggest the same chronology of doctrinal shift. The documentary evidence suggests that most twelfth-century cross slabs should be primarily concerned with collecting prayers for the deceased, but the ubiquitous '*Orate pro anima*' inscriptions of the late-medieval period are nowhere to be found on early

monuments. There are a few inscriptions from the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth centuries, which mostly conform to the '*Hic iacet...*' formula, together with the deceased's name (e.g. Danby 7, East Harlsey 2), and though a possibly twelfth/thirteenth-century slab at Kirby Ravensworth requests '*De eius anima deus miseratur,*' no inscriptions explicitly asking for prayers from the living are found until the late-thirteenth century (e.g. Easington 1, Amotherby 2).

It might be assumed that in the absence of prayer clause inscriptions, the belief in purgatory had not yet taken hold, or the concern with it was not yet as urgent as in the late-medieval period. It certainly is possible that the acceptance of complex doctrinal concepts came more slowly to the lesser elite who commissioned cross slabs. However, even in the late-medieval period, cross slabs do not display intercessory inscriptions at anywhere near the rate of brasses and other contemporary monuments. Close to 90% of late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century brasses and monuments in Norfolk feature intercessory inscriptions (Finch 2003, 441), while at most five North Riding cross slabs do. It is of course possible that ephemeral inscriptions were painted on many cross slabs (Badham 2005, 166), but it may also be that in a primarily illiterate milieu, the visual image of the cross itself, and its implications of resurrection, were sufficient to remind observers to pray for the deceased. It has been argued that the growing importance of purgatory precipitated the development of figural tomb sculpture and brasses, because of the perceived ineffectiveness of earlier monuments as generators of prayer (Badham 2005, 166; Crouch 1997, 180; Daniell 1997, 186; Daniell 2002, 252). But even without obvious purgatory-related inscriptions, cross slabs continued to be employed throughout the medieval period, and in the North Riding, they seem to have been produced at a much higher rate than either figural sculpture or brasses (cf. Badham 1989). Despite their apparent deficiencies, the enduring popularity of cross slabs demonstrates that they must have effectively served the necessities of a populace, and that at the levels of the lesser elite and below, the means of invoking purgatorial

intercession may have been much less explicit than the greater monuments have lead us to believe.

Commemorative strategies are also an effective means of staking claims to ownership and social dominance, particularly in contentious or turbulent circumstances and communities (Crocker 2000, 185; Finch 2000a, 184). The ability of monuments to convey individual and family identities and memories was imperative for those who wanted to maintain the hierarchical order, but could be equally effective for those who wished to undermine or challenge it. Whether employed competitively or cooperatively, memorial stones could be used to negotiate balances of power among multiple patrons. A number of monuments in the church and churchyard could suggest successive generations of a patronal family perpetuating a legacy through burial, or else a wide array of patrons who may have been competing with each other, and perhaps the architectural patron, for status. Alternatively, a number of contemporary monuments at a site might be evidence of a dominant lord identifying and rewarding his high-ranking followers by allowing them stone commemoration, though such a situation does not rule out competitive display amongst the followers. Though facilitating the burial and commemoration of his followers seems a compromise, such an action proclaimed the strength of the lord's local authority, the breadth of his affiliation, and the desirability of his church as a burial site. His control of burial practice, cloaked in generosity, could consolidate his power over his retinue.

Building a stone church, or rebuilding or adding to one, would have been an even more dramatic statement of presence and authority than a commemorative monument. It offered a greater degree of permanence, required far greater control of resources, and often dominated the built environment of the settlement. It may also have been a partially civic gesture, further reinforcing the ties of a patron to a certain locality. Acts of patronage in the local church cemented a lord's relationship to his basis of tenorial wealth and social standing, and materially symbolized and reinforced his power and elite identity even in his absence (Graves 1989, 311-312). As long as the patron's descendants remained prominent,

his contributions to the architectural fabric could continue serving this purpose after his death. Church-building had a distinct advantage over commemorative monuments in that the patron could benefit directly from his expenditure during his lifetime. While the patron's family or descendants may have benefited from the social statements made by commemorative monuments, the patron himself saw none of those rewards. Architectural patronage, however, if carried out while the patron was alive rather than as a bequest, could actively aid any current ambitions. In addition, the grander scale of a church afforded control of the landscape and village in a way that funerary sculpture did not. And importantly, it created a space within and around which additional material culture and memorial objects could be housed, and where a social discourse with those objects and their physical context could be carried out for generations to come.

For those who could afford it, architectural patronage may have been especially attractive because it was a far less crowded patronal milieu than commemoration. Though building a church identified the patron as a member of a particularly elite group, it was also a strong statement of the individual's ambition, resources, and knowledge. The socio-cultural values and personal affiliations that were expressed in the imagery, symbols, and inscriptions of monuments were perhaps not as explicit in architecture, at least until the integration of heraldry into architectural design became more common in the thirteenth century (Ailes 1990; Crouch 1994, 67). But in the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman settlement, the pool from which architectural patrons could be drawn was likely to be small, so overt identification of the patron, and his associated personal identities, may have been far less necessary.

The advantages of architectural and commemorative patronage were often deliberately combined. A direct correlation between secular patronage, burial, and the rebuilding of a church is often evident at monastic levels (Astill and Wright 1993, 132-134; Williams, H. 2003b, 241). In parish churches, this correlation is most clear in the late-medieval period, where there are documented examples of brasses and effigies being placed

in purpose-built additions (Williams, H. 2003b, 243), such as the monuments and south chapel of the FitzAlans at Bedale, c. 1290 (VCH NR I, 297-8). Founding a chapel or building an aisle at a church would have involved considerable expense, but those who could undertake architectural patronage certainly had the financial resources to commission a monument as well (Gittos and Gittos 2002b, 144). Similarly, patrons may have placed cross slabs in these structures, or in the churchyard outside them, more frequently than the evidence currently suggests. The *ex situ* nature of almost all cross slabs makes it difficult to speculate about which sections of the church or churchyard the monuments occupied, but it is highly likely that the late-medieval and early modern practices of strategic burial location and claims on space (e.g. Finch 2000) were in use from early in the medieval period.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are two periods in the North Riding where there appears to be a strongly interconnected relationship between architectural and monumental patronage. The abundance of stone funerary monuments in the ninth and tenth centuries indicates the importance that Anglo-Scandinavian lords placed on associating commemorative sculpture with the initial foundation and building of churches, as it aided in both the legitimation of the newly founded church and burial ground, and in marking a claim of ownership (Stocker 2000, 197). The late-twelfth century also saw a sharp rise of both cross slab production and architectural evidence, frequently in the form of added aisles, suggesting an equally close relationship between architectural and monumental patronage (see above, 210-211). Late-twelfth century lords may have been sponsoring the building of aisles not only as an improvement for their church and community, but also as a means of personal display and statement, and these public spaces could be appropriated through use as private chapels and perhaps as housing for funerary monuments.

All of the 22 aisled churches with monuments, except for Stanwick, have between one and four slabs dating to this period, which suggests limited patrons and familial burial strategies [Fig. 119]. Stanwick, on the other hand, has an unusually large number of cross slabs overall, with sixteen dating to the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth centuries. While some



of the Stanwick slabs may have been originally associated with aisle-building or improvement projects, the proliferation of commemorative patronage at the church during this period obscures any possible monument-aisle relationship. In the absence of specific documentary evidence and commemorative inscriptions, it is impossible to determine whether the same patrons who undertook architectural patronage were also those commemorating, but it does indicate that commemorative monuments could be an exceptionally popular and viable means of social display and dialogue.

The importance of building local churches, and of being buried at them, persisted throughout the medieval period, but the ways in which churches were owned and patronized changed during that time. Over the centuries, the number of people and institutions with influence in local churches grew, and as a result churches became more divided, physically and conceptually. If ownership of the whole church and its burial ground was no longer feasible, control over a part of it, or a named association with it, was eminently desirable. By choosing to be buried at or donate to a parish church, patrons were able to reinforce a sense of place for themselves and their families and demonstrate a specific bond with that territory. From the twelfth century onward, the practice of adopting toponymic surnames highlights the role that locality could play in personal and familial identity and authority (Coss 1993, 72), setting a precedent for the burial and benefaction of descendants, and aiding in the establishment of a traceable lineage (Cownie 1998, 164; Golding 1986, 37). In addition, the calculated placement of burial markers or the funding of construction could help a patron lay claim to part of an increasingly public space. A burial marker placed in a particular part of the church not only operated as a commemorative object, but influenced the spatial setting in which it lay, assigning memorial meaning to the location and determining the social actions which were associated with it (Hallam and Hockey 2001, 77). Sections of the church could thus be altered, from spaces concerned primarily with spiritual worship, to those which combined worship and prayer with the remembrance and

'presencing' of important figures in local life, ensuring their future place in heaven while preserving their location in the social structure on earth.

### 7.3 Categories of patrons: interests and influences

Having addressed the motivations for patronal choice in terms of the mode of expenditure, we must now examine the various categories of patrons that had an interest in the local church, and the degree to which they impacted upon its material culture. Of all those involved, secular lords with vested local interests will be the most closely scrutinized in this analysis. These lords would have been faced with social pressures from both above and below, and in order to maintain and advance their position, they would have been required to prioritize certain kinds of expenditure at specific times. Many of these requirements, however, could be met by local church patronage. It was one of the few ways in which civic duties, spiritual necessities, and social ambitions could be accomplished in a single act, simultaneously demonstrating control over subjects, as well as the piety, generosity, wealth, and power that were necessary attributes of medieval elite identity. However, the number of other groups bearing influence on the local church make determining the source and motivations of patronage a much more complex and multifaceted issue. Monastic communities could patronize churches themselves, and might also affect how secular benefactors carried out their patronage. Parish priests, when closely associated with both the locality and the church, could utilize patronage to establish their spiritual and temporal authority. In the secular realm, magnates and even prosperous non-elites could have vested interests in local church patronage and its spiritual and social benefits. However, understanding the reasons why these other groups often *did not* prioritize expenditure in parish churches is equally important to elucidating the social uses of local church patronage, and the primacy of the minor lord in that milieu.

### 7.3.1 Monastic ownership and patronage by the ecclesiastical elite

The importance of church patronage to the secular elite remains the primary focus of discussion, but the possible effects of religious society on local churches should not be overlooked. Parish priests were the ecclesiastical group most obviously associated with local churches, as they lived off the church's land, sometimes held a share in the tithes and rents, and generally served as administrators and sometime patrons (Blair 2005, 493). However, it is difficult to determine how much influence they possessed in local society and the church, because their wealth and status could vary so widely by location and over time (Barlow 1963, 186-88; Owen 1981, 132-3; Platt 1995, 5). The status and influence of the local priest or priests was undoubtedly highly dependent on local circumstance, with some priests so socially low as to be unfree, and others so elite as to be retained as members of a lord's household (Blair 2005, 492-493). Nevertheless, the proliferation of local church-building has sometimes been attributed as much to the enthusiasm of the clergy as to the laity (Betley 1987, 28), and though the financial status of most priests made full patronage unlikely, they may have been expected to contribute to the secular patron's building programme (Blair 2005, 494). Even if they were not substantial architectural contributors, the prevalence of cross slabs with priestly emblems demonstrates that many priests were sufficiently wealthy and important enough in the community to command stone burial monuments, and most likely an honoured place of interment in the church.

Monastic communities, as the dominant members of the ecclesiastical elite, undoubtedly had some say in the development of the local church, but the extent to which they influenced the architectural fabric or commemorative sculpture is debatable. Even though monasteries were major landholders, and might have influence on nearby churches and villages, they were probably less immediately influential tenurial lords (Douglas and Greenaway 1953, 74). After the Norman Conquest, the new and refounded abbeys acquired ownership of a considerable number of churches, but the sheer quantity they possessed probably precluded direct involvement in the fabric of most of them (Barlow 1963, 204).

There are occasional grave slabs with abbatial symbols at parish churches, such as those with croziers at Brafferton, Kilburn, and Oswaldkirk, one with a mitre at Richmond, and one with a mitre and crozier at Middleham. On first glance, these suggest that abbots occasionally chose to be commemorated parochially, but it may be that these slabs were moved from nearby abbeys after the Dissolution, perhaps to escape desecration. The Middleham slab was almost certainly brought from Jervaulx (VCH NR I, 256), and Kilburn and Oswaldkirk are both within a few miles of Byland Abbey. Brafferton, while slightly more distant, belonged to Newburgh Priory (Pevsner 1966, 86), and St. Mary's, Richmond had choir stalls from Easby Abbey brought there after the Dissolution (VCH NR I, 30), so the transport of a slab is well within the realm of possibility. Though the monastic elite were technically the owners of the vast majority of churches, the documentary record may belie their real effect on the material culture of the parish church. Compared with priests, local lords, and magnates, they probably had less tangible impact.

However, the practice of alienating the endowments of local churches to monasteries and religious institutions, which occurred especially frequently in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did affect the manner in which secular patronage could be carried out (Kemp 1980, 134; Pounds 2000, 202). From the late-eleventh century, canon law specified that lay persons were not to own churches or tithes, and special emphasis was placed on removing the church from feudal and manorial tenure (Addleshaw 1956, 4-5; Kemp 1980, 135). In North Yorkshire, monastic grants were quite common from c. 1100, and were extremely widespread by c. 1200. There were at least seventeen North Riding parish churches in the hands of religious institutions by the end of the eleventh century, but by the end of the twelfth century, a further 92 churches were in ecclesiastical hands, or had been at one time [see Appendix A]. However, it would be far too simplistic to assign the wealth of twelfth-century church-building evidence solely to the pious enthusiasm of new and wealthy monastic owners. Indeed, the difficulty that some monasteries had in retaining churches after they had been granted demonstrates that secular lords still often held the

balance of power (Burton 1987, 47). Laypeople continued to wield control and gain economic benefit from local churches, and many of the North Riding's churches remained in the control of secular manors throughout the Middle Ages. Even so, monastic ownership may have made patronage and the seigneurial relationship with the local church a more complex and negotiated affair than it had been previously.

Stylistic comparison of architectural schemes demonstrates that monasteries did occasionally take an active hand in parish church-building. Elaborate twelfth-century schemes at Patrick Brompton, Barton-le-Street, and Alne relate them to carvers based in York. St. Mary's Abbey had held Patrick Brompton since the early/mid-twelfth century, and its north arcade bears a close resemblance to the chapter house at the abbey (McCall 1907, 80; VCH NR I 334, 340). At Barton and Alne, both programmes appear to have been the work of carvers working in the 'Yorkshire School' (Morris 1989, 282) [Fig. 120]. As both were close to York and belonged to Holy Trinity, Mickelgate and the Treasurer of York Minster, the direct commission of sculptors by York ecclesiastics is likely (VCH NR I, 476; VCH NR II, 91).

A more complex example is the parish church of Scawton, which is recorded in the narrative of Abbot Philip (1142-96) as having been built by Byland Abbey as a chapel for their tenant Hugh Malebiche (VCH NR I, 557). The architecture is not particularly accomplished, but there are unusual features at the church, such as the twelfth-century recesses to either side of the chancel arch, and the c. 1200 lavatorium in the chancel, which may indicate the stylistic influences of a major institution [Fig. 121]. However, there is no straightforward correlation between the fabric and the documentary evidence, as the nave and chancel date to the early and middle parts of the twelfth century (Morris 1904, 335; Pevsner 1966, 334; VCH NR I, 556). The chancel itself, however, can be more firmly assigned to the latter half of the twelfth century, fitting better with the Byland narrative. It is possible that the construction recorded in the narrative was not an initial foundation and

building, but rather a substantial architectural contribution to an already extant church. Indeed, rebuilding the chancel seems the most likely contribution of an ecclesiastical patron.

There are five local churches in the North Riding, at Easby, Guisborough, Whitby, Old Byland, and Coverham, that have very close physical associations with parent monasteries. In all of these cases, there is evidence that a local church existed before the twelfth-century monastery, but because of their proximity to the major institutions, it appears that these churches were the most likely to be afforded a monastically patronized rebuilding after appropriation. Guisborough has no remaining evidence from the early medieval period, but in the cases of Coverham, Easby, and Whitby, the earliest stone architecture at the parish churches does date to the time of appropriation or soon after, with Easby's fabric correlating well with the major abbey rebuild *c.* 1190 (VCH NR I, 53). It is possible that these churches remained in their pre-twelfth century form until they were appropriated by the monasteries and rebuilt. At Old Byland, however, there is an example of a stone structure pre-dating acquisition by the monastery, and there is no evidence that any significant structural enhancement was carried out by the monastic owners. Old Byland is recorded as being attached to abbeys in both 1147 and 1177 (*BD*, 665), but the eleventh-century sundial and early-twelfth century stone architecture at the church precede both of the monastic dates (Pevsner 1966, 275), and there is no evidence of mid or later-twelfth century alterations for which the abbey was likely to have been responsible.

Indeed, there are far more cases in North Yorkshire where there is no direct chronological correlation between a monastic grant and an architectural phase [cf. **Appendices A & B**]. Even when the architectural and documentary dates seem to match, there is no guarantee that it was the religious institution that contributed to the fabric, rather than secular patrons. This is made explicit in one documented example, where the abbot of Whitby allowed local lord Aschetin of Hawsker the freedom to found, endow, and build a chapel at Hawsker in 1148, on the condition that he then alienated said chapel to the abbey (*CWA* I:ccxx, 179-181; Kemp 1980, 140). In the wake of appropriation, secular patrons may

have been especially anxious to preserve some aspect of control at the church, perhaps making the likelihood of expenditure even greater.

In visitation records, religious houses were often chided for the material neglect of the churches in their care (Morris 1989, 323; Platt 1995, 98), suggesting that they were not habitually contributing to church building programmes. In general, monastic influence on local church patronage may have been less intensive in the North Riding than in southern regions of the country, where religious houses were more wealthy and powerful, and where their role in the ecclesiastical system had never been disrupted (Golding 2001, 150; Green 1997, 392; Harper-Bill 2002, 173). This possibility is strengthened by the acknowledgement that St. Mary's Abbey, despite being the greatest of York's monastic houses and a major owner of land and churches across Yorkshire, seems to have had comparably little effect upon the physical aspects of the churches in its possession (Butler 1982, 91). There is an unambiguous example of monastic disinterest in the church of St. Anne's, Catterick, where though St. Mary's owned the church, the abbey took no part in the major 1412 rebuild of the fabric, which was instead carried out by the manorial tenants, the Burgh family (McCall 1910, 30; VCH NR I, 310).

It appears that despite the great financial potential of monastic institutions, most monumental and architectural work in the parish church was carried out by secular patrons, because they had far more to gain from local patronage. Monasteries, unless they had a close physical association with a parish church or chapel, had little reason to reinforce their standing in the village community by patronizing a local church. They had their own, more important, religious building to look after, for which expenditure must have been prioritized. Secular lords, however, had to be concerned with their standing in the village community and the wider locality, and the parish church was a key vehicle through which a patron's public and personal image could be improved.

### 7.3.2 Secular patronage

The limited evidence for monastically-driven rebuilding in the North Riding runs contrary to Richard Morris' claim that most rebuildings of twelfth and thirteenth-century churches were the work of 'religious institutions, wealthier clergy, and some magnates' (Morris 1989, 352). He uses this statement to draw a contrast between the restricted elite patronage of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, and a proposed community/gentry approach in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, arguing that if the great magnates and religious institutions were not building the churches after 1300, we must turn instead to the role played by the rank-and-file parishioner (Morris 1989, 284, 353). Certainly the interface between the patronal elite and the village community was beginning to manifest itself by the end of the period under study, and the local church was a meaningful space in which that emergent dialogue was carried out. However, Morris here seems to underestimate the contribution that the manorial elite could have made to local churches before the fourteenth century, despite having attributed to them a great deal of influence in the pre-Conquest period (Morris 1989, 129, 138, 163). Other work has acknowledged the influence of the local elite, but has mainly associated it with the late-medieval gentry (e.g. Graves 1989, 311; Saul 1986). Though lesser lords fell below tenorial magnates in rank and wealth, they were well above the state of the normal parishioner, and as it shall be shown, were often in primary control of local churches, and financially able to contribute to them, in the pre-Conquest and Anglo-Norman periods.

The documented patronal interests of the great lords and magnates of North Yorkshire suggest that they focused much of their attention on castles and monasteries, and thus may have ceded much of the work in local churches to the lesser elite. The royal castles at Pickering and Northallerton (VCH NR II, 463; VCH NR I, 418) were joined by late-eleventh/early-twelfth century stone castles at Richmond, Middleham, Thirsk, Helmsley, and Scarborough, built by Count Alan of Brittany, Roger de Mowbray, Walter Espec and William of Aumale (Dalton 2001, 2; Pevsner 1966, 188, 292; VCH NR I, 59). While most



of these lords did have concentrated tenurial interest in Yorkshire, if not specifically the North Riding, they also held land in other regions, such as Aumale's extensive territory in Lincolnshire (Dalton 2001, 2). Others, like Count Alan of Richmond, were in possession of a staggering number of estates across the country, making detailed attention to all of them, both in terms of castles and churches, impossible (Butler 1992, 69). While they may have favoured patronage in Yorkshire, their identities were much less reliant on locality than lords further down the social scale.

Likewise, magnates seem to have focused their primary ecclesiastical expenditure on the major religious houses that showcased their wealth and piety on a larger stage. Every recorded Anglo-Norman burial save one, that of Hugh de Lacy in Weobley church (Herefordshire), took place in a religious house (Golding 1986, 40). Certainly the magnates of twelfth-century Yorkshire had their sights set on the higher levels of ecclesiastical patronage (Butler 2001, 2) [see Appendix C]. Walter Espec founded both Rievaulx Abbey and Kirkham Priory, he was buried at Rievaulx, and he founded religious houses as far away as Bedfordshire (Burton 1995, 21-22). Roger de Mowbray established Newburgh, Byland, and Jervaulx, and was an important patron of Fountains and other northern abbeys (VCH NR II, 62). Eustace FitzJohn founded the priory at Malton in 1135, three other northern houses, and was a benefactor of six other major Yorkshire houses (Cownie 1998, 169-70, n. 139; VCH NR I, 532).

Even from an early period, there is little to indicate the direct patronage of great lords at North Riding local churches. Before the Conquest, Earl Siward founded and was buried at the church of St. Olave in York (Blair 2005, 403), but this was referred to as a 'minster' at its foundation and had a short monastic history in the post-Conquest period (Raine 1898, 19). In the Anglo-Norman North Riding, the only clear examples of magnates patronizing local churches are William Espec's foundation of a chapel at Bilsdale (VCH NR I, 504), and the likely involvement of both William of Aumale and King Richard I in the ambitious and outstanding architecture at Scarborough, though it may have been monastic

by that time (Crouch 2001, 49; Hoey 2001, 66).<sup>19</sup> In general, magnates seem to have viewed parish churches as assets to donate to monasteries, rather than as patronal foci in their right, but occasionally they could take a specific interest in the church of one of their estates. At Weaverthorpe (see above, 232), Herbert of Winchester built or rebuilt the church c. 1110 (Addleshaw 1956, 13), and at Conisbrough, the rare and elaborate Romanesque tomb chest, perhaps of William III, Earl of Warenne and holder of the Honour of Conisbrough, indicates that the high elite occasionally left their mark on parish churches [Fig. 122]. Even then, the honour may have had to be shared with monastic houses, as William was actually buried in his family monastery of Lewes Priory, but saw value in preserving his memory at the local church of his castle through a cenotaph (Wood 2001, 45, 56).

The minor elite often aspired to monastic benefaction, though theirs was rarely equivalent to the donations made by magnates. Rather than founding monasteries, or funding building programmes at them, lesser lords might donate land or tithes to the monasteries from the churches and chapels on their manorial estates. Contributing to an overlord's monastery was a way of demonstrating loyalty and perhaps earning favour, while simultaneously displaying wealth, status, and political affiliation with a particular magnate to wider society (Cownie 1994, 148-149). The donation of Easington church by the subtenant Robert de Rosel, who granted it to Guisborough Priory 'for the health of his own soul and that of Adam de Brus his lord' (VCH NR II, 342-3), is an excellent example of both minor monastic donation and the importance of the overlord's perception of patronage. Lesser lords could also reproduce aristocratic benefaction on a smaller scale by founding nunneries, which were generally smaller and less well-endowed institutions, and thus more often within a feasible economic range for the minor elite. Roger de Aske, who founded Marrick Priory, was a Richmondshire knight, not a baron, and most grants to the priory

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<sup>19</sup> St. Mary's, Scarborough is exceptionally grand, with the only known twin-towered west façade at an English parish church (Hoey 2001, 66). The direct involvement of great lords or even the king in its architectural patronage is more likely than at the majority of North Riding churches.

came not from magnates, but from other local tenants within a 20 mile radius (Tillotson 1989, 3).

While nunneries carried less social clout than monasteries, they offered the lesser lord the baronial ideal of a religious community dedicated to the spiritual well-being of a patron and his family. However, nunneries sometimes competed directly with parish churches for the benefaction of local lords, and in some cases, appear to have lost. Roger de Aske was also a major patron of the parish church at Marrick, and indeed he was buried, and presumably commemorated, in his chapel at the east end of the local church, rather than at the nunnery he founded (Tillotson 1989, 4). This is an extremely significant gesture, as it suggests that while the patronage of parish churches may not have commanded the same spiritual benefits as monastic institutions, the centrality of the local church in manorial life meant that a statement of commemoration and lordly authority was more effective within its walls than those of a minor and relatively poor religious house. Patronage of local churches was not just a 'second best' recourse forced upon lords by their financial limitations. The immense expenditure on local churches from the tenth to twelfth centuries, especially in the latter part of that period when religious houses were a viable patronal option, reveals it instead as an active choice made with very specific social benefits in mind.

Though magnates were financially and socially dominant, it seems that the local lay elite wielded *de facto* power in the local church, as the representatives of manorial authority 'on the ground' (Mason 1976, 18). The high aristocracy had interests further afield, and they needed the national prominence that monastic benefaction provided, more than the regional consolidation that parish church patronage best served. Parish churches and chapels were thus particularly attractive patronal foci for local and regional lords, as they lay on the estates where the lords were visible and well-known, and from which they drew their wealth and power. There is clear documentary evidence from the North Riding that minor lords frequently held a stake in the ownership of the parish church. Lords with locally-derived names like Phillip de Eryholme, Adam de Ingleby, and Pain de Wykeham all granted their

eponymous churches to monasteries in the twelfth century, along with the aforementioned Robert de Rosel. The cartulary of Stoke-by-Clare Priory (Suffolk) makes clear that tenants, rather than the overlord, could be the ultimate power at parish churches. The lord of Clare implored his tenants to donate to his new monastery ‘as much as they liked from their lands, churches or tithes’ (*SBC* i, 116). Though the amount of compulsion the overlord exerted in these ‘donations’ may have been substantial (Cownie 1998, 178), it seems that local lords technically held the power to donate or retain churches and tithes. In the twelfth century, the tenant Sampson Daubeney provisionally agreed to the grant of Masham church to Newburgh Priory by his overlord Roger de Mowbray. However, Sampson would retain the church in full possession for himself and his son so long as he remained ‘in lay habit,’ and in the end, it seems that Masham never entered into the endowment of the priory (*VCH NR I*, 331).

Further documentary and material evidence from the late-medieval period demonstrates that local lords chose to demonstrate a close personal connection to their churches. In Northamptonshire, Sir Simon de Drayton was lord of the eponymous manor, and along with several other lords, he held land in nearby Lowick in 1316 (*VCH NH III*, 236). He patronized the parish church there extensively, building a chantry chapel in the parish church before 1317 (*VCH NR III*, 243), and commissioning a stained glass window with obvious patronal imagery. It features Simon fully armed and holding a representation of the church, implying that he saw himself as not just one of several patrons, but as its possessor and its lord (Coss 2002, 49) [Fig. 123]. Similarly, a mid-fourteenth century figural brass of another local lord, Sir John de Cobham (Kent), pictures the knight in armour and holding Cobham church (Coss 1993, 97) [Fig. 124]. These examples demonstrate the bond with the local church that lords were eager to express, but also the fact that architecture and commemoration could be used in tandem to effectively convey this message. They also show that potential competitors, like the several lords in Lowick, could provoke strong statements of ownership by patrons anxious to establish their primacy in the church.

Even when the manor on which a church lay did not have multiple owners, almost every parish in the North Riding contained several townships or vills, each with their own lord. Since many of these lords would have had no church on their own manors, they would have held a compelling patronal interest in the nearby parish church. At East Harlsey, a double slab of the fourteenth or fifteenth century features a heraldic device which identifies it as the monument of a member of the Salcock family and his wife (VCH NR II, 30). The family were lords of the neighbouring manor of Salcock from at least the thirteenth century, and had a domestic chapel there (VCH NR II, 29), yet the parish church drew their commemorative patronage. It has been argued that beginning in the twelfth century, 'the church and parish were shaped more by canon law than by the local lord' (Pounds 2000, 373). But the evidence demonstrates that, as in the pre-1100 period, the material patronage of local churches remained chiefly in the hands of the secular elite, and was dominated by the interests of the local, manorial lords who stood to benefit from it most.

#### **7.4 Lordship and the expression of patronal identities**

The broad range of objectives that drove architectural and commemorative patronage — constructing memory, displaying wealth, reinforcing authority, demonstrating piety, marking ownership — all worked separately to benefit the patron as his specific needs required. However, these motivations also worked in conjunction to create the overall social identity of the patron. Social identity could be marshalled to identify the patron as a member of a group or a number of groups, which could be political, economic, locational, occupational, or ethnic in nature. But identity could also be constructed on an individual or familial level, which would have had a strong basis in personal achievements and an emphasis on rank or occupation, and lineage. This section will explore the variety of identities that patrons might be choosing to express through their expenditure, including ethnicity and lordship, as well as certain non-elite, primarily occupational, identities. Analysis will focus particularly on the ideal and construction of lordship, which was defined

by relationships to those above and below lords in society, and often included or superceded other relevant identities. The necessity of maintaining these relationships made lordship a dominant driver in social statement.

It has generally been thought that identities constructed in group terms were the norm in the medieval period, because of the attribution of a rise of 'individualism' to the late-medieval/early-modern period. However, the evidence suggests that though it may not be 'individualism' in a Renaissance humanist sense, identifying and advancing oneself through materiality was undoubtedly important, and the tension between group and self was being explored in this period. Apart from effigies and inscriptions, many aspects of commemoration — such as the rarity of comparable funerary monuments at a burial site, the presence of specific emblems, and the location chosen for the monument — could all identify a patron and promote his or her individuality, personal achievement, and ability equally well. In terms of architectural patronage, the increase in construction of private chapels and chantries in the late-medieval period has been cited as evidence of the growing importance of individuality (Pounds 2000, 251). But in the earlier medieval era, founding chapels, choosing to be buried and commemorated in newly-established graveyards, and rebuilding the local church or creating private spaces within it, can be seen as equally bold statements of personal ideals and attributes. It is perhaps unwise to try to isolate motivations based in individual identities from those based in collective ones, as the patron himself may not have actively considered the difference. In all acts of patronage, we can be certain that within or sometimes beyond any objective to mark oneself as part of an elite class or ruling group, the incentives of personal advancement, accomplishment, and memorialization played a significant role in the choices that were made, and that it took no late-medieval realization of 'individualism' to bring this on.

#### 7.4.1 Cultural and ethnic identities

Ethnic and cultural identities are subgroups of wider social identity that might be expected to exert great influence during the various socio-political transitions of the Saxo-Norman period. They may have had particular resonance in northern England, due to the diverse Anglian and Scandinavian heritage of the area, and the region's resistance to the Norman/southern imposition of rule (Kappelle 1979, 9-10). Because of the ways in which architectural and sculptural styles and dates are often culturally categorized, it has been tempting to assign ethnic motivations to patronage. This tendency has been increased because of assumptions that ethnic tension, rather than integration, dominated post-settlement interaction. In reality, the driving forces were far more complex, and sometimes entirely unrelated to cultural considerations. Though a piece of material culture may be labelled 'Saxon,' 'Scandinavian,' or 'Norman', the actual level of ethnicity that was bound up in that item is more difficult to determine, and in some cases it may have had no ethnic resonance at all.

Similarly, politics and language had the potential to be badges of cultural identity, but the associations are not straightforward (Chibnall 1986, 143; Le Patourel 1971b, 1978; Newman 1988, 21; Short 1995, 163). In the early Anglo-Norman period, during struggles over succession between Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, and William Rufus, barons supported either successor out of principles, or personal interests, but not out of any sense of 'Englishness' or 'Normanness' (Le Patourel 1971b, 8; cf. Crouch 1994). It has even been suggested that though there was no real concept of a mixed 'transition' identity in Anglo-Norman England, but rather individuals developed multiple identities, employing 'Englishness' to tie their rule to certain legacies or in confronting the Celtic fringe (Gillingham 2000, 17; Thomas 2003, 201), while using a Norman French identity in culture, art, and language (Thomas 2004, 8). Anglo-Norman French, for example, became an artificially preserved class-exclusive language (Newman 1988, 22; Short 1980, 1995), and even in elite circles it was not sustained. Guntier de Bibbysworth's late-thirteenth century

treatise for teaching aristocratic children French demonstrates that English had become the natural mother tongue in knightly society (Menger 1966, 1-2), and that even when speaking or writing French, second or third generation Anglo-Normans may have thought of themselves as English (Short 1995, 155). Perceptions of language in the Anglo-Scandinavian period is less clear because of the comparative lack of documentary sources, but it seems that the Norse language of the ruling elite remained of equal prestige with English (Townend 2000, 96), probably because of the strong written tradition of Old English. Orm Gamalson's sundial at Kirkdale clearly shows that an important lord of Scandinavian heritage found value in using English to express his patronal action, rather than Norse.

In the Anglo-Scandinavian period, some pieces of sculpture, such as the Sigurd-legend stones at Kirby Hill (Lang 2001, 130, 133) [Fig. 125], bear obvious hallmarks of foreign influence, including mythological scenes and Scandinavian-style dragons and knotwork. Specific elements of pagan Scandinavian culture clearly shaped the development of some ninth to tenth-century funerary sculpture, and at an early post-settlement date it is possible that the use of such motifs served to declare a patron's Scandinavian rather than Anglian/Saxon identity (cf. Sidebottom 2000). But the use of an Anglian-derived form of memorial and the overt Christianity of the monuments, combined with the rarity of Scandinavian-style 'pagan' burials in the region, suggests that substantial cultural integration had already taken place by the time that these grave markers became common (Richards 2000, 142, 159). Cross slabs appear to be the product of a similar process of integration. While cross slabs were rare before the Norman Conquest and grew successively more prevalent afterwards, they were *not* a Norman importation. Cross slabs do not seem to have been common in eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth-century Normandy, and there is no parallel in Normandy for the ninth and tenth-century funerary sculpture of England (Bates 1982, 20). As the Scandinavians had before them, the Norman elite adopted a mode of commemorative practice that was already well-established, but brought to it their own stylistic conventions.



Instead of promoting divisions between ethnic groups, it seems that the commissioning of funerary sculpture, and the exploitation by Scandinavian and Norman lords of the already-established relationship between church patronage and the advancement and consolidation of power (Hadley 2000, 110), actually worked to facilitate cultural integration. The adoption of monuments and churches materially reinforced assimilation, while simultaneously assisting the ruling elite in strengthening their social and tenurial authority.

We must also be aware of making assumptions of ethnicity when considering 'Saxon' and 'Norman' architecture. Since the Great Rebuilding began before the Norman Conquest and continued for nearly a century after it, the unprecedented architectural patronage cannot be tied directly to Norman statements of ethnicity, or an attempt to impose 'Norman' rule on a 'Saxon' populace. That does not mean, however, that a process already underway could not be turned to Norman advantage, especially during the early years of transition. If church-rebuilding and the introduction of Romanesque architectural styles came with a connotation of ethnic and cultural domination, it could only benefit the newly-established elite. An imposition of ethnic identity is almost certainly one aspect of the wholesale Norman Romanesque rebuilding of Anglo-Saxon cathedrals in the late-eleventh century (Holt 1997, 6; Fernie 2000, 24; Le Patourel 1976, 352). But at the parochial level, the distinctions between 'Norman' and 'Saxon' were never as clear-cut, and by the time Norman Romanesque was in full and common use at a local church level, it is likely that any cultural and ethnic affiliations that had once been attached to it had weakened considerably (Fernie 2000, 299).

Throughout the late-eleventh and well into the early-twelfth centuries, there were a number of building styles in use simultaneously, and architectural style may have borne multiple cultural signifiers. Despite William of Malmesbury's claim that in the post-Conquest period large numbers of churches were built 'in a style not known before' (*WM*, 291), it appears that in local churches, early but fully-developed 'Norman' Romanesque could stand side by side with contemporary work that was more 'late-Saxon' in character.

Four neighbouring churches in Ryedale — Lastingham, Middleton, Ellerburn, and Levisham — provide an excellent example of the diversity of architectural work that could be carried out in even a small region during the Saxo-Norman period. They also highlight the effects that very localized circumstances could have on building programmes that have previously been classified as part of an overarching 'Great Rebuilding.' Lastingham, which was under monastic patronage from Whitby Abbey by 1078 (Burton 1994, 44), features a grand but partially-completed church, constructed in a mature early-Norman style. Middleton possesses a fine Saxo-Norman west tower of the type seen in the region in the late-eleventh century, and perhaps received this distinction because of its history as an Anglian minster and a high-status Anglo-Scandinavian church. Ellerburn and Levisham, on the other hand, are both small, towerless churches containing work that is dated to the early twelfth century (Hall and Lang 1986; Hayes 1983), but which is more reminiscent of Saxo-Norman than Norman work. These churches were also established in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, but they occupy isolated locations and were dependent chapelries and sokes of Pickering (VCH NR II, 423), which may explain why they were still being constructed in simple and idiosyncratic styles at a time when other, more important parish churches and patrons of the early-twelfth century (e.g. St. Mary's Whitby, Pickering, Sheriff Hutton) were working in grander architectural terms.

It is highly unlikely that Saxo-Norman work progressed linearly into the early-Norman style in either architecture or sculpture. Rather, the use of each style in the decades after the Conquest depended on patronal circumstances encompassing the availability of materials and craftsmen, wealth, artistic knowledge, and technological skill, as well as the socio-political situation of the patron, church, and manor. Building style undoubtedly carried meanings, but a patron's use of architectural style was not an involuntary action directly reflecting his ethnic sympathies, but a choice that was dependent on a variety of practical and ideological factors.

Monuments of the ninth and tenth centuries, early cross slabs, and early post-Conquest church building are excellent examples of the negotiation of transition and amalgamated cultures, as all were products of specifically *Anglo-Scandinavian* and *Anglo-Norman* societies. In each case, the newcomers adopted vocabularies of patronage that were already current in the societies they had conquered, and thus it was not necessarily the style that the patrons employed that was paramount, but what was accomplished with it. In the ninth and tenth centuries, though Scandinavian motifs communicated a level of ethnic awareness, it was the new elite's appropriation of ecclesiastical sculpture for secular individual that made a far stronger statement of a new social order. And in the Great Rebuilding period, regardless of when and whether a continental or native style was employed, the rebuilt churches were larger and more imposing than what had previously been present on the site (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 64; Blair 2005, 390). In both periods, and regardless of style, architectural patronage was employed in order to demonstrate the current patron's dominance over the work of the past.

Overall, it seems that lords' nationality had little bearing on their patronal choices. For Anglo-Normans, patronal allegiance would have been based more on political, tenurial, and social concerns generated by their lives in England, rather than any sense of sentiment for a homeland or 'Norman' ethnic identity (Crouch 1994, 65). The reign of William Rufus saw a marked shift away from the patronage of continental to English monasteries (Chibnall 2000, 57), and by the time of Henry I, the dominance of English interests among patrons was clear (Cownie 1998, 194). Though family ties could still provoke benefactions to French houses, the concentration of patronage in England had much more to do with the increasing importance of religious expenditure to tenure and the expression of authority, and the ways in which patronage effected a binding of oneself to a particular church and locale.

When lordly authority was at stake, it seems that the concept of ethnic allegiance entered only marginally into the driving forces of patronage. The Scandinavians and Normans who settled northern England were ethnically heterogeneous, and though it has

been argued that the 'Norman Myth' of shared social memory and lineage strengthened their collective identity (Davis 1976, 14), it appears that lordship was prioritized by both groups. In Domesday Book, there are at least eight native 'men' of Count Alan of Richmond listed as his tenants (Finn 1972, 27), and a number of other native landholders, including major manorial lords such as Orm and Gospatric, are mentioned throughout the North Riding's entries (e.g. North Otterington, Manfield, Marrick, Hornby, Thornton Steward). If there was ever an ideal of total Norman ethnic dominance, it was obviously compromised in the face of tenurial practicality and political expediency (Chibnall 1999, 87). Likewise, for these late-Saxon lords to retain land and their social station, any ethnic or cultural identity they held was at least partially subjugated to identities of secular lordship, regardless of its ethnic cast. As shall be seen, it is the expression of lordship that dominated acts of patronage in the parish church, and the identity that was apparently the most imperative to maintain.

#### 7.4.2 Lordly identities

Identities of lordship and power seem to have surpassed cultural identities as a motivation of patronage, yet ethnicity may have been successfully exploited if it was closely tied in to the dominant group's lordship, such as in the continued prestige of French and in the persistent use of Scandinavian-derived motifs after the Anglo-Scandinavian integration had been completed. It could be argued that there was an awareness of ethnic heritage being expressed in such actions, but it is more likely that they were understood as appropriate or even necessary conditions for those who considered themselves part of the ruling elite, or who wished to be included in that group. Surmounting ethnic definitions of lordly identity, and running uninterrupted throughout the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman periods, was the concept of the nobility as a ruling group and a tenurial and military elite (Georgianna 1999, 14; Strickland 1992, *xix*). Because of the emphasis placed on martial values and their close relationship to lordship, both Anglo-Scandinavian thegns and Anglo-Norman knights, regardless of their individual financial status or the extent of their manorial

holdings, were members of a subtly graded social rank based on shared elite values (Brown 1984, 20, 25; Coss 1993, 26; cf. Harvey 1970).

In the commission of a funerary monument or a contribution to the fabric of the church, the patron articulated lordly identities that were allied to both vertical and horizontal relationships. Vertical relationships of power and authority have often taken precedence when programmes of lordly patronage are considered (e.g. Saunders 2000, 213), as in a rural settlement, there were few clearer ways of expressing dominance over a landscape and a populace than by stamping one's material authority on the local church and burial ground. But vertical relationships and material display also worked in the reverse direction. Lesser lords, by ensuring that one's superiors encountered tangible evidence of their understanding of elite culture, and their ability to acquire it, might attempt to climb the hierarchical ladder.

Though there were substantial differences in scale amongst the various levels of the elite, the variations were generally of quantity rather than quality (Crouch 1992, 23). While lords were conscious of these differences, they were also aware of what they had in common with those above and below them. This self-consciousness and the shared importance of certain traits and values thus contributed to an overarching lordly ethos (Dyer 1989, 19). In England, this was combined with a lack of legal definitions for nobility before the late-medieval period (Bisson 1995b, 753, 758), so that the practicalities of power defined lordship more than legalities, allowing for a measure of fluidity and openness within the elite social ladder (Bloch 1962, 331; Evergates 1995, 17). The 'promotion law' that enabled those with certain criteria to achieve Anglo-Scandinavian thegnage (Williams 1992, 225), along with the advancement of 'new men' in the reigns of William the Conqueror and Henry I (Hollister 1980, 1987), set precedents for social ambition and reward. As a consequence, the social and political situation in late-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England facilitated aspiration and a certain amount of mobility within the ranks of the elite (Gillingham 2000, 259-276). Though overt social climbing was not necessarily looked upon favourably (Crouch 1992, 19), it was common for the patronal actions of the king and major tenants-in-

chief to be copied by subtenants (Cownie 1998, 172; Crouch 1992, 148; Douglas 1964, 105). The tastes of the high elite were quickly acquired by those lower on the social ladder in an effort to reproduce the understood mechanisms of power and status.

As local lords gained increasing power through their expenditure on local churches, they may have been perceived as a threat by the higher aristocracy. Lesser barons may have been particularly threatened by the aspiration and growing power of the minor elite, as increased subinfeudation and the independence of the regional elite began to blur the lines between magnates and other lords (Palmer 2000, 287-288; Hollister 1987, 100). In circumstances where tenurial status became less of a concrete signifier of baronial rank, greater lords who had family monasteries and reserved burial spaces in them could use that patronage to underpin their membership of the high aristocracy (Daniell 1997, 91). In this way, magnates may have retained a modicum of differentiation between themselves and the rest of the lordly classes, by forcing even the higher levels of minor lords to patronize on a local level. Higher lords may even have supported a lesser lord in his contributions to the local church, perhaps viewing patronage on their estates as welcome expressions of loyalty and affiliation. If the patronage of his subtenants and retinue meant that a wealth of churches and stone monuments fell within his ambit, his standing amongst other great lords might be improved.

In addition to developing relationships with those above them in status, local lords had to be concerned with strengthening their place in the hierarchy over those below them. Establishing authority in a locality undoubtedly involved an imposition on those of lesser status, but power and other aspects of lordly identity might also be enforced more subtly, through patronal actions that were perceived as beneficial by the village populace. Blair has argued that some church foundations, especially those made by lords on estates they visited only periodically, were driven by the pastoral demands of the populace, rather than by the lord's own liturgical needs or desire for status (Blair 2005, 393-395), but that is not to suggest that such foundations were without social benefit for the founding lord, or that they

played no role in defining his identity. Providing a church and priests for one's tenants created a material presence of the lord's authority at the manor, which could be especially important if that church was not his primary locale of architectural or commemorative patronage. But such pastoral provision also cultivated a perception of 'good lordship,' a magnanimity and moral responsibility towards one's underlings that was required of lords at every level (Bisson 1995, 752). A lord's reputation perhaps took on even more importance in light of the ever-increasing complexity of subinfeudation and as the practice of taking on affiliations with multiple lords became common (Bean 1989, 140). Local and regional lords may have been required to materially display qualities of good lordship in order to effectively compete with their peers to attract subtenants and retainers.

The bulk of the relationship between the lord and his tenants and villagers, however, would have been maintained through the active imposition of authority. These social relationships were not abstract, but were instead tied to specific physical spaces and structures which were both practical and symbolic instruments of control (Dodgshon 1987, 186). Tom Saunders has proposed that church buildings, monuments, castles, and even the planning of the village were all deliberately designed and constructed to aid the creation of a regulated, 'feudal' space that both created and embodied elite dominance (Saunders 1990; Saunders 1991, 208, 245). While his characterization of an overarching economic struggle and a unified 'peasant' class can be critiqued, Saunders has made vitally important points about the construction of authority through buildings and physical space, and has convincingly established physical structures as active constituents of the social order. The church was a particularly effective tool in maintaining hierarchical relationships because it was economically, socially, *and* ideologically powerful. Continual patronage of the church structure and its interior and exterior spaces allowed the lord to alter and organize the church to his advantage, in order to augment his authority (Saunders 1991, 210). Elite/common segregation, the appropriation of church space, internal or conspicuous external burial, monumental commemoration, and association with or access to the holiest parts of the

church all underpinned the stratification of society and the established hierarchy, which were further legitimized by the religious milieu and the permanence of the materials.

The effectiveness of churches and commemoration in promoting lordly authority could be further intensified if they were paired with a manorial structure or castle, as they frequently were in both the pre- and post-Conquest periods (Bayle 2000, 6; Daniels 1996, 109-110). The links that developed between the local church and lordly residences created an arena in which close social control could be exerted on villagers, reinforcing that they were administratively, tenurially, and religiously under the lord's auspices (Faith 1997, 167). The construction of a church and/or manor, as relatively fixed sites in the village layout, were thus often the foci for settlement planning (see Daniels 1996; Roberts 1987; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000), enabling the elite who built them to control the spatial orientation of the village, and thus the relationships of power.

Before the late-eleventh or twelfth centuries, the lack of material evidence makes it difficult to consistently trace the relationship between churches and lordly residences, and the in-depth exploration of this relationship lies outside the parameters of this thesis. However, the reality and significance of this relationship in the Saxo-Norman period is clearly demonstrated by the depiction of Harold Godwinson's aisled, vaulted hall at Bosham on the Bayeux Tapestry (Williams 1992, 232), which is pictured adjacent to a Romanesque church [Fig. 126].<sup>20</sup> In addition, the excavations at Rivenhall and Raunds churches provide evidence for pre-1100 manorial association (Rodwell and Rodwell 1985, 9, 179; Boddington 1996, 5). While there are no firm associations between pre-twelfth century manors and churches in the North Riding, at Sinnington, there is a structure with late-twelfth century evidence standing just north of the church which was almost certainly part of a medieval hall complex (BD, 1120) [Fig. 127], and at Seamer, there is one wall of a medieval manor house standing just west of the church (Pevsner 1966, 336). Further medieval examples are

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<sup>20</sup> It is of course likely that the Bayeux Tapestry was created under a Norman stylistic ethos (Grape 1994). Though we cannot necessarily accept the architectural depictions of Bosham hall and church as representative of late-Saxon England, the physical association between them is surely accurate.



evident at Carlton-in-Cleveland, Crathorne, Kildale, Leake, Welbury, Sockburn, Startforth, and Stonegrave (see entries VCH NR I, II). Furthermore, a study of the Yorkshire/Durham Tees Valley region has demonstrated that 72% of the sites had integrated churches and manorial sites, and over 50% of known pre-Conquest sites were integrated (Daniels 1996, 104-106, 109-110). The survival of these associations into the later medieval period indicates that in the Tees Valley, an area at the limits of Norman control, it was beneficial for Norman lords to appropriate pre-existing centres of secular and religious authority, which perhaps provided an element of legitimation that facilitated social dominance.

The relationship between churches and castles in the North Riding is more easily traced [Fig. 128], as a great number of medieval castles and churches in all parts of the riding stand in close proximity to each other, often with no more than a few hundred metres separating the structures [Fig. 129]. But castles in general, as well as those closely associated with churches, are more prevalent in the northern and western regions, probably due both to post-Conquest (Beeler 1956; Hollister 1965) and Scottish threats (Strickland 1990, 180; Green 1990, 97). If only churches and castles from the thirteenth century and earlier are plotted, the geographical patterning is less obvious, but only a small minority of castles in existence at that time are located far from a local church, indicating that the affiliation was strong from early on [Fig. 130]. The great number of churches that already existed by this time indicates that Normans were often either choosing to build their castles closely allied to existing churches, or else that they were adopting pre-existing Anglo-Scandinavian manorial centres and building upon them. In either case, the draw of the local church as an aid to the imposition of authority and dominance is unquestioned, as is the benefit of staking claim to an already significant location in the village landscape.

It is possible that castles had particular connections to cross slab commemoration as well. Churches associated with castles may have been particularly attractive locales for lordly burial and commemoration, as their closely ties to a structure of secular authority may have imparted increased social significance to commemorative monuments. We might

expect to find high levels of military emblem cross slabs at churches closely associated with castles, and indeed, there are at least seven pre-thirteenth century castle or fortified manor sites directly associated with military emblem monuments [Fig. 131]. But only one of those churches, Bowes, has five or more military monuments. If the relationship is extended into the later-medieval period, however, the correlations become noticeably stronger [Fig. 132]. Six of the sites with at least five military monuments have associated castles or fortified manors by the late-medieval period, and Stanwick, the site with the highest number of military slabs (13), has the fortified manor of Aldborough only slightly distant. It thus appears that any bearing that castles had on levels of cross slab production was focused in the late-medieval period, rather than before the thirteenth century, perhaps due to the larger knightly retinues that characterize the late Middle Ages (Hicks 1995), as well as the increased provision of fortifications due to the Scottish invasions of the fourteenth century.

The vertical relationships of both aspiration and dominance clearly structured much of patronal action, but the tenurial situation created a highly competitive environment for lords, particularly those below the top rungs (Dalton 1994, 113; Williams 1990, 243). Steadily increasing subinfeudation, larger retinues, and multiple lordship compelled lesser lords to carve out their place in the social hierarchy, and horizontal bonds in society sometimes took precedence over vertical ones (Cownie 1998, 5). Thus it was often the minor elite who laid the most emphasis on competition, expenditure, and display through church patronage (Saul 2002, 193-4), and who generated competition between regions and localities from which many magnates would have felt detached (Crouch 1994, 65). In the periods following the Scandinavian and Norman settlements, this would have been especially true once stability in the ruling elite had been achieved, and the pressures of establishing control over the population had lessened.

In uncertain transition periods, when unity as a controlling class was perhaps more vital, alliances of shared elite identity may have developed amongst the manorial lords who most frequently met and worked with each other, and who had a shared interest in

controlling their area effectively. But with or without a class-based bond, a certain measure of the local lord's experience in other churches must have been competitive in nature. Even if church patronage was seen as a means to establishing group dominance, one's church or monument would also have been a manifestation of individual status. It has been established that building and rebuilding churches was a popular means of competitive expenditure amongst lords throughout the medieval period (Blair 2005, 370-371; Morris 1989, 349; Platt 1995, 44-46; Williamson 1993, 158), and the inherently competitive nature of display could be intensified if multiple patrons of a similar status chose or were compelled to spend money in the same church. Material display was not only necessary to situate a patron in the social hierarchy, but also had to be continually reproduced in order to maintain that status once it had been acquired. In the fifteenth-century *Paston Letters*, the correspondence between Margaret Paston and her sons continually emphasizes the importance of erecting and maintaining a suitable tomb at Bromholm Priory for their husband/father, in addition to patronage at a number of other churches and chapels, lest their reputation and place in the local gentry be compromised (*PL* 5:782, 5:843, 5:930). Lesser lords may have felt that they were under particular pressure from the thirteenth century onward, due to the advances of the upper echelons of tradesmen and merchants. In this situation, maintaining an elevated level of patronage could be a means of separating oneself, visibly and tangibly, from the arriviste classes.

### 7.4.3 Non-elite identities

Towards the end of the Anglo-Norman period, members of society not usually considered 'elite' were able to contribute materially to the parish church. The involvement, and indeed required expenditure, on the fittings and fabric of the church by the parish community in the late Middle Ages is well known (Brown 1903, 342), but the role of the general populace before the fourteenth century was probably far more limited (Mason 1976, 23; Morris 1989, 285, 352; cf. Blair 2005, 508; Cragoe 2005). It has been suggested that

freemen and sokemen, the marginally elite smallholders of Domesday Book, were a source of early church foundation and patronage in the Saxo-Norman period (Stenton 1969, 1), though this seems unlikely in the North Riding. Freemen in the East Midlands and East Anglia could account for up to 50% of the 1086 population (Darby 1962, 436; Williamson 1993, 158), but the levels of freemen were remarkably lower in the North Riding than in any other northern county (Hadley 2001, 23), with only fifteen freemen and 44 sokemen were recorded in the North Riding in 1086 (Darby and Maxwell 1962, 501).

Those of lordly rank thus seem to have dominated patronage of the tenth, eleventh, and most of the twelfth century in the North Riding, but those below elite level began to make their mark late in the period. By the end of the twelfth century, the existence of trade emblems on cross slabs indicates that wealthier members of the craft and mercantile classes, most obviously masons and blacksmiths, were joining lordly families and priests as those who could afford and were considered worthy of stone monuments. Whether the growing affluence of merchants or tradesmen also translated into an ability to contribute to the fabric of the church is debatable, since that required much greater expenditure, but they may well have donated to church furnishings and fittings. The involvement of non-nobles in commemorative, and perhaps architectural, patronage may have a precedent in Anglo-Scandinavian North Yorkshire. David Stocker argues that while most Anglo-Scandinavian monuments can be attributed to church-founding lords and their families, the remarkably high levels of commemorative monuments at Lythe in the tenth and eleventh centuries were instead due to the flourishing trading community in the area. The merchants there may even have been responsible for the foundation of the church itself, though that would have been unusual for the region (Stocker 2000, 182, 200).

Parish priests were certainly the most common non-lordly patrons in the local church, and had been from an early period. Priests had a history of stone commemoration in northern England since the Anglian period (Lang 2001, 36), and priestly emblems are the earliest to appear alongside swords and shears on cross slabs. With priests, the question of

wealth, nobility, and identity becomes even more complex, because of the range of social stations they held. Most priests were freemen and generally would have been regarded as an influential member of the village community, but they usually held only the average peasant's share of arable land, and much of their income was dependent on agricultural production on the benefice (Duby 1977, 166; Holdsworth 1986, 53; Loyn 2000, 95). Nevertheless, some priests were obviously able to acquire stone commemorative monuments, suggesting that either their economic standing was fairly high, or else that lords sometimes bestowed monuments on them, just as he might reward other followers who had performed a service.

Some priests, on the other hand, were younger sons of nobles (Loyn 2000, 136), who might enter the priesthood because of their lack of inheritance prospects (Chibnall 1986, 213; Lennard 1959, 332; Pounds 2000, 159). Two cross slabs, both probably of the fourteenth century, stand out as possible examples of noble priest patrons (cf. Carlatton 1, Ryder 2005, 19, 54). Hornby 1 features a chalice emblem to the left of the central cross and a sword to the right of it, while Thornton Steward 2 has a sword beneath a shield, upon which is marked the blazon of three chalices, probably with eucharistic hosts inside them.<sup>21</sup> Most priestly emblems do not, however, share their slabs with swords, shields, or any other emblem. It seems that through the use of chalices and books, most priests were content to communicate religion as their primary identity. The temporal and spiritual prestige and power gained from that identity alone must have been sufficient for most priests, who by virtue of their religious career, gained a social standing that in most cases outweighed their financial clout.

The other identifiable non-elite groups of patrons appear to be craftsmen, though not all craftsmen are represented on commemorative monuments. Blacksmiths' and masons' emblems, while not exceptionally common themselves, outnumber those of other trades (cf. Ryder 1985, 2001, 2005). The occupations that are not represented are equally interesting,

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<sup>21</sup> This slab may be a rebus or device of a secular lord (cf. William Sawcock, East Harlsey 1).

and their absence may imply the greater social value of certain trades to the elite. In estate records, millers and smiths were the only two craftsmen likely to be present in every 'normal' agricultural village, because only for these was demand high enough for a single village to support the craft (Harvey 1990, 106-7; Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 769), but there is as yet no evidence for a slab with emblems denoting a miller. Carpenters, too, are infrequently depicted, though their tools could easily be confused with those of the mason, and in small villages, the wood carver and the stone carver may have been one and the same.

Masons would have been a specialized and probably lucrative trade because of their organized craft guilds and their involvement in the high-status buildings of the elite, so their ability to commission cross slabs is less surprising. Blacksmiths, because of their vital role in making military implements, were likely to have been one of the lord's most valued craftsmen, and they may have been rewarded financially and socially for their services, especially as their tenurial situation changed from bond service to cash payment in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Harvey 1990, 111). The early importance of blacksmiths in rural society is clear even from the Anglo-Saxon period (Hinton 2000), and in the Middle Ages, they often seem to have been freemen and one of the wealthiest and most influential members of the non-lordly village community (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 771). The presence of swords on some blacksmith slabs (e.g. Hutton Magna 1, Stanwick 22, Well 3) may imply that they were accepted and esteemed by elite society and granted access to its symbols and trappings, or else that elite control of these identifying symbols was open to contention by aspiring non-elite patrons who were growing in power.

Though not strictly a trade, some foresters or huntsmen appear to have gained sufficient status to commission monuments by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the association of hunting with lordship and elite leisure may explain their high incidence. The lowest-ranked hunt servants made only 1-2*d* per day, but hunt masters and chief officials could earn considerably more money and social prestige (Almond 2003, 119), and it is known that some hunt masters were noble by birth. In Gaston Phoebus' illustrated

hunting manual *Livre de Chasse*, some huntsmen are depicted with the trappings of knightly rank, mounted and spurred. There are also lower-ranked, professional huntsmen pictured, though it seems that they too would have been highly skilled hunt servants that even if not noble-born, were party to elite society and familiar with the symbols of lordship (Almond 1993, 51-52, 121; *LDC* folio 54, 56v) [Fig. 133]. There are sword emblems on two of the seven forester emblem slabs in the North Riding (e.g. Bowes 6, Kirkby Ravensworth 31) and on four of the five in Cumbria, suggesting that foresters were consistently associated with knightly status.

While we have been able to identify some of the members of non-noble classes as commemorative patrons, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how far local church patronage extended up and down the ranks of society. It has been argued that in the late-medieval period, cross slabs were displaced from their place at the high end of the commemorative scale, and became the monuments of more humble men (Platt 1995, 44). The fact that the crafts and trades we see represented on cross slabs almost never appear commemorated on effigies and brasses supports this claim, as does the evidence for agricultural emblems on slabs from other regions. In County Durham, there are thirteen slabs with agricultural implements dating from the later-twelfth century and afterwards, including hoes, coulter, and ploughshares, which almost certainly represent commemorated ploughmen (Ryder 1985, 37) [Fig. 134]. However, it is notable that the agricultural implements on some of the monuments (e.g. Middleton-in-Teesdale 1, 3) are accompanied by swords, perhaps indicating that they were ploughmen of a higher status, such as free tenant farmers. The monuments also tend to occur in small groups at certain churches rather than in widespread distributions, and they are often marked by vernacular stylistic traits, suggesting that the extension of cross slabs to agricultural labourers occurred only on very localized levels.

It is difficult to reconcile the North Riding evidence with the argument that cross slabs became a commoners' monument. The expansion to a wider range of patrons that began in the late-twelfth century did not cause the monuments to lose their viability for elite

society. As late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, slabs were still used by churchmen as influential as abbots of major monasteries (Middleham 6, Richmond 1) [Fig. 135], and judging by the proliferation of sword emblems on slabs of the late medieval period, elite commemorators were increasing rather than diminishing over time [see Appendix F]. The presence of shields with heraldic devices on late-medieval slabs (e.g. Kildale 3 and 4, Sockburn 2, East Harlsey 1, Gilling East 2, Gilling East 3) demonstrates that even when brasses and effigies were common, cross slab patronage could reach as high as manorial lords from very prominent families, such as the Percys at Kildale or the Conyers at Sockburn (Ryder 1985, 39; VCH NR II, 252). Rather than losing their prestige in the face of brasses and effigies, North Yorkshire cross slabs retained elite status throughout the medieval period. Indeed, the fact that they are in use at such a late period at all is in contrast with southern regions of England, where figural and inscription brasses dominated local church patronage (Finch 2000a, 2000b). In comparison with the Midlands and South, brasses were never as easily acquired in North Yorkshire (Badham 1989, 166, 171), and it seems that cross slabs retained many of the knightly and middling elite patrons that in other regions moved to brasses.

Non-elite patrons occupied an important place in the hierarchy of material display, as they were contributing to churches and monuments, but they were also part of an extensive non-lordly society that was often the prime target of assertions of seigneurial authority. The question of how the non-elite viewed the patronage of their lords and religious superiors should be raised (e.g. Saunders 1991, 210; 2000, 213), though it is difficult to access due to the heterogeneity of the village community and the specific circumstances of each locality. Churches and monuments did reinforce the medieval hierarchy, and inside the church, restricted spaces of worship and burial would have clearly demarcated the ranks of the parishioners, and enhanced the separation between the elite and the lower classes. But we have seen from cross slab patronage that some who might be categorized as 'normal' villagers were acquiring monuments generally associated with the



lordly and religious elite. The growth of non-lordly patronage probably reflects an increase in economic power, particularly disposable income, for these classes (Barnett 2000, 77), but the relationship of this advance to their social standing is less definite (Brown 1984, 24-26). These people, though perhaps not quite elite themselves, may have seen their superiors' patronage as inspirational rather than oppressive. They may even have reached the level where lordly patronage was viewed as a statement of competition. It appears that movement along the social and financial scale was available to some villagers, and by demonstrating an understanding of ecclesiastical material culture and elite modes of patronage and commemoration, they could strengthen their newly attained position, or move closer to the ranks to which they aspired.

### **7.5 Patronage in transition: socio-political change and material culture**

The fact that authority, identity, and socio-political concerns were all articulated so readily through concrete media such as churches and commemoration is key to understanding the role of materiality and permanence in transition periods. Material culture defines the physical world, the landscape, and the built environment, which were all crucial elements of power and control. At periods of social and personal crisis, materiality often became the most vital tool in the creation and maintenance of memory and identity (Hallam and Hockey 2001, 26). Before the late-medieval period, the vital importance of visual display to social negotiation has been recognized (e.g. Coss and Keen 2002), but after the written word gained a foothold in medieval culture, the primacy of materials as modes of discourse is often thought to have been superseded. Despite the substantial documentation of the late-Saxon period, and great advances in the prevalence and perceived authority of the written word from the twelfth century onward (Clanchy 1993, 3; Moreland 2001, 35), it is clear that the power of objects to communicate social statements was not diminished (Moreland 2001, 43). Indeed, as much of the populace was still illiterate, authority and identities which depended on communication to a wide audience were far more effectively

demonstrated in visual, tangible, accessible media (Keen 2002, 2; Valdez del Alamo and Pendergrast 2000b, 3).

Material display not only retained its importance in the face of the written word, but continued to develop in complexity and elaboration throughout the Middle Ages (Keen 2002, 4). In the parish church, the supremacy of the material and the visual persisted throughout the medieval period, and text does not seem to have been an integral part of patronal strategies before the fourteenth century. During the Anglo-Scandinavian period in the North Riding, writing only features in dedicatory inscriptions on a few sundials, and no commemorative monuments from that period have any surviving text. Even in the twelfth century, when text was steadily encroaching on other areas of society, only a very few monuments featured definite accompanying inscriptions (cf. Badham 2005, 166). When the written word did eventually become a common feature of monuments in the later Middle Ages, it still seems to have been most effective when supporting, rather than supplanting, imagery. Indeed, despite the convincing triumph of the written word in post-Reformation Christianity, much of this devotion to text was still communicated through the visual medium of funerary monuments (Finch 2000a, 183). The power of the visual and the material was apparently little diminished at any time during the Middle Ages.

The continuity inherent in the Church as an institution, and in the physical site of a church or burial place, must have been particularly attractive to both patrons and the village community in the midst of transition. When Scandinavians arrived in the Northeast, the institutional Church was arguably a more cohesive, powerful, and long-standing entity than any secular ruling power in that region, making the ecclesiastical system a vital focal point for those wishing to control it. And by the time of the Norman Conquest, Christianity and the importance of the local church was a source of common understanding between the native population and the newcomers, thus lending itself to being used as a mode of negotiation, legitimation, and the communication of meaning (Halbwachs 1992; Le Goff 1992). The reuse of Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and architectural

fragments by Saxo-Norman and twelfth-century builders (Taylor 1965, 66) [Fig. 136], and the deliberate preservation of Saxo-Norman towers, twelfth-century south doorways, and Norman fonts in later-medieval churches may have been shrewd attempts by patrons to link themselves to the history of the locale and the building (Stocker and Everson 1990, 94-95; cf. Betjeman 1958, 26). By appropriating and patronizing existing churches and churchyards, incorporating iconic material of earlier periods, and building new churches within the established system, incoming lords could attach themselves to the past, while simultaneously staking their claim on the future of the locality in a material language that they knew would persist.

As patrons relied increasingly upon the permanence and stability of the church and churchyard to define the spatial organization of landscape and settlement and provide a lasting legacy of authority, stone became a necessary medium of patronage. It was not only durable, but access to quarried stone was likely strictly controlled (Morris 1988, 192; Parsons 1990, 8). The purchase and transport of it, especially in the quantities required for building, was prohibitively expensive for many (Senior 1991, 18), and the availability of those with the technical and artistic knowledge required to carve or build in stone was limited (Gem 1996, 2). All of these factors combined to make stone a desirable and symbolic material, especially in areas where it was less readily available.

Considering the centrality of churches and spiritual life to medieval society, and the particular secular significance attached to pious display (Keen 2002, 1), it is unsurprising that religious material culture was the first to be enshrined in stone. Once a funerary monument was commissioned in stone, the likelihood of it being moved or destroyed decreased, and it was immediately differentiated from the vast majority of ephemeral grave markers. When buildings were constructed in stone, they were more likely to create a fixed focal point in the settlement that afforded the patron control of a wider landscape and visual milieu. And when stone monuments were employed alongside stone churches, as they were through the majority of the twelfth century and later periods, the meanings bound up in

monuments could support or contest the meanings inherent in the church, and the personal identities and memories of individuals could be brought into particularly sharp focus.

Commemorative monuments and churches were effective tools for either supporting or contesting the established social structure, and in the transition periods of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman eras, both aims could be of primary importance. In each period, an incoming elite needed to make their mark upon the populace, which involved redefining old hierarchies and social structures. But they took care to carry out any restructuring in a familiar material vocabulary, and potentially contentious conditions of transition were somewhat ameliorated by acknowledging and actively incorporating elements of the past. Direct links were established with what had gone before, yet patrons still altered and adapted the media of patronage to their own benefit. Employed by elite groups in need of establishing themselves in an often hostile climate, churches and monuments did not serve to *either* undermine or maintain understood social structures, but often did both simultaneously, as the situation warranted. It also must be remembered that the motivations of a particular group of patrons often changed in response to the political and social climate. The recursive nature of material display, particularly in media so laden with memory, history, and local significance as churches and funerary monuments, helped them to negotiate shifting social requirements. In their transition periods, Scandinavians, Normans, and twelfth-century lords all imposed new parameters of authority by weakening old associations of power through expenditure on churches and monuments. But after stability and dominance had been achieved, these groups employed the same patronal choices to uphold and reinforce the social structures they had created.

## *Chapter 8: Conclusions*

The preceding analysis of the patterns of local church architecture and funerary commemoration in the North Riding of Yorkshire has demonstrated that both media became fundamental and highly influential components of secular and religious life in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. The visibility, accessibility, and permanence of churches and monuments ensured that they were integral to the social life of all segments of society, most particularly for those who were sufficiently wealthy and powerful to patronize them. During the period under study, a number of processes emerged as driving influences in the development of both churches and monuments. The breakdown of Anglian pastoral organization and the formation of a parochial system; the growth and increased independence of minor, locally-defined lordship; the social relationships ingrained in the manorial economy and tenurial hierarchy; and a raft of cultural, ethnic, and political transitions all played significant roles in the creation and subsequent social use of local churches as places of worship, burial, and material display. However, the actions of patrons and audiences were not determined solely by these functional processes. Rather they were framed within a variety of social structures which regulated the creation of churches and monuments, and determined the meanings attached to them. Medieval patrons recognized the secular importance attached to religious display, especially the role played by materiality and permanence in reinforcing statements of elite identity, personal and familial memory, and temporal authority. Patronage and expenditure in the local church thus emerged as actions necessary to the definition of chosen identities. These identities could also be tied to specific physical spaces and localities, and thus to their history and social memory, in order to establish legitimacy and legacy.

The findings of the study have reinforced the status of the parish church as an especially effectual instrument of patronage and expression, as it was the only building in which kings, monks, magnates, minor lords, tradesmen, and peasants all took a vested interest, though

obviously to varying degrees. Both as material objects themselves, and as spaces in which other patronal activities and materials were situated, local churches dominated social display in most medieval villages. Though they were challenged in certain locations by castles or monasteries, they were both more commonplace and more accessible than these structures, and thus were important and advantageous patronal options, particularly for those below the level of the highest elite. As a social arena, the local church allowed identities to be expressed through the organization and control of its internal and external spaces. Some areas were sectioned for private use, and some were common, and while some areas expressed the will of a single, dominant patron, others were forums for competitive display. However, *all* areas of the local church were defined, in terms of ownership, holiness, or social importance, by the ways in which they were built and by that which was displayed within them. The ideals and identities of patrons were established in the fabric of the church or monument — in their size, shape, and location; occasionally, but not always, in the style in which they were constructed; and in the elements of previous traditions or phases which had been destroyed or retained. Deliberate patronal choices connected to specific social motivations were thus the primary force shaping the development of the local church and its funerary monuments.

The major trends of church and monument construction and production between the tenth and early-thirteenth centuries in the North Riding have been traced, and their overarching trajectory summarized as a regional example of ecclesiastical development. However, this development should not be seen as a linear progression which existed outside the conscious choices made by individual patrons, or one which was unaffected by the necessities of very specific localities and social relationships. The decline of the minster organization in the ninth and tenth centuries was part of wider manorial, political, and social processes. Minsters as a whole lost an element of their ecclesiastical control when they were unable to stifle new foundations, but the extent to which each church remained viable and active in the North Riding was highly dependent on patronal action. Despite the supposedly weak minster system of the

North, as well as apparent changes in function and ownership, the minsters' traditional rights and influences seem to have persisted long after the undermining of the organization. They do not seem to have controlled pre-1100 church and churchyard development to the extent that some southern minsters did, but their influence was not negligible, and continuity was fairly strong. In general, the North Riding's minster community was not destroyed, but was rather adopted, transformed, and rebuilt into a fully-fledged parochial system.

The 'Great Rebuilding,' in terms of the conversion of North Yorkshire's existing wooden churches to stone, began in the second half of the eleventh century and was probably fully accomplished by the first few decades after 1100, perhaps earlier. But in terms of a wider programme of intense church construction and alteration, a 'Great Rebuilding' encompassed the whole of the twelfth century. In certain parts of the North Riding, where stone church construction had begun in earnest at an early date, twelfth-century lords undoubtedly capitalized on the developed infrastructure of quarries and masons that they encountered, rebuilding the churches that already existed and building a substantial number of new ones. The Norman Conquest did not halt or reorganize previous programmes of church-building, but it did enable the adaptation and intensification of that programme to the needs of Norman lords. Both the rebuilt and the newly-built stone churches can be partially explained as an investment in an administrative structure that was imposing and permanent, but as is clear from North Yorkshire's twelfth-century evidence, the functional conversion from wood to stone was not the primary motivation of the rebuilding process. Throughout the twelfth century, lordly enthusiasm for building also encompassed churches that were already built in stone, demonstrating motives beyond the merely practical. In the middle and later years of the twelfth century, the changing priorities of competition, and a focus on individual rather than collective lordship, may have altered the driving forces behind rebuilding. But they did not stop the process, which continued intensely and unabated through the early-thirteenth century.

In commemoration, a similar continuity – of function, of ideology, of style, and of patron — between Anglo-Scandinavian monuments and cross slabs has been clearly confirmed. They were not two separate traditions of commemoration, one stopping at the Norman Conquest and the other beginning thereafter. Cross slabs were not an importation, but were rather the adoption of a native practice and a stylistic adaptation of its traditions. They too served as a means of assimilation, just as the Scandinavian adoption and alteration of Anglian sculpture had been. Anglo-Scandinavian commemoration was a vitally important part of the elite expression of identity in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and though it declined somewhat in the later part of that period, this was not attributable to a waning of Anglo-Scandinavian influence or to the cultural imposition after the Norman invasion. The decline began some time before the Conquest, and production did not pick up in the immediate aftermath. The Saxo-Norman decline in commemoration was precipitated by far more complex and multivariate forces, which seem to have been closely related to the perception of church buildings and their role as signifiers of individual identity, and which were highly dependent on circumstances specific to the North Riding. However, once monumental commemoration regained its position of importance, non-effigial funerary sculpture retained that significance throughout the whole of the Middle Ages. It remained an important and socially valuable mode of commemoration for the minor elite, for a few of those in the echelons above them, and apparently for a burgeoning high ‘middle class’ of patrons.

When the trajectories of monuments and churches are compared, it can be seen that they did not always coincide in space and over time. While they were undoubtedly related patronal activities, the choice was not always made to implement them together. In some cases this was due to a patron’s inability to commission architectural fabric, but in others it was due to specific choices, based on the perceived currency of one medium over the other, or to the actions of other patrons at that locale. At certain locations, a large group of commemorators could have either supported or challenged those responsible for architectural patronage at the same site. At



times, however, it appears that the two media worked jointly to achieve an effective expression of authority and identity. The disjuncture in the relationship in the pre-1100 and Saxo-Norman periods seems to be tied to notions of permanence. When the building of stone churches was prioritized by lordly patrons, the structures may have usurped the permanence of a monument, and thus much of its commemorative role. But in the mid and late-twelfth centuries, lay ownership of churches in their entirety declined, a previously limited class of patrons began to expand, and programmes of church foundation and major rebuilding had all been carried out. Commemoration then regained its prominence as a mode of expression, alongside smaller and possibly more private modes of architectural patronage, such as aisles.

Several significant intra-regional patterns have also emerged from the analysis of the North Riding. The deanery of Ryedale was picked for an exploratory study (McClain 2001) because the area appeared exceptional in terms of early architectural and commemorative work, and in its twelfth-century provision as well. When Ryedale is viewed in the wider context of the complete North Riding analysis, it can be seen that the region is undoubtedly distinctive. It is now clear that the unusual characteristics of the deanery's churches also extend into contiguous parts of northeastern Bulmer, and that it had a western parallel in the Wensleydale region of Catterick deanery. Both Ryedale-Bulmer and Wensleydale feature particularly noteworthy concentrations of Anglian churches and Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, as well as Saxo-Norman architecture. Ryedale is particularly notable for its eleventh-century sundials and for a form of Saxo-Norman architecture characterized by imposing west towers, which are especially interesting in that they all feature on churches which seem to have once been Anglian minsters. The reasons behind Ryedale and Wensleydale's exceptional provision of early churches, and their patrons' enthusiasm in rebuilding them throughout the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries, are not always clear, but both the established high-status religious tradition and the manorial and agricultural characteristics of the regions probably had considerable influence. It is certain that the presence of a considerable number of minster churches in these areas shaped the

ecclesiastical landscape from a very early period, and these churches were very likely to have been tied to large, important estates established on the good agricultural hinterlands of York. The established churches encouraged later lordly patrons to adopt these structures into the vocabulary of authority, and to incorporate them and new foundations seamlessly into manorial settlements and secular control. This practice then subsequently influenced the actions and motivations of future builders and commemorators, actively and reflexively shaping the mechanisms of manorial lordship and ecclesiastical provision.

Other areas of the riding, particularly the Honour of Richmond and northern Cleveland, have been shown to be particularly distinctive in their twelfth-century provision of architecture, but are most notable for their high levels of commemorative sculpture throughout the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, and even into the late-medieval period. Saxo-Norman and twelfth-century monuments are particularly prevalent in northern Richmond and Cleveland, and distributions have demonstrated a possible Tees valley style that extended over the river into Durham. The study has brought to light definite regional groups of sculpture in these areas, including the Tees valley vine scrolls of the late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the twelfth-century coped ridge crosses and striated bracelets of the western riding. But while these are undoubtedly regional preferences, they were not the products of cohesive schools or central workshops, but rather speak to a stylistic ethos that was profoundly provincial in outlook. Several churches and parochial clusters feature a number of similar monuments, demonstrating locally-based production that only occasionally reached outside a catchment area of a few parishes.

It is difficult to tell whether the North Riding's amount and distribution of tenth to twelfth-century churches and monuments is exceptional, considering that very few similar or equally comprehensive regional studies have been conducted. Within Yorkshire, the North Riding appears to be the best source of pre-1100 evidence. West Yorkshire has far fewer churches mentioned in Domesday Book or featuring Saxo-Norman architecture (Ryder 1993,

14, 24), and though no recent survey has yet been carried out, the West Riding as a whole seems to have Anglian or Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture at only 26 churches (Morris 1911, 45).

Surprisingly, the East Riding has substantially less pre-1100 sculpture than either the West or North Ridings. There are only sixteen sites with sculpture, with a total of 36 pieces found at those sites (Lang 1991). In the twelfth century, the East and West Ridings have levels of architectural evidence more comparable to those found in the North Riding (Morris 1906, 36-40; 1911, 47), though the North Riding still outstrips both regions. It has been stressed that while pre-twelfth century church foundation and twelfth-century church-building both seem to be national trends, the process of local church proliferation occurred at different rates in different regions (Hadley 2001, 89). The North Riding's rate of church foundation and rebuilding appears to have been one of the highest in the northeast, and in some areas, like Ryedale and Wensleydale, it is characterized by a precocity and intensity that probably rivals any region in the whole of England.

In addition to clarifying church and commemorative development in the North Riding, the thesis has addressed a number of outstanding questions that have hopefully contributed meaningfully to the understanding of local churches in Yorkshire and northern England, as well as to the current direction of the discipline of church archaeology. One of the most significant achievements has been the recording and cataloguing of the exceptionally widespread, but archaeologically undervalued, resource of cross slabs. Academic indifference has only compounded the threat to their survival posed by time and the environment, and as a result, many of these monuments are lost without having been properly recorded, or their significance to medieval material culture considered. This study has brought to light the obvious importance of cross slabs to the tradition of medieval commemorative work, as well as the potential for archaeological assessment they provide. Cross slabs are not only the most common form of monument in the Middle Ages, but they appear to be a direct stylistic and conceptual link between the funerary sculpture of the Anglo-Scandinavian period and the effigial work of the

late-medieval periods, and they played an important role as a linchpin in the continuum of medieval commemoration. The North Riding's corpus of cross slabs, particularly, is one of the most important, as it comprises one of the largest bodies of monuments that has been found in any region of England.

Another significant accomplishment has been the complete, systematic tracing of the development of local churches and monuments in a large but defined region and time period, and an analysis which has attempted to fully integrate the spatial, chronological, and conceptual relationships that existed between the two media. The wide focus has allowed for interpretations that address broad developmental patterns in addition to apt examples. It has considered the trajectories of church and commemorative development as they occurred over an entire area, and has demonstrated the importance of couching any assessment within the framework of wider political and social trends. When evaluated from a material standpoint, churches, and especially monuments, have too often been considered independently from each other and from their surrounding environment. As a result, important physical and ideological relationships that may have impacted the social use of churches and commemoration have been neglected. The thesis has demonstrated the value of addressing local church evidence in a number of wider contexts, including topography, communications networks, patterns of landholding and tenure, and other aspects of the built environment such as castles and monasteries.

These aspects of the environment have all been shown to affect local churches in the North Riding, although all were not equally influential, and their effects were highly dependent on local circumstance. Chief amongst the influences on the North Riding must be the widespread availability of workable stone. Though a purely functionalist interpretation linking the prevalence of stone to the incidence of churches and monuments would be far from accurate, the availability of stone must be considered when the social currency of the material is in question. There is little doubt that the easy access to stone in the North Riding encouraged the

devolution of monument production to an extremely local level, especially from the eleventh century onward. This can be seen not only in the absence of any large, quarry-based workshops like Barnack (Lincs), but in the discernible lack of even major stylistic schools of carving in the cross slab tradition. This is demonstrably not the case in other parts of England, where freestone was less common and centralized production was the norm (see Butler 1957, 1965; Finch 2000a, 2000b). Thus not only the modes of production, but the value subsequently attached to the products, must be considered. While the quarrying effort, technological knowledge, and considerable wealth required for architectural patronage is far less likely to have been affected by the ready availability of stone, the level to which individual monuments were obtainable by various levels of society may have been. That being said, the wide availability of stone did not transform non-effigial commemoration into a commoner's monument. Though the monumental evidence in the North Riding suggests that their use became less restricted over time, it emphatically does *not* indicate a devaluation of the social currency of funerary monuments for elite classes of patrons, even if they were more widely accessible than in other parts of the country. The availability of stone was but one factor in the myriad forces, both social and environmental, that determined patronage.

Topographical characteristics and favourable agricultural land seem to have been a determining factor in the location of the first local churches in the North Riding, and perhaps in the early implementation of stone architecture, but settlements and churches do move into liminal areas perhaps more quickly than we would expect. The natural terrain seems to have had far less bearing on patterns of commemoration. The areas closest to the economic and ecclesiastical centre of York featured limited levels of commemoration, while the northern and western regions of the riding, which would generally be considered more remote and less agriculturally developed, are characterized not only by a widespread distribution of monuments, but also very high concentrations of sculpture at individual churches. Similarly, communications networks of rivers and roads, which were also closely related to topography,

were immensely important to the siting of settlements and churches throughout the medieval period. Patterns of growth are discernible along particular arteries, with some, such as the main Roman roads and river confluences, attracting the earliest nucleated settlement and church establishment.

While much has previously been written about the early siting, building, and rebuilding of parish churches and chapels, this study has effectively clarified that process as it occurred in one region, highlighting both where it integrates with wider trends, and where more localized trajectories of development seem to have occurred. The project has also hopefully elevated non-effigial commemoration to a similar level of understanding, both in terms of the specific characteristics of the North Riding's body of evidence, but also how that work fits into larger regional and national chronologies and spatial patterns. The significance and social value of non-effigial commemoration has often been ignored at the expense of brasses and sculpted figural monuments, because of their perceived cultural superiority, but the study has shown that even when all forms of monuments coexisted, patrons made active choices about which type to implement. These choices could have been determined by functional factors, including limited wealth or the availability of resources or expertise, but also by symbolic and ideological tenets. One monument type may have been a visual motif better understood by the local populace, or there may have been a long lineage of a particular commemorative form in the family or location. It was undoubtedly often a combination of both functional and ideological concerns that determined the eventual patronal action.

One of the most important aspects of the thesis has been its recognition of the significance of the minor elite as a driving force in the early medieval period, and one that had as much influence on a local scale as the widely recognized 'gentry' of late-medieval and early-modern England. The absence of these highly influential individuals from documentary sources has led to their marginalization, or their actions and identities being subsumed under the heading of the 'landholding elite' (Bisson 1995b, 751), with little regard for their distinct identities and

patronal priorities. Their patronage seems to have been chiefly based around their greater need to establish themselves 'on the ground' in the manorial settlement, as present and legitimate authorities over the running of their estates and those who lived and worked on them. The magnates above them, for much of the time, occupied a related but separate social milieu. Local lords were undoubtedly part of aristocratic society, but they dealt in a much more real way with the inner workings of the manorial system and village society. The local lord occupied an important role as a link between the aristocracy and the underclasses, and their patronage thus has particular significance, as it was directed up as well as down the social hierarchy. They were also equally concerned with cementing horizontal relationships, that established the patron as an important part of a vast and competitive network of subtenant landholders. These results have emphatically demonstrated that we must revise any assumptions that those who are most prominently mentioned in documentary history were those responsible for church-building and monumental commemoration. Though the high aristocracy and monastic institutions owned the local churches, they do not seem to have been their primary patrons.

This study has also successfully bridged the gap of the Norman Conquest, and reintegrated the developments of the Anglo-Scandinavian period with those that followed them in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It has noted both the continuities between the periods, as well as the many changes brought about by specific political, cultural, and demographic shifts. The process of the Conquest, while obviously influential, has been shown to be no more momentous, at least in the North Riding, than the Anglo-Scandinavian invasion and settlement. The development of churches and monuments in the region has been shown to be at least partially dependent on secular and religious traditions and systems that originated long before the tenth century. While many issues and trends have been examined, rightfully, in their 'Anglo-Scandinavian' and 'Norman' political and cultural contexts, the continuity of church development through the period has been highlighted, and the importance of patronage in both architectural and commemorative terms was maintained throughout. Most importantly, it has

been demonstrated that concepts of lordship remained a constant, and as such, so did the social requirements of that identity, and the material and visual ways in which membership of that group, or aspiration to it, was expressed.

The economically depressed, harried vision of the north of England in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries has also been challenged. The North Riding's vibrancy during that period has been clearly shown in terms of the patterns of elite expenditure on the local church, the fundamental aspect of village life. The region was inhabited not only by an elite group with the means and motivation to patronize the local church, but also by a general populace at which that patronage was partially directed. If previous structures and organizations had been totally overwritten during the Conquest, there would have been no need to negotiate transition through a carefully controlled process of retaining and rebuilding the material culture of the local church. Likewise, the need to express authority or control would have been obviated in a wholly decimated landscape. All of the various cultural, political, and social groups of the North Riding were active and influential during the transition period, and they played a significant role in the implementation of churches and commemoration during that time.

The importance of visual display has been recognized in the early-medieval period, but the recognition of the growing importance of text as the Middle Ages progressed (Finch 2000, 182; Keen 2002, 2) has sometimes resulted in a decreasing emphasis on the role of material expressions of identity. Some scholarship has expressed reservations about addressing patronage in periods before the late-medieval period, when documentation is sparse (Astill and Wright 1993, 127), but this study has shown the viability of such an approach in the Anglo-Scandinavian, Saxo-Norman, and Anglo-Norman periods. Even if specific patrons cannot be named or matched with documented commissions, an examination of local churches and monuments has illustrated some of the means by which, and the arenas within which, visual display was most effectively accomplished, as well as the benefits that various classes of patron may have derived from such expenditure. Patronage played a particularly vital role in these



periods, as churches increasingly defined the landscape, and church buildings and monuments actively shaped the developing social hierarchies and relationships between villagers, local lords, and magnates. The pattern of late-medieval church patronage by local families was set long before the Norman period, and the concerns of locality were a key determinant in church expenditure throughout the Middle Ages.

The thesis' findings have substantially augmented our current understanding of churches and commemoration in the North Riding, as well as the roles they could play in the structuring of society. However, the study has also highlighted areas in which more needs to be done, as well as the potential for expanding the line of inquiry, or taking it in new directions. Primary amongst these needs is a complete illustrated catalogue of cross slabs in the North Riding, which would take into account the slabs in monasteries and secular sites like castles that fell outside the methodology of this study. Any catalogue should preferably be drawn as well as photographed, for the more complete capture of detail, which is particularly important in light of the continually deteriorating state of a great number of slabs, and the potential that the cross-head design and secondary emblems have for stylistic dating and the interpretation of meanings and identities. Extensive studies of medieval cross slabs have been hampered by the scarcity of published catalogues, which provide a basis of data that facilitates analysis of a region, and which enable inter-regional comparison of both stylistic and chronological trends. Particularly, more work on cross slabs must be carried out in southern England, as the vast majority of work has been done in the Midlands and the North. Comprehensive recording of southern cross slabs would illuminate differences in both the production and consumption of monuments, and how the better availability of alternate monumental forms such as brasses, or the lack of an established pre-Conquest sculptural tradition, affected southern cross slab development. Systematic studies of southern monuments would also reveal whether the apparent dearth of cross slabs below the Midlands is a genuine and meaningful pattern, or simply a reflection of the focus of research on northern England.

In addition, attempts to look at connected patterns of church building and commemoration in other regions would provide important sources of comparison and contrast to the findings of this study. The interpretation of spatial and chronological patterns and the establishment of trajectories of development is always more meaningful when wider comparisons can be made, particularly if there are social, cultural, or political variables that may illuminate differences between the regions. Other Danelaw regions of England would be a useful primary comparison, though the substantial differences between the northern Danelaw and East Anglia should be considered (cf. Davis 1955, Hadley 2001). Norfolk, and particularly Suffolk, appear to have perhaps four times as many churches pre-dating c. 1100 than the North Riding (Cautley 1982, 3; Darby 1977, 54), and Suffolk seems to have had at least as many medieval churches as the three ridings of Yorkshire combined, despite being less than a quarter of Yorkshire's size (*BGB* 1977; *NGBI* 1868). Whether these exceptionally high rates of early church foundation affected or were linked to East Anglia's commemorative and rebuilding practices should be examined. Studies of the growth of local churches and funerary monuments are also particularly needed in non-Danelaw areas of England, where the Anglo-Saxon minster system remained stronger, royal control and authority were more imposing, and monastic power and influence were uninterrupted. Some or all of these factors may have played a decisive part in the initial character of local churches and monuments, and thus had bearing on their subsequent medieval development. This factor may have been particularly influential if the foundation of independent local churches and the establishment of commemoration at an early date were found to be less widespread or less dependent on minor lords than in northern England.

Alongside further studies in other areas of England, a real attempt must be made to address the contemporary local church-building and commemorative practices of other cultures, such as Scandinavia and Viking Ireland, that may have directly affected the patterns of development in the North Riding. Chief amongst these, however, should be early-medieval

France, considering the impact that Norman lords had on twelfth-century English churches. The political situation in tenth to thirteenth-century Normandy is well-documented (Bates 1982; Potts 2003), but far less archaeologically directed and theoretically informed analysis has been carried out on the region's churches and funerary monuments. Most work confines itself to great churches, and the studies which have been done on parish churches are almost entirely concerned with architectural history rather than wider social questions (e.g. Bayle 2000; Hoey 1996). When the architectural relationships between England and Normandy have been discussed, it has tended to be in terms of traceable stylistic diffusion or innovation (e.g. Fernie 1994; Grant 1994), rather than in patterns of patronage and the driving social forces behind acts of expenditure and display. The neglect of France's medieval commemorative tradition, apart from effigial monuments, seems to have been even more pervasive. It has been noted that there is a substantial lack of material evidence for early-medieval burial and commemoration from Normandy (Daniell 2002, 243), though whether this is due to a true lack of stone monuments, or just neglect of study, is yet to be determined. Normandy had no 'Franco-Scandinavian' stone sculpture tradition to compare to England's Anglo-Scandinavian one (Bates 1982, 20), though it does appear to have at least some medieval cross slabs (pers. comm. D. Petts and P. Ryder, 2004). But until these instances of medieval commemoration are intensively catalogued and studied, the role that pre-existing concepts of local churches and commemoration might have played in Norman interaction with England's eleventh-century material culture will remain unclear, as will the correlation between the existence of a strong pre-Conquest commemorative tradition and the prevalence of medieval cross slabs.

In addition to expanding the geographical parameters, it may also be worthwhile to explore the relationships between churches, monuments, and identity in other time periods. The processes of transition engendered in the North Riding during the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman periods have provided a useful socio-political backdrop for framing the trajectory of church and commemorative development. It is worth considering whether the

patterns of patronage that have been seen here could be found in other time periods and places where 'transitions,' be they political, cultural, or tenorial, were especially frequent or momentous. It would be useful, for example, to trace programmes of church-building and commemoration in marcher areas, such as along the Welsh or Scottish borders. The response of castle construction to political and social pressures in these areas is well-known, but it is possible that authority in specific localities and the legitimacy of rule were also negotiated through local churches and monuments, especially in times where border territory was most fiercely contested and cultural identities may have been of primary importance. It has been established that in the North Riding, the ethnically driven aspects of Scandinavian and Norman authority were subdued in favour of a more overarching identity of lordship, but that may have been a response specific to North Yorkshire and the practical negotiation of its political situation, rather than a pattern that will hold across the country and over time. Explorations of patronage in other contested regions and time periods could help to clarify whether the North Riding response was atypical or commonplace.

It is also imperative that future work examines the spatial and chronological patterns of churches and monuments more closely, particularly in terms of the wider contexts of the surrounding secular, religious, and economic landscapes. The relationship between architectural and commemorative patronage and material aspects of the wider social environment has been addressed only briefly in this study, due to the large geographical parameters and the size of the dataset. However, this is undoubtedly a fruitful avenue to pursue, particularly in terms of the negotiation of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman transitions. These momentous changes were dealt with partially through the expenditure they provoked in the local church, but a thorough examination of how patronage of the local church in a region was tied to the other elements of the spatial and built environment, including castles, manor houses, monasteries, and even village plans, could be undertaken.

In addition, changing economic and demographic trends throughout the Middle Ages, and their effects on the nation, large regions, and even individual settlements, are worth examining, as they had the potential to either exert pressure on patrons, or else greatly facilitate their expenditure. A cursory examination of North Riding towns with markets recorded before *c.* 1200 (Britnell 2003; Sheeran 1998) reveals close associations between early economic centres and churches of Anglian origin, as well as more impressive architectural development in later periods (e.g. Helmsley, Scarborough, Northallerton). Also, the results from recent urban church excavations across the country have demonstrated that only a very few of that total have an origin date of later than 1100 (Gilmour and Stocker 1986; Magilton 1980; Schofield and Vince 2003, 175), appearing to contradict claims that urban churches were generally founded later than their rural counterparts (e.g. Rosser 1992, 274). Commemorative commission and production may also have been affected by the market forces of an urban environment, as well as by artisan influx and the diffusion of stylistic knowledge. A comparison of the development of churches and monuments in rural areas to those in both market towns and true urban centres could greatly enhance our understanding of the ways in which trade, a cash economy, and higher levels of population could affect church foundation and patronage.

Most importantly, however, a study that fully integrates concepts of landscape and wider relationships would enable the complex associations between ecclesiastical and secular foci of medieval society to be more clearly defined, as well as bring about a better and more holistic understanding of the material mechanisms of social identity and display. So far, the examination of churches and monuments has been useful in achieving this end, but it has limited our knowledge to the realm of the local church, when the role in the negotiation of transition played by patronage and identity undoubtedly extended to many other categories of material culture and the landscape. The archaeology of socio-cultural transitions, and the ways in which the organization of the physical world was employed to shape, define, and resolve them, is an area of outstanding potential for further study.

This examination of the North Riding has clearly demonstrated that the social, cultural, and political motivations which drove architectural and commemorative patronage during the tenth to twelfth centuries have resonance throughout the Middle Ages. Here the historical context was specifically that of the Anglo-Scandinavian, Saxo-Norman, and Anglo-Norman periods, and the geographical parameters a section of northeastern England. But the overarching concepts of the construction of elite identity, the creation and maintenance of authority, and the material display of wealth and influence were vitally important forces that should inform analyses of the social use of churches, or of any form of monumental patronage. The pivotal role played by local churches and funerary monuments in structuring the communities, hierarchies, and relationships of medieval society cannot be underestimated. The continual acts of display and social statement undertaken by patrons in the church and burial ground afforded those arenas and objects of material culture enduring significance throughout the medieval period, but these actions were at the same time a testament to that significance, and to the centrality of both media to the definition of personal and communal identity.

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