

MARXISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY:
THE ORIGINS OF FEUDALISM
IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

THOMAS SEBASTIAN AIKMAN SAUNDERS

D. PHIL THESIS

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological theory has become the subject of lively debate during the past few years. This thesis critically examines these recent developments through an exploration of Marxism and archaeology. The case for a historical materialist approach to material culture studies is made through both a theoretical and an empirical discussion of the origins of English feudalism. Central to the thesis is an investigation of three interconnected problems; the development of trade and exchange; the evolution of the rural landscape; and the growth of the medieval town. These issues have been analysed through an archaeological study of the late-Saxon pottery industry, early medieval village plans and urban assemblages of animal bones. It is hoped, therefore, that this thesis will demonstrate the potential for Marxist approaches in archaeology, as well as contributing fresh theoretical perspectives to early medieval studies.

INTRODUCTION

The intellectual climate pervading academic archaeology has changed dramatically over the last decade. Gone are the days when archaeology was simply a 'safe' empirical discipline, recovering, recording and classifying past material culture through 'objective' scientific procedures. The 1980s have seen the arrival of social theory. Archaeology has opened up and immersed itself in the wider theoretical debates outside the discipline. Over the last ten years there has been a plethora of fresh theoretical perspectives within archaeology: structuralist, structural-Marxist, post-structuralist, postmodernist etc., all of which have been subsumed under the label 'post-processualism'. But, despite all the excitement this has generated, the integration of social theory and archaeology is still in its infancy. An atmosphere of superficiality and eclecticism pervades the discipline, as archaeologists attempt to come to terms with a wide variety of schools of thought. Post-processualism, therefore, has been forged with many gaps, questions and silences. Further critiques and dialogues are necessarily required. By exploring the subject of Marxism and archaeology, it is hoped that the current debate around the reconstruction of archaeological theory and practice can be deepened and widened.

Although Marxist inspired approaches are not new to archaeology, the systematic use of historical materialism as a philosophical basis for the development of archaeological theory has yet to emerge within Britain or the United States. Post-processualists have attempted to integrate concepts from the various Marxist traditions into their work, in particular from the structural-Marxist school of thought. However, the epistemological foundations and basic analytical concepts of

classical Marxism have been explicitly rejected (Trigger 1985). This is certainly not something peculiar to the discipline of archaeology. Marxism, since its inception, has been consistently politically and intellectually peripheralised. However, the dearth of Marxist approaches during the formative period in the development of theoretical archaeology has more specific roots. The silence is a reflection of a current intellectual shift within academic circles. While the 1970s marked a period of intellectual renaissance for Marxist ideas within western universities, the 1980s has been a decade of intellectual retreats (see Miliband and Panitch 1990). Marxism has been abandoned, ousted by post-structuralism and postmodernism. Many radicals, initially inspired by the social revolts of the late '60s have now evolved into a post-Marxist position (see Callinicos 1989, 162-71). Thus, classical Marxism is regarded by both left and right-wing intellectuals alike as terribly old-fashioned and conceptually redundant, a body of thought to be transcended.

This thesis forms a defence of classical Marxism. The current marginalising of historical materialism has been carried out largely through misrepresentation and caricature, with Marxist thought the subject of ill-informed and generally facile disputation (see Geras 1990). In what follows, care is taken to examine the basis of Marxist analytical concepts and thus reveal that, far from being intellectually impoverished, historical materialism can solve many of the problems which post-processual theory correctly identifies but singularly fails to answer. This is not simply a return to Marx. The defence of classical Marxism involves building upon this tradition. Consequently, a wide range of Marxist thinkers within the social sciences are drawn upon, from philosophers and social theorists, to historians, geographers and anthropologists.

Examining Marxism and archaeology, however, is not an abstract exercise. The reconstruction of archaeological theory and practice requires a careful analysis of specific archaeological issues through an encounter with empirical evidence. The success or failure of Marxism ultimately rests in its ability to explain adequately the world, past and present. This research, therefore, is concerned with relating general theoretical debates to a discussion and interpretation of a particular field, early medieval material culture. Hence the subtitle 'The Origins of Feudalism in Early Medieval England'.

Medieval archaeology has been much slower to respond to theoretical developments than the discipline as a whole, largely remaining deeply empiricist and anti-theoretical. Although an intellectual shift is occurring, principally behind the work of Richard Hodges, the conceptual categories adopted remain weak and inadequately integrated with the empirical evidence. So, despite the period in question being one in which medieval England and Europe took shape, archaeologically based debate on feudalism and its origins has been conspicuously avoided by medieval archaeologists. Thus, by focusing upon this issue and constructing an appropriate research programme, the thesis attempts to illustrate concretely the value of Marxism as an analytical tool for interpreting material culture. It is through tackling this specific historical question that many new ideas are advanced.

Much of the current explanatory frameworks in medieval archaeology have been centred upon the role of trade and exchange and the rise of urban markets in the formation of the medieval world. The model developed below critically reassesses these theories by exploring transformations in the social relationships of production and exploitation. It is through analysing the origins of feudalism as the birth of a

mode of production that new insights are cast on the character of the feudal town.

The thesis is divided into three parts. **Part 1** is concerned generally with the recent developments in social theory and archaeology. It begins with a critique of the founding tenets of post-processual theory as advanced in particular by Hodder, Shanks and Tilley. In **Chapter 1**, the issues of epistemology, causality and material culture are considered in the context of the current crisis of Marxism and the ascendancy of post-structuralist philosophy. Specifically, the absence of a coherent Marxist approach within archaeology is analysed in terms of the rise and fall of Althusserianism. Thus, **Chapter 2** focuses on the development of structural-Marxist perspectives in anthropology and archaeology. It reveals the inherent weaknesses of this school of thought through a critique of the prestige goods exchange model, an approach which has dominated much of theoretical archaeology, including model building for the medieval period. Finally, in **Chapter 3**, therefore, the construction of a Marxist research programme into the origins of English feudalism is outlined and contrasted with a critical assessment of Hodges' theories on Dark Age economics. It is in this chapter that the basic analytical tools of historical materialism are defined.

Part 2, the core of the thesis, shifts the centre of discussion to an analysis of the reflexive integration of Marxist theory and material culture studies. Following up criticisms and alternatives outlined in **Part 1**, the issue of archaeology and feudalism is developed and elaborated with reference to empirical data. **Chapter 4** provides an introduction, mapping out a course by which archaeological evidence can be positively incorporated into the rich body of historical research on feudalism. Three separate, but connected, themes are then taken up and explored theoretically and empirically. First, in **Chapter 5**, the issue of trade and

exchange in early medieval England is discussed. Marxist historical scholarship on medieval towns is used to provide a general theoretical framework for the examination of the early medieval pottery industry. The archaeological evidence serves to clarify the fundamental distinction between capitalist and pre-capitalist economic formations. Secondly, in Chapter 6, concepts derived from Marxist geography are developed to assess the rise of feudal social relations on the land, in terms of transformations in the social use of space within early medieval rural settlements. The movement from dispersed and fluid settlements to planned and nucleated villages is interpreted as an expression of the rising economic and political power of a class of feudal lords. Thirdly, Chapter 7 considers the problematic issue of the status of towns in the feudal economy. Developing concepts advanced by Marxist historians and anthropologists, faunal assemblages from urban sites are studied to examine town and country relationships. Feudal towns are analysed as centres for petty commodity production and nodes in the articulation of agricultural surpluses resulting from the growth of feudal social relations on the land.

Part 3 contains some concluding remarks. The theoretical framework outlined is obviously provisional and sketchy. But it does provide a more secure foundation on which to reconstruct and integrate archaeological theory and practice. In Chapter 8, therefore, the prospects of future theoretical and empirical research into archaeology and feudalism are outlined. The strength of Marxist theory lies in its ability to develop research programmes which can extend progressively our understanding of pre-capitalist social formations. However, the thesis ends on a more polemical note, with a brief discussion of the politics of theory in Chapter 9. The rise of post-processualism has been closely associated with the conscious politicising of the discipline. The concluding chapter assesses the relationship between Marxism and

archaeology through a critique of the growth of radical archaeology.

The path this thesis follows is therefore complex. A diverse range of theoretical, historical, and empirical issues are analysed. This partly reflects the immature state of current theoretical archaeology. There is a constant need to define and clarify basic premises and concepts, particularly given the simplifications and distortions in the treatment of Marxism. But, hopefully the thesis goes some way towards rescuing historical materialism, at the same time laying the ground work for more mature Marxist approaches in archaeology.

PART 1

SOCIAL THEORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

CHAPTER 1

THE THEORETICAL VACUUM OF POST-PROCESSUAL ARCHAEOLOGY

'*Archaeology*', as the 1988 Cambridge Seminar on Post-Structuralism and Archaeology announced, '*is breaking up*' (Yates 1989). The doctrines of 'New Archaeology' (Clarke 1973), its functionalism and positivism, have been cracked open with the ascendancy of post-structuralist theory. Centring initially around Ian Hodder (1982; 1982a) and a small group of archaeologists at Cambridge in the early 1980s, a lively theoretical debate has swept through the discipline, founded on the realisation that the so called New Archaeology of the 1960s and '70s was flawed. Many notions and values which New Archaeologists had excluded, peripheralised or otherwise dismissed, were taken up with great vigour and persuasion. Symbolism, ideology, power, difference and contradiction became the new salient points for discussion and critique, turning archaeological theory upside down.

Inevitably, what started as a critique of New Archaeology combined with an openness to a wide variety of sociological frameworks have come to form a new orthodoxy with its own epistemological rules and assumptions. Three important books, Hodder's *Reading the Past* (1986); Shanks and Tilley's *Re-Constructing Archaeology* (1987) and their *Social Theory and Archaeology* (1987a) have recently set down the basis of what has been termed 'post-processualism', a new self-reflexive, critical and political practice of archaeology. Post-processualism has been hinged around a reconstruction of the theoretical cornerstones of functionalist archaeology, replacing realism with relativism, the causality of prime

movers with pluralism and a passive concept of material culture with an active concept (Hodder 1986, 11-17).

The intention in this chapter is to discuss, and offer a critique of, the above three issues raised by post-processualism: - epistemology, causality and material culture. This is not a negative exercise, to present an argument for a return to the strictures of functionalism. Indeed, the post-processualist experience has been valuable, furthering the discipline's climb from the depths of empiricism and also providing a sophisticated exposition of the limitations of New Archaeology. My contention, however, is that at the heart of post-processualism lies an intellectual vacuum, a theoretical void which presents the discipline with an impasse. The issues of epistemology, causality and material culture do require detailed reassessment. But the conclusions drawn by the post-processualists are confusing, inconsistent and contradictory. This provides the context for discussing the primary concern of this thesis, Marxism and archaeology.

As a prerequisite for this critique, post-processual archaeology itself needs to be placed within a philosophical, and social context. First, the conceptual underpinnings of post-structuralism (of which post-processualism is a small part) need to be examined and, secondly, the theoretical implications of the 'crisis of Marxism' (Althusser 1978), which it claims to have identified must be assessed.

SECTION 1: POST-STRUCTURALISM AND THE CRISIS OF MARXISM

The label post-structuralism characterises an intellectual movement initiated in the mid '70s by a variety of figures on the Parisian intellectual scene. Emerging from structuralism though a critique of it's methods and assumptions, then transforming and developing certain of its concepts, post-

structuralism spread quickly and widely within European and American academic circles. Although a diverse philosophical trend, it has two important starting points; Saussurian linguistics and the work of Nietzsche. These ground post-structuralism firmly within a philosophy of difference.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIFFERENCE:

Ferdinand de Saussure, in his master work *General Course in Linguistics* (1959), initiated a revolution of language. He broke from the classical doctrines of language in which there was a necessary connection between the word and the object to which that word corresponds. Saussure demolished this atomistic conception of language by his assertion that the relationship within a linguistic sign, between signifier (the sound-image) and signified (the concept), was purely arbitrary or conventional. Language was divided into two, 'langue', the whole system of language, and 'parole', the individual speech act which took place within the system. Saussure directed his attention to langue and a synchronic analysis of the way in which the structure of the whole made sense of the parts, the individual signs. Signification was therefore not determined by a word's reference to entities outside language or by its social context of use, but by contrasts between words themselves. Hence, for Saussure, language became constituted by relations of difference, in which the meaning of an individual sign was determined by its place in the network of language, by its relationship to other signs.

This concept of language carries important philosophical implications. With signification internal to language, language is lifted from reality, becoming an autonomous, self-contained discourse. It thus denies the subject's position of securing meaning. With words deriving their identity from the

difference between them, the subject is no longer the guarantor of the link between word and object. The subject is decentred, having no direct contact with reality except through language. So Saussure was not just discussing language but also, through his concept of signification, the mechanism by which we understand the world. His work was a theory of consciousness as well as linguistics.

It was not until the 1950s that these premises had any serious impact upon intellectual circles. Then concepts of structural linguistics were drawn upon and developed to produce general theories on how the material and social world was symbolically structured, in what Perry Anderson (1983, 40-43) has termed the 'exorbitation of language', of identifying the structures of language with those of society. The anthropologist Levi-Strauss (1969) was central to this generalisation, with his claim that kinship systems were a kind of language. He contended that marriage rules and kinship systems were established and mediated through symbolic codes which formed a type of communication. Structural linguistics were also generalised into other areas of the social sciences, for example by Lacan (1977) in psychology, and by Barthes (1973) with the development of cultural semiotics.

Post-structuralism is not essentially a break from this Saussurean structuralist model, rather a logical extension of it. Instead of structure, difference becomes the focus of attention. Saussure concentrated on the relationship between signifier and signified in the process of signification, yet for the post-structuralists primacy is placed with the signifier to such an extent that meaning, signification within language, is never fixed but merely a product of difference occurring on an infinite number of levels. So language becomes an absolutely autonomous, self-referential process, an endless play of difference. Thought and consciousness have no access to reality outside the play of signifiers. Language and

reality become prised apart:

'There is nothing outside the text.... There have never been anything but supplements, subjective significations, which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the "real" supervening and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement, etc. And thus to infinity'.

(Derrida 1976, 158-9)

This notion of the endless play of difference which pervades all post-structuralist thought lends itself to a view of reality itself as difference. Hence a characteristic of this work has been an adulation of the philosophical legacy of Fredricke Nietzsche. Reality, for Nietzsche, was chaotic and pluralistic, a collection of fragments with no structure, no underlying pattern. Any ordering of these fragments, halting the play of difference through introducing a meta-narrative, a transcendental signifier, was part of the metaphysics of the 'will to power'. Life had no purpose or identity outside relations of power, 'the endless struggle of opposed forces'. Relations of domination, power and subordination were an inherent feature of human existence. But, critically for Nietzsche, these relations of power were intrinsically related to the will to know. Consciousness was merely an effect, a manifestation of a particular configuration of power struggles. From this Nietzsche developed the notion of 'perspectivism', an idea stronger than relativism, in which all ideas are of equal weight and value, and each theory creates it's own reality, it's own objects of knowledge. The possibility of truth, as the correspondence of propositions to an external reality, was therefore denied by Nietzsche. Any notion that science could provide knowledge of the world was not simply mistaken for the pursuit of absolute truth but was a product of the will to knowledge, a determinate form of the will to power.

Nietzsche's thought has been especially important for Foucault and Derrida. For Derrida (1978) there could be no escape from metaphysics, merely a never-ending, never-progressing circle of criticism. He has engaged himself, therefore, in endless deconstructions of texts, examining the methodological tenets of theoretical positions to uncover the ideas underlying any theory and so expose these roots to critical and rigorous questioning. Foucault, on the other hand, extended Nietzsche's genealogical method in his examination of power/knowledge, the construction of discourse:

'....there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault 1977, 27).

Foucault's (1973; 1981) major preoccupation has been to explore the rules of formation, the institutional complexes upon which discourses are articulated, in order to determine the conditions which permit certain statements to be permitted while excluding others. Power/knowledge, for Foucault, is inescapable.

THE CRISIS OF MARXISM:

The background to the rapid rise of French post-structuralism was not simply a product of internal development of French structuralist philosophy. It was also a consequence of crisis of political theory on the Left. The upsurge of political struggles in the world during the late 1960s and early '70s; May '68 in France, the Prague Spring, the Vietnam war, the Portuguese revolution of 1974-5 etc., had brought a resurgence of Marxist and revolutionary theory and politics. But by the mid 1970s those heady days had gone. The Prague Spring was ended with the arrival of Russian tanks; America's defeat in Vietnam was lost in terrifying images of Pol Pot's atrocities; and the Gaullists remained in power in France. Western capitalism had survived these social and political

traumas to assert a new conservative consensus (see Harman 1988 for a discussion of the political developments in this period). Consequently, many of those originally attracted to revolutionary socialism began to retreat. Political changes were accompanied by theoretical shifts. The development of Eurocommunism by the western Communist Parties was illustrative of a whole rightward drift amongst the European left. The retreat from class politics led to the crisis of Marxism and out of this post-structuralism arose (Callincos 1982, 5-24; 1989, 162-71).

Critically, however, this crisis of Marxism occurred not only as a product of the ideological offensive against historical materialism. Although the anti-Marxist 'nouveaux philosophes' had a profound effect on leftwing intellectualism, the quick ascendancy of post-structuralist ideas was also a manifestation of a theoretical impasse within 'Western Marxism' (Anderson 1976). The consequence of the crisis of Stalinism after the invasion of Hungary by Soviet troops in 1956 (see below, 66-8), was that historical materialism in the West became reconstructed. Marxist academics borrowed concepts from bourgeois social sciences to solve the problems with Stalin's orthodoxy. On the resurgence of Marxist theory in the late 1960s, it was the French Communist Party philosopher, Louis Althusser, more than any other who led and inspired this growth in Marxist thought. But, in the process of developing and transforming the concepts of historical materialism, Althusser shifted Marxism onto the hostile ground of bourgeois thought. This effectively undermined the coherence and distinctiveness of historical materialism and thus allowed much of Western Marxism to collapse into post-structuralism.

Althusser's project was organised around the reconstruction of Marxism through the borrowing of concepts from the philosophy of difference: the creation of 'structural-Marxism'. This essentially involved the assertion of the

priority of difference expressed in the theory of 'overdetermination' (Althusser 1969, 87-128). Althusser criticised the main two strands in Marxist philosophy - the evolutionists, (Plekhanov, Kautsky, Stalin) and the Hegelians, (Lukacs, Gramsci, Korsch). Both schools of thought, he asserted, were guilty of reductionism. The evolutionists reduced alterations in both the relations of production and the superstructure to passive effects of the development of the productive forces - technological determinism; and the Hegelians reduced different aspects of the social whole to expressions of its hidden essence, the transformation of the worker (the subject) into a commodity (an object) - the 'expressive totality' (Althusser 1979, 94). In both cases the different elements constituting the whole were reduced to some simple principle. Difference arose from unity, primitive communism went through stages of difference in class society and found its resolution in unity, communism proper. But for Althusser, complexity or multiplicity was intrinsic to social formations. The only unity that existed was a 'complex structured unity' (Althusser 1969, 198-9). So, the Marxist notion of the social whole was retained while still incorporating the concept of difference. The totality became a complex unity of multiple and irreducible practices, forming semi-autonomous instances, (political, economic, ideological, etc.), which articulated in such a manner that one instance dominated society. The plurality of instances could not be reduced to the economy. The economic instance held a determining role only indirectly, by providing the context for the specific structure of dominance among the other instances (Althusser 1979, 96-9).

Althusser's Marxism carried important implications. The notion of a complex and structured totality meant that ideological and political relations were not epiphenomenal, but constitutive of the social whole. He seemed to have found a solution to the old charge of reductionism. However this

apparent strength of structural-Marxism also contained the seeds of its downfall. Cutting the superstructure free from any effective form of material determination, promoted the move from structural-Marxism to post-Marxism. The success of French post-structuralism in unseating structural-Marxism, was therefore less of an alternative to Althusser than the logical extension of his system. It was not long before the concept of overdetermination was used to characterise the social totality as being open and indeterminate, incompatible with giving any kind of explanatory or causal priority to an objective economic structure. This is most vividly illustrated in Laclau and Mouffe's move 'beyond' Marxism in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). As one critic has argued:

'Althusserianism was the road down which a whole generation of left intellectuals travelled from Marxism to bourgeois irrationalism'. (Rees 1988, 86)

The arguments surrounding the philosophy of difference and the crisis of Marxism have been set down in a very brief and schematic manner. The intention has been simply to provide a background for a more detailed and selective discussion of how some of these arguments have been assimilated into current archaeological theory. Such a critique of post-processualism will proceed through an examination of their reconstruction of the three fundamental concerns of archaeological theory; epistemology, causality and material culture.

SECTION 2: EPISTEMOLOGY

Post-processualism established itself in opposition to the methodological concerns of New Archaeology, a central objective of which was the introduction of scientific rigour to archaeological explanations. Emanating initially from America, New Archaeology rejected purely inductive strategies in favour of the use of logical positivism and their hypothetico-deductive method (Binford 1965; Watson, Le Blanc and Redman 1971). Archaeological hypotheses were constructed and the logical consequences tested against the observed data. It was recognised that facts did not speak for themselves, definitions and classifications being archaeological constructions. But it was assumed that an independent instrument of measurement, 'Middle Range Theory' (Binford and Sabloff 1982), could test the relationship between theory and data. The statics of the material cultural record were related to the dynamics of the past society through ethnographic analogy. New Archaeology, therefore, reworked the old relationship between theory and data. Thus archaeology could strive to be an objective scientific discipline. The epistemological foundations of this positivist methodology have been shaken to the core by post-processual archaeology.

CRITICALLY SELF-CONSCIOUS ARCHAEOLOGY:

The post-processualist central attack is to deconstruct the myth that an archaeological hypothesis can be tested against archaeological data. Theory and data, it is argued, are not opposed to each other because all data is theoretically defined. What one measures depends on particular perceptions and categorisation processes. Consequently:

'There can be no question, then, of testing in terms of either a verification or a falsification strategy. This is because there is literally nothing independent of theory or propositions to test against'.

(Shanks and Tilley 1987, 111)

This critique of postivism is linked to a denial of the possibility of a non-discursive access to reality. A major philosophical implication of Saussure's revolution of language is that consciousness becomes lifted from reality. Hence there can be no direct or immediate contact between the human mind and the world, between subject and object. All knowledge of the world, including empirical observations, are mediated by the arbitrary nature of languages signifiers. The dichotomy between data and theory therefore collapses. Any possibility of gaining an objective knowledge of the world, and likewise of the past, is consequently denied by the post-processualists. Data is always a theoretical object and so discourses create their own objects of study, their own reality.

Adopting the 'radical' stance of post-structuralist philosophy, this false scientism of New Archaeology is criticised on the basis of politics. Following Feyerabend (1978) and Foucault, the objectivity of New Archaeology is seen to be embroiled within the power and domination strategies of contemporary capitalist society. Ideological assumptions are depoliticised within the 'scientific' method. The individual is reduced to a passive pawn within systems analysis. Social change is determined by non-social prime movers, such as the environment (Hodder 1985, 7 and 18-22). The past evolves in a unilinear fashion culminating and consequently legitimising the present (Shanks and Tilley 1987 7-28).

However, valid though these criticisms appear, it is not at all clear in all this what is to replace the positivism of the New Archaeology, in particular, and rationality in general. The collapse of science leaves the discipline of archaeology open to epistemological anarchy and to relativism. With no access to an external world independent of discourse,

historical explanations lose their anchorage in reality. Nothing is fixed, everything is open to a continual process of interpretation and reinterpretation.

So we are asked to embrace a 'critically self-conscious archaeology'. Positivist discourse is discarded on the basis that it rests on a closure which constrains research by laying down prior frameworks and setting limits beyond which research cannot stray. An alternative, 'open philosophy of archaeology' (Shanks and Tilley 1987 103) is put forward. This open/closure dichotomy (an extension of Althusser's [1979, 52, 92] distinction between science and ideology) is linked to Shanks and Tilley's notion of a need for a 'radical pluralism in archaeology' (1987a, 200). Archaeological research, they argue, must be open because the past is never fixed. There is no finishing position since there is no way of evaluating whether the right interpretation has been arrived at. Instead there are many archaeologies and many frameworks to understand the past. This does not lead, however, down the slippery road of open liberal relativism wherein anything goes. For conceptions of the past are theoretical constructs of the present and hence throughly political.

'Knowledge is not a recognition of the eternal but is fundamentally part of contemporary social practice, rooted therefore in political relations of power'.

(Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 58-9)

Consequently, radical pluralism involves *'condemning or supporting particular archaeologies according to social and political values'* (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 200). It means providing a critical and self-reflexive explanation of how material culture is employed in the power strategies of the past and present. For Hodder this critical self-knowledge centres around supporting alternative archaeologies, such as indigenous, feminist and working class archaeologies, against the established perspectives *'written by Western, upper*

middle-class, and largely Anglo-Saxon males' (Hodder 1986, 147-70). Shanks and Tilley (1987, 68-99; 1987a, 186-208) have concentrated their attack on the underlying philosophical assumptions of theoretical archaeology and the politics embedded in the presentation of the past in contemporary museums. But there is no discussion of where these different values, attitudes and approaches come from. Indeed, the post-processualists own philosophy denies the possibility of there being a material and extra-discursive basis for the generation of ideas. Ideology is characterised as autonomous, or floating, and so ultimately unexplainable.

A RATIONALIST CRITIQUE:

An assessment of the post-processualist attack on the epistemology of New Archaeology need not start from the content of their critique, for the debate on the problems of positivism is welcome contribution to archaeological theory. However, the fundamental weakness is the form of the critique, the premises on which it is based, and thus the conclusions which lead from them. Four key problems can be identified which emerge from the post-processualist anti-realist stance, the philosophical basis of their epistemology (see Callincos 1989, 73-80).

First, the notion that there can be no access to reality independent of discourse leads to a very pessimistic perception of the aims of archaeology. If discourses construct their own reality through creating theoretical objects of study and ordering them into coherent patterns, the past, as well as the present, is unknowable. Archaeologists have only brief glimpses of the power strategies and systems of domination of the present. Thus there is no past to study. Post-processualists wish to refrain from drawing such pessimistic conclusions, but the logic of their argument dictates it. Hodder (1986, 118-46) may claim that historical

knowledge can be gained through his contextual approach; Shanks and Tilley (1987, 103-15) may argue that a sense of the past is obtained with the rigorous use of their fourfold hermeneutic and dialectical method; but these positions are at odds with the anti-realist premise that knowledge is not about an approximation to an external reality.

The second problem flows out of the confusions of their alternative methodology. Although the post-processualist continually stresses the need for critical debate, contending that the scienticism of New Archaeology obscures self-analysis, discussion within post-processualism itself is very rare. Denying access to an independent reality also denies the possibility of there being a rational basis for choosing between theories. The post-processualist is consequently extremely elusive.

'One can't win an argument with textualists: anything in their opponents' work which suggests that denying the autonomy of discourse is not equivalent to ignoring its specificity is appropriated by the textualists as properly theirs. They play with loaded dice'. (Callinicos 1985, 95)

This point is vividly illustrated by Hodder's (1987) reply to a critical review of *Reading the Past* (Bell 1987). Questioned on the issue of relativism, Hodder's defence is first to argue that the review is just one reading of the text, *'the book is real but different readers give it different realities'*. So he does not want *'to argue that my interpretation of "my own" book is right and the Bell is wrong'*. Secondly, his main defence is to deconstruct the philosophical routes of Bell's criticism, dismissing it as being in the processualist tradition separating theory/data, subject/object and depoliticising archaeology. This two pronged defence provides Hodder with the space carefully to avoid any serious assessment of the charge of relativism.

Third, when it comes to a self-critical, reflexive analysis, this slipperiness hides a real contradiction. The post-processualists pay only lip-service to their anti-realism. Implicitly, a rational method is used to sustain post-processual archaeology. This is well illustrated in Shanks and Tilley's work. The basic premise of their reconstruction of archaeological theory is that there can be no pre-defined conceptual frameworks, no definition of the objects of study on prior grounds. But as Kristiansen pertinently points out:

'How such a re-definition can be carried out without being trapped by another conceptual framework I fail to see. It seems to me the S&T are conceptually blinded here, believing that their essence is not an essence, that the flux of differences and relations in society can be grasped without prior pre-definitions, so the barrier disappears between abstract concept and empirical concrete'. (1988, 476)

This is the crux of the problem. On what basis should we reject New Archaeology in favour of post-processualism if there is no rational basis to choose between the two? Hodder and Shanks and Tilley can only seduce the reader to their point of view by appealing to their rationalism (see Hawes 1990). The view of the past as open and indeterminate is presented as a more sophisticated understanding, a better approximation to an external reality than one which is conceived through the totalising theory of New Archaeology. Extra-discursive referents, in the form of empirical data, are manipulated to present case studies illustrating the superiority of post-processualism in making sense of archaeological patterns. As Johnson (1988) points out, Shanks and Tilley's rejection of empiricism is contradicted by the case studies in *Re-Constructing Archaeology*.

This problem is linked to a wider political issue. What can only be described as the post-processualists' superficial denial of realism obscures the social and political basis for

the rise of their own discourse. The fourth and final criticism is thus a political one, a deconstruction of the post-processualists' own text.

'Let us snatch Nietzsche's hammer from the textualists' hands, and ask what will to power their own discourse conceals'. (Callinicos 1985, 95)

The political underpinnings of post-structuralism have been located as being two-fold; the restructuring of capitalism after the initial economic and political crisis of the late 1960s and early '70s, and subsequent internal political crisis of Western Marxism. Hodder's and Shanks and Tilley's politics are marked by this socio-political context. Post-processualism does provide a critique of bourgeois society, in particular how the past is naturalised to legitimate the present. This political critique, however, is made through an open rejection of classical Marxism. Shanks and Tilley, for example, have emerged from structural-Marxism to dismiss any notion of economic determinacy, the base and superstructure metaphor. Their work is characteristic of the move from Althusser's Marxism to Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism.

The point here is not to fault the post-processualist in sustaining a political opposition to capitalist society, but to highlight the limitations of their critique. The anti-realism leads to a position in which any totalising philosophy is rejected under the charge that prior conceptual frameworks halt the play of signifiers, impose a meta-narrative and constrain freedom of thought through power/knowledge. Yet the question then arises - what comes after the critique? As Eagleton has argued in his assessment of Derridean post-structuralism:

'The strength and weakness of deconstruction is that it seeks to position itself at the extreme limit of the thinkable. This rocks the foundations of metaphysical knowledge to the precise extent that, posed at the extreme edge as it is, it threatens.....to leave everything

exactly as it was'. (1986, 111)

The post-processualists with their critical archaeology, can do no more than provide a negative metaphysics. Their politics, because they remain in the realm of critique, provides no path forward (see Dews 1987, 34-8). Philosophy, politics and theory are not seen as guides to action. Pure critique in itself does not aid our ability to change the world. Hence within the discipline of archaeology, the negative metaphysics of post-processualism allows the old division between field and academic research to be maintained. Certainly Shanks and Tilley's reconstruction does not link theory and practice. They fail to provide a philosophy, and therefore a methodology, by which theoretical pursuits can be linked to the empirical preoccupations of field archaeologists. The post-structuralists, therefore, cannot overcome the dualisms which they seek to avoid, the division between theory and practice; subject and object. Consequently the capitalist division between mental and manual labour is not challenged. This point will be discussed at more length in **Chapter 9**.

SECTION 3: CAUSALITY

The rejection of the philosophy of presence, the notion that an objective knowledge can be obtained through logical positivism, forces post-processualism into a head on attack on the New Archaeology's conception of systemic change. Systems analysis, with the social totality composed of interdependent subsystems articulating within a state of dynamic equilibrium, reduced historical transformations to the effect of extra-systemic prime movers, such as climatic factors or population pressure (see Hill 1972; Clarke 1968). In the post-structuralist tradition, however, the placing of primacy of signifier over signified means not only that signification is never fixed, but that reality itself becomes an endless play of difference. Social dynamism cannot be reduced to mono-causal prime movers, as change occurs on an infinite number of levels and through a mosaic of interrelationships.

THE LOGIC OF CONTINGENCY:

In archaeology, the move away from systems theory was aided by the philosophy of Althusser and his notion of the expressive totality. It is Shanks and Tilley, more than any other post-processualists, who have attempted to reformulate the concept of causality in archaeological theory. They will be the focus for the following critique.

Althusser followed the contrast between the openness of science and the closure of ideology to his dual notions of simple and complex totality. A simple totality reduced difference to an all expressive essence, while the complex totality had no structuring centre, only a flux of semi-autonomous instances. The former presented a closure, imposing prior, fixed concepts onto society. The latter, an open philosophy, appreciated the complexity and multiplicity of the social. Shanks and Tilley's reconstruction of social

archaeology is consciously structured around the division between the simple and the complex, or the closed and the open.

New Archaeology, through the adaption of positivism and systems analysis, created a logic of necessity (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 119-22; 1987a, 54-7). Archaeological theory became crippled by all encompassing dualisms: - subject/object, appearance/essence, data/theory, particular/general, past/present etc., - in which the second categories were privileged over the first. This meant that the explanatory concepts used in social analysis were bounded and pre-defined. History was consequently brought to order - the particular was subsumed under the general, the contingent excluded by the necessary, and the detailed reduced to the abstract and hence *'the production of a reductionist and ideological History'* (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 176). Althusser used the notion of the expressive totality to preface his thesis that at the heart of authentic Marxism was a complex conception of the social whole. But in Shanks and Tilley's hands the concept is extended to become a tool to dismiss any totalising philosophy, thus taking Althusser's critique to its logical conclusion. Now, not only New Archaeology can be rejected under the charge of essentialism but also structural-Marxism. Despite Shanks and Tilley's shared sympathies with Althusser, they claim that his system itself introduces a fixed closure. Through clinging on to preconceived Marxist categories, *'the totalising framework of the model requires a reductionist essentialism'*. Shanks and Tilley therefore:

'....wish to question the adequacy of the concept of mode of production and social relations of production as predetermined objects of archaeological analysis'.

(1987, 119)

The alternative to the logic of necessity and totalising philosophies, *'is to assert that the social is open'* (Shanks

and Tilley 1987a, 58), a pluralistic flux of internal relations. This notion has its origins in Althusser's argument for a complex structured totality, the concept of overdetermination. But once again, in Shanks and Tilley's hands, this concept becomes stretched. Althusser, in his effort to overcome accusations of determinism in Marxism, replaced what he perceived as the reductionist base and superstructure metaphor, with the notion that the economic instance could be overdetermined by the ideological or political. Shanks and Tilley have simply taken this one step further. Overdetermination, for them, is taken to mean outright indeterminacy and plurality. There is no causality of the economic, even in the last instance, no privileging of one element above another. There are simply structured differences articulated through a multiplicity of social practices. Although social differences embody contradictions which necessitate change, there is no hierarchy. All contradictions are of the same order, and carry the same explanatory weight. Society is thus conceived as a constantly transforming flux of social practices.

'The social is an overdetermined relational whole, an open field of relations, an indeterminate articulation.'

(Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 59).

The closed logic of necessity is replaced by the open logic of contingency. Left without any form of structural determination, Shanks and Tilley invite us to embrace two propositions:

'(1) all social life is contingent; (2) all episodes of social change are conjunctural'. (1987a, 176)

So following the path from structural-Marxism to post-Marxism we arrive at, and greet whole-heartedly, the 'randomisation of history' (Anderson 1983, 48)

POST-STRUCTURALISM AND THE RANDOMISATION OF HISTORY:

Shanks and Tilley's perspective criticises the theory of New Archaeology for containing a series of disabling dualisms which produce reductionist history. However, the most striking aspect of their critique is that it is solely structured around another dualism; simple/complex, or closed/open. All archaeological theory (apart from, apparently, their own), is rejected for essentialism and reductionism. This is true of Piggott and Hawkes' cultural materialism, Renfrew's functionalism; or Rowlands' structural-Marxism, because all are closed philosophies. But in pursuing such an argument Shanks and Tilley are also guilty of reductionism. Their critique reduces all the differences, specificity and detail of these conflicting paradigms to an all encompassing essence. As Geras points out in his polemic against Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism, the open/closure dualism means that:

'....virtually any framework of historical explanation, any principle of sociological intelligibility, can be condemned in the name of the "openness and indeterminacy of the social"....Laclau and Mouffe have embraced an obscurantism capable of disparaging every explanatory project, because an "essence" will always be discoverable in whatever principle or principles of explanation it may put forward'. (1987, 47)

The implication of Shanks and Tilley's argument is that history cannot be understood by unifying principles or a unified framework of explanation. However, in reality, the very act of writing and theorising imposes some kind of structured order upon perceived phenomenon. Shanks and Tilley's archaeological aim of writing the past without any pre-defined analytical categories cannot, in all honesty, be maintained. The constant criticism of essentialism, therefore, reflects a prior conceptual feature of their own work. Their purported objections merely obscures an essence on which the

authors remain silent. This brings us to the second area of discussion, the conceptual logic and content behind the alternative post-processual perspective.

Shanks and Tilley have divided the intellectual universe between closed/open, simple/complex, dualities linked to another, determinacy and contingency. It is this dichotomy which structures the theoretical content of their notion of the social. They maintain that all conceptions of the social which give primacy to one type of structure within a group of structures, or which construct a hierarchy of causalities of uneven weight, are deterministic. Such conceptions reduce everything to a preconceived essence, a transcendental signifier. Thus systems analysis and Marxism can be linked. Instead archaeological theory must welcome the logic of contingency, must acknowledge that 'all social life is contingent'. So we end up with a inflexible either/or choice. Either absolute social determinacy or absolute social contingency.

But we should not accept the austere logic which runs behind these two absolutes. Indeed much of the thesis will be concerned with illustrating how concepts of economic determination necessarily require an appreciation of the contingent when explaining social change. The imposition of this 'all or nothing' rationale on archaeological theory, rather than being an aid to historical explanation, is nothing but a false dualism. It is a manifestation of a theoretical error common to much of post-structuralism contained within the 'exorbitation of language' (see above, 17).

To elaborate this argument, we must return to the analysis of structural linguistics. Saussure made the distinction in language between langue (the structural laws of language), and parole (the individual speech act). This division gives rise to the split between determinacy and contingency. The two

linguistic categories are obviously related, but in Saussure's scheme there is an unbridgeable conceptual gap between them. On one hand communication in language is absolutely determined by the structure of language. On the other hand the structural laws of language are reproduced in speech acts which take an infinite number of forms. Hence no set of laws can explain the act. The split, therefore, between *langue* and *parole*, between determined structures and contingent events, cannot be reconciled. The post-structuralist's error is to generalise this view of language to encompass all social practices, and conflate the two linguistic distinctions. The conditions of possibility contained within the laws of language are treated as if they were causes of the unpredictable and inexplicable nature of every particular speech act. Consequently:

'Structure is treated as if it were the cause of events...which effectively means that they are subject to no specific causality at all; and history becomes the sphere of "irreducible contingency" or "legislated accident"'. (Wood 1986, 78)

Although Shanks and Tilley state that *'by stressing the contingent and conjunctural nature of change we hope to avoid the pitfalls of essentialism and reductionism'* (1987a, 176), it is the very randomisation of history which creates a hollow theory of causality. Their complex phraseology forms a sophisticated appearance to a superficial essence. If there is no fixity, only thoroughgoing social indeterminacy, what more can a social theorist say about change? Herein lies the paradox of post-processualism. Accepting the openness of the social is heralded as the only possible way to come to terms with the complexity, the detail and specificity of the social. But in practice this openness fails to help us understand and explain anything at all. As Geras asks:

'....must we just assume that openness and indeterminacy of the social mean, here, such a free play of discourses and articulating practices that any number of outcomes is

always possible, so that no particular outcome, no specificity, can be understood or explained? Whatever is, then, simply is, but whatever it is, it can always be subsumed under the (re)description of the social world as a discursive plurality with some nodal points. It is hard to see how one could get any closer to complete theoretical vacuity.' (1987, 74)

Of course this conclusion is never actually reached by Shanks and Tilley. While the logic of necessity can be found hidden within all other archaeological theoreticians, when it comes to their own work Shanks and Tilley are more lenient. They are apparently blind to the fact that it is based on a prior assumptions and contains pre-defined conceptual frameworks. It is the centrality of discourse and beneath that power and ideology which forms the essence of Shanks and Tilley's post-Marxism and is typical of post-processualism as a whole.

This brings us on to the third area of critique, the philosophical implications which are contained in the notion of the openness and indeterminacy of the social. Thoroughgoing idealism lies within statements such as:

'The social practices of agents are always to be regarded as situated in relation to power, group or individual interests, ideology and symbolic and signifying practices', (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 210; emphasis added)

Previous archaeological theories reduced conceptions of ideology and power to reflections of a preconceived essence, the functional needs of adaption, or a response to economic inequality. With the post-processualist, however, ideology and symbolism does not have a subordinate role but a dominant one.

'The social is an open field fixed in the politics and strategies and in the interpretative practices of discourses'. (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 210)

As there is no independent reality outside discourse, nothing

has a non-discursive foundation. This centrality of discourse in post-processual archaeology is quite clearly visible in their total preoccupation with ideology and power, from Shanks and Tilley's analysis of megalithic tombs (1982) and beer cans (1987) to Hodder's study of neolithic Orkney settlements (1982a) and pottery designs (1986). This overindulgence in the material construction of ideology and power is a reflection of the idealistic logic of post-structuralism (this point is taken up at length in Chapter 2).

The post-processualists' debt to the philosophy of difference leads straight to anarchistic notions of causality. Signification becomes the product of the endless play of difference. There is nothing outside the text to ground meaning. Ultimately this is a return to an old idealism which states that absolutely everything - subjects, experience, contradictions, conflicts - is constituted within articulating discourses. The question of what might be the material conditions generating these specific discourses is excluded and undiscussed by post-structuralism. We are left with floating signifiers with no material reference points. It is this philosophical stance which leads Shanks and Tilley, following Foucault's conception of discourse, to state:

'Power is central to social analysis; power (both productive and repressive) is coextensive with the social field'. (1987a, 210)

By embracing the notion of the ever present nature of discourse (power/knowledge), Shanks and Tilley are subject to the same impasse as pointed out by critics of Foucault (see Dews 1987, 161-70; Callinicos 1989, 80-91). If power is always there, and there can be no relationship outside power, how can there be resistance and change? Where would it come from? What conditions would generate it? There are no answers to these questions apart from relying on the idealistic metaphysics of the Nietzschean will to power. Thus, once the material foundation to ideas, power, symbols, consciousness is denied,

the post-processualists slip quickly into an idealism in which discourses construct their own reality, order and structure and transform social phenomena according to the logic of contingency.

SECTION 4: MATERIAL CULTURE

The third tenet of post-processual archaeology concerns its theory of material culture. The problem of relating static data patterns to the dynamics of past society is the most fundamental issue within archaeology, potentially its most distinctive contribution to social science. New Archaeology developed a functional theory of material culture in which there was a one-to-one correspondence between cultural patterns and social systems. Archaeology simply moved from empiricism to positivism and focused on questions of methodology, the creation of techniques to gain a more objective account of the past. Archaeological interpretations of material culture patterns, and consequently knowledge of the past, were to be built up through the use of Middle Range Theory. One of the central tasks of post-processualism has been to readdress the relationship between the material and social worlds. Through the application of structuralist and post-structuralist philosophy the object of archaeological investigation has been rigorously reassessed in terms of active symbols, of structured codes and signs, which can be read like a text.

READING THE PAST: MATERIAL CULTURE AS A TEXT:

In both traditional and New Archaeology material culture is portrayed as passive. This, the post-processualists maintain, leads to the theoretical error of reductionism. Traditional archaeology, being normative, saw empirically based patterns as passive reflections of shared cultural ideas and mental-templates. Thus material culture was reduced to the expressions of cognitive systems. New Archaeology however, saw material culture as people's 'extrasomatic means of adaption' (Binford 1962). Despite this move from an idealistic to a materialist premise, material culture was still seen as a passive reflection of the interaction between society and the

environment. Hence New Archaeology produced another reductionist theory, with cultural patterns reducible to functional adaption.

To break from the reductionism of these two paradigms, post-processualism asserted that culture is meaningfully constituted in the social. This implies that material culture actively participates in the production, reproduction and transformation of social practices. A whole host of archaeological studies subsequently emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, highlighting the active symbolic and coded information embedded within archaeological data patterns (see in particular Hodder 1982). Within this active view of material culture lie two central premises. The first is the notion that social action is negotiated and mediated within the material world. Material culture both constrains and enables action, it is *'a cause and effect, a stimulus as well as a residuum, it is creative as well as created'* (Hodder 1986, 92). Second, human actors consciously draw upon the material world and invest it with meaning. Material culture is therefore consciously reproduced and transformed through social action.

The post-processualists conclude that, if the material world is seen to be consciously structured through codes and symbols, then *'we can consider the archaeological record as a "text" to be read'* (Hodder 1986, 122). As a text, signification in material culture involves deciphering the structured set of differences between the signifiers. By analysing archaeological objects contextually, similarities and differences are observed within the data and from these patterns interpretations made. Much of early post-processualists' work was therefore concentrated on the discovery of structural principles ordering the sets of differences between the signifiers. Very much in a structuralist vein, formal analysis was applied to expose the

rules, or grammar, observed in the patterning of material culture (for examples of this approach see Washburn 1983 and Leroi-Gourhan 1982).

Two major problems, however, emerge once material culture is treated as a language. First, if the relationship between signifier and signified is purely arbitrary, what do the structured sets of differences within the data show? How does the patterning of material culture relate to the social? Structural analysis could observe the grammar, the language of material culture, but not interpret it. Hodder (1982a), for example, argued that the bounded designs on Dutch Neolithic pottery, which consisted of a hierarchy of horizontal and vertical lines, were linked directly to the bounded social entities of lineage groups. However there is no reason to expect any relationship between pot decoration and social organisation. If the relationship between the signifier (the pot decoration) and the signified (the cultural meaning of this decoration) is arbitrary then the archaeologist's interpretation is likewise arbitrary. Structural analysis in archaeology appeared to be merely a description of rules concerning patterning, rather than an interpretation of them.

This limitation is related to the second problem; a lack of an appreciation of process. Focusing on a synchronic investigation of the grammar of material culture diverts attention away from change. Diachronic analysis consequently becomes problematical. The structural linguistic approach left studies of the history of material culture with two unsatisfactory alternatives. Either the structural principles beneath patterning remain fundamentally unaltered, merely taking different forms of cognitive universals such as binary opposites, male/female; living/dead; domestic/wild etc. Or structure is reproduced in a totally arbitrary manner. The randomisation of history means the randomisation of material culture.

The post-processualists, although acknowledging these problems (see Hodder 1986, 34-54; Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 98-102), did not break essentially from this structuralist model. Following developments within post-structuralist philosophy, the linguistic model was simply expanded. Drawing from the work of Derrida, Saussurean structures of difference are extended infinitely. Difference becomes all pervasive so that signification is never fixed but floating, subject to the never ending play of signifiers. Such notions are taken up by Hodder (1986, 118-46) with his 'contextual archaeology'. For him, reading material culture requires an appreciation of the multiplicity of difference observed within context.

'The symbolic meaning of the object is an abstraction from the totality of these cross-references. The meaning of an object is derived from the totality of its similarities and differences, associations and contrasts'. (1986, 138)

The complex network of difference, however, is infinite, therefore signification in archaeology is open. There are an infinite number of readings of the text and no criteria for choosing between them.

Linked to this notion that material culture forms an open discourse, continually interpreted and reinterpreted by the present, is the argument that the signification in the past was continually negotiated.

'If material culture is a "text", then a multiplicity of readings could have existed in the past'.

(Hodder 1986, 149)

The production of material culture took place within a network of social practice which was also in a state of flux, constantly being reproduced and transformed. Material culture mediated these practices, being drawn upon and invested with

meaning in the negotiation and renegotiation of social relations. It is, therefore, through a theory of these social practices that the post-processualists attempt to explain the transformation of material culture patterning and so unravel the relationship between the material and the social. This has been taken up most coherently by Shanks and Tilley and their theories on power, ideology and discourse.

Shanks and Tilley's theories are influenced by Althusser's concept of ideology. For Althusser, social actors could not live without representations of their world and of their relation to it. Ideology expressed these representations, the imaginary relationships linking subjects to the conditions of their existence. Consequently subjects live their relation to the real in the imaginary. Ideology is more than simply a consciousness. It is rather a practice with a material existence:

'....ideas are his (the subject's) material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject'. (Althusser 1971, 169)

Material culture is the medium through which these ideological practices are structured and reproduced. Hence Shanks and Tilley (1982), for example, hypothesised that disarticulated patterns of skeletal remains within megalithic chamber tombs related to an emerging social elite which legitimated their position through creating a sense of corporate identity. Individuals at death were absorbed into the megalithic tomb, a representation of an egalitarian social body. Material culture, therefore, was not a passive reflection of ideology, but the material reality of ideological practice. In their more recent work, Shanks and Tilley have extended this notion of ideology to encompass Foucault's work on power and discourse. Material culture is seen as being bound up with power and discourse, actively created in an arena of conflict.

As Foucault (1981, 94) claims, '*where there is power, there is resistance*'. Material culture is thus constantly mediated, linked and bound to social practices and social strategies involving power, interests and ideology. It therefore forms an open and changing system of signification in both the past and present.

THE IMPASSE OF DIFFERENCE:

Despite the development on theories of material culture, post-processualism inherits similar problems to that of structuralism. Beneath a more sophisticated rhetoric lies silence, a conceptual void within which lurks idealism.

The central thrust of post-processualism is to unleash the play of difference. This rightly moves archaeological research away from isolated artefact studies to the study of context. There is nothing intrinsic in an object which imbues it with meaning. Signification is a product of contextual contrasts and associations. This approach, though the strength of post-processualism, also contains a critical weakness. As with language, archaeological signification becomes an internal process. There is nothing outside the material culture text to structure interpretations. The free play of difference therefore means all contextual differences are of equal importance. There can be no hierarchy of difference, no privileging of one pattern over another, because all contrasts and associations need to be considered. This, however, presents archaeologists with an impossible dilemma. Data collection by necessity involves selections and choices, but if contextual differences occur ad infinitum, on what basis can these selections be made? The post-processualists have pulled the rug from under their own feet.

Two solutions are offered, both unsatisfactory. The first, as outlined by Hodder, is induction. Recognising the problem

that contextualism throws up for archaeological interpretation, he states:

'There seems to be no easy answer to this problem, except that it is important to know all the data as thoroughly as possible'. (1986, 141)

So we are invited to return to a form of empiricism in which archaeological knowledge develops through the collection and manipulation of more data, *'the more networked the data, the more there is to "read"'* (Hodder 1986, 141). But, by the post-processualists' own definition, there exists a never ending play of difference - we cannot 'know all the data'. We return to the initial impasse.

The second solution is simply to play lipservice to the philosophy of difference by giving a privileged status to certain types of differences to order signification. Hodder (1986, 128-32) does this by selecting four fundamental levels of similarities and difference which archaeologists routinely deal with; temporal, spatial, depositional and typological. Shanks and Tilley (1987, 137-71) alternatively argue for the need to search for structural principles to understand signification. For example in a study of Swedish middle neolithic ceramic designs, they employ formal analysis to identify a generative principle based on the binary opposition between bounded and unbounded designs. But this is little more than a continuation of structuralism.

This brings us to the underlying weakness of post-processualism. Signification is an internal process in which material signs are compared with other signs in a never-ending web of contextual similarities and differences. This might be an improvement on structuralism as it involves contrasting more sets of differences. But it does not transcend the problem of linking signifier to signified. It simply introduces a circularity into the argument. As Hodder himself acknowledges:

'....if everything only has meaning in relation to everything else, how does one ever enter the context'.

(1986, 140)

The post-processualists cannot escape from the internalism of discursive contexts to grasp the extra-discursive processes embedded in the social practices which brought the patterns into being and endowed them with meaning. To enter the archaeological context we need to get back to the subjective intentions and motives in the minds of past social actors.

This historical idealism takes many forms. With Shanks and Tilley it flows from their intellectual debt to Althusser and Foucault. As there is no social practice except in and by ideology, then ideas are the starting point of archaeological research. A more open form of idealism is evident in Hodder's post-processualism which takes it:

'....to be the role of history to understand human action, rather than event. To get at action is to get at subjective meanings, at the inside of events'. (1986, 79)

The work of Collingwood (1946) is cited to provide the philosophical framework to analyse culture patterning. To get back to the subjectivity of past action requires 'historical imagination'. The reconstruction of historical meanings from material culture involves a correspondence between theories and the perceived cultural patterns, but also historical imagination to draw the data together and give it a coherence.

'The procedure to be followed is first to immerse oneself in the contextual data, re-enacting past thought through your own knowledge....."Historical knowledge is the knowledge of what mind has done in the past, and at the same time it is the redoing of this, the perpetration of past acts in the present" (Collingwood 1946, 218). The past is an experience to be lived through in the mind'.

(Hodder 1986, 94)

A thoroughgoing idealism, therefore, lies at the heart of Hodder's perspective. Not only are ideas given privileged

status in explaining how material culture is meaningfully constituted in the past, but the archaeological procedure in reading these texts itself revolves around the free floating idea, historical imagination. No wonder that one of Hodder's conclusion is that, '*the historical approach*', to material culture, '*allows that people are free to think as they want*' (1986, 102).

SECTION 5: TOWARDS A MARXIST APPROACH IN ARCHAEOLOGY

From this critique of post-processualism, we can begin to discuss the issue of Marxism and archaeology. The applicability of historical materialism for the reconstruction of archaeological theory and practice after post-processualism forms the intellectual core of the thesis. It has its starting point in a discussion of the three critical areas of epistemology, causality and material culture. Although this move towards a Marxist archaeology begins at a high level of generality, this section provides the fundamental basis for the more concrete and detailed arguments developed in the subsequent chapters.

RATIONALISM AND MARXISM:

On the question of epistemology, the post-processualist position centres on the denial of immediate knowledge. As signification, it is claimed, is purely a product of arbitrary differences between signs, there can be no access to an external reality, no transcendental signifier on which to ground meaning. The result, as has been illustrated, is a sharp rejection of realism followed by an inevitable move down the slippery slope of relativism. Although it is true that the semiotic nature of consciousness means that there can be no direct or immediate contact between the human mind and the world, a relativist conclusion does not necessarily follow. The denial of immediate knowledge in itself does not require the corresponding denial of the possibility of objective knowledge. The objectivity of a theoretical discourse does not depend on its immediate acquaintance with the real, but upon the degree to which it approximates to it.

The starting point for a realist epistemology is a materialist premise. Reality exists independent of discourse, because discourse presupposes a reality outside itself. This

concept of materialism can be found in the work of the classical Marxists, (see Marx 1973, 101-2; 1976, 102; Engels 1947, 106ff). For example Lenin in **Materialism and Empirico-Criticism** argues that:

'Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensations, and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of thought'. (1947, 114)

The assertion that there exists an independent reality, and that thought is a reflection of this, does not imply that there is a simple one-to-one correspondence between thought and reality; ie. naive realism. Marxist materialism maintains that there is a sharp separation between reality and thought. Perceived phenomena are not surface deep. Rather, concealed beneath the appearances of reality there exists an underlying structure which is responsible for the way in which things outwardly present themselves. To defend science and overcome naive realism, this distinction between essence, the inner structure, and phenomenon, outward appearance, needs to be made. As Marx declares in **Capital**:

'....all science would be superfluous if the outside appearance and the essence of things coincided'. (1981, 817)

Three important implications can be drawn from this notion of the correspondence between thought and reality. First, to gain objective knowledge the starting point cannot be the concrete, the raw data. Immediate knowledge is impossible. Instead the character of objective knowledge is conceptual. Science attempts to grasp the mechanics which work beneath the concrete, ***'the concentration of many determinates'*** (Marx 1973, 101) through an articulated system of concepts, ***'the power of abstraction'*** (Marx 1976, 90). So, as Marx's states in the **Grundrisse**, in science:

'....the method of rising from the abstract to the

concrete is the only way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind'.

(1973, 101)

Second, a stress on the complexity of reality means that objective knowledge is an approximation to reality. There can be no ultimate resting point for knowledge. Although reality is knowable, this knowledge is itself fallible. In the writings of Marx, and in the accounts given by Engels and Lenin of science, the objectivity of truth is a process of infinite approximation to reality.

'Man cannot comprehend = reflect = mirror nature as a whole, in its completeness, its "immediate totality", he can only externally come closer to this, creating abstractions, concepts, laws, a scientific picture of the world, etc., etc.' (Lenin 1961, 182)

Third, as knowledge of the world is an approximation to truth, the degree of a discourse's approximation can only be established relatively. Only where two or more discourses compete with each can it be judged whether a discourse adds to our knowledge of reality. What is required, therefore, is not an anti-realist open philosophy of discourse, but a theory of immanent rationality, evaluating theories in terms of their degree of success in resolving the problems which they set themselves.

LAKATOS AND THE METHODOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROGRAMMES:

A theory of immanent rationality which provides us with the means to examine *'the eternal endless approximation of thought to the object'* (Lenin 1961, 182), can be found in the work of Imre Lakatos. Lakatos' methodology of scientific research programmes allows us to avoid the dual traps of relativism and

naive realism (see Callinicos 1982, 168-95; 1983, 114-26; Shaw 1978, 162-8 and Bernstein 1981 for a Marxist discussion of Lakatos).

Lakatos' starting point was a criticism of Popper's falsification methodology, whereby a theory is scientific only if it can conflict with a basic statement and can predict novel facts. Lakatos challenged Popper's model on the grounds that it still endorsed a scientific method where empirical contradictions provided a viable falsification programme, depending essentially upon the confrontation between an isolated hypothesis and a fact. Lakatos, in contrast, maintained that scientists do not reject hypotheses because they clash with empirical data. In many instances theoreticians overthrow experimental verdicts, for data is so often laced with theoretical speculation.

'No factual proposition can ever be proved from an experiment. Propositions can only be derived from other propositions, they cannot be derived from facts.....If factual propositions are unprovable then they are fallible. If they are fallible then clashes between theories and factual propositions are not "falsifications" but merely inconsistencies'. (Lakatos 1978, 16)

What matters in scientific methodology is the relation between successive versions of a theory, the way it is modified in the face of anomalies and inconsistencies. Within a scientific research programme:

'.....the clash is not "between theories and facts" but between two high level theories; between an interpretative theory to provide the facts and an explanatory theory to explain them'. (Lakatos 1978, 16)

Hence, it is a series of theories which are appraised as rational and scientific. It is a series of theories which form a research programme.

Lakatos conceived the research programme as consisting of

two elements, the negative heuristic and the positive heuristic. The former tells us which paths of research to avoid, the latter which paths to pursue. The philosophy of discourse is not a philosophy of openness. The Lakatosian research programme is a closed discourse in the sense it rules out certain forms of explanation and lays down the broad direction where research can be pursued. The heuristic (both negative and positive) forms a 'hard core' of a scientific research programme which is treated as irrefutable, immune from falsification. Around this hard core is a 'refutable protective belt', of falsifiable 'auxiliary hypotheses'. The programme subsequently develops by modifying or adding to these auxiliary hypotheses in accordance with the heuristic, and testing them through empirical observation. An adjustment of this protective belt will count as progress for the programme if it meets a number of criteria; first, if the new theory predicts new data and facts; second, if the content of the theory is supported by empirical data; and third, if the hypothesis is consistent with the heuristic. Consequently, if a theory does not meet these standards then it represents a theoretical and empirical degeneration for the programme. The refutation of an auxiliary hypothesis does not necessarily refute the hard core, but if the explanation lacks empirical support the the research programme does degenerate.

Lakatos' philosophy of science offers the best available account of the process of the infinite approximation to truth. Gaining an objectivity in discourse is not a matter of theory and facts confronting each other but a conflict between two competing research programmes and their empirical predictions. So Lakatos' theory of immanent rationality offers a critique, not only of the hypothetico-deductive method of positivism, but also the epistemological anarchism of post-processualism.

MARXISM AND THE PRIMACY OF PRODUCTION IN SOCIAL LIFE:

The philosophical basis for a materialist epistemology is the proposition that reality exists independent of discourse. This proposition also forms the starting point for Marx's metaphysical theory of human nature. A discussion of this issue is an essential prerequisite for the construction of historical materialism, a philosophy which offers a coherent solution to the pitfalls of the post-processualists' randomisation of history. Despite the need for a sharp separation between the mental and material, at the heart of Marx's conception of human nature lies an understanding of the dynamic interaction of ideas and the world, an appreciation of the relationship between conscious human beings and nature. It is through this that we can start to overcome the false dualism of materialism/idealism sustained within processual and post-processual archaeology.

Marx's formulation of historical materialism starts from the recognition that human beings are biologically part of nature. As set out in *The German Ideology*:

'The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. . . . The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men'.

(Marx and Engels 1970, 42)

Existence for human beings necessarily involves eating, drinking, shelter and clothing. There is not an unbridgeable separation of mind and matter, of humans and nature. The fundamental condition of all human history is an appreciation of the dynamic relationship between the two. Critically, the core activity which defines the relationship between humans and nature is productive labour, the activity of work on the

material world. '*Labour*' for Marx is '*the essence of man*' and the common basis of all societies. It is thus the labour process which defines human beings, which creates their 'species being'.

'Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life'. (1970, 42)

The essence of productive labour can be characterised in two ways, being redirective and transformative. The fact that human beings are conscious and self-conscious creatures, creates the ability to modify and improve their productive techniques, to redirect activity into new forms designed to achieve new goals. The fact that labour is redirective separates human beings from the animal world. Second, through production, human society transforms nature in order to satisfy a wide variety of needs. Yet, critically, human labour not only transforms nature, it also alters human beings themselves. Human needs and capacities are not fixed but are constantly re-defined as the labour-process is modified or improved. Enlarging the productive powers of human beings creates new desires and interests. It is this transformative aspect of labour which means human beings have an active rather than passive relationship to nature. The idealism/materialism dualism therefore is overcome. It is not matter over mind, nor mind over matter, but mind in matter.

Finally, to grasp fully the importance of Marx's concept of productive-labour for his theory of history, it must be acknowledged that production is a social activity. Co-operation is a necessary element of labour, a feature which distinguishes human beings from the animal world. For this

reason Marx describes labour as involving:

'....a double relationship: on the one hand as natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end'. (1970, 50)

Marx, therefore, thought it was an absurdity to view human beings as isolated individuals. The notion of social labour was fundamental to his metaphysical theory of human nature (Geras 1983). As argued in his sixth *Theses on Feuerbach*:

'....the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In reality it is the ensemble of social relations'. (Marx and Engels 1970, 122)

It is this fundamental social nature of production which means, when analysing society, that we must concentrate attention on the way in which production is organised. Changes in production will be associated with changes in the relations between human beings immediately around the productive process, and therefore changes in people's beliefs, desires and conduct:

'....men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life'. (1970, 47)

This outline of the Marxist concept of the primacy of production in social life does not go far in tackling the problems and dilemmas outlined in the critique of post-processual theories of causality. But it allows us to begin to grasp the relationship between mind and matter, human beings and nature, constraints and freedoms, the active and the passive etc. as a complex and dynamic one. To this extent, it provides the foundation for an alternative theory of history: one which is neither crudely materialistic, reducing change to environmental stimuli (as with much of processual

archaeology); nor essentially idealistic, perceiving the world as ordered, structured and transformed through discourse (as with post-processual archaeology). As maintained by Geras, in his defence of the importance of Marx's view of human nature,

'A concept of human nature, encompassing at once the common needs and the general and distinctive capacities of humankind, plays an important, a quite fundamental role there [ie. within historical materialism] in accounting for those specifically human relationships that are the production relations and for that specifically human type of process of change that is history'. (1983, 106)

The key concepts of historical materialism, such as mode of production, forces and relations of production and social formation will be discussed at length in **Chapter 3** and used throughout the thesis. However, to conclude, it is worth stressing that Marx's concept of productive-labour, as a metaphysical proposition, plays a key role in the scientific research programme of historical materialism. It forms part of the irrefutable hard core heuristic of the research programme, on the basis of which empirical, falsifiable hypotheses are formulated.

'Marx's metaphysical theory of human nature.....provides the philosophical rationale of a scientific research programme whose main concepts, the forces and relations of production, serve to specify the historically variable forms in which social production is organised, and admit of empirical corroboration and refutation via the falsifiable hypotheses they generate'.

(Callinicos 1983, 44)

MARXISM, BAKHTIN AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION:

The ontology of productive-labour provides the key to explaining the complex network of signs enmeshed in material culture. In essence, the interaction between human beings and

nature generates material culture. The active and transformative character of labour, with all its complexities, internal contradictions and antagonisms tied up within productive social relationships, forms the basis to examine cultural production.

This does not mean, however, that material culture is merely a passive reflection of human behaviour. As the post-processualists rightly maintain, material culture can play an active role within society. Around this issue of the relationship between the social and material, the post-processualists have made a positive contribution and a Marxist appreciation of material culture needs to accept two of their premises. First, that material culture does not passively reflect societies' interaction and adaption to the natural environment. As production is a dynamic process, material culture is actively used within social relations, constraining and enabling action. Second, the interpretation of cultural patterning can only be achieved contextually. The network of historically specific social relations forms the contextual framework for archaeological interpretations.

But in contrast to post-processualism's divorce of signifier and signified Marxism grounds signification in production. This is not to reduce form and content to production, but to put forward forms of production, with their corresponding productive and social relationships as the explanatory basis through which historical interpretations are made. To the non-Marxist this proposition might seem desperately crude and deterministic. However the analytical implications which it carries offers a solution to the problems presented by post-processualism and the philosophy of difference, without returning to the reductionism of New Archaeology. To draw these implications out we must tackle in more detail the issue of signification within linguistic theory. This requires a return to Saussure's revolution of language.

It is often claimed by post-structuralists that one of the critical defects of Marxism is its failure to provide an adequate linguistic theory. Such a claim is misfounded. Marx saw the root of language in labour, arrived at through the social and collective action of human beings in their interaction with nature. Labour necessitated forms of communications which were practical and social,

'Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally; language like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men'.

(Marx and Engels 1970, 51)

The two ideas contained here are that language is a social construct and that consciousness, thought and language are inextricably bound together. They formed the basis for the Russian Marxist Bakhtin's philosophy of language, outlined in the work **Marxism and the Philosophy of Language** (published under the name of his colleague Volosinov in 1986). Although written in the 1920s, and subsequently lost amongst Stalin's linguistic vulgarisations, Bakhtin's philosophy of language anticipates many of the issues raised by the post-structuralists (see Bradbury 1988).

Bakhtin denies the autonomous nature of signification and espouses a referential conception of language. His concern was not the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified, but the relation between word and object. A sign has meaning because it stands for something outside itself - meaning cannot be internal to language. Thus a realist account of signification is developed in which meaning is not a matter of the relation between signifiers themselves, but hinges on the success of expressions in referring to extra-discursive objects.

'The organising centre of any utterance, of any experience, is not within but outside - in the social

milieu surrounding the individual being'. (1986, 93)

The sign, therefore, must be viewed as a concrete utterance unintelligible outside the material conditions and social relations in which it was produced. Bakhtin is quite clear, that *'the meaning of a word is determined entirely by its context'* (1986, 79) and that understanding context involves referring to extra-discursive, usually social and political, entities.

Although Saussurean linguistics, in which the underlying structure is the source of meaning, is rejected, Bakhtin's realism does not mean that we are forced to embrace an atomistic theory of language. Bakhtin overcomes naive realism through ascribing primacy not to the individual word but to the sentence. In this way both 'abstract objectivism' and 'individual subjectivism' are rejected in favour of a dialectical model. With sentences the basic unit of language, linguistic norm and linguistic creativity interact as the speaker performs an active role by selecting words and combining them in appropriate ways to form sentences. With this account of language:

'It thus becomes possible to relate the speech-act to its extra-discursive conditions of utterance without running foul of any accusation that one has illicitly invoked the metaphysics of presence to halt the play of signifiers'.

(Callinicos 1985, 92)

The strength of Bakhtin's understanding of the relationship between language and the social is derived from his characterisation of language as essentially dialogic in nature. Meaning involves the interaction between speaker and listener in a particular political and social context.

'Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers'. (1986, 95)

It is through considering the dialogic context of language that the multiplicity of meaning in signifiers arises. The centrality Bakhtin places on language as social communication enables him to pose the question of the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices. Utterances and speech are constructed within dynamic social relationships which include contradictions, tensions and conflicts. Signs are formed and shaped by those social relations at the centre of which are productive relations.

'Every sign... is a construct between socially organised persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, the signs are conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction'. (1986, 21)

The changing meanings of signs, therefore, are a result of the social conflicts based in production, rooted in the formation of antagonistic classes. Thus Bakhtin maintains that the *'sign becomes an arena of the class struggle'* (1986, 23), *'each word is a little arena for the clash and criss-crossing of differently oriented social accents'* (1986, 41). It is the extra-discursive forces, therefore, which explain, but also set limits on, the open and fluid nature of the sign.

'The multiplicity of meanings thus arises, not from the constitutive instability of language, its own internal lack generating an endlessly self-deconstructing process, but from discourse's functioning as a field of force produced by the interplay within it of antagonistic extra-discursive interests'. (Callinicos 1985, 94)

Although material culture is not the same as language material culture does form a silent discourse. Bakhtin's philosophy of language can provide a sophisticated framework with which we can begin to analyse the contextual patterning of the material world. As well as constraining and enabling practices it also contains coded information which is open to

negotiation. However, relating the social to the material, clarifying the relationship between signifier and signified, can only be achieved through understanding the connection between the discursive and extra-discursive. Historical materialism in general, and Bakhtin's contextualism specifically, provide such a perspective. The study of material culture patterning requires a concrete examination of the economic, political and social forces constituting a particular social formation. Through a detailed assessment of conflicting social interests rooted in antagonistic production relations within class societies, we can begin to unravel the complexities of material culture. So Bakhtin develops a philosophy and methodology which overcomes the problems posed by post-processual theories. Examining extra-discursive social forces contextually is the starting point to understand how the material world is produced, reproduced and transformed. Thus we can begin to define and select the relevant patterns and dimensions of difference within archaeological data.

Having laid the basic framework for a classical Marxist approach in archaeology it is now time to move on and consider previous uses of historical materialism in material culture studies. Although Marxist theory is marked by a rich diversity of schools of thought, recent approaches in archaeology have been dominated by one particular tradition - structural-Marxism. Thus, the next chapter focuses analysis on a critical assessment of the rise and fall of structural-Marxist archaeology.

CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURAL-MARXIST ARCHAEOLOGY

In 1984 Mathew Spriggs edited a book entitled **Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology**, the first of its kind in the English-speaking world. The intellectual upheavals within archaeology in the late 1970s and early '80s brought with it an opening up of the discipline to a wide variety of social theories. In this context certain archaeologists openly stated their interest in the theory of historical materialism, exploring trends within French anthropology. Marxism was not a novelty to the discipline. V. Gordon Childe had integrated historical materialism into his research on prehistoric social progress. However, this renewed interest in Marxism was a product of a general philosophical shift from structuralism to post-structuralism within Western intellectual circles. Childe was only discovered later as a revered ancestor (see Spriggs 1984a), while the *main intellectual debt lay with Althusser*.

This chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive survey and critique of past and present uses and abuses of Marxism and archaeology. This has been adequately covered elsewhere (see Trigger 1984; 1989). Rather, the aim is to examine the inherent weaknesses of structural-Marxism. The flirtation of contemporary archaeologists with historical materialism has been extremely short-lived. Marxism is now regarded by the post-processualists as a dirty word, associated with reductionism, evolutionism, determinism and functionalism. Structural-Marxist archaeology, through its own internal logic and theoretical contradictions, quickly collapsed and became absorbed into main stream archaeological interpretations. The strengths and weaknesses of this school of thought lay within

its re-theorising the relationship between economics and politics, the base and superstructure. In archaeology and anthropology this presented new insights into the character of pre-capitalist economies. It is in the area of primitive exchange that structural-Marxist archaeology has had a profound impact. In particular, their 'prestige goods exchange model' has been adopted in various forms by both processualists and post-processualists. It is hoped, therefore, that a critique of structural-Marxism will serve to clarify and add depth to the arguments made in Chapter 1 and also provide a basis for a re-examination of Marxism and archaeology.

SECTION 1: FROM TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM TO STRUCTURAL- MARXISM

On the surface it might seem surprising that the revival of Marxist theory in archaeology was neither inspired by the work of Gordon Childe, nor, apart from a few notable exceptions (see Leone 1982; and Trigger 1978), associated with his theoretical preoccupations. After all, Childe, more than any other scholar, was responsible for developing and re-defining archaeological theory in an explicitly Marxist direction. His two most widely known books, **Man Makes Himself** (1936) and **What Happened in History** (1942), were both concerned with developing themes contained within Engels' **Origins of the Family Private Property and the State** (1978). History was depicted as a dynamic process involving the interaction of primitive societies and their struggle with the environment. Childe was consequently a thorough-going materialist, perceiving cultural progress as developing from the intensification of human beings' control over nature. The expansion of the forces of production, the innovation and application of new technology, defined epochs in which prehistory moved from savagery to barbarism and then to

civilisation through economic revolutions. These theoretical and conceptual concerns, however, were not shared by the Marxist archaeologists of the 1970s and early '80s. Critically, this break in the Marxist trend of Western archaeology must be considered and understood in the context of Stalinism and the crisis of Marxism (see above, 19-22).

CHILDE AND STALINISM:

Soviet archaeology had a formative influence on Childe's thinking and he openly expressed sympathies with the political and economic developments in Russia. Although not a member of the Communist Party, his philosophical and historical perspectives were shaped by the Marxist orthodoxy emanating from the East (see McNairn 1980, 104-67).

By the 1930s, with Stalin's power fully entrenched and Russian economy subordinated to a rapid industrialisation policy enshrined in the five year plans, historical materialism underwent a significant transformation. Stalin, to consolidate his position, turned Marxism into a technological determinist schema. As set out in **Dialectical and Historical Materialism** (1941), history was portrayed as a fixed process, with society going through a series of inevitable stages dictated by the natural development of the forces of production. In the hands of Stalin and his theoreticians, Marxist orthodoxy became a series of unbendable historical laws. The growth of technology and the economy automatically led to corresponding changes in society. So the growth of industry in Russia would inevitably lead from a workers' state to socialism and from socialism to communism. This new orthodoxy was a gross distortion of Marxism, a return to the mechanical materialism of the Second International (see Molyneux 1985). Despite this, Stalin's Marxism gained hegemony within the non-Russian Communist Parties and, through them, mechanical materialism, or technological determinism,

influenced 'Left' intellectuals across the world. This is the political context of Childe's archaeological theory.

Although he was critical of many of the political overtones of Russian orthodoxy, technological determinism had a clear influence on Childe's classification of prehistoric societies and his characterisation of social crisis and revolution. He argued that, because it was principally by means of tools that people act upon and alter their environment, tool-types could serve as the basis to distinguish different types of society. The level of technology also had a determining role in transforming society. The improvement of technology, the invention of new tools, was determined and conditioned by preceding events. Social relations and organisation must functionally respond to technological changes, or else they would fetter the economy, causing stagnation and crisis (see Childe 1979, 94). But Childe, in his emphasis on the dynamic causative role played by technology, excluded the centrality of class and class struggle (see Hill 1949), a reflection of the influence of Stalinism.

ALTHUSSER AND THE CRISIS OF STALINISM:

In the 1950s, however, Marxist orthodoxy suffered severe blows. The monolith was cracked open by Khrushchev's famous 'secret' speech denouncing Stalin and the events of Hungary 1956 when Moscow's tanks drowned a revolution in blood. The Communist Parties across the world were thrown into turmoil. Leading intellectuals, such as E. P. Thompson and John Saville in Britain, left the party to search for a Marxism which was neither a vulgar determinism nor an economic reductionism (see Birchall 1980). The New Left was born, characterised by a return to the humanistic and self-emancipatory ideas found in Marx's earlier writings and the philosophical work of George Lukacs (1971).

These challenges to the Stalinised version of Marxism by the New Left met with a reaction by those who remained loyal to the Communist Party. It was in this situation in the early 1960s that Louis Althusser appeared on the scene (see Harman 1983). Althusser, the French Communist Party's most respected philosopher, set out to demolish the central tenets of the New Left's theory with his assertion that Marxism was not humanistic. This did not mean a return to technological determinism. In order to defend the orthodoxy, it required refurbishment and reconstruction, ensuring that it was no longer prey to accusations of such reductionism. The form this took, the borrowing of concepts from the philosophy of difference, has been outlined in the previous chapter. The success of Althusserianism in the 1960s and early '70s was astounding (see Benton 1984). Paradoxically, structural-Marxism appeared to be anti-deterministic and so attracted many who were critical of Stalinism. It was the **New Left Review**, and its publishing house Verso, which provided the principal agency through which Althusserianism gained an intellectual foothold in the English-speaking world (see Callinicos 1984). The hallmark of the development was a:

'....basic shift in the whole centre of gravity of European Marxism towards philosophy'. (Anderson 1976, 49)

The intellectualism and apparent anti-determinism of Althusser's work meant it had an obvious attraction for academic Marxists. One of its central tenets was the assertion that knowledge is both theoretical in content and autonomous in form. Althusser saw the development of theory itself as a particular form of practice, with its own means and methods of production. This 'theoretical practice' was an activity in its own right, completed independently of the political practice of the class struggle. The methodology of Marxism now resembled that of psycho-analysis, or certain schools of social anthropology and structural linguistics. Althusser's Marxism, therefore, was readily absorbed by a whole generation

of left intellectuals and stimulated a renaissance of Marxism in Western universities. Althusserianism, along with much of the New Left, became detached from the political and economic orientations of classical Marxism, (this point will be taken up in detail in Chap. 9).

The renewed interest in Marxist theory in archaeology was a belated product of the revival of Marxism in Western intellectual circles. Thus it mirrored the dominant trends of Western Marxism and so became heavily influenced by Althusser's philosophy. The forming of structural-Marxist archaeology had a profound impact, particularly influencing questions of ideology, power and prestige exchange. Althusserianism, with its stress on difference and the autonomous nature of politics and ideology, lent itself to this concentration of research on questions of superstructure. Within the study of primitive societies, structural-Marxist archaeologists focused their analysis on the constitutive and determining role performed by religious rituals, kinship relations or exchange mechanisms.

Marxist archaeology, therefore, has been far removed from the general economic concerns of Childe. Indeed Childe was considered too much of a technological reductionist to be treated as a theoretical guru. With the opening up of theory to the philosophy of structuralism and post-structuralism, issues of symbolism, ideology, power and discourse, became a more fashionable object of study than the crude issue of technology. Hence, structural-Marxism found a comfortable slot within post-processual archaeology. The reconstruction of historical materialism through the borrowing of concepts from the philosophy of difference rendered it open to bourgeois irrationalism and idealism (see Saunders 1990).

Through examining prestige and exchange this chapter will outline the rise of contemporary Marxist archaeology from

French anthropology and trace its fall into idealism through a discussion of the weaknesses of Althusserianism. This is not the prelude to a resurrection of the more orthodox Marxism of Childe. A latent yet central argument running through this chapter is that the theoretical problems found in Childe and the structural-Marxists are problems thrown up by the debased vulgar Marxism of Stalin. The materialism and idealism of both schools are two sides of the same coin.

SECTION 2: PRE-CAPITALIST ECONOMICS

The structural-Marxists' perceptions of prestige and exchange developed out of a wider anthropological debate on the definition of economics. In the 1950s and '60s an understanding of the character of pre-capitalist economic systems was dominated by two schools of thought; the formalists and the substantivists. The debate centred around the role of exchange. A dichotomy was established between the formalists, who perceived that competitive exchange was a constant feature of human history, and the substantivists, who asserted that there was no universal basis of economics. Structural-Marxists did not simply side with the substantivists to attack the ahistorical concepts of the formalists. They also produced a modified version of the substantivist doctrines, assimilating them into the Marxist concept of a mode of production. The philosophical basis of the union will be analysed here, while a critique of the development of these ideas will form the content of Section 3.

THE SUBSTANTIVISTS AND THE SOCIALLY EMBEDDED ECONOMY:

The formalists' goal in anthropology was the production of an economic science through the study of *'human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses'* (Robbins 1952). This basic and widely assumed proposition had its foundation in Adam Smith's classical economic writings. The essence of Smith's philosophy was that society was composed of rational self-motivated individuals and that these individuals, whatever their social context, competed with one another, exchanging their labour and products to maximise their satisfaction. This implied that exchanges for gain, articulated via the market place, were a universal and fundamental feature of human societies. The formalists integrated these propositions into their anthropological work, so that the history of economics became

the study of the history of market exchange, its evolution and development in form and complexity (see LeClair and Schneider 1967). The substantivists had an opposing starting point to that of the formalists. The central thrust of their argument was that the concept of individual rational self-interest was inappropriate for an understanding of material transactions outside capitalist market economics. Instead of the political economy of Adam Smith, they drew upon the anthropological work of Mauss and Malinowski to develop a particular theory on the nature of pre-capitalist economics around the principles of redistribution, reciprocity and gift exchange.

In his study of the Maori, Marcel Mauss (1950) observed how the most pervasive form of transaction took the form of a gift. Material items were embodied with a 'spirit matter', endowed with a social significance. Their circulation created ties and obligations which provided the foundation of social relationships. The giving and receiving of gifts maintained the Maoris' social cohesion, giving the group a common identity. Mauss, therefore, considered the spirit of the gift as a form of political exchange. Gifts were seen as the primitive means of achieving the social peace, that in developed societies, was secured by the state. A similar picture was derived by Malinowski's (1922) study of the exchange of shells among the Trobriand islanders. The conclusion he drew was that two forms of economic mechanisms widely existed in primitive societies, reciprocity and redistribution. Gift and counter-gift giving was typical of kinship relations, while redistribution was a characteristic of chiefdoms in which goods were channelled to an allocative centre, the chief, who redistributed them among the tribe.

Substantivist anthropology emerged through the generalisation of these concepts in the analysis of primitive economics. An important distinction was made between market and non-market societies, the disembedded and embedded economy

(see Dalton 1961). It was argued that without market exchange the distinctive characteristic of primitive life was the fusion of social and economic institutions. Whereas market systems generated clear divisions between the economic, political and social spheres of life, in non-market societies this clear differentiation collapses and exchange became embedded within the non-economic.

Marshall Sahlins in *Stone Age Economics* (1972), advanced and modified Mauss' findings, arguing that:

'....every exchange, as it embodies some coefficient of sociability, cannot be understood in its material terms apart from its social terms'. (1972, 183)

Artefacts carry meaning and exert emotive and ideological powers, their exchange governed by moral, ideological or mystical laws and codes of conduct defined by the non-economic. Importantly, Sahlins developed a classification of forms of socially-embedded exchange and characterised different primitive societies by the nature of their exchange mechanisms. Modes of exchange were then linked to an evolutionary theory in which reciprocity was diagnostic of a segmentary society, and redistribution of chiefdoms and states. Similarly, Karl Polanyi (1957) presented an evolutionary sequence on the basis of modes of exchange. As economic processes within primitive societies were enmeshed in the diverse institutions of kinship, politics, religion etc., the task of the anthropologists, he asserted, was to study the shifting place occupied by the economy within the non-economic.

FRENCH STRUCTURAL-MARXIST ANTHROPOLOGY:

It was within the context of the substantivist-formalist debate that French structural-Marxist anthropology was formalised. What was significant about the debate was that it was focused on the role of exchange. On the surface, the

substantivists and formalists appeared to be in direct opposition; the universal applicability of the market versus the socially-embedded economy. But, underneath these differences, both were united in isolating the sphere of circulation and distribution as the terrain on which to examine primitive economies. Thus exchange was fetishised at the expense of production. This preoccupation influenced the structural-Marxist approach to primitive economies.

The development of French Marxist anthropology occurred in the period of upheaval and reorientation of the Communist Parties after Krushchev's 'de-Stalinisation' of the U.S.S.R. and the rise of the New Left in the West. In the mid and late 1960s, French Marxists, who were then almost exclusively members of the Communist Party, combined Marxism and anthropology. The study of primitive economics was conceived as a avenue to develop Marxist explanatory categories in an alternative manner to that of the discredited Soviet orthodoxy (see Kahn and Llobera 1980; Bloch 1983, 141-72). This Marxist anthropological school became closely associated with the names of Claude Meillassoux and Maurice Godelier who examined the economic rationality of different economic systems. This project required a critique of the basic categories of economic anthropology and a redefinition of them from a Marxist standpoint, but:

*'To produce these criticisms, Godelier and Meillassoux relied heavily upon a somewhat modified version of the substantivist doctrines of K. Polanyi and his associates'.
(Kahn and Llobera 1980, 83)*

The critique of formalist economic theory was much sharper than that of the substantivists. The underlying rationale of formalism, the reduction of economics to the study of the relationship between desired ends and scarce means, was attacked for resting on the naive premise that the choices available to social actors were open and free. It missed the

central point that economic choices are normally neither free nor desirable, but conditioned and imposed by the structure of society (see Meillassoux 1972). Thus the formalist could understand neither the logic and variations of different pre-capitalist economic systems, nor the dynamics and changes within society (see Godelier 1977). The attack upon substantivist economic theory, however, was much weaker. The underlying premise that primitive economies were socially-embedded remained unquestioned. Instead, the substantivists were criticised for their implicit empiricism, which meant that they could not get beyond the appearance of society to discover its concealed essence (see Godelier 1986, 179-207). The task of Marxist anthropology was seen as extending substantivist analysis to:

- '(1).....look for - beyond the apparent, visible logic - an invisible logic;
- (2).....look for and find the structural and historical circumstances of their appearance, their reproduction and disappearance in history'. (Godelier 1977, 23-4)

French Marxist anthropologists raised the level of analysis in the characterising of pre-capitalist modes of production, focusing on the fusion of politics and economics in primitive societies. However, through accepting the fundamental premises of the substantivists, Marxist economic theory became centred on the problems of distribution and circulation, rather than on production. This shifting of Marxist thought to a preoccupation with the dynamics of superstructure was a product of the logic of Althusserianism.

Godelier, originally a philosopher, became interested in anthropological research through the influence of Levi-Strauss. In this he was treading on the heels of Althusser. Godelier argued that Marx's explanation of capital in terms of the logic of underlying structures was similar to Levi-Strauss' theories. Marxism and structuralism were thus

combined. Social formations were analysed in terms of the articulation of different structures - political, ideological, technological etc. It was the system of interrelationships which determined the course of history (see above, 21). This theory was presented by Godelier in his famous and very influential essay '**System, Structure and Contradiction in Capital**' (1978).

For Godelier, understanding the existence and interplay of two central contradictions was the key. The first is an internal contradiction within the relations of production. This 'within structure' contradiction reveals itself in social antagonism, the class struggle. However, the class struggle occurs as a result of a second contradiction, that between the development of the productive forces and the existing relations of production. This contradiction is visible in the development of social crises, the material context of class struggle. Therefore, the second fundamental contradiction '***is not a contradiction within structure, but between two structures***' (1978, 87), their interplay determining social development and social change. This re-theorisation of Marx's conception of structure and contradiction contained radical implications for the base and superstructure metaphor, the notions of economic dominance and determinacy. Again Godelier's work mirrored the ideas on overdetermination advanced by Althusser.

The priority of difference in Althusser's schema resulted in the social totality being conceived as a complex structured unity. This meant that superstructure was not just a passive reflection of the economy, but active and constitutive of the social whole. Thus the economic structure could be overdetermined by the non-economic. Similarly, Godelier's stress on there being two separate contradictions, within and between a mode of production, meant the superstructural phenomena were irreducible to the base. The relationship

between the two was a matter of the 'correspondence' of structure.

To illustrate what was meant by this notion of correspondence, we can examine Godelier's (1975) often cited explanation of the dominance of kinship relations within archaic societies. It was argued that, although the distinction between productive forces in primitive societies is clear, relations of production and other social relations are indistinguishable. There exists a correspondence between structure manifested in kinship relations. Kinship dominates society by acting simultaneously as a political and economic relationship, organising and articulating production as well as cementing the social cohesion of the group. *It can be treated as being part of both base and superstructure. Non-economic structures, kinship - political or religious and social relations - can thus dominate the economic through functioning as relations of production.* The economy plays a determining role only indirectly, by setting limits to social development. Therefore, the difference and diversity of pre-capitalist societies which all share a similar level of the development of the productive forces, is explained by the dominance of the non-economic, by the fact that the economy is overdetermined by elements of the superstructure. It was within this philosophical framework that the substantivists' key notion of the socially-embedded economy was assimilated and integrated into French Marxist anthropology.

The theoretical propositions outlined by Godelier were taken up and concretely applied in the research projects of many French Marxist anthropologists (see Rey 1975; Terry 1972). Meillassoux (1978), for example, analysed how, in lineage societies, the domination of the seniors was maintained through the manipulation of non-economic sources of power. Without owning the means of production, nor wielding extra-economic forms of coercion, he argued that the privileged

position of the seniors was achieved through their sole access to the control of social knowledge and rituals, particularly in respect of marriage. Critically, these forms of social control operated materially within the sphere of circulation. Through monopolising the possession of elite goods, the exchange of which was essential for marriage, the seniors controlled access to women. It was this control of women which guaranteed the dominance of the seniors, political control over reproduction being the basis for economic control over the means of production. For Meillassoux, exchange relations determined and dominated economic appropriation.

Although the French Marxists' objects of study in anthropology were diverse and wide ranging, a significant preoccupation was with theories of exchange (see Dupre and Rey 1973; Terry 1974). As Godelier maintained, the central task of Marxist anthropology was the examination of the:

'.....significance of economic exchanges in the deeper logic of the function and evolution of human societies, that is the relationship between economics, society and history'. (1977, 16)

In analysing the impact of Western colonialism on the social development of pre-State African societies, the notion of prestige exchange became an important concept in understanding the social upheavals brought about by imperial exploitation. Exploitation was conceived as lying within the sphere of circulation. Through exchange the nature of exploitation was concealed. This is well illustrated in the central themes of Meillassoux's book **Maidens, Meal and Money** (1981). Its emphasis on the logic of pre-capitalist exchange, an examination of the internal dynamics and contradictions along with systems of thought and representation contained within the socially-embedded economy, was a reflection of the intellectual debt structural-Marxist anthropology paid to the substantivists.

FRIEDMAN AND ROWLANDS AND THE PRESTIGE GOOD SYSTEM:

These concepts of exchange exerted a formative influence on the development of a Marxist archaeology in Britain during the early 1980s. Particularly important was the introduction of the concept of a 'prestige good system' developed by the British structural-Marxist anthropologists, Friedman and Rowlands. Both Friedman and Rowlands' followed Godelier in arguing that there were two central structural contradictions within modes of production.

'The key to the whole affair is what has been referred to as the relative autonomy of structure, that is the autonomy of their internal properties.....It is the relative autonomy of structure which entails the necessary existence of two distinct relationships, those within and those between'. (Friedman 1974, 449)

The pre-capitalist economy was, therefore, conceived as overdetermined, subject to a rationality imposed on it by political relations. Thus, by asserting the primacy of politics over economics, both Friedman and Rowlands maintained that process and dynamics in pre-capitalist social formations centred around the control over sources of wealth (see Rowlands 1982). Hence, an elite's monopoly over the production and exchange of prestige goods could form the means of economic control and exploitation. As well as sustaining social hierarchy, the prestige goods system was also the primary cause of social momentum. This emerged from a contradiction between the production for consumption and the production for exchange.

These ideas were developed most explicitly in Friedman and Rowlands' seminal essay, **Notes towards an epigenetic model of the evolution of "civilisation"** (1977). Their starting point is an Althusserian one. The social totality is composed of various levels of semi-autonomous structures or practices. Although these are structurally independent, they are

inextricably linked to the material processes of reproduction through the dominant relations of production.

In the prestige goods system, the dominant relations of production are embedded in the ownership of wealth objects, their controlled circulation providing the basis for obtaining tribute and sustaining surplus labour appropriation. Prestige goods pass down from a dominant to a dependent lineage in return for tribute in the form of slaves and subsistence goods. Crucially, these relations of exchange not only dominate the economic but contain an internal contradiction, a contradiction within structure, which paves the way for social process. The prestige system is expansionist in nature, because sustaining, or increasing, tribute requires the continual controlled circulation of prestige goods. But the accumulation of such prestige goods through the expansion of exchange alliances puts pressure on, and eventually undermines, the elite's monopoly of the source of political power. The growth of the exchange system, and the accompanying geo-political expansion, encourages the development of sub-centres, as the dominant elite becomes dependent on a number of middlemen at the peripheral regions of their territory.

'Thus, the very existence of a prestige-good system undermines the centralised control which is its foundation by increasing regional division of labour and the ability of sub-centres to become independent in a region larger than that of the politically dominated area'.

(1977, 232)

Access to prestige goods, therefore, becomes the basis for social competition and conflict, the foundation of an internal contradiction.

'The instability of the prestige system is due to the difficulty of maintaining a clear regional monopoly over long distance exchange contacts'.

(1977, 228)

Further, as the prestige goods system expands, a second contradiction occurs between structure. Although the production and exchange of wealth items forms an autonomous sector, independent of agricultural production, this economic structure has a determining role in the last instance, setting the limits beyond which the social formation cannot go. The continual drive for prestige goods comes into contradiction, at some point, with the need for subsistence production. An opposition is formed between production for wealth and production for consumption. The conjunction of the two contradictions, within and between structure, induces social transformation.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF PRESTIGE EXCHANGE:

Structural-Marxist anthropology provided a pool of models which Marxist-orientated archaeologists could draw upon. The prestige goods system seemingly offered an escape from functionalist theories, at the same time avoiding the limitations of simple economic determinism of orthodox Marxism. Since artefacts represent a significant element in the archaeological record, exchange models of prestige goods found particularly suitable and readily accessible archaeological correlates.

Friedman and Rowlands suggested that archaeological indicators of prestige exchange could be found in the distribution of prestige goods, particularly in the identification of imported grave goods. This formed the basis of Frankenstein and Rowlands' (1978) highly influential essay on the patterning of grave goods of early Iron Age society in south-west Germany. Here it was argued that a process of hierarchisation among certain lineage groups was achieved by monopolising imports from the Roman world. This control over external trade in wealth objects generated political centralisation, with the dominant lineage regulating the

internal distribution of prestige items and hence monopolising the key form of social wealth. The continual accumulation of wealth objects by a dominant lineage led, however, to inflationary spirals - the more objects in circulation, the less wealth they embodied. Consequently, to sustain political prestige, the imported wealth objects were removed from circulation through being buried as mortuary goods, whose accumulation reflected the political status of the deceased. Frankenstein and Rowlands mapped out these processes of political centralisation by examining the spatial distribution of accumulated prestige goods recovered from early Iron Age graves.

Frankenstein and Rowlands' model was followed by many archaeologists. For example, a similar framework was adopted by Haselgrove (1982) to explain how prestige exchange with the Roman world led to political centralisation in south-east Britain during the late Iron Age, manifested in variations in the ranking and chronological distribution of rich burials. Likewise, Parker-Pearson (1984; 1984a) highlighted how changes in the deposition of grave goods and votive offerings represented cyclical growth and crisis within the prestige exchange system operating among the pre-state societies of Jutland.

A central aspect of the prestige good exchange model was an emphasis given to the realm of ideology and symbolism and their material representation. Prestige items embodied spiritual powers, being linked and integrated into a ideological system which articulated the relationships between social actors. It was through manipulating ideology that the chiefs of dominant lineages could monopolise the distribution of prestige goods and so sustain their privileged position. A closer orientation on ideology in connection with prestige exchange has been a common trend in recent structural-Marxist literature. In anthropology Godelier's book, **The Mental and**

the Material (1986), has given added emphasis to the mental component at the core of material practices. In archaeology, this move has been led by Rowlands (1987), for example in his study of Cameroon chiefdoms in west-central Africa. Here he stresses that native conceptual systems are needed to understand the political consequences of specialisation and exchange. He maintains that the moral order of the Cameroon spiritual universe determines how basic resources are allocated and who can produce and distribute goods. Religious systems and rituals also affect the course of political development when new opportunities of wealth are introduced by the slave trade.

SECTION 3: CRITIQUE OF STRUCTURAL-MARXIST ARCHAEOLOGY

Having outlined the rise of contemporary Marxist archaeology within French structural-Marxist anthropology, it is now possible to turn towards a critique. This is directed primarily at the fundamental problems involved in integrating historical materialism and the philosophy of difference. Despite the attractiveness of the structural-Marxist perspective, the compromising of Marxism, through incorporating Althusser's concept of difference, is riddled with internal theoretical contradictions. Although it was stimulated by a desire to refute the cries of reductionism and determinism in Marx, the end result is simply the reverse side of the coin of Stalinism, a shift from technological determinism to the autonomy of idealism.

Althusser's concept of overdetermination and of a complex structured totality enabled the structural-Marxists to assert a number of propositions. First, non-economic instances, aspects of the superstructure, could dominate society. Ideological and political relations were not epiphenomenal but constitutive of the social whole. Second, change was a result of an accumulation of structural contradictions within the instances composing a social formation. Third, flowing from this, *'history is a process without a subject'* (Althusser 1972, 77). In the same way that the subject was de-centred in language, the primacy placed on social structures as self-sufficient autonomous entities, generating their own contradictions, displaced the subject, whether individual or a collective, from playing any causal role in the social world. The impact of this philosophy on theories of the exchange of prestige goods is striking. The sphere of circulation of prestige goods becomes the dominant non-economic instance within pre-capitalist modes of production. Prestige exchange generates its own within structure contradiction, leading to the expansion of the system. But the unintended consequence of

political development results in a second contradiction emerging between structures, between the production for exchange and the production for consumption. The combination of these two contradictions leads to a '*ruptural conjuncture*' (Althusser 1969, 99-100). Social change, therefore, takes place behind the backs of the social actors. Such a model represents a dramatic shift from a Marxist materialist perspective.

The key problem can be located in the stress on the autonomy of structure. Distinguishing between two contradictions articulating a mode of production leads to a false characterisation of the connection between the forces and relations of production. These become separated so that the relations of production gain a degree of autonomy. But:

'....social relations exist materially in correspondence with technical conditions of production. If a particular set of social relations is viewed as relatively autonomous, the the material basis for this autonomy must be specified'. (O'Laughlin 1975, 356; emphasis added)

Precisely because difference is taken to be intrinsic to social formation, the autonomy of structures is assumed. However, this assumption means that the form and character of the interaction of structures, the connection between the forces and relations of production, cannot be adequately conceptualised. Without a material base to explain why one instance emerges as dominant, we are left with an unstructured list of different instances and levels - a descriptive account. For example, in the prestige exchange model, Friedman and Rowlands never specify clearly why the production of prestige items and their controlled distribution is so critical to the reproduction of many pre-capitalist societies. The model only works if the non-economic sphere of prestige goods circulation is assumed from the start to be the dominant instance. This non-materialist fetishising of exchange mechanism and relations is a throwback to the formation of

French structural-Marxism from within the substantivist/formalist debate.

The paradox of structural-Marxism, the supposedly non-deterministic version of historical materialism, is that it cannot explain social diversity without falling foul of either idealism or functionalism. This is particularly clear when the role of the economy in the prestige goods exchange model is examined.

THE IDEALISM OF PRESTIGE EXCHANGE:

Although the economy is said to be indirectly determinate in the structural-Marxist schema, *'the hour of the determination in the last instance never strikes'* (Althusser 1976, 127). It is the autonomy of the non-economic instances which explains social diversity and social development. The implicit idealism in the structural-Marxists perspective leads to the stress on the centrality of ideology in the prestige goods exchange model. This is a direct product of Althusser's influence. For him, ideology is omnipotent, found in all social formations and transmitted by a whole variety of institutions. Principally, it is through ideology that the individual is integrated into the social whole. This is seen as a process of interpellation through which the social actor comes to recognise himself/herself as a subject. In other words, ideology treats the individual as an autonomous agent. Thus the illusion is created that the world exists for the individual, or, that he/she is in control of his/her circumstances.

'Ideology is a "Representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence'. (Althusser 1971, 162)

Ideology is therefore constitutive of the social whole being the primary means by which relations of production are reproduced.

This concept of ideology, however, leads straight to idealism (see Callinicos 1982, 71-80). Althusser and his followers, in conflating the relations of production with the ideological and political conditions of their existence, collapse the base into superstructure. This fault arises precisely because the relations of production are conceived as constituted through ideology, overdetermined by the conditions of their existence within the superstructure. Hence the relations of production are reduced to 'imaginary' relations between subjects.

'Having first reduced the relations of production to inter-subjective relations, it is a small step to treat the latter as forms of consciousness and thus collapse the base into superstructure, inverting Marx so that consciousness determines social being'.

(Callinicos 1982, 76)

This is exactly what happens in the prestige goods model. The ideology of prestige interpolates individuals into subjects wedded to relations of exchange which articulate the dominant relations of production. Ideological relations, therefore, assume the central explanatory role in the model. The importance placed on the ideological powers of prestige exchange is very close to the post-structuralists' insistence on the centrality of discourse. Indeed, it is this preoccupation which has allowed structural-Marxist archaeologists to be swallowed up by post-processualism. Althusser's followers have been equally quick to travel down the road to bourgeois irrationalism, trapped by accepting the idealistic argument that the structures of knowledge are entirely constitutive of the object. The consequence of this intellectual drift is illustrated most clearly in Rowlands' recent archaeological work on religious legitimation in West-Central Africa (1987). The internal contradictions of a holistic ideological universe are seen as the source of social conflicts in the material world of Cameroon society. These

ideological structures of moral authority determine the direction and content of political developments.

THE FUNCTIONALISM OF PRESTIGE EXCHANGE:

The reverse side of the faulty coin of idealism is functionalism. For example, there is the functionalism contained in Althusser's concept of ideology, a fault inherited by structural-Marxist archaeologists. For Althusser (1969, 232), '*ideology is..... an organic part of every social totality*'. It exists in all societies. Thus, despite the diversity of forms, ideology fulfills a universal function across modes of production, securing in advance the reproduction of the relations of production:

'....ideology (as a system of mass representation) is indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence'. (Althusser 1969, 235)

This theory is exhibited in the all-embracing status attached to the ideology of prestige and exchange in the structural-Marxists' model. The ideology of prestige goods exchange articulates the relations of production, functioning to secure the reproduction of the social formation. Change and transformation in the minds of the social agents is unintended. They remain simply bearers of structures and structural contradictions.

The problem of functionalism, however, takes a more prominent form in the structural-Marxist conception of the nature and role of the economy in the prestige goods model. This fault, again, has its origins in the assumed notion of the autonomy of structure. The form of the separation of the relations from the forces of production means that the economy is reduced to the qualitative level of production and the level of technology, rather than seen in terms of the

integrated relationship between the forces and relations of production. Structural-Marxism remains trapped in a Stalinist category (Binns 1982, 98-101). The economy is said to be determinate, not in that it influences the structure of social formation, but in the role which it plays as a passive limiting condition, marking the boundaries beyond which the social formation cannot go. As a consequence, the contradiction between structure, between the forces and relations of production, is conceived in functionalist terms. The contradiction within structure develops till it comes into conflict with the economy, causing contradiction between structure. The combination of contradictions leads to a structural transformation. So the material conditions for the resolution of within structure contradiction can only exist outside the realm of the productive relations, because the productive forces are conceived as a reality distinct from the relations. This leads Friedman (1975), when analysing Kachin society, to take the productive function as given and simply to assume that the population will grow and the system expand up to a certain limit. The contradiction between structures, the forces and relations of production, asserts itself in the contradiction between the production for consumption, the need to satisfy the subsistence needs of the population, and the production for wealth, the need to exchange prestige items to secure social status. In Kachin society this takes the form of a clash between the system of exchange valuables (women and bridewealth) and the potential productivity of the economy.

'The Kachin exchange system tends to increase output to the limits defined by the production function of the social technology, but it can go no further, not because of the concrete nature of the agricultural

activity.....but because the potential productivity of the technology is being realised, setting a limit on a political elaboration which would demand a further increase in surplus'. (Friedman 1974, 456)

A very similar functionalist argument is apparent in Friedman and Rowlands' prestige exchange model. The internal dynamic of prestige exchange leads to an elaboration and expansion of the system, until it comes into contradiction with the forces of production. This contradiction, between production for exchange and production for consumption, provides the necessary conditions for the resolution of the contradiction within the relations of production - prestige exchange, through structural transformation of the social formation. This model has clear parallels with the systems theorists' functionalist concepts of dynamic equilibrium and homeostatic threshold. The full paradox of structural-Marxism is finally reached. Although starting from a position of apparent hostility to the reductionism of Stalinist Marxism, the structural-Marxists ultimately share a similar explanatory perspective.

The reconstruction of the Marxist totality in an Althusserian manner, incorporating concepts of difference, structure and autonomy, therefore fails. Fetishising the sphere of circulation, conceiving it as a dominant autonomous instance with its own dynamic, fails to explain social causality and drifts back into idealistic and functionalist arguments. As such, structural-Marxism capitulates to the fundamental arguments put forward by substantivist economic theory. Pre-capitalist societies are characterised as being socially-embedded, with the economy articulated through the various mechanisms of prestige exchange.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR MARXISM IN ARCHAEOLOGY?

The two intellectual periods in which a Marxist archaeology has tentatively emerged have been short lived. The Childean and the Althusserian schools both contained theoretical problems which have limited their impact and led to their demise. Do the dual criticisms of determinism and idealism therefore render historical materialism academically redundant, representing, in the terms employed by Lakatos, a degenerating research programme? Is there a credible alternative which can overcome these problems without shifting from the fundamental tenets of Marxism?

In Chapter 1, it was argued that the abstract issues raised by post-processualism of epistemology, causality and material culture, should be reconsidered through a return to the classical writings of Marx and Engels. Herein lies the solution. The heart of the matter is that there exists a deeply embedded confusion between Marxism and Stalinism which is sustained both by Childe and by structural-Marxist archaeologists. Too frequently, when Marxists feel the need to avoid the problems of Marxism by recruiting ideas from alien traditions, such as the philosophy of difference, the 'problems' they refer to are those of Stalinism. The crisis of Marxism has arisen fundamentally out of a crisis of Stalinism. The failure of the left is to appreciate that the rise of Stalin represented the antithesis of Marxism, the establishment of a state capitalist regime legitimised by the distortion of the very essence of socialism (Cliff 1988). Overcoming these problems of Stalinism, as well as returning to the classics of Marx and Engels, is where the future of Marxism, and thus Marxist archaeology, lies.

As illustrated in Chapter 1, classical Marxism can solve the problems thrown up by post-processualism. However, it has been clear from the discussion of the limitations of structural-

Marxism that the basic concepts of historical materialism need to be rescued and reasserted. In the next chapter, therefore, these issues will be assessed through a consideration of the dynamics of pre-capitalist social formations. In particular, the issue of social change in early medieval society will be addressed through critically exploring the work of Richard Hodges on Dark Age economics. Thus, an alternative classical Marxist research programme for medieval studies will be developed. This research programme will form the conceptual core of this thesis, concretely illustrating the superiority of classical Marxism, as a conceptual tool for archaeologist, to that of post-processualism and structural-Marxism.

CHAPTER 3

PRE-CAPITALIST SOCIAL FORMATIONS

The publication of Richard Hodges' *Dark Age Economics* in 1982 marked the entry of New Archaeology into the realms of medieval scholarship. In the previous fifteen years the debates and discussions raging throughout prehistory had hardly touched the myopic visions of medieval scholars, stifled within an all embracing culture-historical framework (see below, 136-8). Hodges forced theoretical issues to be addressed within historical archaeology. From *Dark Age Economics* to his most recent work, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, published in 1989, his explanations for the origins of towns and the development of state formation in the early medieval period have dominated archaeological model building and have gone largely unchallenged.

Hodges' continued theoretical eminence may appear surprising, since his essential perspective has been phrased in functionalist terms, consistently incorporating the much questioned approach of systems theory. This, however, is not simply an indication of the traditional poverty of theory exercised within medieval archaeology, its scholars preoccupied with empirical questions. The source of Hodges' academic authority must be located also in the specific form and construction of his explanatory models. For the main thrust of his research has been the central role performed by the controlled and regulated distribution of prestige goods in social development. Although dominated by functionalism, this model draws heavily upon a number of contrasting schools of thought, including structural and 'neo-Marxism' (see Hodges

1987, 119-27), through an elaboration of a prestige goods model. So, while remaining explicitly functionalist, Hodges' work also has close ties with the debates stimulated by post-processual archaeology. It is this apparent synthesis of processual and post-processual theory which has helped to sustain his intellectual influence.

The importance of assessing Hodges' work as a prerequisite for the construction of a classical Marxist research programme is twofold. Not only does his work carry a general hegemony within theoretical debates for this period; but, more critically, his preoccupation with the exchange of prestige goods illustrates some of the issues discussed in **Chapter 2**. The critique which follows analyses the limitations and inconsistencies of the structure/agent relationships formulated in the Hodges model, particularly the role given to the individual in history and the explanatory use of the notion of human nature. This will hopefully provide a more useful context for a detailed discussion of historical materialism and its value in unravelling the dynamics of pre-capitalist social formations.

SECTION 1: RICHARD HODGES AND DARK AGE ECONOMICS

For Hodges, the ninth century marked a critical point in the development of the market. It was a period of qualitative systemic change, the birth, as he perceives it, of the '*first English Industrial Revolution*' (1988, 116). Underpinning these traumatic social upheavals was the break from a socially-embedded economy, characterised by systems of redistribution, reciprocity and gift exchange, to a socially-disembedded economy based on a competitive market system. It was the formation of competitive markets which paved the way for new social relations, culminating in the establishment of the nation state. The central dynamic force in this evolutionary

sequence was the input of long-distance trade into the cultural system, specifically the exchange of prestige goods between peer-polities.

This relationship between trade and state formation is perceived within a systemic framework, utilising the concepts of the 'multiplier effect' and 'peer-polity interaction', as derived from Colin Renfrew's theoretical research (1984; 1986). Hodges proposed that the emergence of chiefdoms in pre-ninth century England coincided with the input of trade into the system. The exchange and distribution of prestige items was not only instrumental in cementing existing social relations, but also promoted the expansion of the centralised power. Trade, as the source of wealth, created new demands and ultimately the move towards specialized production, and thus stimulated the growth of more trade. Hence there was an inherent tendency for elites to accumulate sufficient political wealth to separate their position from the rest of the community (1982, 187). In such circumstances, cyclical chiefdoms were born and, as power became centrally accumulated, primary states emerged. However, the creation of the secondary state marked a qualitative and quantitative break in the economic make-up of society. This transformation was not simply a product of political and economic advances triggered by an external factor, prestige exchange. It was an endogenous response to the circumstances arising out of long-distance trade because *'the nexus of change was political'* (1988, 89). Kings articulated these internal political forces, the genius of individuals, such as Alfred the Great, sponsoring urban loci and competitive market exchange.

This explanation can be set within Renfrew's theoretical perspectives. Renfrew assumes that social change cannot be explained without acknowledging the existence of competition. Fundamentally, the universal desire in the individual for prestige and the enhancement of social status underlies all

change, because it:

'....ensures that a culture continues to grow even when any reasonable absolute demands of the citizens have been met'. (Renfrew 1984, 305)

The primacy of the individual, and competition within the multiplier effect, provides the theoretical cornerstone for the concept of peer-polity interaction. The crux of the concept is that competitive interaction between those individuals at the apex of the social structure leads to social development. Hodges integrates this into his explanation of the establishment of the secondary state. The interaction between peer-polities motivates political expansion.

'Competition between polities and the slow increases in agrarian production provided the foundation of political change'. (Hodges 1986, 78)

Thus, a suitable context was created for the individual genius of Alfred to shape the future course of history.

Hodges' use of Renfrew's systemic approach is important because it lies at the heart of his whole explanatory framework. The assimilation of non-systemic perspectives such as structural and neo-Marxism has not meant a radical change of theoretical perspective, but essentially a refinement of a basic systemic model.

Although its more overtly Marxist aspects, such as the stress on exploitation, have been stripped away, Hodges' prestige goods model owes much to Rowlands and Friedman's structural-Marxism, as he (1987) has acknowledged. In both cases the controlled circulation of prestige goods is perceived as leading to a cycle of political centralisation through the process of positive feedback. The functional core of Rowlands and Friedman's model is therefore implicitly exposed by Hodges and readily incorporated into his systemic framework.

However, the two perspectives do diverge in their characterisation of structural transformation. Friedman and Rowlands identify the contradiction between the production for consumption and the production for exchange as the source of change, while Hodges emphasises the active role of individuals in the establishment of the market and the state. This position, stemming from Renfrew's individualistic assumptions, is also supported and refined, through drawing on the neo-Marxism of Third World developmentalist theories, in particular the work of Carol Smith. As Hodges (1988) has increasingly made his adherence to Smith's neo-Marxism explicit, it is worth exploring how it has become integrated into his model.

Smith's (1976) perspective on the origins and evolution of the market is a Marxist synthesis of Adam Smith's and Karl Polanyi's arguments. She claims that the interaction of different polities generated inequalities through the growth of an elite group monopolising the exchange of wealth objects. The establishment of hierarchical institutions then propelled economic development, as sustaining a non-producing class stimulated the need for rural specialisation. This reduced the economic self-sufficiency of the rural producers and so necessitated the need for the internal articulation of agricultural surpluses via markets. Thus the necessary conditions for economic takeoff were created. Market development depended on elites, the one group with an economic interest in breaking the political hold of a socially-embedded economy. So:

'...the internal market system is instituted by an elite class that requires regular and efficient food production'. (1976, 51)

Such a model clearly provides Hodges with a more sophisticated intellectual backing for his dual notions of the dynamic nature of individual kings and prestige exchange.

Thus, the neo-Marxism of Smith can be incorporated, without fundamental modification, into Renfrew's concept of the multiplier effect and peer-polity interaction.

CRITIQUE - FROM FUNCTIONALISM TO IDEALISM:

A criticism of Hodges' explanatory models must start from an account of the basic weaknesses of functionalism. It is its essentially systemic perspective that renders Hodges' apparent synthesis of processual and post-processual archaeology extremely weak.

The heart of the problem of functionalism as a social theory is its inability to explain change satisfactorily. The analogy between social and organic life means that society is analysed in terms of a system striving for equilibrium, change being conceived as the adaptive reflexes to exogenous stimuli. There is no internal dynamic for social momentum. Consequently, explanations of systemic change are reduced to teleological descriptions. Such criticisms have been set down most sharply by Hodder (1986) and Shanks and Tilley (1987; 1987a), and need not be reiterated here. On a general level, they effect Hodges' model: ninth century structural transformation can only be described as the system reaching its homeostatic threshold. But his conception of structure and agency does appear to overcome these criticisms. Recognising the fundamental dilemma of describing rather than explaining systemic change through subordinating social actors to adaptive structures, Hodges locates a subjective internal context for ninth century transformations in the form of the competitive individual. The structure of prestige exchange sets the system in motion, but it is active individual polities competing with each other which pave the way for the market economy. Human agents, therefore, are not mere passive bearers of structures but a key active element in early medieval social process.

Perceived, however, within the context of systems analysis, Hodges' conception of the individual agent simply replaces one set of criticisms with another. In attempting to avoid the teleological determinism of systems analysis, Hodges' model lapses into idealism, resting fundamentally on ahistorical assumptions about human nature, viz the innate competitive nature of individuals. When isolated as an independent variable, individual competition does not adequately explain historically specific change. The model fails to account convincingly for why competitive interaction, at the level of individual peer-polity leadership, leads to the qualitative and quantitative jump from a socially-embedded to a disembodied economy in the ninth century. As poignantly argued by Chris Wickham, in his review of *Dark Age Economics*, it is never illustrated how:

'Charlemagne and Alfred, unlike their predecessors, realised the future potential of the market and regulated the economy accordingly'. (1983, 139)

So Hodges is pushed into explaining the establishment of the state by stressing the success of an individual king in imposing his will and plans on society, and therefore succumbs to the classic idealistic notion of 'explaining' the past in terms of 'great men'.

The crux of the matter is an inadequate and very confused formulation of the relationship between human agency and structure. In systems theory the key to change of structure is to be found in the interdependence of subsystems in the social whole. Hodges, by isolating dispositions inherent in individuals as the source of social momentum, fails to clarify the relationship between individual action and the complex interaction of structure. As a result, the explanation becomes psychological rather than sociological. This is important, for it undermines his central argument. Beneath the notion that trade and exchange provided the stimulus for social development, lies Adam Smith's ahistorical assumption that the

'natural tendency for men to truck, barter and exchange' (1986, 118) leads to continuous economy-wide growth. Rational self-interest forces specialisation, thus generating the need for competitive markets. But this ignores the ways in which historically specific social structures dictate and determine economic development or underdevelopment over entire epochs. So, while patterns of exchange become both isolated and elevated into an extra-historical dynamic force, social structures become reduced and peripheralised to mere expressions of homo economicus. Hence Hodges' conception of structure fails to account for how definitions of social interest, of the individual and the collective, alter through time. Relying on notions of individual self-interest, therefore, sheds no more light on why the ninth century is the watershed in early medieval history.

This discussion of how Hodges has synthesised functionalism and aspects of Marxist thought has illustrated a number of points. Firstly, the overall theoretical redundancy of his explanatory model is clear, being faulted simultaneously by both determinism and idealism. Secondly, the critique exposes the underlying problems of the neo-Marxism utilised by Hodges, particularly in conceptualising trade and exchange as a dynamic force in socio-political development. Thirdly, the criticisms presented reveal the central philosophical issue requiring further discussion; the relationship between structure and agent. The question of the role of the individual vis-a'-vis social conditions, has consistently arisen in explanations of historical transformations. If an adequate classical Marxist model for early medieval social development is to be formulated, then this relationship needs to be addressed.

SECTION 2: MARXISM AND THE MAKING OF HISTORY

'Men make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted'. (Marx 1973a, 146)

This passage from the beginning of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* stands as Marx's most important statement on the relationship between structure and agent. However, despite being concise, it remains confusing. How do structures actually influence action? Are they essentially negative and constraining? What form of action transforms rather than reproduces structure? Attempts at answering these questions have taken various forms. Because Marx developed his ideas, and was always conceived with a diversity of issues, there has been a multiplicity of readings of his texts. From the structural determinism of Marx's immediate successors (see Kautsky 1925) to the methodological individualism of analytical Marxists (see Elster 1985), distinct traditions have characterised the discussion of historical materialism.

Critics of Marx have frequently focused upon one particular tradition, thus grossly caricaturing and denigrating historical materialism proper. A straw man has been created out of the distortions of Stalinism, with Marx portrayed as a technological determinist, utilising crude evolutionary stages with functional teleology (see above, 65-6). From a confusion over the 1859 *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* an orthodoxy has been created which conceives history as a series of modes of production - ancient antiquity, feudalism, capitalism - each succeeding the other in a preordained sequence as a response to the inevitable development of productive forces. Ideological and political relations are seen as epiphenomenal to the productive base, with human action reduced to structural conditions and class struggle simply the executor of the laws of history.

Much of Western Marxism has been preoccupied with refuting this orthodoxy and reconstructing Marxism as a non-teleological and non-determinist discourse. But from Lukacs (1968) to Giddens (1981) this reconstruction has repeatedly involved the assimilation of non-Marxist categories into the heart of historical materialism. Rather than sharpening the revolutionary ideas of Marx, this borrowing of concepts has often meant compromising Marxism by idealism. In **Chapters 2**, I have attempted to illustrate how Althusser's schema for avoiding reductionism through assuming concepts from the philosophy of difference castrates the explanatory powers of Marxism through creeping idealism. The rise and fall of Althusserian Marxism and the dominance of post-structuralism within radical circles has accentuated this academic shift away from the explicit use of Marx's works. The future of Marxism, as a social science, lies in the classical tradition, embracing Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, Luxemburg and Gramsci. This does not simply imply a return to the classics, but demands the conceptual development of the analytical tools of classical Marxism.

In this section certain themes discussed by Alex Callinicos (1982; 1987) in his reinstatement of the classical Marxist tradition will be explored. An attempt will be made to unravel the problematic of structure/agent relations through examining Marx's conception of social totality. This will serve as a basis on which to elaborate Marx and Engels' comments on pre-capitalist social formations.

MODES OF PRODUCTION, STRUCTURES AND AGENTS:

Callinicos, in his two major theoretical books, **Is there a future for Marxism?** (1982) and **Making History** (1987), has attempted to address the issue of the crises of Marxism. In particular, he concentrates on the central dilemma of Marxist thought, the apparant weakness in ascribing a primary motor

for historical change. Is it essentially focussed upon the objective contradiction between the forces and relations of production or on a more subjective force manifested in class struggle? Answering this question involves an assessment of how human beings and their circumstances are related, through an examination of the relationship and the nature of correspondence between the forces and relations of production, the key analytical concepts of historical materialism.

Callinicos' starting point in formulating the ideal construct of a mode of production (a particular combination of forces and relations of production), rests not on the much quoted 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, which has given so much support to the 'straw man' version Marx, but rather on the 'mature' Marx as expressed in *Capital*. The essence is encapsulated in the following passage.

'The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of the direct-producers determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows directly out of production itself and reacts back on it in turn as a determinant. On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community arising from the actual relations of production, and hence also its specific political form. It is in each case the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers - a relationship whose particular form naturally corresponds always to a certain level of development of the type and manner of labour, and hence to its social productive power - in which we find the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice, and hence also the political form of the relationship of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the specific form of state in each case'. (Marx 1981, 927)

The relation of correspondence, therefore, between the forces and relations of production does not involve the causal

primacy of either, but rather their mutual presupposition. The forces of production should be conceived as the structured relationship of labour-power (the activity of work itself) and the means of production (a combination of the object and instruments of work). The relations of production, on the other hand, involve *'the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers'*. This includes three elements. First, the relationship of the direct producers to the means of production and their labour power, ie the distribution of the means of production; second, the nature of the non-producing class, their relationship with each other; and third, the mode of surplus labour appropriation, *'the specific economic form, in which unpaid labour is pumped out of the direct producers'*. Significantly, it is the form of exploitation, the mode of appropriation of surplus labour, *'which reveals the innermost secret'* of the society, for it determines class structure.

Class therefore is the collective expression of the fact that exploitation is embodied in social structure (see de Ste. Croix 1981, 31-111). Classes exist, and are defined, not simply by their objective relationship to the means of production but also by their relationship to other classes. It is this exploitative connection in the definition of class which gives rise to, and so explains, class struggle, a struggle that necessarily signifies not only exploitation but also resistance to it. Critically then, social conflict is intrinsic to the structure of a mode of production, rather than a contingent consequence. Power and struggle are thus rooted and forged in the very heart of social production. It exists even where it does not embrace class consciousness or active political conflict, ie. even where there is only a class 'in itself', defined structurally through relations of exploitation, and not also a class 'for itself', actively engaging in struggle, conscious of the conflicting interests in society (see Marx 1973a, 239 for his use of the terms).

These premises carry important implications for conceptualising agency, structure and historical change in classical Marxism. Three particular issues require further discussion.

The first concerns the relationship between structures and individuals. The polarisation between structure and action, evident in the orthodox and structural-Marxist positions in which individuals are passive bearers of structures, can be overcome without slipping into idealism. Structures are the consequence of human action, not self-producing, and so human conduct cannot be reduced to structural constraints. More particularly, explanations of events need to acknowledge the causal role played by subjective intentions, beliefs and desires of the human agents involved. Social systems themselves, do not have purposes. As ably argued by Marx and Engels in *The Holy Family*:

'History does nothing: it "does not possess immense riches, it does not fight battles". It is men, real, living men, who do all this, who own things and fight battles. It is not 'history' which uses men as a means of achieving - as if it were an individual person - its own ends. History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their own ends'. (1957, 66)

Yet, while it is true that structure is the consequence of human action, that action itself has taken place under conditions which include structures. Structures, then, cannot be eliminated from social explanations. They possess an explanatory autonomy in that they, along with individuals, are irreducible components of social theory. As Antony Giddens maintains, structures are *'the unacknowledged conditions and unanticipated consequences of human action'* (1979, 69). They both constrain and enable action.

However, Callinicos' formulation of historical materialism goes much further than Giddens' 'duality of structure'.

Criticising what he perceives to be an ambiguously weak conception of structure, Callinicos develops the notion of the 'structural capacity' of human action (1987, 76-91; see also Callinicos 1985a, for a critique of Giddens). Expanding in more abstract terms Trotsky's comments on the role of Lenin as an individual in the Russian Revolution, he claims that an agent's power and transformative capability is partly dependent upon his/her position within structure. Or, to formulate it in Marxist terms, structural capacity derives from an agent's position within the relations of production. This theory does not depend on any claim about the individual's belief being about, or shaped by, structures. The potential powers individuals possess exist independently of any conscious recognition. So historical materialism specifies the structural capacities possessed by agents by virtue of their class position, their position within production relations, and that these capacities which agents subsequently share have primacy in explaining their actual behaviour. But this premise in no way asserts that these structural capacities are, in themselves, sufficient for understanding human agency and more generally, historical transformations. It simply provides the context in which to analyse the subjective factors embedded in individual actions with their complex mesh of unintended consequences. In short, it reveals the framework to examine the politics of class struggle, the outcome of which is indeterminate.

The second major issue arising from Callinicos' analysis concerns the greatly misunderstood metaphor base and superstructure. Although Althusser and the structural-Marxists were right to challenge the reductionism and essentialism of the orthodox and Hegelian Marxist notions of economic determinism, this does not mean that the base/superstructure distinction can be dismissed out of hand. The cornerstone of Marxism is that the contradictions rooted in social production have an explanatory primacy in social theory. As stated

clearly in the 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, this central contradiction occurs between the forces and relations of production.

'At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production....From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters'. (1975b, 425)

The distinction between base and superstructure, then, is not between economic and non-economic institutions, as many institutions include both, but, as Callinicos maintains, an analytical distinction:

'....since the base in terms of which the superstructure is explained is constituted by that key theoretical couplet, the forces and relations of production'. (1987, 175)

So, the superstructure is not reduced to the base, but explained through the base, and thus cannot be seen as a mere passive element within social formations. As argued sharply by Engels in a letter to Joseph Bloch:

'The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure - political forms of the class struggle and its results, such as constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and especially the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political, legal, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas - also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their form in particular'. (1980, 10)

Since the forces and relations of production determine the internal organisation of a mode of production and its form of articulation, each historical mode needs to be specified in order to clarify the relationship between base and

superstructure. This is very important for comprehending the dynamics of pre-capitalist social formations.

As commented earlier, class struggle is intrinsic to the structure, the third and final issue to draw attention to is the relationship between class struggle and structural contradiction. Chapter 2 illustrated how structural-Marxists separate the forces and relations of production to form two contradictions, those between and those within structure, ultimately relating class struggle to the contradiction between the forces and relations of production in a functionalist manner. However, the principal thesis in Marx's *Capital* is that class struggle between capital and labour, rather than being a distinct within structure contradiction, is the inherent expression of the central contradiction between the forces and relations of production. This occurs because modes of production contain a contradictory dynamic, rooted in the form of surplus extraction. This means that, in as much as the productive forces actually develop, they will come into conflict with the prevailing production relations. The nature of such a contradiction, or fettering, depends on the particular mode of production. But in abstract, for all modes of production, this fettering is likely to lead to a social crisis.

Callinicos draws on Gramsci's concept of an 'organic crisis' to describe social crisis (Callinicos 1987, 93-95; Gramsci 1971, 178-179). As the underlying contradictions mature within a specific mode of production, the ruling class will be forced, faced with a threat of revolt or social disintegration, to struggle to 'cure' them, or at least to limit their effects. The outcome of such an organic crisis will depend on the class struggle. Thus, human agency, the utilizing of conflicting structural capacities:

'....plays a pivotal role - in the terrible, bloody struggles which unfold in a period of organic crisis'.

(Callinicos 1987, 95)

It is this perspective which underpins the famous opening to the **Manifesto of the Communist Party**,

'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.' (Marx and Engels 1973, 67-8)

Although Marx did not treat class struggle as the primordial phenomenon of social life, it is fundamental to social formations, bound up and determined by the dominant relations of production. It is ever present, *'now hidden, now open'*, and so manifests itself, and is reflected, in numerous social practices. Class struggle, therefore, cannot simply be reduced to the physical fight between the contending classes, although ultimately social change is dependent upon this. It takes many forms, being expressed and played out in the realms of politics, sexual relations, art and literature, language etc. Of vital importance for the archaeologist, it becomes reflected in the active use of material culture.

MARX AND ENGELS AND PRE-CAPITALIST SOCIAL FORMATIONS:

With these heuristic assumptions in mind, it is now possible to turn towards an examination of Marx and Engels' comments on pre-capitalist social formations. Any consideration of their work requires an acknowledgement of their historical perspectives (for a fuller discussion of this issue see Bloch 1983, 21-62). Knowledge of the past, for Marx and Engels, was rooted in their understanding of the present. As critics of capitalism seeking to reveal the '*rational kernel*' of a society whose '*mystical shell*' took on the appearance of universals, their historical studies served, essentially, a two-fold purpose; first, to expose the historical specificity of capitalist institutions, such as the state, classes, family etc., and second, to illustrate how capitalism was the creation of historical forces centred around changes in the interaction of human beings and nature through the process of production. As a consequence of this polemical context, their historical research appears very selective and one-sided, with many issues left untouched or open to question. These limitations, coupled with the fact that the sources on which they drew heavily have been found subsequently to be factually incorrect, has led to a situation whereby Marxist and non-Marxist scholars alike have wholly disregarded their anthropological writings. I believe this position to be misfounded. Although Marx and Engels' formulations need to be analysed critically, they do form an invaluable starting point for the analysis of pre-capitalist social dynamics. In particular, Marx's *Grundrisse* and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, present certain key concepts and arguments to be used in the construction of a classical Marxist research programme for early medieval social process.

The section in the *Grundrisse*, commonly known as the *Formen* (1973, 471-514), contains the most detailed discussion of the

problem of pre-capitalist periodisation in Marx's mature work. Elaborating themes in *The German Ideology*, Marx introduces the concepts of the 'germanic' and 'asiatic' modes of production. Both modes are perceived as developments of tribal or communal property and form analytical rather than geographical categories.

The foundation of the asiatic mode was the primitive unity of a community of producers, expressed by the common ownership of the means of production, the land. Local, self-sustaining village communities existed, fragmented and atomised but united under a state. The ruling class which the state embodied arose, in the first place, to safeguard common interests, such as water supply, then divorced itself from the community to form an independent body of armed men and special institutions, which was able to extract a surplus. Further, the relationship between the state and the underlying village communities was the tributary one, ie. surplus labour was appropriated in the form of tribute. Thus, three distinctive features characterised the asiatic mode. First, the state extracted tribute, not from the individual producers, such as the serf or slave, but from the community as a collectivity. Second, the relationship of the state to the economic base resembled a symbiosis, a relationship between two organisms which appeared to be autonomous. Consequently the village communities were self-sustaining and not substantially affected by political changes within the state. Third, unlike other modes of production, economic exploitation and political rule was rolled into one. The tributary state was not only the political guardian of the economic rulers but also involved directly in the process of surplus extraction. In this manner politics and economics were fused into the same hands. (For a further discussion of the asiatic mode of production see Draper 1977, 515-571).

The germanic mode differs from the asiatic in that its basic unit of production was not the village community but the family household. Members of the community were not co-owners of the communal property. Every household formed an independent centre of production, sharing only communal pastures and hunting territory. These independent family groups were linked together within a tribe and came together in assemblies for such things as war, religion and the settlement of disputes.

More is said about the germanic mode of production by Engels in **The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State**. This is of particular relevance, for Engels was concerned with how the germanic mode transformed into feudalism during the early medieval period. Although this work has traditionally been turned against classical Marxists, being characterised as crude and reductionist, it does discuss the two key features articulating the internal contradictions of the germanic mode; militarisation and the alienation of land. Engels, in chapter seven of **The origins...**, describes quite superficially how the Germanic tribes invaded and overthrew the Roman empire, taking the land and dividing it amongst themselves. As related in the **Grundrisse**, the land was parcelled out equally according to household, with the rest forming common ground, regulated by the whole community. But critically, militarisation and conquest resulted in the formation of warrior kings and the parcelling out of land. In order to secure protection of a conquered territory from attack, it became necessary to strengthen the power of the military leader, to alter his social position into one of kingship. With this political transformation, land became territorially controlled by monarchs, and units of this land could be allocated to retainers in return for military services. Thus during the military instability of early medieval Europe, germanic kinship and communal ties were broken down, to be replaced by feudal productive relations.

From out of this scenario, some important issues need to be examined, particularly the contrast between the feudal and tributary relations of production. Unlike the asiatic state, there was no fusion of politics and economics in the feudal state. Political rule and exploitation was related, but not fused. It was the individual landed nobles who directly appropriated surplus labour from the immediate producers, the peasantry. While feudalism may have been a sharply ranked and hierarchically organised society, centring around a chain of social and political obligations linked to the holding of land, the core of the system was focused on the extra-economic forms of coercion by which the lords extracted a surplus, a feudal rent, from the peasantry. This feudal rent could be appropriated in a number of ways - labour services such as working on the lord's demesne, rents in kind or customary dues. But importantly surplus labour was pumped out of the individual producers, the serfs and peasant families, rather than through the state demanding tribute from the community as a whole. The state, therefore, under the feudal mode of production, played less of a direct economic role and more of an overtly political and military one, towering above society and politically unifying the atomised and unstable hierarchy of lords and vassals. It was in this manner that:

'....the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen'.

(Engels 1978, 208)

However, although politics and economics were indirectly related in the feudal state, it was fused at a local level through the lord on his manor. For Marx and Engels, the political power of the lord was seen to be organically fused with his relationship as a landowner to the actual producers. In the 1844 *Economic and Political Manuscripts*, Marx writes:

'The rule of private property begins with property in land, which is its basis. But in the system of feudal landed landownership the lord at least appears to be king of the land....The land is individualised with

its lord: it has his status, it is baronial or ducal with him, has his privileges, his jurisdiction, his political position, etc. It appears as the inorganic body of its lord'. (1975a, 318)

Precisely because the feudal state was alienated from control over the direct producers, and surplus was extracted through extra-economic forms of coercion by individual nobles, private property was dominated by the political. So in the manorial village, *'every private sphere had a political character or was a political sphere'* (Marx 1975, 90).

BRENNER AND WICKHAM: A MARXIST CRITIQUE:

Marx and Engels' writings on the asiatic, germanic and feudal modes of production form an important contribution in the construction of the proposed model and research programme. However, there are great limitations in Marx and Engels' formulations. Acknowledging the historical and philosophical context under which they were written, it is clear that neither of the social categories described can be utilized as fully coherent modes of production. They have, therefore, to be used with due caution, significant qualifications and refinements.

Both Hindess and Hirst (1975, 178-220) and Anderson (1974a, 462-549), have produced extensive and rigorous criticisms of the asiatic mode. The essential problem is that the asiatic mode, being too legally and politically specific, has too many institutions arbitrarily attached to it for it to be of much help as an economic category. Both autarkic village communes and a tax-raising state, owning all landed property and carrying out large scale public works, are historically very rare. Similarly, the germanic mode of production is a vague formulation containing conceptual ambiguity. Firstly, the means by which the military leaders extracted surplus-labour is not clarified. Consequently, the diagnostic criteria

distinguishing the germanic mode from feudalism are essentially social and political, through contrasting ties of social obligations, kinship, vassalage, etc. This is a significant problem, for if the underlying basis of surplus extraction rests on landed property, how are germanic exploitative relations different from feudal relations? Secondly, Engels locates warfare and military expansionism as central in the transition to feudalism. But an explanation for the material basis of warfare focusing on the contradiction between forces and relations of production is not given. Instead, warfare is elevated to an explanatory status mirrored by that of the evolutionists Carnerio (1970) and Webster (1975), with their warfare models for state evolution.

Acknowledging these limitations and inadequacies, however, does not render Marx and Engels' historical research academically worthless. Contemporary historians, notably Robert Brenner and Chris Wickham, have most successfully built on and extended their formulations.

Marx in *Capital* makes an important statement that:

'.....in all forms (of modes of production) where the actual worker himself remains the "possessor" of the means of production and the conditions of labour needed for the production of his own means of subsistence, the property relationship must appear at the same time as a direct relationship of domination and servitude, and the direct producer therefore as an unfree person - an unfreedom which may undergo a progressive attenuation from serfdom with statute-labour down to a mere tribute obligation.....Under these conditions, the surplus labour for the nominal landowner can only be extorted from them by extra-economic compulsion, whatever the form this might assume'. (1981, 926)

The implications of this argument are explored by Brenner in relation to pre-capitalist economic development (1985; 1985a;

1986). He contends that where surplus appropriation was realised through extra-economic means of coercion, economic patterns of behaviour would be adopted, which, in the long term, prevented increases in aggregate per-capita output. The direct producers would have no incentive to specialise, as this brought market dependency with its economic uncertainties. Full maintenance of subsistence, however, could be guaranteed through diversification. The exploiting class, on the other hand, were in no better position to pursue a pattern of economic development. With the direct producers possessing no economic incentive to work diligently and efficiently, the expropriators would find it difficult to force them to use more advanced means of production. Thus, the prevailing relations of production hindered the intensification of the forces of production through labour saving investments.

This is not to say that there was no growth in the productive forces. But it took primarily an extensive form, through settlement of new land gained by conquest or reclamation. Still, to the extent that forces of production developed, they would come into contradiction with the productive relations. This is critical to the argument. If the exploiting class wished to increase their income, their share of surplus labour:

'....they had to deploy their resources toward building up their means of coercion - by investing in military men and equipment. Speaking broadly, they were obliged to invest in their politico-military apparatuses'.

(Brenner 1986, 31)

So surpluses were not ploughed back into production. They were consumed politically rather than economically.

'Indeed, we can say the drive to political accumulation, to state-building, is the pre-capitalist analogue to the capitalist drive to accumulate capital'.

(1986, 31-2)

The very form this took meant the long-term developmental trend was towards economic stagnation, a fettering of the productive forces by the relations of production. Concentrating on European feudalism, Brenner argues that lords following the process of squandering surplus in military expenditure and the conspicuous consumption of wealth reduced the means of consumption and production available for the peasant producers, and, in consequence, undermined the economy's fundamental productiveness.

'In sum, the contradictions between, the development of peasant production and the relations of surplus-extraction which defined the class relations of serfdom tend to lead to a crisis of peasant accumulation, of peasant productivity and ultimately of peasant subsistence. This crisis was accompanied by an intensification of the class conflict inherent in the existing structure, but with different outcomes in different places....depending on the balance of forces between the contending classes.'

(1985, 36)

So Brenner asserts that the differential strengths of lord and peasant help to explain the variable forms taken by the states of early modern Europe.

These hypotheses, have far reaching implications. First, they provide a powerful argument against the neo-Marxist concepts incorporated into Hodges' model, as discussed above. So long as pre-capitalist productive relations persist, then trade appears powerless to set off a process of development. As the exploiters and direct producers already had what was necessary to reproduce themselves independently from the market, the prospect of trade would not, in itself, generate economic intensification. Indeed, it is more likely that the extent to which either party became involved in trade, would be limited by the surplus generated after subsistence production had been completed. If the exploiting class wished to respond to the market opportunities, they would have to do

so within the constraints imposed by the prevailing productive relations and increase levies on the direct producers. There is no reason to assume, therefore, that trade would affect the subsistence sphere of the economy or break down pre-capitalist social relations. In fact, because increasing levies on the direct producers hinder reinvestment and development, Brenner argues that:

'....to the extent that the rise of trade can be expected to affect pre-capitalist economies, it is likely to bring about not the loosening, but the tightening, of pre-capitalist property forms, and the quickening not of economic growth, but of stagnation and decline'.

(1986, 40)

Secondly, Brenner's general argument goes a long way to explain the dominance of warfare in pre-capitalist modes of production. It is an analysis that provides a counter argument to that of Giddens (1981) and Mann (1986), who assert that the pre-eminence of warfare and state-building over the last millennium, and the importance of organisations, such as states and armies, which are not direct structures of economic power, undermines the explanatory strength of Marxism. Furthermore, analysing the dominance of political and military spheres in terms of extra-economic forms of coercion is the starting point to discuss the fusion of politics and economics. For this fusion, which is expressed through the tributary state in the asiatic mode, and through the landed nobility in the feudal, can be explained by the nature and form by which, *'unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of the direct producers'.*

Thirdly, the notion of the incessant *'drive to political accumulation'*, helps explain the cycle of economic crisis in pre-capitalist modes of production, even though the precise structural determinants of these crises and nature of the subsequent class struggles, can only be specified by examining

particular modes in detail. Brenner achieves this for feudalism. He suggests that the fragmented nature of the exploiting class under feudalism, the separation of the landowners from each other, was the pre-condition for military competition involved in political accumulation.

'The very prerogatives (force/jurisdiction) required by every lord to ensure his reproduction (as a lord) vis a vis the peasants constituted a threat to other lords, and made for a generalised tendency to intra-lordly competition and conflict which made political accumulation a necessity'. (1985a, 238)

The relationship of members of the exploiting class to each other, as well as to the direct producers, is critical in analysing the various economic and political trajectories pursued. Analysing these internal and external class relationships helps overcome the conceptual problem of historical periodisation. This problem is particularly acute when explaining the transition from antiquity to feudalism, as the modes of production considered, asiatic, germanic and feudal, share two fundamental similarities. First, the productive base in each rests on peasant production - they are agrarian societies. Second, the extraction of surplus-labour involves forms of extra-economic coercion. The temptation, therefore, is simply to define pre-capitalist modes of production in terms of superstructure. As argued by Hirst:

'This means that there can be as many modes of production as there are distinct legal political constitutions and forms of extra-economic sanction which follow them'.

(1975, 462).

It results in abandoning systematic Marxist analysis. Chris Wickham, however, has convincingly overcome the problem of periodisation by elaborating Marx's argument in *Capital*, that:

'What distinguishes the various economic formations of society - the distinction between for example a society based on slave-labour and a society based on wage-labour -

is the form in which this surplus labour is in each extorted from the immediate producer, the worker'.

(1976, 325)

Wickham (1985; 1986) draws a useful and very pertinent distinction between societies based on tax and those based on rent. He contends that although the asiatic mode of production, as formulated in the *Grundrisse*, cannot be regarded as having any analytical validity, the relationship represented by a state bureaucracy taxing a peasantry has considerable relevance. Societies in which the exploiting class is maintained on the basis of tax, extracted by a state taking the form of sole owner and power force, are distinct from feudal societies whereby surplus is obtained by a class of fragmented rent-taking landlords. The former mode of surplus extraction Wickham terms, after Amin (1974), the 'tributary mode of production'. It defines the specific relationship of the ruling class to each other and to the non-producers, and so determines the forms of class struggle:

'....the difference between the ruling classes of the feudal and tributary modes is between the relative separation of the former and the near-total separation of the latter from the processes of production'.

(1985, 186-7)

The tributary state maintains itself through taxation, taxing both peasantry, and landowners if they exist. But, precisely because the tributary state is totally separated from production, it is normally forced to co-exist with more typical feudal relations of rent-taking landowners. While the feudal mode can exist without the tributary mode, the tributary mode cannot exist without the feudal. Herein, Wickham argues, lies the structural contradiction of the tributary mode of production.

'States do not only tax peasants; they characteristically tax landlords too, at least in that they take a percentage

from the surplus the landlord has extracted...One arena in which tax is thus very definitely opposed to rent lies in the structural antagonism there is between the state (unless it is a feudal state) and the landed aristocracy'. (1985, 183).

Both Brenner, with his notion of political accumulation as the underlying dynamic of pre-capitalist societies, and Wickham, who explains the opposition between tax and rent as central in distinguishing pre-capitalist modes of production, clarify considerably the points drawn out earlier on historical materialism and Marx and Engels' anthropological studies. The research programme to be outlined in the next section will be a combination of elements and general synthesis of these works, explaining the movement towards state formation in England in terms of the change from a tributary to a feudal mode of production. This will specify the structural contradictions of early medieval social formations and so provide the context to explore how human agency and class struggle are reflected in material culture of the period.

SECTION 3: FROM TRIBUTARY TO FEUDAL MODES OF PRODUCTION

The research programme presented below will be of a highly abstract nature, without references to either historical or archaeological data. Although, by necessity, it presupposes some empirical knowledge of the early medieval period, as a research programme of political economy, it will proceed along the lines of Marx's method of '*rising from the abstract to the concrete*' (1973, 101). The essential determinants of the transition from tributary to feudal modes of production, drawn directly from the heuristic assumptions outlined in the previous section, will form three critical areas of analysis; class and exploitation, contradiction and organic crisis, and agency and transition. It is from these that more detailed and data-sensitive auxiliary hypotheses can be formulated to explore the transition in time and space through material culture.

CLASS AND EXPLOITATION:

Class is the collective expression that exploitation is embodied in social structure. Critical in clarifying the nature of class relationships, is '*the specific economic form in which unpaid labour is pumped out of the direct producers*'. The non-producers in early medieval England emerged as a ruling class, comprising kings, their dependents and retainers, sustaining itself as a proto-state, collecting tribute from the direct agricultural producers.

The term proto-state is not a wholly unambiguous term. As set down by Draper (1977, 239-45), the difference between proto-political authority and state authority proper, relates to the role of coercion and force in society, the means of socio-political compulsions and constraints. In pre-state society, coercion is applied by the whole community. The offence of an individual is an offence against the interests

of the social group as a whole. Free from class conflict, society exists as a single interest bloc; consequently there is no special institution separated from the collective that implements public authority. State coercion, on the other hand, is a political force operating independently from the community as a whole and emerges with the coming of class divisions.

'The state... is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable opposites which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order that these opposites, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state'.

(Engels 1978, 205-6)

The state, therefore, is an institution which bases itself on the availability of forceable coercion in order to maintain the dominance of a ruling class, preserve existing property relations from basic change, and keep all other classes in subjection. It differs from the primitive organising authorities of tribal communities in a number of important respects. First, the state is a power over a given territory, rather than over a kinship group of related people. Second, it possesses specialised institutions and instruments of coercion divorced from the communal whole. Third, the state is maintained by contributions from its subjects - taxes. Finally the special functions of the state require a bureaucracy, a privileged stratum of functionaries and ruling officials.

The tributary ruling class amalgamated elements from both these forms of authority. For, although they were territorially based with defined kingdoms, their institutions of coercion were not totally divorced from the communal whole. They were still partly dependent on kinship relations and personal ties for sources of authority in the reproduction of social relations. Hence the term proto-state. This carries important implications for the development of English feudalism. Nevertheless, the relationship between the non and immediate producers was a tributary one. With the latter remaining in possession of their means of subsistence, the land, exploitation entailed extra-economic forms of coercion. This took the form of tax, collected by the proto-state as tribute off communities of producers within a defined territory. The ruling class consequently expressed itself as the central expropriator and power force in society. Economic exploitation and political rule was fused. It was this tributary relationship which determined the class relations and social structure of early medieval society.

Although the tributary mode of production characterised pre-feudal society, a conceptual distinction needs to be made between modes of production and social formations.

'Modes of production are ideal constructs; social formations are real societies in all their complexity, and thus in practice virtually irreducible to formal categories'. (Wickham 1985, 167)

So, social formations characteristically comprise elements of more than one mode of production. Their articulation is complex but involves the domination of one mode over the others. This is important, for although tributary relations of exploitation remained dominant, the combination of different productive relations exerted considerable influence on the structure of contradiction and the fabric of the organic crisis emerging in the early medieval period. Two key factors underpin this. The first is peculiar to the constitution of

the tributary social formation. Because the ruling class was separated from production, tributary productive relations, in reality, co-existed with other productive relations. The second is specific to the birth of the tributary relations. The ruling class developed from out of kinship ties of personal dependence. So, although as a tributary collecting class they remained isolated from production processes, as proto-states they had not sufficient power and strength to divorce themselves completely from kinship relations.

Subordinated, therefore, within the tributary social formation, two further modes of production can be identified. First, kinship ties wielded influence on the relationships between the immediate producers, this being a remnant from previous communal modes. The precise form this took has been specified by both Marx and Engels within their formulation of the germanic mode of production, with the basic unit of production centred on the family household as described above. The general notion of kinship ties as the articulation of a relations of production, has been usefully developed by Marshall Sahlins in his 'domestic mode of production' (1972, 41-148) and by Maurice Godelier (1975). Kinship relations contained numerous complex functions, but could operate as productive relations by regulating the appropriation of surplus labour through determining the social forms of access to resources and control of the conditions of production. In early medieval England this was sustained through self-sufficient, independent family production units, linked together through shared communal property, such as pastures. Kinship productive relations, therefore, maintained the agrarian production on which the dominant tributary relations of exploitation were based. The very act of appropriating a surplus from these communities meant that kinship was subordinated under the tributary mode.

Alongside kinship were feudal relations of production, reflected in a rising class of landed aristocrats. As specified by Wickham, feudal relations co-existed under tributary ones precisely because the state was removed, almost exclusively, from the processes of production. The origins of feudal relations emerged with the formation of the tributary proto-state. This returns us to the work of Engels. As extra-economic forms of coercion were required to sustain a non-producing class, physical forms of coercion ie. military power, were continually developed to sustain reproduction. Subsequently, the military retainers of the proto-state acquired, either through personal seizure or through receiving gifts from the king, land from which they could extract rent from the direct producers. The establishment of feudal lords, however, occurred within the tributary social formation. Not only were they peripheral to the processes of actual production, being initially numerically small, but they were also totally subordinated under tributary relations of surplus extraction. Landed aristocrats, along with the immediate producers, paid tribute to the proto-state, and were tied into the process of collecting the community tax on behalf of the king. Consequently, their effect on undermining the kinship relations of the direct producers would be negligible.

Both kinship and feudal relations were articulated within the early medieval tributary social formation. It was this combination which determined the forms of class struggle, latent and explicit, throughout early English development.

CONTRADICTION AND ORGANIC CRISIS:

Class struggle occurs because modes of production involve a contradictory dynamic rooted in the form of surplus appropriation. This means that, in as much as the productive forces develop, they will come into conflict with the prevailing production relations, resulting in an organic

crisis. As discussed by Brenner, in all pre-capitalist societies, surplus extraction required extra-economic forms of coercion. This creates an underlying dynamic of political accumulation, which leads to a long term trend of economic stagnation.

Within the tributary social formations of early medieval England, the drive towards political accumulation centred around the relationships within the tributary ruling class. The non-producing class was fragmented and still partly embedded within kinship relations. So proto-states exploited relatively small territories, with the consequence that early medieval England was a conglomeration of minor kingdoms or peer-polities. The drive for political accumulation was an expression of the competition between these tributary proto-states. As production could only be increased extensively, through the cultivation of new land gained by conquest or reclamation, competition for scarce resources mediated a unity between proto-states, creating an incessant cycle of competitive emulation of military spending. But deploying resources in such areas of expenditure, ie. consuming surplus politically, strained the agrarian base of society. There was no ploughing back of investments into production, so the development of the forces of production was fettered by the relations. This underlying structural contradiction of the tributary mode led to the sharpening and intensification of class struggle.

The fundamental relationship between classes entails class struggle, involving exploitation or resistance to it. Within the tributary social formation four salient forms of class struggle can be identified. First, was that between the proto-states and the communities of kinship production units. The second stemmed from this struggle between classes, manifested in an antagonism within the tributary ruling class itself. Competition between proto-states for scarce resources, led to

military campaigns of conquest and thus surplus appropriation, with a subordinate polity paying tribute to a dominant one. The third emanated from a contradiction within the tributary social formation, the conflict between a proto-state and a landed nobility, subordinated under these exploitative relations. The emergence of a rising class of feudal lords produced the final source of class conflict, that between rent-taking lords and peasants.

These forms of class struggle were intrinsic to the tributary social formation and need not have been expressed in active political conflict imbued with class consciousness. But, with the underlying contradictions maturing with the incessant drive for political accumulation, they would have become increasingly intense, open and explicit. The proto-states, faced with the threat of revolt or social disintegration, would be forced to implement strategies to cure these social antagonisms. These strategies took a number of paths, but two were of central importance for appreciating the nature and outcome of the organic crisis.

The first, and most obvious, avenue would be to increase the amount of surplus appropriated by expanding tributary relations of payment. Tribute could be extracted from neighbouring polities with successful military campaigns of conquest. Yet, any strategy which increased absolute surplus labour, required in itself a development in the forms of political accumulation. The build-up of the coercive powers of the state absorbed surplus within a non-productive sphere of society. Militarisation forged a vicious circle within neighbouring polities, forcing an ever increasing cycle of competitive accumulation of military spending.

The second strategy, although linked to the first, avoided the problems of feeding back in to the drive for political accumulation. It took the form of the proto-state giving

grants of land to retainers, thus turning them into landed nobility. In return for land, military support and co-operation for the proto-state was guaranteed and strengthened. It was also a strategy to increase the amount of surplus available, because the landed nobility, being closer to the process of agricultural production, could supervise the increased exploitation of the peasantry on behalf of the tributary ruling class.

Yet, avoiding the hazards of political accumulation aggravated the structural antagonism between tributary king and landed nobility. Possessing land gave the nobility an incentive to bypass tributary obligations and gain autonomous control over agricultural exploitation, material interests which were immediately contrary to those of king. Hence, class struggle could not be circumvented without undermining the very foundations of tributary relations of production. Kings could alienate land from economic tribute in return for more stringent military obligations only at the expense of weakening the power of the tributary proto-state. The outcome of the organic crisis in the early medieval period, therefore, rested on the relative strengths of the nobility vis-a'-vis the tributary kings.

AGENCY AND TRANSITION:

The question of historical transition from one mode of production to another, raises the issue of human agency. As described earlier, the social power of an agent is dependent on their position within the relations of production, their structural capacities. Agents have collective interests and capacities by virtue of their class position. In the tributary social formation, the landed nobility can be seen as the agents in social change, the rising class with the structural capacities to revolutionise the relations of production, to transform the whole social formation.

First, as specified above, landed nobles possessed the material interests to challenge tributary relations. Paying tax to the King prevented, or severely hindered, their ability to reorganise production on their land in the pursuit of their interests. However, owning land with an independent means of subsistence, and with the king dependent on them for military service, the landed aristocracy had the potential power to replace the tributary relations of tax with the feudal relations of rent. Further, as a result of pursuing their material interest against tribute, the landed nobility also had the need to break the kinship productive relations between the direct producers. The growth of a class of feudal lords was thus inseparable from the establishment of a peasant class. The fragmented household production units impeded the increased appropriation of agricultural surplus and the introduction of more advanced productive processes and techniques, such as open-field farming and the use of the heavy plough and mill. Kinship relations needed to be replaced with collective and corporate forms of productive relations. When freed from tributary obligations, feudal lords could invest resources into altering the very processes of agricultural production and reproduction. Thus the landed nobility possessed the structural capacities to change the whole fabric of early medieval society. But the process was not inevitable. It was dependent on a whole web of subjective factors embodied in the class struggle within tributary and kinship social relations.

The other key element in the transition to feudalism was the strength of the ruling class to preserve tributary relations and their inclinations in following such a policy. This point is fundamental in understanding how the tributary proto-state was replaced by the feudal state. It dictates whether the tributary ruling class needed to be physically eliminated, or whether they could evolve and become assimilated into the feudal mode. Several factors indicate the transition took the

latter path. Both the strategies of militarisation and granting land, weakened and altered the proto-state, each feeding back on the other to separate the state from the rest of society and sever the links between politics and economics within it. With the expansion of the military capacity of the state, political accumulation necessarily became the overwhelming preoccupation of the tributary ruling class. Granting gifts of land enhanced this process. Land could be alienated from tribute in the return for rigorously stipulated military services and obligations. But the loosening grip and influence of the proto-state on the processes of surplus extraction, transformed the tributary class into a feudal class. The king was sustained in the same manner as other feudal lords, through extracting rent within his own estates and land. So, although the king may have been the largest and most powerful landholder, the economic relations with the direct producers were feudal rather than tributary. With lordship dominating the specific form of surplus extraction, the tributary proto-state emerged and developed into a feudal state, a class state in the true Marxist definition of the term. Standing above society, freed from relations of kinship, it formed a public power with immense organs of coercion, a standing army and a bureaucracy ruling and ordering its subjects within a kingdom. Arising, as it did, amidst intense class conflict, the state became the instrument of the ruling class, a medium for holding down and facilitating the exploitation of the peasantry. As such, it was supported and maintained by the feudal lords, safeguarding their interests. The coercive powers of the state provided a stable environment for feudal expropriation, free from the internal disorder of peasant uprisings and from the external threat of conquest by other feudal states.

'Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonism in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict between these classes, it is as a rule the state of the most powerful,

economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class and so acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class'. (Engels 1978, 208)

The establishment of the feudalism meant that the functions of politics and economics, previously existing within the state, became embodied within the landed nobility. The political power of the lord was fused with his relationship as landowner. So the feudal lord became king of his own estate, a state within a state. The lords, along with their lands, were tied together in a chain of social and political obligations extending downwards to the peasant and upwards towards the monarch, who unified the atomised hierarchy of lords and vassals.

The direct producers, the majority of the population in early medieval society, were the class to lose most from the establishment of feudal productive relations. Increased surplus extraction took place at the direct expense of the peasantry. From a position of kinship ties and communal rights, feudalism imposed strict and coercive forms of discipline, within both private and public spheres of social life. Labour was alienated, with production fundamentally geared away from the kin and community, to the private landlord. Economically, politically and socially, the position of the direct producers would shrink, tied down by relations of servitude and domination. Power would be exercised from without, imposed from above by the lord. The resistance of the direct producers to the process of feudalisation would be greater than any other class in society. Thus, the birth of feudalism took the political form of the physical destruction and elimination of kinship resistance and production relations.

The above research programme has been outlined in a very schematic manner. Deliberately, attention has been drawn away from questions of detail. The model merely sets down the most essential and critical social and economic dimensions for characterising the transition from tributary to feudal modes of production, in order to provide a heuristic framework, in which to discuss the particular; an analytical structure through which the interaction of specific non-economic institutions and social relations can be assessed. Such a dialogue cannot be developed without reflecting on, and critically exploring, empirical data sets. In order to elaborate on the conceptual issues raised in the research programme, the rest of the thesis will proceed to examine and discuss these issues by constructing data-sensitive and testable auxiliary hypotheses. In this way, the research programme will be elevated from the abstract to the concrete.

Three specific research questions can be isolated for consideration to tie down the nature of the transition in time and space. First, on the issue of prestige exchange in pre-feudal society, in contrast to Hodges' model, the production and exchange of prestige goods is seen, neither, as providing the structure for social momentum, nor the context for dynamic individuals to be agents in historical change. Instead, prestige exchange will be assessed as a response to social conflicts, a material reflection of the class antagonisms between tributary proto-states and feudal lords, and a particular manifestation of the drive for political accumulation.

Second, the question of landed nobles as the class agents of early medieval social change, will be taken up in detail. The implications of the recursive and discrete social practices of tax and rent extraction, will be examined in relation to the organisation and definitions of the social use of space within rural settlements. This will set the context to assess, first

the effect which the fusion of politics and economics at a local level has on private and public domains in rural social practices, and second the alterations in agricultural productive processes occurring under feudalism.

The third and final auxiliary hypothesis will be more explorative, reassessing the highly problematic issue of the role of towns within feudal society. Through manipulating environmental evidence, these settlements will be considered primarily as a response to the increased expropriation of rural surpluses by the feudal ruling class. With the growth of social complexity and superstructural institutions, the urban centre can be best understood as a mechanism in the articulation of agricultural surplus. The discussions raised in developing these hypotheses, will hopefully return debate back to the research programme, which can be revised to sustain further hypotheses, with increased levels of detail and sophistication.

PART 2

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM
AND MATERIAL CULTURE

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

A discussion about archaeology and the origins of feudalism cannot proceed without a consideration of documentary history and its relationship with archaeology. Not only has this issue been of fundamental importance in the development of medieval archaeology, but it is also of particular pertinence for the question to be discussed here. The debate over the origins of English feudalism has been dominated, almost exclusively, by the discipline of history. It has been historians who have taken up the challenge, set the agenda and constructed various interpretative frameworks. Archaeologists, on the other hand have conspicuously avoided the issue. So, despite the wealth of historical-based research and the enormous corpus of literature which has been accumulated in the last hundred years, there has been no comparable archaeological research. This absence of an archaeology of feudalism is significant raising some basic questions on the relationship between the two disciplines. This chapter, therefore, attempts to examine why it is that archaeology has remained so peripheral to such a critical and controversial historical debate.

Part of the problem has been the terms in which the debate has been conducted. The dominant definition of feudalism has been phrased in extremely narrow legal terms. This in itself has excluded archaeologists from entering a meaningful dialogue with historians. However, the principal underlying factor has been the character of the inter-disciplinary relationship. Medieval archaeology has emerged as a subordinate to history. The document and text has been privileged over the artefact. This dominance of history over

archaeology has been a product of the structure of the academic system and the institutional segregation of the social sciences. The purpose of this chapter is to question this inter-disciplinary relationship and to illustrate how archaeological knowledge can be integrated positively into the historically-based debate on the origins of English feudalism.

SECTION 1: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Medieval archaeology is still very much in its infancy. Although the study of Anglo-Saxon material culture began in the early decades of this century, it was not until the 1950s that medieval archaeology as a whole was considered a recognised subject in its own right. The foundation of the Society for Medieval Archaeology in 1956 marked the formal acknowledgement of its existence, but it is only since the early 1970s that it has been taught as an academic subject in British universities (see Clarke 1984, 9-13). The main reason for this is that archaeology had developed first and foremost in the study of prehistoric societies (Daniel 1962), a region of the past which had been previously unexplored or understood. Initially, therefore, an academic niche was created outside the realms of the more firmly established and rooted discipline of history. But, with the widening of archaeology into the research of past material culture in total, the discipline expanded into a study of historical societies. The basis for a medieval archaeology took shape. The problem which inevitably arose from the development of medieval archaeology was the status of the subject in respect to history. How could the knowledge derived from two closely connected disciplines be combined to write the past?

CULTURE-HISTORY:

The emergence of medieval archaeology in the shadow of

history had important consequences. The subject had to develop within a well-established chronological and interpretative framework. The two subjects were therefore integrated from the start. But it was history which provided the basis for the examination and interpretation of material culture. The character of this inter-disciplinary relationship reflected itself in the formation of the culture-historical school of thought (see Trigger 1989, 148-206 for a fuller discussion of this term). Archaeological knowledge became the means to illustrate materially the information gained from documents, the historical framework became embedded within the structure of research of medieval archaeology. AD 1066, for example, was the basis for further sub-disciplinary divisions, separating 'Anglo-Saxon' archaeology from 'Medieval' archaeology. Culture-historical labels provided the basis for the terminology and the classification of artefacts (see Arnold 1988, 1-16).

Culture-history was highly influential in the development of medieval archaeology. But the character of the inter-disciplinary integration constrained the potential use of archaeological information. Medieval archaeology generally, and Anglo-Saxon archaeology in particular, became dominated by the study of historical cultures - the Britons, the Anglo-Saxons, the Vikings, the Normans etc. Historically known events connected to these cultures became the basis for archaeological research strategies (see for example Leeds 1913; Myres 1969; Wilson 1971 and Alcock 1971). Implicit behind this academic approach was the privileging of the text over the artefact. It was the document which set the archaeologists' agenda, the historical framework being accepted uncritically. Medieval archaeology became, in the now famous phrase coined by Sawyer, '*an expensive way of telling what we know already*'. Nobody asked whether the framework derived from historical evidence was the best starting point to examine material culture, nor whether archaeology could

actually answer the sorts of questions posed by the culture-historians.

The principal theoretical assumption which this school of thought was based on was that of the diffusion of different ethnic groups. The invasions by the Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and the Normans, were perceived to be the primary cause of social change in the early medieval period: - the Anglo-Saxons for marking the end of antiquity, the Vikings for stimulating urban developments, and the Normans for introducing feudalism. Although few contemporary medieval archaeologists openly claim to be culture-historians, this notion of diffusion still frequently underpins their interpretations.

MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE HISTORIANS:

The culture-historical subordination of the artefact to the text, presented archaeology as a purely narrow specialised subject, unable to add substantially to what was already known. Historians, therefore, have tended to be quite dismissive of archaeology. This attitude is typified by Allen Brown.

'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 only of the other. It follows that whereas the historian ought to be an archaeologist also, the archaeologist, tout court, can never be an historian, which is, quite literally, a solemn thought'. (1969, 132)

The conclusion is that archaeology simply provides *'picturesque marginal illustrations to historians' text or lectures'* (Rahtz 1983, 13). Archaeology cannot, and should not, attempt to construct broader social interpretations based on material cultural evidence. This task should be left to the

historians. So, for example, the issue of the origins of feudalism cannot be discussed adequately by the archaeologist because as one historian has argued '*archaeology cannot pick up land tenure, social control, coercion; history can and does*' (Wickham 1983, 139).

Such a pessimistic view of archaeology is reiterated, in various forms, time and time again by historians (see Sawyer 1978, 134-5; 1983a). Although this is partially a product of the naivety with which archaeologists have used historical evidence to interpret material culture, it also has deeper roots. To a large extent there has been a misconception over what forms of information can be extrapolated from the archaeological record. Archaeological data cannot be fitted neatly into a framework derived from documentary sources. Different analytical procedures are required in examining different forms of evidence. The confusion around this issue has accentuated the problems involved in integrating properly both historical and archaeological knowledge in the writing of the past.

NEW MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY:

The response of medieval archaeologists wishing to break from the culture-historical school of thought has been to assert the value of archaeological research as a source of historical knowledge in its own right. In the guise of 'New Medieval Archaeology' (Rahtz 1981a), attempts have been made to separate strictly archaeology from history and to argue that medieval archaeology should develop as an autonomous discipline. Being based upon the premises of New Archaeology, the issue of the relationship between archaeology and history has been perceived in methodological terms. It is argued that, although both history and archaeology yield information about the same past, this knowledge is derived from different materials - documents and artefacts. Separate methodologies

are therefore required to interrogate the different forms of data to extract this information. History and archaeology can be used to present different, but equally valid, pictures of the past. However, this can only be achieved if the two subjects are institutionally divided into two separate disciplines. Thus, it has been argued by archaeologists, such as Rahtz (1983), Hodges (1983) and Randsborg (1980), that models, hypotheses and analytical techniques should be borrowed from the prehistorians' repertoire when interpreting archaeological evidence. Medieval data sets could then be examined independently of the documentary evidence. Only after the historians and archaeologists have analysed the different data sets in their own terms should the two disciplines be compared, contrasted and possibly intergated into a joint interpretation of the past.

Although New Medieval Archaeology attempts to highlight the potential of material culture in being more than just a peripheral complement to history, it does not satisfactorily solve the issue of inter-disciplinary integration. Perceiving the problem simply in methodological terms means that the epistemological basis of this disciplinary boundary is left unquestioned. Hence, implicitly, it is assumed that there is a fundamental distinction between the artefact and document, and that this division is somehow natural (see Dymond 1974). Lost from view in this institutional separation is the essential notion that artefacts and documents are the creations of the same past. Both were embedded in the production and reproduction of the same social relations. Integrating archaeology and history, therefore, requires challenging the whole academic structure of social knowledge.

SECTION 2: THE ACADEMIC STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

Writing the past is a theoretical practice. It is not simply an exercise in the accumulation of data, of 'facts', whether historical, geographical, archaeological etc. It involves philosophical assumptions, epistemological and ontological premises. Thus, the past is a cultural construction, a product of the present. 'History' is written using analytical frameworks derived from social theory developed independently of the specific methodologies of history, geography, archaeology, etc. The point is obscured by the interdisciplinary boundaries of academic institutions. It is the fragmentation of knowledge which lies at the heart of the problem of integrating archaeology and history.

CAPITALISM AND SOCIAL SCIENCE:

The growth of the social sciences has fundamental historical connections with modern capitalism. The world of academia, with its enormous institutional complexes of teaching and research, would have been inconceivable without the development of modern industry. There are thus indissoluble practical bonds between the social sciences and the material structure of capitalist society (see Gramsci 1971, 3-23). It is this relationship which has given rise to the fragmentation of social knowledge.

The emergence of the social sciences and their complex internal differentiation was intricately connected to the dynamics of capitalist production. Firstly, the constant transformation and development of technology necessitated the growth of specialised intellectual categories. Secondly, the social conflicts and struggles embodied in capitalist production required ideological legitimation. Social sciences were a response to the growth of class antagonisms, part of the framework of capitalist hegemony (see Shaw 1975, for a

detailed account of the roots of social knowledge). The institutional structure of academia is an expression of this. The organisation of both the natural and the social sciences reflects the highly complex social and economic divisions in the world. Social knowledge has thus become structured on the basis of separate institutional disciplines, the divisions being an important part in the process of the control of knowledge. Each discipline, with its hierarchical structure of authority and rewards, includes its own practical and ideological standards which regulate the production of knowledge. Fields of study are, therefore, strictly defined and separated out, so that they are perceived as the exclusive property of specific groups of specialists. Hence, the social sciences have become reified into self-contained disciplines: - history, economics, sociology, politics etc. (This argument will be developed further in **Chap. 9**)

This fragmentation of the social sciences clearly has a damaging effect on the development of social thought. The study of the past is divided into a whole spectrum of disciplines and sub-disciplines. Empirical research is separated from theoretical research, history and archaeology divorced from philosophy and sociology. Each specialist group develops its own methodological standards and sense of professionalism, believing that it has the sole rights to its particular field of knowledge.

It is this which is the source of the animosity between the historian and the archaeologist. As the study of medieval England has traditionally been explored through documentary evidence, historians have been very suspicious of archaeology appearing to be poaching on their ground. But the development of medieval archaeology as a discrete sub-discipline has likewise reflected these institutional divisions. The New Medieval Archaeologists have consciously attempted to

establish an autonomous discipline with its own research directions and procedures.

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY:

The implications of maintaining these inter-disciplinary boundaries are consequently profound. Within archaeology and history the effect has been to foster a deep-seated empiricist philosophy. As specialist data-based disciplines, historical or archaeological knowledge is perceived to be simply the result of the empirical analysis of the documents or material culture. Generalisations proceed from the accumulation of data which is 'pure' and unbiased. But the separation of these two disciplines from the interpretative social sciences of sociology and philosophy results in the general explanations being of a very naive and simplistic kind. The use of the cultural diffusion hypothesis as a catch-all interpretation for social change in early medieval England is a good illustrative example. This lack of coherently constructed social models to analyse particular data sets has been a major contributory factor behind the problems of integrating archaeology and history.

The deconstruction of the conventional inter-disciplinary relationship amongst the social sciences is therefore the critical starting point for the integration of archaeology and history. It is only out of the totality of social knowledge that the question of the archaeology of feudalism can be posed. Of course, many individual scholars have attempted to escape from the restrictions imposed by the structure of academia and to assimilate research from other disciplines (see Driscoll 1987; and Austin 1990). But it is the philosophy of historical materialism that has most consistently confronted and opposed the foundations of bourgeois thought. Marxism dissolves the false boundaries between individual disciplines and replaces them with the concept of social

totality (see below, 312-3). History, politics, economics, etc., are linked and integrated as each is perceived to have a common root in the production and reproduction of social life. Archaeological knowledge, therefore, need not be confined to a specialised field, restricted by the rigorously narrow definition of its subject-matter, but fully connected to a total theory of social development.

The Marxist concept of social totality allows the disciplines of history and archaeology to be integrated into a common study of feudalism. The origins of feudalism can be explored by examining the historical, architectural, geographical, archaeological and anthropological evidence. Starting from the basic unity of social theory means that the subject of feudalism is not the sole property of one discipline within the social sciences.

SECTION 3: THE ORIGINS OF ENGLISH FEUDALISM

Collapsing the conventional disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences is the proper starting point for posing the question of the origins of English feudalism. However, a problem which immediately arises is that of definition. The study of feudalism has been marked by a fierce controversy over this issue. The debate, which dates back to the work of the Victorian scholars, Frederic Maitland (1967) and John Round (1964), has dominated research on the question of origins. Therefore, before we consider the integration of history and archaeology in a Marxist study of feudalism, the problem of definition needs to be addressed.

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION:

Historical opinion is divided into two camps, two rival schools of thought, both of which spring from the Maitland/Round debate: those who use the term feudal and feudalism in the broad sense and perceive such a society developing in Anglo-Saxon society; and those who have argued for a narrow definition and see English feudalism as a Norman innovation.

In *Domesday Book and Beyond* (1967), Maitland argued for a definition of feudalism in the broad sense, analysing the growth and development of a whole variety of medieval institutions and social relationships. His specific interests, however, lay in exploring the rise of seignorial authority and justice. For Maitland, the development of the idea of lordship was *'a deep seated cause of many effects, a principle which once introduced is capable of transfiguring a nation'* (1967, 307). He perceived the practice of the king devolving jurisdiction to the great landholders as the critical step in this process. This, Maitland traced through examining Anglo-Saxon land tenure charters and, in particular, the development

of book-land (1967, 272-306). Through obtaining grants of jurisdiction, the great landholders of England gained the right to collect tribute and food rents, previously rendered to the king, in return for military services and obligations. Thus, the fundamental feudal institution, the granting of land in return for military services, had pre-conquest origins.

Many historians have echoed Maitland's views and wide-ranging research objectives, for example, Chadwick (1905) and Vinogradoff (1908; 1911) with their studies of Anglo-Saxon institutions, and, more recently, Eric John, in his controversial book **Land Tenure in Early England** (1960). However, this school of thought has been met with sustained criticism. English historians on the whole have adopted the narrower definition of feudalism.

The conventional view that English feudalism was a Norman innovation springs from Round's work, **Feudal England** (1964). He took the view that the introduction of knight-service into England by the Normans was of absolute fundamental importance. Feudalism centred strictly on the military organisation of society, namely the holding of a unit of land, a fief, by a class of specialised warriors, knights, in return for stipulated military service. Hence, the issue of the pre-conquest development of lordship was regarded as largely irrelevant to the issue of the origins of feudalism. Round's insistence on using the term feudalism in a very precise and narrow sense quickly became the established view among English historians (see Chew 1932; Stenton 1932; Douglas 1939). However, it has been the work of R. Allen Brown (1968; 1973) which has come to epitomise this school of thought. The refined meaning of the term meant that feudalism was not a description of a whole social order, but of certain specific relationships within the medieval ruling class:

'....feudalism, strictly defined and thus properly understood, is an upper-class affair' (Brown 1973, 23).

This debate over terminology and origins, with its polarisation into two opposing camps, has led some scholars to seek either a compromise (Prestwich 1963; Harvey 1970), or to avoid using the term altogether (Brown 1974, Abels 1988, 3). The question of definition, it has been argued, has imposed such a conceptual straitjacket onto historical research that it has obscured many important issues within the study of early medieval England and, indeed, this has been the case. However, it is the fault of the character of the dominant definitions used.

The fundamental problem with both schools of thought is that the term feudalism is used in an essential descriptive manner. Although the broad definition is used to analyse a variety of important social relationships, the growth of the manor, the establishment of a subject peasantry, the birth of military services etc., it lacks a conceptual coherence. The breadth of the definition results in feudalism becoming synonymous with everything medieval. Thus the term loses any precision. The narrow definition retains an intellectual rigour absent from the broader one, but at the expense of only describing a very exclusive social relationship. Feudalism is strictly defined in terms of the legal relationship of the free vassals with their overlords. In effect the refined definition rejects the whole notion of a feudal society as it has little to do with the relationship between lords and peasants who probably constituted at least ninety per cent of the population in the early middle ages (Hilton 1976a, 30). There is thus no notion in this definition of a social totality and still less a conception of feudal dynamics.

MARXISM AND FEUDALISM:

Marxists reject both schools of historical thought. The concept of feudalism needs to be retained, but defined in terms of a social totality. This can only be achieved by

perceiving feudalism as a mode of production, a specific combination of forces and relations of production, as outlined in Chapter 3. This use of the term as an analytical category means that the principal structural components underlying the dynamic of feudal society can be traced and identified. It is a definition, therefore, which grasps the essence of feudal society. It conceptualises both the social relationships between classes, the peasants and lords, and those within the classes themselves, the lords and the state (see Anderson 1974, 147-53). Defining feudalism in this manner poses the question of origins in a radically new way. It also carries important implications for the relationship between historical and archaeological research on feudalism.

The dominant historical definition, being phrased strictly in legal terms, is biased towards the historical evidence. This formulation thus peripheralises archaeology and restricts the space for a dialogue between disciplines. The Marxist definition, however, is constructed in abstract terms. As an analytical category, the feudal mode of production outlines essential social relationships. The definition is not expressed in terms of historical or archaeological evidence. Hence, the concept of the feudal mode of production can be used as a framework to analyse numerous forms of data, including historical and archaeological without privileging one over another. This Marxist definition of feudalism, therefore, directly challenges the institutional separation of history and archaeology. It undermines the 'common sense' view that there is a 'natural' division between documents and artefacts, and between historical and archaeological knowledge.

However, although documents and artefacts need to be analysed through single theoretical framework, the collapsing of the conventional disciplinary boundaries does not mean that methodological questions are ignored. There are clear

differences in the procedures required to analyse the different data sets.

Material culture and documents yield different forms of information about feudalism. Therefore, the questions asked of the data, although derived from the concept of the feudal mode of production, are not the same. Archaeological and historical data cannot be integrated simply, as illustrated by the weaknesses embodied in the culture-historical school of thought. Uniting the two forms of evidence requires the construction of data-sensitive hypotheses. The issue of surplus extraction in the early medieval period, for example, can be posed directly in historical terms, by exploring the documents relating to land tenure. The research carried out within the Maitland school of thought illustrates the great value of such historical evidence. Yet this does not mean that the archaeological evidence is marginalised. It is just that the question needs to be posed differently. Archaeology can be used to examine the issue of exploitation through the analysis of the social use of space, or, through exploring ecofactual assemblages. Historical and archaeological evidence therefore, provide complementary, but different, forms of information about the past. Thus, archaeologists can not only enter the historical debate on the origins of English feudalism, but can also add to it by examining the question in a slightly different way.

Part 2 of this thesis, therefore, concerns the archaeology of the origins of English feudalism and forms part of the wider debate introduced in Part 1 on the integration of Marxist theory and material culture studies. The basis for inter-disciplinary integration is theory. So, although it is principally archaeological evidence which will be examined, the framework of analysis has been derived from the rich theoretical debates within Marxists scholarship on the question of feudalism. Ideas from within Marxist geography,

anthropology, sociology, economics, as well as history, will thus be drawn upon to construct archaeological hypotheses.

This integration of archaeological evidence into these Marxist debates will hopefully promote further research on feudalism, irrespective of the conventional disciplinary boundaries. Archaeology is not an autonomous subject, but material culture studies can yield new and exciting perspectives on old and well rehearsed debates. Thus, there is great potential in using archaeological knowledge to write the past.

CHAPTER 5

TRADE AND EXCHANGE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

The early medieval economy was not simply confined to subsistence production. Alongside the system of agrarian production, there was also the trade and exchange of luxury and prestige goods. The seventh to tenth centuries saw the growth of specialised centres which flourished in both long-distance and local commerce and artisan manufacture. However, understanding the role of this commodity production and exchange within the context of pre-capitalist social formations, is a highly problematic issue, raising many theoretical questions. For example: what was the relationship between the production for exchange and that for use? What impact did the growth of towns and markets have on the ~~the~~ medieval economy? Discussions surrounding these questions have raged throughout the social sciences, and archaeology has certainly not been excluded. Indeed, as illustrated in Chapters 2 and 3, the issues of prestige goods exchange and pre-capitalist economics has been of central importance in the development of theoretical archaeology. The origins of towns and trade is clearly a key feature in any explanation of the social transformations occurring in Anglo-Saxon England, as exemplified in the work of Hodges. This chapter is concerned, in particular, with developing a Marxist critique of Hodges' theoretical perspective.

Hodges' understanding of the economic basis of medieval towns will be described in Section 1. It will be suggested that his work is based on a common misconception which conflates trade and exchange with the capitalist mode of

production. This criticism will be developed in **Section 2**, when Marxist historical scholarship on medieval towns will be discussed. The issue of the transition from feudalism to capitalism has been the focus of a number of important debates on the question of the role of towns within an agrarian economy. It is thus, primarily, to these debates that I shall turn in **Section 3**, to provide a general theoretical framework for the examination of the early medieval pottery industry. This case study demonstrates concretely the inadequacies of Hodges' perspective. Through discussing the early medieval pottery industry, an alternative Marxist conception of towns is developed, which attempts to illustrate the status and character of trade and the production for exchange within the feudal economy.

SECTION 1: RICHARD HODGES AND THE ORIGINS OF CAPITALISM

The core of Hodges' work has been an enquiry into the origins of towns and trade, tracing the expansion of commercial transactions from the fall of the Roman Empire to the growth of market towns in the late-Saxon period. In this he has been influenced by the work of Henri Pirenne. The first chapter of **Dark Age Economics** (1982), for example, sets out the aims of the book in terms of the Pirenne thesis, as does **Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe** (Hodges and Whitehouse 1983), a book subtitled **Archaeology and the Pirenne thesis**. Although, in assessing the wealth of the new archaeological evidence, Hodges presents a radically different explanation from Pirenne for the rise of medieval Europe, he still shares many of Pirenne's theoretical assumptions on the economics of urbanism. Both perceive the birth of the medieval town as crucial in the foundation of modern Europe. This assumption requires critical examination.

Pirenne's central claim, as stated in his famous book *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1939), was that feudalism arose when Europe's Mediterranean trade was disrupted by the rise of Islam. It was this discontinuity in seventh century trade which, Pirenne argued, made European society turn in on itself, and adopt the enclosed, self-sufficient economy of the manor. However, from the tenth century onwards, there was a regrowth of commerce, with the opening up of Mediterranean trade in the south and the development of Scandinavian trade in the north. With the revival of long-distance, commercial transactions, towns and cities began to flourish and a powerful class of merchants was born. Although towns and trade operated within the medieval economy, they were seen as being antagonistic to feudalism, the town operating on fundamentally different principles to that of the manor. The merchant class, embedded in the business of extracting profit through exploiting differences in supply and demand, represented the embryonic bourgeois class (Pirenne 1936, 162-8).

On the basis of archaeological data, Hodges removes the critical role played by Islam from his perspective on the formation of early medieval Europe, one of the central planks of Pirenne's thesis. However, the form of his remaining argument is similar. Both share a common preoccupation with uncovering the economic basis of medieval urbanism. In particular, the integrated and causative role of the rise and fall of trade and socio-political development which pervades Pirenne's work, remains critical in Hodges' conception.

The key conceptual tool for Hodges is not the role of the Islamic invasion, but the change from a socially-embedded economy to a disembedded economy. As outlined in **Chapter 3, Section 1**, he characterises seventh and eighth century European states as based on systems of redistribution, reciprocity and gift exchange. Commercial trade existed, although at a low level, and was socially regulated at ports-

of-trade which grew up on the peripheries of kingdoms (Hodges 1988, 73). Peer-polity interaction, however, articulated through a prestige goods system, stimulated political and economic growth. By the end of the ninth century, Europe had been transformed. Market forces broke down the old social ties as the economy became geared towards urban production and exchange. From the tenth century onwards, the establishment of towns involved in both local and long-distance commercial transactions, represented the development of a competitive market system (Hodges 1988, 90).

A number of theoretical assumptions are contained within this argument, two of which are particularly important and need to be drawn out. Firstly, there is the idea that tenth century towns were based on competitive markets. Urban production and exchange is seen as geared towards the acquisition of profits through the manipulation of supply and demand. Thus, Hodges asserts that economic advances and developments were made because market forces imposed a competitive element within the runnings of an agrarian economy. He locates the growth of the market as providing the material incentives for the adoption of new technology and thus contributing to the agrarian revolution in late-Saxon England. The pottery industry, for example, underwent a radical transformation with the introduction of the potter's wheel and the adoption of improved kiln technology. In terms of both quality and quantity, there was a dramatic improvement in production. Hodges perceives these developments as a major component of the new marketing goals advanced by the late-Saxon state.

Medieval markets were disembedded and so embraced all levels of society. Peasants were drawn into the logic of a competitive urban economy. Hodges (1989), drawing on the work of Alan Macfarlane (1978), argues that the medieval market brought new social freedoms and offered material advantages

which induced craftsmen and peasants to increase productivity. The market was the principle behind the roots of English individualism. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Hodges sees the birth of the town in the ninth and tenth centuries as the core of Anglo-Saxon achievements. This was the period of *'the first English Industrial Revolution'* (1988, 116).

Secondly, and following on from this, is the notion that the roots of modern capitalist society lie within the towns of medieval Europe. Medieval towns are perceived as operating on the same principles as modern towns and the medieval market as promoting alien economic forces within a predominately agrarian social structure. In the famous phrase of Postan, towns *'were non-feudal islands in the feudal seas'* (1975, 239). The opening chapter of Hodges' most recent book, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement* (1989) is titled *'Archaeology and the Origins of Capitalism'* (see also Hodges 1988, 148-55). He asserts that the archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon period allows us to chart the beginnings of capitalism. The roots of commodity production and circulation lie in the formation of the European medieval markets. Hence:

'A more or less unbroken line connects the age of Bede with the Industrial Revolution, and hence with us'.

(Hodges 1989, 1)

These two theoretical assumptions, which take their inspiration from Pirenne, are highly controversial. The debates on medieval urbanism, or the origins of capitalism, are far-reaching and have deep roots within historical based social sciences. Hodges takes an extreme position in arguing that the late ninth and tenth century was the critical period in the formation of modern Europe. He can be faulted for fetishising the sphere of circulation. At both theoretical and practical levels, he obscures the social relationships articulating production and distribution. Competitive markets are seen as the 'natural' vehicle of economic development and

thus elevated to become the central dynamic force of history. Hodges focuses his archaeological research on changing distribution patterns of certain artefacts, for example, coins or imported pottery. But this preoccupation with exchange mechanisms peripheralises transformations in production and social structures, seeing them as passive reflexes to market processes. The introduction of the potter's wheel and improved kiln by the late-Saxon pottery industry, for example, are explained simply as a mechanical response to the establishment of competitive markets. The complex changes in social relations during the early medieval period are, therefore, obscured behind the sphere of circulation. Such a reductionist perspective is a product of extracting patterns of exchange from the social conditions of their origin.

This fundamental fault stems partly from Hodges' synthesis of systems theory and structural-Marxism, as argued in **Chapter 3, Section 1**. However, it is also a product of a theoretical assumption shared by Pirenne among other prominent medieval scholars, such as Fernand Braudel (1975) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1974). This assumption equates commodity production and commercial trade with capitalism. This confusion leads Hodges to link tenth century urban development and the modern industrial revolution. Hence, medieval towns are perceived to represent the beginnings of the world-economy, the place where a new bourgeois class was forged. However, such an assumption, despite being widely held, is fallacious. It is founded on a misconception of what characterises and distinguishes capitalism from pre-capitalist societies. The roots of an alternative conception of medieval towns requires an adequate distinction between capitalism and pre-capitalist economic systems.

SECTION 2: MARXISM AND MEDIEVAL TOWNS AND TRADE

The cutting edge of historical materialism lies in Marx's scientific analysis of capitalism and the historically specific circumstances of its existence. *Capital* was his most momentous accomplishment, the centre-piece of his life's work. Its aim was '*to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society*' (Marx 1976, 92). To clarify the issue of the distinctiveness of production and exchange under capitalism, in contrast to preceding societies, therefore, we must examine this text. Marx devoted a section in volume three to the study of pre-capitalist commerce which provides the theoretical corner-stone for the discussion in this section.

Marx was not simply interested in characterising the dynamics of capitalism. His underlying philosophy was concerned with revealing a materialist conception of history. The capitalist mode of production was situated historically, the product of the development of class struggle and social production. Contained within this theory of *social evolution* was an analysis of the contradictions of medieval society and an outline of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. This subject has aroused enormous controversy among Marxist historians and economists, stimulating a debate which has hinged on the question of the role of medieval towns and the merchant class in the development of bourgeois society. The work of some of the protagonists, particularly that of the historian Brenner, will be discussed in order to examine the social processes behind early medieval urbanisation.

THE CAPITALIST MODE OF PRODUCTION:

Capitalism cannot be equated with commodity exchange. Money and trade are found in pre-capitalist societies. Capitalism was defined by Marx as a mode of production, a specific combination of productive forces and of production relations.

The capitalist mode of production involves, for Marx, two fundamental social divisions which distinguish it from other economic systems.

The first is the separation of the means of production from the direct producers. Under capitalism the worker owns only his/her labour-power, which he/she must sell to the controllers of the means of production in order to survive. Thus, labour-power is a commodity - wage-labour. This exchange between capital, represented by those controlling the means of production and wage-labour represented by workers, does not occur naturally, but depends on prior historical developments. It presupposes the fall of other social relations of production and the development of productive forces of social labour. Marx shows, in *Capital*, how the creation of wage-labour was the result of a historical process in which the peasantry was deprived of its land through the acts of enclosure and the means of production (which was initially the land), became the monopoly of a class whose objective was profit.

'In themselves, money and commodities are no more capital than the means of production and subsistence are. They need to be transformed into capital.....The capital-relation presupposes a complete separation between the workers and the ownership of the conditions for the realisation of their labour.....This process, therefore, which creates the capital-relation can be nothing other than the process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of his labour; it is a process which operates two transformations, whereby the social means of subsistence and production are turned into capital, and the immediate producers are turned into wage-labourers'. (Marx 1976, 874-5)

The second division is the separation of the units of production. In other words, the capitalist economy is a system

divided into separate, competing, yet interdependent, producers. The development of the forces of production and the consequential development of the division of labour means that, under capitalism, production in each economic unit is specialised and separate from other units. Individual units relate to each other through market exchange. Hence, makers of the same product will compete for the same market. Their relative success will depend on how cheaply they sell their products. Competition compels individual units of production constantly to transform the labour-process through technological innovation and thus to increase the productivity of labour. Competition also forces the accumulation of surplus-value, so that it can be reinvested in expanded and improved production. A capital which fails to do so will be undersold and eventually driven out of business by its competitors.

These two social divisions underpin the logic of capitalism. Competing capitals seek to undercut their rivals by introducing cost-cutting technological innovations, while the subjection of workers to the labour-market allows capitalists to develop systematic incentives designed to improve labour productivity. Hence, the dynamism of the system. As Marx argued lucidly in *Communist Manifesto*:

'The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones.'

(Marx and Engels 1973, 70-1)

This definition of capitalism as a historically specific mode of production makes Hodges' claim that he has uncovered the roots of modern industrial society in late-Saxon England, appear at least far-fetched, if not ridiculous. Hodges is guilty of reading history backwards. The late ninth and tenth centuries may have witnessed the birth of markets and towns, but this does not prove that these institutions shared the same economic dynamic as capitalist towns and markets.

In reality, medieval urbanism emerged within a mode of production markedly different from that of capitalism. Under the tributary and feudal modes of early medieval England, the direct producers were not totally divorced from the means of production. The peasants were not free, but tied to the land and thus in possession of their means of subsistence. Likewise, artisans and craftsmen were not wage-labourers. The urban economy, like the rural, was based on the family unit of production and distribution. Artisans possessed their own tools and were not alienated from the products of their labour. They existed in a social context, defined by a comparatively low level of productive forces, in which the overwhelming majority of the population was engaged in agrarian production for subsistence needs. Thus, the economic character of trade and exchange was radically different from that of capitalism. Certainly profits from trade were extracted within pre-capitalist economies, but this should not be confused with capitalism as a mode of production.

PRODUCTIVE AND COMMERCIAL CAPITAL:

In *Capital* (1981, 440-55) Marx clearly draws out the essential differences between commercial trade and commodity exchange in capitalist and pre-capitalist societies. These differences are encapsulated in the opposition between productive and commercial capital. Within the former, the form of capital specific to modern societies, profits (ie. surplus-

labour), is extracted directly from the exploitation of wage-labour. The monopolising of the means of production, and thus the controlling of an intermediate stage of production and exploitation, led to the continuous '*self-expansion of value*', ie. the accumulation of value which acted to create and accumulate more value. This can be represented in outline as a process of $M-C-[P]-C-M$ where M stands for money, C for commodity and P for production. This process can only occur when labour power is itself a commodity.

'Value, the objectified labour which exists in the form of money, could only grow by exchange with a commodity whose use value itself is only possessed by living labour capacity...'

Value, money, can therefore only be transformed into capital through exchange with living labour capacity'.

(Marx and Engels 1989, 36)

This is the core of one of the most famous concepts contained within *Capital*: the labour theory of value.

Commercial capital, however, existed long before productive capital. Marx defined it as '*the oldest historical form in which capital has an independent existence*' (1981, 442). The processes involved with mercantile trade were very different. Without the existence of wage-labour, merchants gained their profits not from their control over production, which was negligible, but from the purchase and sale of commodities. Commercial capital was confined to the sphere of circulation. There were no social mechanisms to expand profits continually through the intensification of production and to increase the surplus obtained from the labour force. This could not happen so long as agriculture and craft-production was constrained by relations resting primarily on coerced labour. Merchants could buy goods cheaply and sell them for more, exploiting differences in the prices of production in various different countries and thus expand their wealth. This might be represented by the formula $M-C-M$. However, the character of

this commercial capital meant that the long term possibilities for any individual merchant were very limited. They could take advantage of existing price discrepancies, but not find a way to create systematically such discrepancies. Commercial capital simply mediated the exchange of commodities, remaining separated from their production.

'The circulation of money and commodities can mediate spheres of production with the most diverse organisation, which in their internal structure are still oriented principally to the production of use-values. When the circulation process becomes independent in this way, as a process in which the spheres of production are linked together by a third party, this expresses a double situation. On the one hand, that circulation has still not mastered production, but is related to it simply as its given precondition. On the other hand, that the production process has not yet absorbed circulation into it as a mere moment. In capitalist production, on the contrary, both these things are the case'. (Marx 1981, 445)

This does not mean, of course, that the expansion of trade and exchange exerted no influence on the historical trajectories of pre-capitalist societies. But commerce *'taken by itself, is insufficient to explain the transition from one mode of production to the other'* (Marx 1981, 444). The development of trade might undermine pre-existing productive relations:

'But how far it leads to the dissolution of the old mode of production depends first and foremost on the solidity and inner articulation of this mode of production itself'.
(Marx 1981, 449)

This distinction between commercial and productive capital is basic to understanding the role of markets, trade and towns in the early medieval economy. The central fault in Hodges' argument is that he conflates the two and consequently

obscures the historical specificity of the capitalist mode of production.

THE BRENNER DEBATE:

Since Marx, the analysis of the social and economic character of medieval commercial capital has extended into a rich and varied debate among Marxist historians and economists on the subject of the transition from feudalism to capitalism (see Hilton 1976; Martin 1983; and Harman 1989). Although a sharp polarisation of ideas has arisen, the leading protagonists of the debate have developed many of the concepts implicit in Marx's work. Some of these, particularly those of Brenner, can be integrated into the theoretical framework of this chapter.

The celebrated debate on the the question of transition to capitalism took place, initially, during the 1950s, provoked by Maurice Dobb's *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (1946). He argued that medieval economies were compatible with the relatively advanced existence of markets. Merchant capital was integrated with, and parasitic on feudalism, its existence predicated upon pre-capitalist relations of production. Consequently, he rejected those explanations of the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism which gave primacy to the spread of trade and the growth of towns as centres of commerce. This interpretation was strongly challenged by the American Marxist, Paul Sweezy (1976), who developed a Pirenne-type argument. Long-distance trade, for Sweezy, was a force which created a system of production for exchange alongside the old feudal system of production for use. A powerful rising class of merchants was seen as the dynamic behind the breakdown of pre-capitalist relations.

Although the ensuing debate encouraged contributions from a number of different Marxist historians, it was Brenner, who

gave fresh life to the controversy by subjecting the ideas of Sweezy and Wallerstein to a most forceful criticism. Such was the impact of his work, that the whole question of the transition has been re-termed, the **Brenner Debate** (Aston and Philpin 1985). The core of Brenner's thesis analyses how agrarian class structures impede economic development in pre-capitalist societies. His ideas thus provide new insights into the economic character of medieval towns and trade.

Brenner's central arguments have been outlined in **Chapter 3** (see above, 114-18). However, it is worth drawing out, in a more explicit, *manner what they mean for the Marxist* conception of medieval urbanism. Brenner draws a sharp distinction between capitalism and pre-capitalist modes of production. In particular, he locates the crucial difference in the mechanics of surplus-labour extraction, on the difference between economically compelled labour (wage-labour) and physically coerced labour. Under capitalism, rapid economic growth is possible because the two main classes have an incentive to develop the productive forces intensively. On one hand the capitalist is subject to the pressure of competitive accumulation; on the other the worker, separated from the means of production, is compelled to sell his/her labour power on terms which subject him/her to the pressure to increase productivity. However, under pre-capitalist societies, Brenner argues that no such economic developments are possible. As the direct producers in agrarian societies remained tied to the land, in possession of their means of subsistence, the appropriation of surplus-value rested on extra-economic forms of coercion. The two contending classes had no mechanisms or incentives to intensify production. Hence, pre-capitalist relations of production set structural limits to the expansion of the productive forces. This was true even when they involved production for the market (Brenner 1977, 32).

The implication that this thesis holds for medieval urbanism is profound. The growth of trade and urban markets would be, in themselves, powerless to set off a process of economic development. Towns in pre-capitalist societies, therefore, cannot be conceived as generative entities. As urban exchanges rested on coerced labour, the sphere of circulation could not decisively advance production. In fact, production for exchange would remain separated and detached from the production for use. Brenner concludes that the medieval town was not based on free competitive markets, or 'free' labour, but constrained within a 'commercial-specialised sector' of the economy.

Despite Brenner being increasingly regarded as the authority on the question of the transition to capitalism, his thesis has proved highly controversial. The French Marxist historian, Guy Bois (1985), for example, has challenged him on grounds of voluntarism, of reducing the diverse historical developments of early modern Europe to the contingent outcome of class struggle. A similar line of argument has been developed by Harman (1989), who attacks Brenner on grounds that he fails to appreciate how economic expansion can be rooted in pre-capitalist societies. Even though the reliance on coerced labour constrained developments in the forces of production, technological innovations were introduced and adopted within agrarian-based societies. Brenner, more or less, ignores these changes and therefore underestimates the role of economic factors in effecting the political trajectories of pre-capitalist modes of production.

These are important criticisms. Brenner, in an effort to give his argument greater polemical power, does simplify the distinction between capitalist and pre-capitalists societies. The argument that intensive developments of production were negligible and so peripheral to agrarian based societies is indeed a significant weakness. Brenner has gone too far in

criticising any theory which places the growth of the productive forces as key to economic development, as being guilty of neo-Smithianism (Brenner 1986, 39-47). This flaw, unfortunately, tends to obscure the fundamentally correct emphasis in his work on the essential characteristics of pre-capitalist modes of production. The fact that pre-capitalist relations of production were based on extra-economic means of coercion, results generally in what Brenner calls '*the drive towards political accumulation*' (1986, 32). Although it is accepted, and will be demonstrated below, that he underplays the material possibilities for the intensive development of the forces of production, this criticism alone does not deny that political accumulation was one of the underlying dynamics of pre-capitalist societies. What he calls '*the drive towards political accumulation*' is of critical importance for understanding the material factors stimulating the rise of trade and exchange in early medieval societies and is thus central in any exposition of medieval urbanism.

The primary aim of production in pre-capitalist societies was consumption and production for use. However, this did not exclude the production of goods for conspicuous consumption: i.e. luxury or prestigious items such as clothing, exotic food, jewellery. Social consumption played an important part in the expression of class identity. For example, conspicuous consumption among non-producers was the means by which they could represent and reinforce their class positions and social identities and thus an integral part of the pre-capitalist trend of political accumulation. The demand for luxury goods and prestigious commodities was a central material force promoting the growth of trade and the production for exchange. Obviously the character of trade and exchange would be specific to the particular pre-capitalist modes of production. But the link between political accumulation, conspicuous consumption and urban growth remained fundamental. Towns were nodal points in the specialised production and commercial

exchange of commodities for conspicuous consumption. This luxury trade developed separately from the subsistence sphere of the economy. Towns reflected this separation between the production for exchange and the production for use. They were institutions physically divorced from the rural communities, places where such trade could be restricted and controlled.

Brenner's ideas, therefore, contain the theoretical tools with which to analyse the growth of trade and exchange in the early medieval period in a manner which does not fetishise the sphere of circulation. His notion of political accumulation and urban developments, combined with Marx's distinction between productive and commercial capital, provides the key conceptual hinges on which to hang an alternative hypothesis to that of Hodges et al, on early medieval towns. From such a foundation that can begin to analyse the role of trade in the transition from tributary to feudal societies and to explore the economic character of markets in the process of early medieval urbanism.

TRADE IN TRIBUTARY AND FEUDAL SOCIETY:

The expansion of long-distance trade during the seventh and tenth centuries is seen as a historically contingent response to the structural contradictions embedded in the emerging tributary proto-states of Anglo-Saxon England. As argued in Chapter 3, small tributary states of early medieval England were locked in competition over scarce resources, principally land. This manifested itself not simply in terms of militarisation, but also in prestige exchange. The relative position and status of individual polities was expressed in their ability to accumulate and control the exchange of prestige goods. Being dependent on old forms of social solidarity and cohesion, such as kinship social relations, the tributary ruling groups secured class alliances through the reciprocal exchange of prestige goods.

Prestige goods exchange became increasingly important with the rise of feudal social relations. As the tributary proto-states were reliant on middlemen to collect tribute, social tension inevitably arose between these embryonic feudal lords and the state. The proliferation of prestige exchanges was a response to these social tensions. In return for the collection and payment of the king's tribute, the middlemen received prestige goods. This form of gift exchange was thus part of an attempt by the proto-states to mask the class contradiction embodied in the tributary mode of production.

Conspicuous consumption under feudalism, however, was motivated by different material factors. The feudal ruling class was fragmented, each feudal lord being atomised by his private ownership of individual estates. As Brenner (1986, 31-2) argues, this led to both military and political competition between the lords. The drive towards political accumulation among a fragmented class of landlords produced internal class tensions, which had the effect of stimulating the political competition expressed in the form of conspicuous consumption. This drive towards enhancing social status through conspicuous consumption affected all levels of the feudal ruling class but the feudal state, in particular, was a key force in nurturing the exchange and trade of luxury and prestige goods.

Although the production for prestige exchange and conspicuous consumption within the early medieval period was promoted by different social relations, the effect of prestige or commercial exchanges within both the tributary and feudal economies remained fundamentally unaltered. As trade and exchange in both societies rested on coerced labour, the sphere of circulation was confined to a discrete sector of the economy. Urban growth was an expression of this. Medieval towns were not advanced institutions, the prime movers of economic developments. Towns were founded upon economic restrictions and the control of luxury items. The tight social regulation

of the market mechanisms was part of the very essence of urban expansion within the late-Saxon period.

REGULATED MARKETS:

The establishment of towns in the ninth and tenth centuries was, therefore, not based on free competitive markets, nor did urbanisation represent the embryonic development of capitalist social relations. As within tributary societies, feudal towns were socially prescribed institutions, with trade and exchange regulated, checked and restrained by political mechanisms. The exclusivity of towns was a precondition of the growth of merchants within feudalism. Trade depended on their success in monopolising the supply of prestige commodities. Through means of staple policies, trade and exchange was concentrated and diverted to particular towns to secure this market monopoly.

'So long as the market depended on price disparities between separate spheres of production in which the producers were not separated from the means of production and subsistence, trade existed only in the interstices of the system, monopolising supply of a limited range of goods, and was dependent on political indulgence: it was more of a tribute structure than a trade structure'.

(Merrington 1976, 181)

Towns became distinctive economic and social units, set apart from the rural economy and defended by laws and privileges. The growth of towns depended on these privileges in safeguarding its monopoly against the country and allowed the economic exploitation of the countryside through the towns' monopoly of the market and prices (Hibbert 1963).

Urban elites possessed no independent class position within medieval society, but, remained wedded to and dependent on, feudal social relations. As with feudal landlords, there was a distance between the merchants and the productive process. The

income of the merchants was not directly dependent on the appropriation of surplus labour, but on the fulfillment of a middleman function. The merchant interposed himself between the craftsman and the buyer. With trade articulated through middlemen, the merchants, the feudal market remained highly regulated.

Towns in the early medieval period, were not, therefore, an antagonistic force within the feudal mode of production. Although the sphere of commercial exchange was separated from the sphere of agrarian production, the medieval town was dependent on feudal social relations for the defence of its market privileges. The Marxist historian, Rodney Hilton (1976a; 1982), has shown how urban medieval growth was sponsored by either powerful lay and ecclesiastical lords, or the feudal state. By establishing towns, kings and feudal lords could gain both cash profits and secure access to international luxury trade. Hence, it was the feudal aristocracy who stimulated urban development and promoted market growth by guaranteeing trade monopolies. Towns were integrated into the economic movement of the feudal order, with the urban elites tied politically and socially to the feudal aristocracy (see also Duby 1974; and Hilton 1974). Therefore we cannot characterise the medieval town as a non-feudal island within a feudal sea.

The growth of English towns in the ninth and tenth centuries must be analysed in the context of the above perspective. That late-Saxon trade and exchange operated on the basis of monopolistic and socially regulated economic principles is suggested by the historical evidence, as shown by David Hill (1988) in his study of late-Saxon law codes. Regal policy directed towards towns insured that their markets held a monopoly position. The legislation of both Edward the Elder and Athelstan, for example, made the town central to the legal process with regard to trade with the establishment of shire

towns which became the market and administrative centres for each shire. This pattern lasted well into the Middle Ages. The monopolising of the sphere of circulation, however, is not only expressed through documentary evidence, but also manifested in the archaeological record. It is to the archaeology of exchange that we shall now turn.

SECTION 3: THE EARLY MEDIEVAL POTTERY INDUSTRY AND MARKET EXCHANGE

Pottery has frequently been used by archaeologists as evidence of social and economic change, the archaeologist's lowest common denominator. It is found in many social contexts, is highly culturally specific and a good survivor. Hence pottery has been regarded as an indicator of exchange and economic mechanisms. This is particularly true of the Middle Ages where ceramic assemblages have been recovered from a variety of archaeological sites and contexts and have consequently received a lot of archaeological attention, both in terms of classification and interpretation.

The study of medieval ceramics developed with the establishment of the Society for Medieval Archaeology in 1956, the first general synthesis of the subject being by Gerald Dunning (1959). From the 1960s, the pace of research quickened with the expansion of fieldwork, especially excavations in historic towns. In response to this growth of data, the Medieval Pottery Research Group was founded in 1975 along with its periodical - **Medieval Ceramics**. However, it was John Hurst (1976), with his synthesis of Anglo-Saxon ceramic data, who provided the essential framework for research into the late-Saxon pottery industry, the major ceramic period to be discussed in this section. Although his paper has now been superseded by McCarthy and Brooks' book **Medieval Pottery in Britain** (1988), the basic classification and terminology of early medieval ceramics derives from Hurst's work.

In late-Saxon England there was a dramatic development in the ceramic industry with the establishment of Saxo-Norman pottery. This culture-historical label refers to the period from about the mid-ninth century to the mid-twelfth, marked by the widespread use of high-quality wheelthrown pottery fired in fully developed updraught kilns (McCarthy and Brooks 1988,

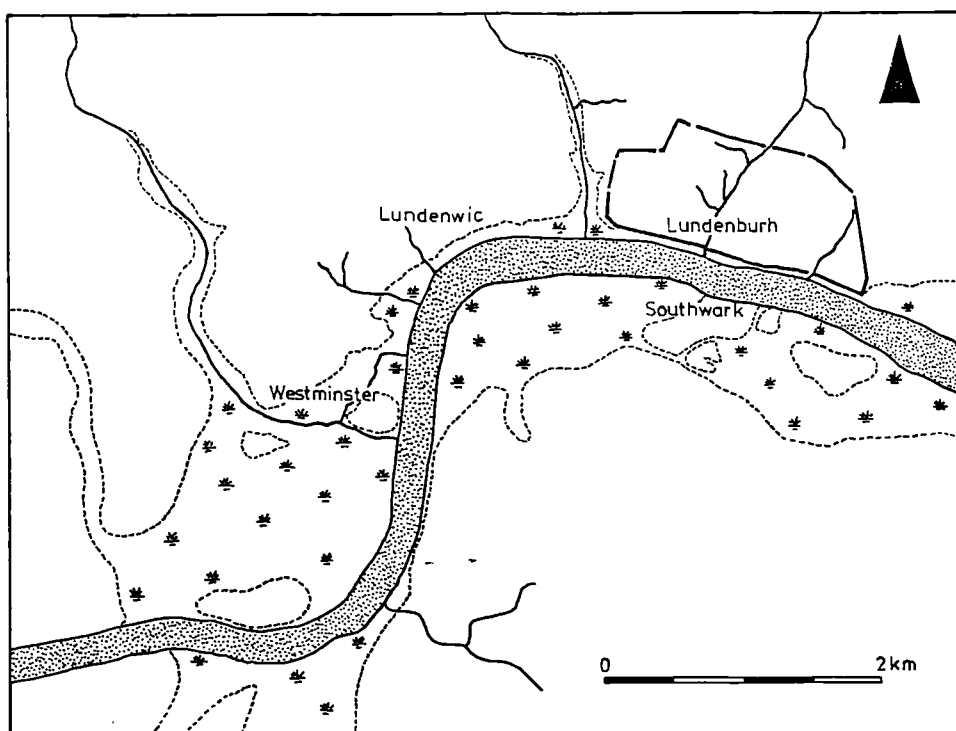
66-7). Research into Saxo-Norman pottery has traditionally been centred on those late-Saxon urban contexts which produce large quantities of pottery in dateable, well-stratified sequences. In particular, there has been an emphasis on the use of pottery for reconstructing trade and exchange patterns. Attention has therefore been focused upon fabric analysis and methods of characterisation (Vince 1987). Through petrological analysis, the range of rock and mineral inclusions can be identified and used to define both fabric characteristics and their geographic sources. Thus, by determining the sources of pottery supplying a town, and measuring the stratigraphic sequence and relative proportions of the different wares, trade routes can be reconstructed. This technique has been carried out with great success by Alan Vince (1985; 1988) in his study of the Saxon and medieval pottery sequence from London.

Although Vince's work has provided a sophisticated assessment of the actual data sets, his interpretation of these patterns is extremely limited. He perceives the changes in pottery production and distribution in the tenth century as a reflection of the militarisation of the economy under the impact of the Viking invasion. As illustrated in **Chapter 4**, the culture-historical assumption that the Viking invasion played a causal role in the development of Anglo-Saxon England is highly unsatisfactory. Thus Vince's empirical work will be described, but an alternative, Marxist, interpretation of the data will be presented.

THE EARLY MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM LONDON:

The pottery studies from London have great potential for understanding the link between production and distribution and the nature of exchange mechanisms in early medieval England. First, London is the major town in this period. It was not economically insulated, and so the ceramic data from London

will be a sensitive indicator of changes in trade. Secondly, excavations from the City of London have yielded a series of large, closely datable pottery assemblages from a range of well-stratified contexts. Changes in the nature of the pottery assemblages can thus be linked to the historical development of the city.



1. Map showing the position of mid and late-Saxon London (after Vince 1990)

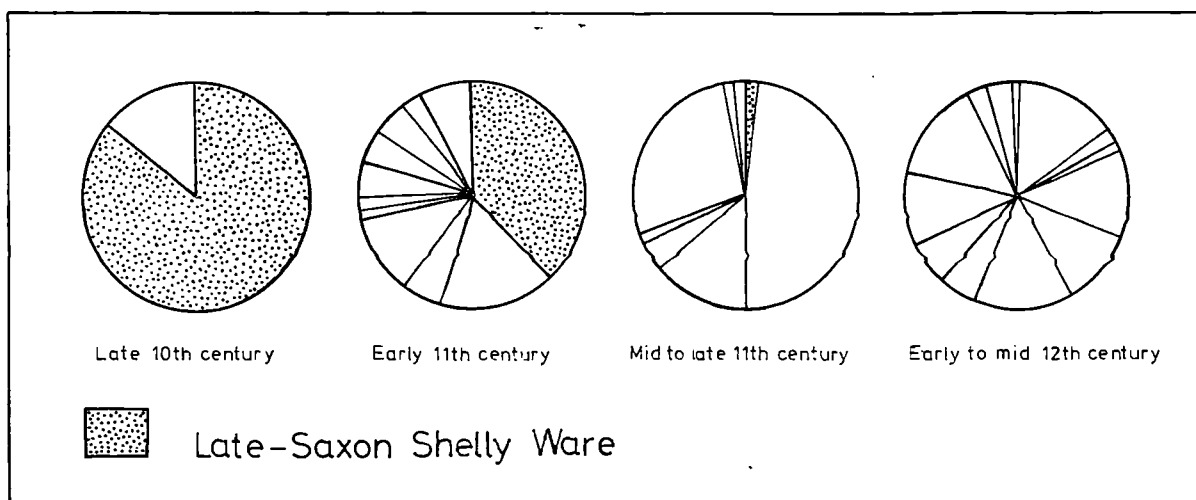
There is a clear change in the location of occupation of early medieval London, from the mid to late-Saxon period (see fig 1). Recent fieldwork has shown that, from the seventh to ninth century, London was situated along the Strand, stretching from Whitehall to Fleet Street (Vince 1990, 13-25). Very little is known about the character of this settlement, as most of the evidence comes from artefact distributions rather than from excavations. But, by the tenth century, there was a dramatic shift in the settlement to the east, the late-Saxon town being located within the walls of the old Roman

city. It has been argued that this new town was laid out with a gridded street plan, in the same fashion of other late-Saxon burhs (Vince 1990, 26-37).

Accompanying this shift in settlement location was a sharp change in the nature of the pottery assemblages. The mid-Saxon settlement along the Strand was supplied mainly with Ipswich-type ware, but also with chaff-tempered and limestone-tempered pottery from the upper Thames valley. Continental imports were also present, including Tating ware and Badorf-type amphorae and cooking pots. These have been found at the Treasury site in London, and also on surrounding sites, such as Waltham Abbey and Old Windsor. However, from the late-ninth century to the late-tenth century, after the settlement shift to the east, the ceramic assemblages are characterised by large quantities of shell-tempered ware - late-Saxon shelly ware (Vince 1985, 30-4). Although there was no stratigraphic evidence for the starting date of the late-Saxon shelly ware, it is clear that its introduction did not predate the reoccupation of the Roman city.

Three important points can be made about this ceramic change in London. First, petrological examination of the fabric of late-Saxon shelly ware showed that it came exclusively from one source, a region in Oxfordshire. Thus, a single production site had a monopoly supply of pottery to London during this period. Second, there is the change in production processes involved with the manufacture of the pottery. All the vessels are wheelthrown and kiln fired. The change in the location site of the town, therefore, coincided with new, intensive forms of technology. Third, there is the absence of any other form of pottery. The assemblages in the City are dominated by late-Saxon shelly ware with very few imports throughout the tenth century. Thus, there was a sharp demise in international trading in London.

Another abrupt change in the nature of pottery assemblages in London occurs from the eleventh to the mid-twelfth century (see fig 2). Late-Saxon shelly ware was replaced by a number of other wares, predominantly early medieval sand and shell wares (Vince 1985, 34-43). Again, in terms of production and distribution, these sand and shell wares show a clear break in the pottery tradition. The technology employed in their production was noticeably inferior to that of the tenth century. The majority of the vessels were handmade and fired in clamp kilns. The sand and shell wares came from production sites such as Lambeth and Westminster, much closer to London than Oxford. Instead of there being one single major source of pottery, London was supplied by three or four major producers and several minor ones. Finally, and critically, continental imports appeared again. There was trading contact between London and a number of areas, principally the Rhineland, the Low countries and Northern France.



2. Pie charts showing the relative frequency of pottery types in early medieval London (after Vince 1985)

THE TRANSITION FROM MID-SAXON TO LATE-SAXON POTTERY:

Vince's study of the early medieval pottery from London

illustrates the great potential of archaeological research for understanding the early medieval economy. With sequences of well-stratified ceramic assemblages, detailed information can be gained on the changing nature of exchange mechanisms. Although London is by far the best example, comparative sequences are beginning to emerge from other sites across England. It is has become clear that there is a widespread break in the early medieval pottery industry and that the introduction of the potter's wheel had dramatic consequences for marketing patterns (McCarthy and Brooks 1988).

The pottery assemblages recovered from York offer one of the best comparative sequences with those of London. York was a major settlement in north-east England during the early medieval period. As at London, there is a shift in the location of occupation. The mid-Saxon emporium at Fishergate (Hall 1988) was situated to the south of the present town, while the late-Saxon town was established in the vicinity of the old Roman fortress (see below, 268-9). The settlements are characterised by different pottery assemblages. Fishergate was associated with a diversity of imports from southern England, including Ipswich-type and Maxey-type wares; continental imports such as Tating ware and a number of local wares (Mainman pers.comm.). The ceramic assemblages from the mid-ninth and tenth century deposits at Coppergate, however, are indicative of a break in the pottery tradition. Initially the assemblage was marked by small standardised handmade pots (Mainman 1990, 396-8), quickly superseded by local, gritty, wheelthrown pottery (York ware) which dominated the ceramic market to the virtual exclusion of all other wares (Mainman 1990, 400-11). But, during the middle decades of the tenth century, the gritty York ware began to be replaced by grey sandy wares in the Torksey tradition, which by the end of the century dominated the assemblage. The other striking feature of the pottery groups from Coppergate was how little foreign pottery was found. Only a few Rhenish vessels were present and

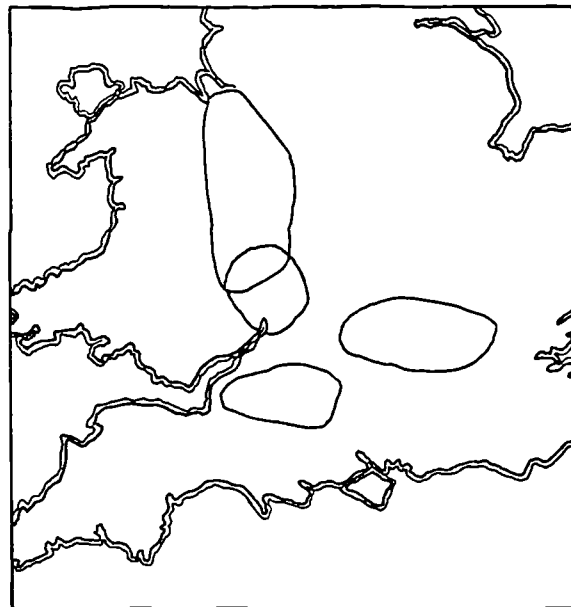
occasional burnished wares, including Tating ware (Mainman 1990, 477-86).

The transition to Saxo-Norman wheelthrown pottery in many areas of the country is also clear cut. In eastern England, this ceramic division is marked by the replacement of Ipswich-type ware with the products of the Thetford-type ware industries (Hurst 1976, 314-23). In the midlands, handmade shell wares, recognised at Eaton Socon, developed into the classic wheelthrown St Neots ware in the course of the ninth century (Addyman 1965, 53-4). The transition in this area and in the north of England is also identified by the widespread distribution of wheelthrown pottery types produced under a high level of industrialisation, for example, Stamford-type ware, Stafford-type ware Chester-type ware etc. (McCarthy and Brooks 1988). A similar pattern is evident in the south and south-west, with the introduction of Winchester-type ware, Gloucester ware etc. Although the starting date of many late-Saxon wheelthrown wares is not as clear as at London or York, there is little doubt that most were contemporary, being in use during the tenth century.

The adoption of the potter's wheel and updraught kilns appears to have facilitated the mass-production of high-quality pottery which often had a wide distribution. Stamford-type ware was manufactured on a fast wheel and fired in a developed single-flue kiln, an example of which was excavated in Stamford itself (Mahany, Burchard and Simpson 1982). The finer vessels, such as the spouted pitchers and some bowls, were covered with a thin yellow, or, pale green, glaze and are one of the earliest types of glazed pottery in the country. Stamford-type ware was also the most widely distributed ware in the late-Saxon period (Kilmurry 1980). Its vessels were heavily concentrated in Lincolnshire, but also spread out as far as Winchester, Canterbury and the Welsh Marches.

At Stafford, Martin Carver (pers. comm.) has shown that the principal type of vessel produced from the late-Saxon pottery industry was a standardised orange jar. The excavations of the kiln sites demonstrated that production was confined to the south eastern quarter of the town. Careful attempts were made to control the colour of the pottery aswell its volume. Outside Stafford this pottery is only found in West Midland 'burhs' (see Vince 1985, 36).

Similarly, the manufacture processes involved in the production of Thetford-type ware was indicative of a high level of organisation. The pots were fired to comparatively high temperatures in fully developed kilns, with a large number of standard forms being produced in a range of sizes. Thetford-type wares were also distributed widely across East Anglia. Other wide distribution patterns occur with St Neots-type wares in the east Midlands and Torksey-type wares in Lincolnshire.



3. Distribution map of tenth century wares in southern England (after Vince 1981).

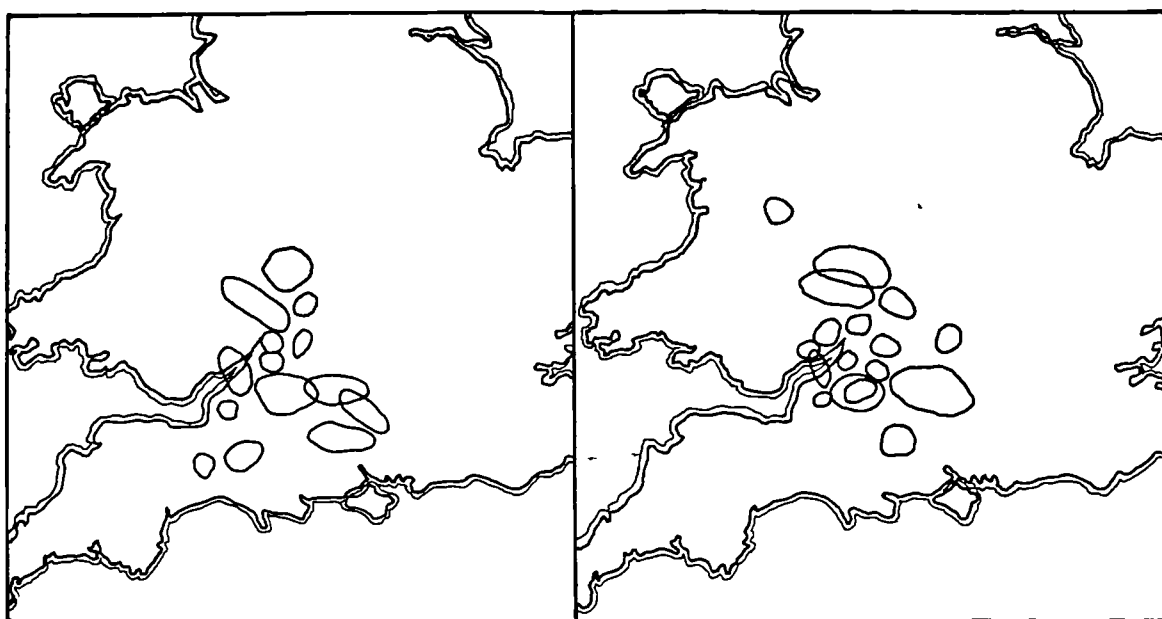
A distinctive feature of the distribution of Saxo-Norman pottery, however, is not simply how widely it was traded, but also its tendency to be supplied to exclusive markets. London is still the best example of this. Late-Saxon pottery industries and their products are known in every region surrounding London. For example, there were apparently three industries supplying settlements on the Thames between Oxford and London, but only shelly ware from Oxfordshire entered London. York is another clear example of the monopolisation of the pottery markets (see above, 177). This tendency is evident in other areas of the country. Alan Vince (1981), has made a study of the production and distribution patterns of the medieval pottery industry in southern England (see fig. 3). He has shown how the area around the Seven Valley was supplied by four types of pottery in the tenth century; Chester-type ware, Gloucester ware, Cheddar E fabric and Oxford B fabric. These wares were not only widely distributed, but monopolised separate catchment areas almost exclusively.

Importantly, these dramatic changes involved in the transition from mid-Saxon to late-Saxon pottery occurred at the same time as there was a sharp, and in some areas an almost complete, demise in international trade. The tenth century deposits from London are conspicuous for their lack of continental pots, as are those from Coppergate in York. Very few imported goods have been found at either Lincoln, Ipswich, or Chester in the tenth century, a striking contrast to the assemblages both before and after this period.

THE TRANSITION FROM SAXO-NORMAN TO MEDIEVAL POTTERY:

The whole pattern of the Saxo-Norman pottery industry, however, abruptly changed towards the end of the eleventh century and throughout the twelfth. Not only was there a revival of international commerce, but also a transformation in both production and distribution patterns in the regional

pottery industries. The return in London to the technologically inferior technique of handmade pottery appears to be a generalised phenomenon. Throughout England the urban-based pottery industries declined and gave way to smaller-scale pottery-making centres outside towns (Haslam 1978). The advanced techniques of the potter's wheel and the developed kiln which produced high quality, standardised pottery types, in many areas disappeared altogether.



4. Distribution map of eleventh and twelfth century wares in southern England (after Vince 1981).

Vince's (1981) study of the industries within south-west England is a good example of this process. The four tenth century wares, three of which were wheelthrown, disappeared in the eleventh century and were replaced by fourteen handmade pottery types, followed by a further eight new wares in the twelfth century (see fig 4). The distribution of these handmade pots also shows a marked contrast with that of the earlier wheelthrown wares. The tenth century industries were distributed over a much wider area than that of the handmade types which typically supplied areas within a ten mile radius.

This distribution pattern remained virtually unchanged between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Similar developments took place across the country. The twelfth century local hand-produced pottery centres generally depended on the nearest urban or village market for the distribution of their products. This naturally gave rise to the regional diversification of ceramic wares which had no monopoly of supply to particular markets, urban or rural. In only a few centres was there any continuity of production on an industrial scale. The transition to local handmade pottery, however, was not automatic. For example, the high-quality Stamford ware continued to be manufactured throughout the twelfth century (Kilmurry 1980).

THE REGULATED MARKET AND FEUDALISM:

This discussion of the early medieval pottery industry provides one illustration of the changes in production and distribution which accompanied urban growth in England. As Hodges has correctly highlighted, the late-ninth and tenth century represents a qualitative and quantitative transformation in the medieval economy; an intensive development in productive processes and an extensive development of distribution networks. However, are these changes indicative of the imposition of competitive markets, as he would have us believe? Far from supporting his arguments, the archaeological patterns described above provide substantial weight to the alternative Marxist view of the early medieval economy.

The ninth and tenth century urban developments in England were associated with the near total collapse of international ceramic trade. This pattern conflicts with Hodges' perspective, which focuses on the role of long-distance trade in stimulating market developments. At their inception late-Saxon towns were not dependent on overseas trade. The economic

basis of these towns was, therefore, not the same as that for the mid-Saxon emporia. Thus, the linear explanation of the steady rise of luxury trade, leading to the growth of urban markets, appears far too simplistic. The inadequacies of Hodges' model are also exposed when the changes in pottery production are considered. He assumes that the birth of the competitive market led to the intensification of production. Market forces underpinned the adoption of the potter's wheel and the developed kiln as production became geared towards profit. If this was the case, why was there a marked decline in pottery technology in the eleventh and twelfth centuries? The idea that markets brought continuous economic development in the medieval period is directly contradicted by the archaeological evidence. Further, and conclusively, the notion that the late-ninth and tenth centuries witnessed a breakthrough of the competitive market, is certainly not supported by distribution patterns of pottery. The tendency of the late-Saxon pottery industries to supply to exclusive markets suggests that trade was more tightly controlled and regulated rather than less administered.

The late-Saxon urban expansion which accompanied the transformation in the pottery industry can be best understood as part of the rise of feudalism. The transformation from the tributary to the feudal mode of production stimulated urban life and promoted regional markets. In Section 2 it was argued that feudal merchants acted as middlemen intervening between the producer and consumer. Profits were thus made through the social and political regulation of medieval markets. The exclusive nature of commercial trade led to the separation of production for exchange from production for use. It is, therefore, very important that one of the distinctive characteristics of Saxo-Norman pottery production is that it was urban-based, physically separated from the rural economy. The urban location of pottery production facilitated the regulation of the mechanisms of distribution. Urban merchants

could appropriate the manufactured pot from the artisans and so control its distribution. Acting as middlemen in this way merchants could monopolise markets. The tenth century London pottery is illustrative of controlled exchange. The late-Saxon shelly ware was produced in Oxfordshire, presumably Oxford, and transported via the Thames to London. This transportation was clearly regulated, as no other pottery type was obtained enroute despite the potential opportunities. London's market, thus, became monopolised by one source of pottery.

The role of middlemen in articulating patterns of exchange is not only reflected in the exclusive distribution of late-Saxon pottery, but also in the distance it travelled. The scale and extent of its marketing could only be achieved through the interaction of middlemen. For example, the widespread use of Stamford or Thetford wheelthrown pottery could not have occurred if the potters were directly trading with the consumers. As argued by Kilmurry (1980, 170-5), the scale of the distribution of Stamford ware, in which many town sites possessed a full range of its types, suggests the presence of middlemen traders specialised in pottery marketing.

These inferences obtained from the pottery data, however, can go much further than just supporting the theoretical points made in Section 1. The archaeology of this period offers us an opportunity to further our understanding of the relationship between production and distribution under the feudal mode of production.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION AND FEUDALISM:

The late-Saxon state was concerned with limiting trade to towns. This is not only reflected in royal legislation but also by the fact most of the Saxo-Norman pottery industries were located in towns, implying a strong connection between

the regulation of trade and control of production. The nature of this control can be explored archaeologically by examining the factors which might have contributed to changes in technology.

The social implications of the introduction of the potter's wheel and the mass-production of pottery fired in fully developed kilns are far-reaching. These technological developments required a considerable increase in investment in the means of production and suggests central planning. The establishment of regulated markets was linked to the mass-production of the pottery and the laying out of systems of communication and transport. Certainly the distribution of Saxo-Norman pottery is indicative of planning and the social regulation of trade in the tenth century. However, the nature of the technology would also have aided the administration of the pottery industry and distribution. The potter's wheel and kilns could be centrally managed, with distribution regulated through the control of production. Intensification of the forces of production in the late-Saxon period is a clear illustration of how the ruling elite within the feudal economy did have a degree of direct control over the means of production. Resources were consciously invested in improved technology and this helped to facilitate the monopoly of market exchange.

The link between production and distribution is also evident in the transformation of the early medieval pottery industry in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The shift from wheelthrown pottery back to handmade pots was accompanied by a change in distribution patterns. These changes in production and distribution are causally related. The amount of investment, technology and skill required for the production of handmade pottery is relatively low. All that is needed is a clay source and a clamp kiln, which amounted to little more than a bonfire. The production of handmade pottery, therefore,

could not easily be controlled by a central authority. The ease with which handmade pottery could be manufactured contributed to the regional diversification of wares. The technology meant that handmade pottery could not be mass-produced in the way that wheelthrown, kiln pots had been. The majority of these local production centres depended on the nearest urban and rural centre for the marketing of their products. There is no clear distinction between the production for use and production for exchange. Handmade pots were locally produced and distributed in a whole range of settlements, both urban and rural. Further, the marketing of these local wares does not appear to have been dependent on the operations of middlemen. The patterns of distribution, unlike for the Saxo-Norman pottery industries, suggest that the potter dealt directly with the consumer at the market place.

How might these changes in the production and distribution be explained? To appreciate their interrelationship, we must return to the basic theoretical framework outlined earlier.

It has been argued that one of the major factors underpinning the growth of towns and trade was the drive for political accumulation, expressed in competitive cycles of prestige exchange and conspicuous consumption. The continental pottery from mid-Saxon emporia was a manifestation of this trade in luxury items. Ruling elites symbolised their social status through the possession and exchange of prestigious commodities. This particular network of prestige exchange was ruptured at the end of the ninth century. International trade in ceramics declined sharply and the production and distribution of pottery was transformed with the emergence of the Saxo-Norman pottery industries. The character of conspicuous consumption of pottery thus altered radically in the tenth century. This coincided with other fundamental changes in early medieval society - the growth of regional

towns, the establishment of nucleated villages and the introduction of the open-field system of agriculture (see Chapter 6).

The central argument of this thesis is that all of these changes represent the rise of feudal relations of production. Associated with the growth of a new ruling class was a shift in forms of conspicuous consumption and symbols of power. Many of the wares from late-Saxon potteries were clearly not simply utilitarian items. The investment in new technology produced wares of extremely high quality, luxury items. Saxo-Norman wares were often decorated in styles imitating the earlier imported pottery. Thetford-type storage wares, for example, were decorated with applied bands and stamped motifs copying the features on the relief-band amphorae imported from Bardof in the Rhineland from the ninth century (Haslam 1978, 11). The Saxo-Norman pots were being produced for exchange and not simply for use. This is reflected in the location of production sites in towns. It was there that the manufacture of wheelthrown pottery, could be controlled. The distribution and exchange of these luxury ceramic wares could thus be administered through urban merchants. By acting as middlemen they regulated trade, supplying to exclusive or monopolistic markets.

The patterns of production and distribution exhibited by the late-Saxon pottery industries are indicative of the growth of regional markets during this period. The factors promoting their proliferation can be partly attributed to the increased need of conspicuous consumption for a much expanded and localised ruling class, the feudal landlords. Resources were initially concentrated on establishing an internal market of commodity exchange. This, however, changed during the latter part of the eleventh century. International trade links in pottery were re-established. Critically it is at this point

that the regional pottery industries underwent another transformation as described above.

This transformation marked a shift in the character of conspicuous consumption within English feudalism. In the tenth century pottery was still a relative novelty and so regarded as a luxury commodity. As mass-production and the regional markets expanded, pottery became so widely distributed that it lost its power as a symbol of feudal social status and became regarded as an item of everyday utility. The drive for conspicuous consumption among the feudal elites focused on other less accessible artefacts, for example continental imports or jewellery produced in the growing urban craft industries (Crossley 1981). Local pottery, therefore, became produced primarily for its use value rather than its exchange value. The change in technology and patterns of circulation is indicative of this. Handmade pottery had the same use value as wheelthrown. It could be manufactured quickly and easily, not requiring a high level of technology or investment. As essentially a product of utility, being widely produced and circulated, there would be no incentive to regulate its distribution. In any case, as handmade pottery could be so easily manufactured, urban merchants would find it virtually impossible to act as middlemen and monopolise markets.

Although the above scenario goes part of the way to explaining the developments in the early medieval pottery industries, more needs to be said about the changing patterns of production. The introduction of the potter's wheel and the updraught kiln marked a very important stage in the intensification of the forces of production. It indicates that the ruling feudal elites did exercise a degree of direct control over the means of production. This is a good illustration of how Brenner underestimates the potential for technological developments within pre-capitalist modes of production. However, Brenner is fundamentally correct to argue

that there was no structural mechanism within feudalism for the continuous and sustained intensification of the forces of production. The fact that the Saxo-Norman pottery industries had virtually collapsed by the twelfth century is a vindication of this point. Pottery production in the tenth century was regulated through the control of the means of production, the wheel and kiln, but as surplus-value within feudalism was overwhelmingly extracted through coerced labour, there could be no systematic improvements in technology. Profits obtained through markets and trade were extracted on the basis of middlemen manipulating differences in supply and demand, not on the basis of wage-labour. Hence, commercial trade within the medieval town remained administered, politically constrained by extra-economic forms of coercion.

The archaeology of the medieval town is a vast topic, much of which remains to be explored adequately. The prerequisite of concrete research in this direction, however, is a clarification of some basic theoretical issues. This chapter has shown, hopefully, that contrary to Hodges' perspective, urbanisation was not based on the dynamic of competitive markets. However, illustrating the regulation of commercial trade under feudalism with archaeological data, still leaves some fundamental theoretical questions open. The growth of regional markets in the late-Saxon period cannot be explained satisfactorily simply in terms of the needs of political accumulation and conspicuous consumption. If the driving force behind urban growth was not market forces, what then was the economic basis of the medieval town? This question will be tackled by examining town/country relationships within late-Saxon England. Towns were not external institutions but grew up within the context of feudal social relations.

The archaeological hypothesis discussed in Chapter 6 provides the basic framework for analysing these socio-

economic developments. In the early medieval period, the overwhelming majority of the population lived and worked on the land. Rural production was the basis of society, the foundation of social and political life. Thus tracing the changes in rural productive relations is of fundamental importance for understanding social developments in Anglo-Saxon England. Feudalism emerged on the land. Hence it is to these rural social relations of production that we must turn to in exploring the dynamic of early medieval society.

CHAPTER 6

THE SOCIAL USE OF SPACE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL RURAL SETTLEMENTS

The development of feudalism in early medieval England was marked by a quantitative and qualitative transformation in the forces and relations of production. As the tributary and feudal modes of production were agrarian based, land was an essential part of the means of production and a necessary element of the labour process in both. The development of feudalism, however, embodied radical changes in the organisation of the rural landscape. It was during this transition that the fundamental components of the English medieval countryside emerged. For example, the late-Saxon era was the formative period in the establishment of nucleated villages and open-fields. The rise of feudalism was associated with a restructuring of the spatial order of society.

This proposition will be explored through a study of the archaeology of rural settlements in the centuries prior to the Norman Conquest. In **Section 1**, a historical materialist approach to the spatial construction of society is presented, in contrast to the dominant processualist and post-processualist spatial perspectives. This provides the theoretical and methodological framework for **Section 2**, where the relationship between tributary and feudal social relations and spatial structures is discussed. Then, in **Section 3**, the question of the origins of feudalism is examined through comparing and contrasting the dispersed and fluid rural settlements of the early and mid-Saxon period with the stable and nucleated villages of late-Saxon England. Although a wide ranging and diverse data base is drawn upon, a case study is

made from the Raunds Area Project in Northamptonshire to show the changing social definitions of space.

SECTION 1: THE SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIETY

There is a clear connection between social relations and spatial structures. However, characterising the nature of this relationship has proved problematic. Making sense of social space has therefore been much debated within the social sciences. Archaeology has not been excluded from this discussion because spatial patterns are a fundamental component of the discipline's data. The increased openness of archaeology to social theory has greatly stimulated this debate and critical philosophical and methodological arguments have been raised. A central theme has been the question of the relationship between social relations and spatial structures. Are the observed patterns *passive reflections* of human behaviour? Or does the social use of space actively contribute to social practice? It is the intention in this section to attempt to understand these issues.

The terms of the debate on space within archaeology have been defined by two dominant approaches: a positivist conception, thrown up by the underlying philosophy of processualism, and a structuralist approach, fashionable among post-processual archaeologists. The conclusion here is that, despite the clear differences of methodology, both perspectives have failed to make adequate sense of space. The core of the problem is that both embody a disabling conceptual dualism which hinders concrete research.

THE POSITIVISTS:

The central problem with the positivists is that they focus on the immediate surface appearances of spatial patterns,

producing a myopic perspective (Soja 1989, 118-37). Space is analysed through empirical description, with the regularities of the patterning objectively measured and recorded. Social space is thus perceived as a collection of things, a relationship simply between objects, and explainable primarily through those objects.

This approach has been prevalent for many years in archaeology, particularly amongst medievalists. Settlement forms and village morphologies are described, with space represented as a natural relation between different components. This is clearly illustrated in the work of the historical geographer Brian Roberts (1977; 1987) and the archaeologist Chris Taylor (1983). Despite the depth of their research, and the accumulation of accurate empirical information, medieval villages are portrayed simply in terms of tofts, crofts and building lines; streets, lanes and open spaces; church and manor house etc. The classification of village forms is therefore calculated on the degrees of similarities of spatial appearance; the degrees of regularities, the presence or absence of village greens etc. With physical description substituted for social explanation, very little is actually said about the social relations and social structures lying behind the production and reproduction of these patterns.

Any social interpretations which are developed show strong functionalist leanings. The connection between social organisation and spatial organisation is portrayed in an extremely mechanical manner. Spatial patterns are a passive and incidental reflection of social practice. Village plans are therefore interpreted functionally, a direct product of agricultural practices. So, for example, the generally accepted explanation for the origins of the nucleated village is that it is a reflection of the adoption of the open-field system of agriculture (see Rowley 1982).

The point of the critique is not that social practices did not have a profound influence on village morphology, but that, in perceiving the social use of space as flat, mappable facts, the spatial organisation of society is made to appear passive and socially inert. Content is abstracted from form so that space becomes reified, represented as a natural relation between things, and explainable in terms of the physical properties and attributes of these things. Thus, as argued by Soja:

'.....theories are constructed which always seem to mask social conflict and social agency, reducing them to little more than the aggregate expression of individual preferences which are typically assumed to be (naturally? organically?) given. Lost from view are the deeper social origins of spatiality, its problematic production and reproduction, its contextualisation of politics, power, and ideology.' (1989, 124)

THE STRUCTURALISTS:

Although post-processualists search beneath the surface appearance of physical patterns to discover an underlying order, they, too, have produced a reductionist perspective. The epistemological starting point for this approach has been drawn from structuralist philosophy. Space is represented as a non-verbal language structured by an internal grammar. The anthropologist, Roland Fletcher (1977; 1988), in particular, has influenced the development of this perspective within archaeology. Essentially, he asserts that the social use of space is not directed by immediate material and functional factors, but patterned by the need of the human brain to signal cultural information. Coded messages are embedded within the patterning of social space. The significance of space is not, therefore, immediately observable, but only grasped by recognising a hidden structuring principle which provides the patterning with a degree of coherence.

This structuralist perspective has been taken up by the human geographers, Hillier and Hanson (1984), who have developed a formalist theory of space which has had a profound impact within post-processual archaeology. They have used Chomsky's theory of morphic languages to define a space syntax. Specifying the essential principles which create order in human settlements as a syntactic relationship of enclosed spaces of individual cells, they have developed a form of access or gamma analysis. Building plans are described as an arrangement of different spaces which define patterns of permeability, that is an analysis based on the interconnections between spaces. In true structuralist style, Hillier and Hanson have produced a synchronic perspective in which their space syntax is seen to have a descriptive autonomy, so that the techniques of its application can be used to analyse any settlement or building in time and space. Consequently, the underlying grammar behind spatial languages is a series of universal binary opposites, within and between; open and closed; distributed and non-distributed; symmetrical and asymmetrical space. The ordering of space in this way is interpreted as an idealised representation of society linked to the structuring of social relations, particularly the way in which social encounters are generated and controlled.

These and other structuralist approaches to space have been taken up and developed by many archaeologists who have rejected the crude materialism and functionalism of processualism. The emphasis given to cognitive and ideological aspects of spatial patterns complemented very well the post-processualists' stress on the all-encompassing symbolism of material culture. Space is not portrayed as a passive reflection of society, but an active representation of it on an ideological plane, part of the arena in which social relations are constituted. So, in recent years, there have been many studies in which both formal and non-formal analysis have been adopted to interpret spatial patterns in

buildings and settlements in terms of ideology. Glassie's (1975) analysis of folk housing in Middle Virginia is a classic illustration of a structuralist approach to building plans, while Leone's (1984) study of the planned layout of the eighteenth century William Paca Gardens in Annapolis, Maryland, uses Althusser's theory of ideology to show how the social use of space is actively used to mask social contradictions. The adoption of Hillier and Hanson's formal analysis has taken many forms, mainly due to its proposed synchronic universality. Foster's (1989) application of access analysis of Scottish Atlantic Iron Age brochs and Gilchrist's (1987) study of gender relations in medieval monasteries and nunneries are good recent examples.

The general problem with these approaches is that space becomes reduced to ideology. Perceiving spatial patterns as a non-verbal language, with signification an internal process structured by difference, fetishises space. In an attempt to illustrate how material culture is active on a ideological level in constituting human relationships, spatial form is abstracted from content. Consequently spatial structures are attributed with powers that are rightly due to its constituents, as if space had intrinsic qualities in itself. Hence physical space becomes interpreted as if it were a mental construct. As strongly argued by Soja:

'Mental space may have some intrinsic qualities, but if spatial fusion-fragmentation defines one of the elemental structures of social thought, it too must be grounded in the material conditions of social life, for it does not appear out of thin air'. (1985, 103)

This reduction of spatiality to ideology means that the material processes underlying its production, reproduction and transformation are obscured.

Hillier and Hanson's formalist theory, for example, treats space as the ahistorical dimension of social relations.

Individual cells, bounded space, perform a universal role as the basic unit of the space syntax. The structuring principles, therefore, in their analysis remain constant through time. All that changes is the combination of bounded spaces. But focusing exclusively on patterns in plan form, results in an extremely two-dimensional picture of social space (Leach 1978). The concept of space syntax is a reductionist one because it fails to take account of the complexities of 'real' situations. Form is abstracted from content, with space separated from substance. Thus, the absurd illusion is created that spatial relations can exist independently from objects.

TOWARDS A MARXIST INTERPRETATION OF SOCIAL SPACE:

The dichotomy between positivist and structuralist perspectives, with the resulting separation of form and content in spatial analysis, has been avoided by the development of a critical human geography (Gregory and Urry 1985). Rather than conforming to the either/or choice between passive and active theories of space, the critical human geographers start from a basic reflexive premise - spatial structures are simultaneously both the medium and the outcome of human action. Social relations embody spatial structures which form a fundamental material dimension of society. Physical space is thus a social product, constituted by historically specific social practices which shape its character and form. But, as a material embodiment of recurrent social practices, space also plays an intrinsic role in the reproduction of these practices, in part, actively shaping social action. There exists, therefore, a dialectical relationship between social and spatial structures, an interlinkage between the production of space and the reproduction of social relations. This simple premise, drawn from structuration theory (see Giddens 1984), overcomes the disabling polarisations between passive and active

perspectives and has formed the philosophical core of much of Marxist inspired geography, for example David Harvey's 'spatial fix' (1981) and Edward Soja's 'socio-spatial dialectic' (1980).

The rise of a Marxist geography is one of the varied recent trends within Western Marxism (see Soja 1989, 43-75). Its nature needs to be considered critically. To a large extent it has been a product of the crisis of Marxism and the rise in hegemony of post-structuralist and postmodernist cultural discourse. As argued in Part One of the thesis, the response of many Marxists to this shifting and hostile academic terrain has been to give intellectual ground. Historical materialism has been reconstructed by assimilating non-Marxist categories. It is not insignificant that two of the leading Marxist geographers, Soja and Harvey, have titled their latest works, **Postmodern Geographies** (1989) and **The Condition of Postmodernity** (1989) respectively. The argument here is certainly not that the latest spatial turn within Western Marxism is retrogressive. Indeed, many of the concepts developed below are drawn directly from the work of Soja and Harvey. However, the construction of a historical materialist approach to social space does require a careful examination of the development of critical human geography, outlining both its strengths and weaknesses.

Part of the difficulties in integrating Marxism and critical human geography is that Marx himself never developed the spatial dimensions to his theories. He frequently refers to the significance of space and place in his writings, as can be seen, for example, in the opposition of town and country in **The German Ideology** (1970) or the separation of peasants from the land in the creation of wage-labour as outlined in **Capital** (1976, 877-895). But these ideas were never fully integrated within his theoretical formulations. Space and geography presented itself to Marx primarily as a physical context, the

site for historical action, or as the physical reflection of the social division of labour. Thus, Marx prioritised time and history over space and geography. But he was not necessarily wrong in giving history a privileged position within his work:

'The aim and objective of those engaged in the circulation of capital must be, after all, to command surplus labour time and convert it into profit within the socially-necessary turnover time. From the standpoint of circulation of capital therefore, space appears in the first instance as a mere inconvenience, a barrier to be overcome. Capitalism, Marx concludes with remarkable insight, is necessarily characterised by a perpetual striving to overcome all spatial barriers and "annihilate space with time" [Marx 1973, 539]'. (Harvey 1985, 144-5)

However, defining the abstract dynamics of the capitalist mode of production in aspatial terms led Marx to overlook the importance of geography in the historically contingent development of capitalism. Marx, consequently, failed to build a systematic and distinctively geographical and spatial dimension into his thought.

This gap was partially filled by the leading protagonists of the classical Marxist tradition; Lenin (1968), in his study of the origins of capitalism in Russia and his work on the dynamics of imperialism, or Trotsky (1962), with the development of the notion of combined and uneven development in the theory of Permanent Revolution. But the inspiration for the rise of a Marxist geography in the 1970s and '80s came from new 'radical' intellectual currents within France. The conceptualising of space within a Marxist framework was primarily developed by the French Communist Party philosopher Henri Lefebvre and his associates (see Soja 1989, 43-75). Lefebvre (1976) asserted that social space is where the reproduction of the relations of production is located. This marked the move to a more reflexive notion of space. Social space is not only a product, but also a producer and

reproducer of the relations of production, an instrument of domination and power. These ideas centred around the politicising of space within capitalism, particularly on the question of urbanisation, developed to various degrees by Castells (1977), Poulantzas (1978) and, most influentially, by Harvey in **Social Justice and the City** (1973).

A number of important premises can be drawn out from the convergence of Western Marxism and geography in the reassertion of space in critical social theory. First, time and space are inextricably linked and there can be no privileging of one over the other. The dynamics of social relations are therefore embedded in the making of history and the production of space. Second, as space is constantly being defined and redefined by day to day social activity, this reproduction process presents a continuing source of conflict. Being both the medium and outcome of human relationships, space is open to social contradictions. Social space is thus the domain of class struggle; it is both political and ideological. Thirdly, as spatial structures are intertwined with social relations, they cannot be appropriately understood when abstracted from the society in which they were embedded. Hence there exists no independent, universal or formal theory of physical space. The structuring principles which lie behind spatial patterning are historically specific, intertwined in the production and reproduction of a particular mode of production.

These three general statements on the surface appear extremely attractive. The notion of reflexivity avoids the polarisation between passive and active theories of space, anchoring the spatial production of society within historically based social relations. On an abstract level, they can indeed form the basis of a materialist interpretation of space. However, there remains a serious flaw within much of contemporary Marxist geography which stems from the particular

synthesis of Western Marxism and critical theory. In an attempt to avoid the so called 'space blindness' of classical Marxism and the reductionism and determinism of Stalinism, social space tends to be treated as a relatively autonomous dimension of social practice. Thus space becomes fetishised, imbued with powers which rightly belong to the constituents and social relations defining it. Consequently the difference space makes is over-emphasised.

The point of this criticism is most clearly apparent when the move is made from abstract spatial statements to concrete historical case studies. As it stands, the abstract formulation of a reflexive concept of space is far too vague. The simple proposition, that space is both the medium and outcome of social practice, does not explain the extent to which specific spatial structures are either constitutive or reflective of particular social relations. The realist sociologist, Andrew Sayer (1985), has outlined some of the misconceptions of space which this leads to in Marxist geography. Examining the work of Lefebvre and Castells, Sayer argues that, despite the considerable explanatory weight placed on space, both fetishise the spatial contingencies of social practices and reduce space to the objects constituting it. The central problem is that concrete spatial forms cannot be anticipated purely by reference to abstract theory. For example, the class relationship between capital and labour, fundamental to the capitalist mode of production, can be reproduced in a vast variety of spatial forms which cannot be captured without empirical research. Thus, Lefebvre may argue that urbanism and space modify the relations of production and are indispensable for understanding capitalist society, but, by abstracting from the contingencies of spatial form, very little is actually said about the difference space makes.

To overcome these problems a distinction needs to be made between abstract and concrete research. As maintained in

Section 2 of Chapter 1, such a distinction is central to Marx's defence of epistemology and the scientific method. It is a method which has been taken up by Sayer (1984, 128-135; 1986) in his realist perspective on social space. Sayer argues that the distinction between abstract and concrete research also involves the distinction between necessary and contingent relations and between structures and events. Abstract social theory is concerned with the necessary relations defining social structure. It need only consider space in so far as spatial structures form a necessary component of social structure. On the other hand, concrete research, by definition, focuses on the historic effects of social structure, its causal powers in particular situations. Research then at this level involves an empirical analysis of the specific events and contingent relationships involved in day to day social practice. It is here that the spatial dimension of social relations can play a critical role in the reproduction of social structure. Thus, concrete research must necessarily take spatial structures into account and it is through concrete research that the difference made by space can be assessed.

SECTION 2: THE TRIBUTARY AND FEUDAL CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE

Spatial structures are the historically specific medium through which recursive social relations are produced and reproduced. Different societies embody different organising principles and contrasting spatial orders. Thus the transition from tributary to feudal society can be traced in the changing spatial configurations of early medieval England.

The necessary structural components of both the tributary and feudal modes of production have been discussed in detail in **Chapter 3** providing the basic framework for examining changes in the social use of space. Although the definitions have been outlined in a non-spatial manner, these abstract formulations point towards areas of concrete research in which a spatial analysis is fundamental. The importance of a spatial dimension to empirical research in the early medieval period will be examined through drawing on the work of the historical geographer, Robert Dodgshon.

ROBERT DODGSHON AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY:

In his work **The European Past** (1987), Dodgshon develops a materialist perspective, exploring the interrelationships between social evolution and spatial order. He tries to show how different stages of societal development, from prehistory to capitalism, can be matched to different systems of spatial order. Thus Dodgshon sees history unfolding as much through space as through time, with systems of spatial order contributing to the construction of social order. Critical to this perspective is the notion of 'regulated space'. The rise of state and class societies, Dodgshon argues, is marked by a '*revolution in spatial order*' (1987, 135), in which social relationships become defined by property, constituted in fixed and bounded territories. This point is of fundamental importance.

Pre-state societies were articulated through the kinship relations of production. Social hierarchies and divisions, for example the formation of tribes and chiefdoms, were constituted in terms of blood rather than place and the integration and cohesion of society depended, first and foremost, on the integration of these kinship groups. Consequently, communal property was not fixed in space, but mediated through the kin.

'Bound together by kinship or by a combination of kinship and alliance, the geographical limits of such chiefdoms were its social limits. As such, its territory could be inflated or deflated in lung-like fashion by the life breath squeezed in or out of it by the politicking and warring of tribes'. (Dodgshon 1987, 135)

In contrast, the rise of the state and class divisions marked the demise of communal property. Society became integrated and defined by the holding of land. Formally fixed and bounded territories, not ties of kinship, marked the limits of power. States defined themselves in spatial terms as social relations became shaped by the conditions on which land was held.

'The domain of kings now became physically constituted before it was socially constituted, or, to put it another way, they ruled over people through their rule over territory, not over territory through their rule over people'. (Dodgshon 1987, 135)

Establishing the primacy of territory over kinship was thus one of the means by which the ruling class projected their power over the direct producers. Control over land became part of the means by which class relationships were structured and regulated.

The distinction between social relations based on blood and those on place, and between communal and private property, is

of central importance for understanding the transformations in the social use of space during the early medieval period.

THE TRIBUTARY SOCIAL FORMATION:

The tributary social formation, which rose out of kinship-based modes of production in early medieval England, articulated social relations centred on both blood and place. The ruling class, which extracted tribute from communities of producers, based itself on territorial kingdoms - proto-states. Hence, their class power was defined explicitly in spatial terms. On the other hand, kinship continued to structure the relationships between the direct producers - relations shaped by blood rather than the control of land. The archaeological implication which this holds for spatial analysis is that two forms of social integration and cohesion, state and kin, operated on two levels; a macro and micro-level.

On the macro-level, although the kingdoms of England arising in the seventh century were proto-states, they were still territorial. The geographical limits of these kingdoms were an essential part in the structuring of the class divisions within society, the control of territory being the basis on which tribute was collected. Archaeologically, the existence of territory can be detected by physical boundaries, the splitting up and demarcation of land. Systems of dykes were constructed during the seventh and eighth centuries, indicating the fixing of frontiers and the dividing of land into bounded units, and illustrating the primacy of land over kin for these newly emerging proto-states (Hill 1985; Green 1971). Such a development can also be explored through the study of burial mounds. It has frequently been argued by both anthropologists and archaeologists that the location of burial mounds can be associated with the fixing of territory. For the early medieval period in England, research has been carried

out on the formalising of parish boundaries through an examination of the distribution of Anglo-Saxon pagan burials, as illustrated in the work of Bonney (1976) and Goodier (1984).

Different structuring principles, however, were at work at the micro-level of the tributary social formation. The spatially-framed class relationships within the tributary mode of production were not divorced from the social ties of kinship. The territorialisation of the state did not remove entirely kinship. The ruling class was weak, their institutions of coercion partly dependent on kinship relations (see Chap. 3, 121-5). So, for example, the association of burials with fixed landed property can not be separated from ancestor worship, with the rules and rights of access to land governed by blood ties.

Perhaps the clearest insight into the ambiguity of the tributary proto-state can be seen in the document titled the **Tribal Hidage**, which provides a glimpse of the tribal structure on which the early medieval states were based (Loyn 1962, 306-9; Davies and Vierck 1974). It was an assessment compiled sometime during the period 650-825 AD for the purposes of collecting tribute. However, revealing the nature of surplus extraction, this survey of tribute assessment is organised according to tribe, not territory. As Davies and Vierck have argued, it was tribes which formed '*the axis of early social institutions*' (1974, 224). These tribes had an existence apart from their territory. The early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms and tribes gained their identity through the concept of folk-right. The existence of 'folcland', or folk-right, is another testament of the integration of class and kinship relations of production. A person's folk-right was '*a complex of privileges, status and obligations coming to him with his father's blood and his material inheritance of land and goods*' (Jolliffe 1954, 5).

So, although subordinated within tributary social relations, kinship ties exerted a profound influence on the relationships between the direct producers. The strength of kinship restricted the size and power of the tributary ruling class, since, by definition, the proto-states were integrated on the basis of the social ties of kinship as well as the holding of fixed territory. The significance of social relations, being centred on blood rather than land, can be explored at the micro-level through the archaeology of rural settlements.

The landscape for the kinship groups was boundless. No physical boundaries at a local level restricted access to land and resources, just social ties and obligations. The indirect and collective forms of exploitation imposed by the tributary states did not affect the internal relationships within and between kinship groups. Place, therefore, was not of fundamental importance for the direct producers and there were no mechanisms, apart from kinship itself, constraining social movement. Consequently, such groups were dispersed across the landscape in a fluid manner. The predominant form of agricultural system imposed no substantial obstacle on social movement and, in fact, encouraged settlement shift. The infield-outfield system practised by kinship groups meant that a particular area of land was intensively cultivated for a relatively short period of time and then left fallow, with a new area opened up for cultivation (Steane 1984, 152-3). On a social level, the complex network of kinship ties, maintained through marriage alliances, likewise promoted fluidity in settlement location. Patrilocal marriage rights meant that kinship groups were slowly, but constantly, shifting from generation to generation. Thus, settlement space was influenced by the tribal schemes of marital alliances (Dodgshon, 1987, 78-83).

The one stabilising force at a micro-level was the growth of middlemen, responsible for supervising the collection of the

king's tribute. The development of such a social group would be accompanied necessarily by pressures to fix social space. Tribute was collected from kinship groups on a regional basis. Controlling the social movement of the direct producers would, therefore, become increasingly important to facilitate surplus-labour extraction.

FEUDALISM AND REGULATED SPACE:

The feudal mode of production has clearly defined spatial implications. The development of feudalism from the tributary social formation led to the territorialisation of lordship, the private ownership of estates with immunities from tributary burdens on the land. It was this, not kin, that constituted the relationship between the feudal ruling class and the direct producers. The dominance of feudalism led to the destruction of kinship and the establishment of a class of peasants. Social relationships, tied to the ownership of fixed landed units, penetrated and articulated society on all levels:

'....under feudalism, kings and lords created an abstract political concept of space, one capable of distinguishing space from the people who lived in it, people who, hitherto, had charged it with a purely social identity'.

(Dodgshon 1987, 139)

The hierarchy of social order under early medieval English feudalism existed through a hierarchy of land rights, a hierarchy of space. *Feudal social relations, therefore, were set firmly within a geographical framework and linked to what Dodgshon has termed, regulated space, the formation of bounded units which were tightly controlled:*

'....the feudal relations developed between king and vassal, lord and serf, were not abstract aspatial relations, but were firmly anchored to specific territories and specific spaces: the latter being the quantum basis for the calculation of the other. If we had

to find a word to convey the principles of this new spatial order, it would be the word regulated. Under feudalism, spatial order became socially regulated'.

(1987, 186)

The spatial implications of this abstract definition of the feudal mode of production can be explored on a macro-level, by analysing the relationship between the non-producing class, the feudal lords, and on a micro-level by assessing the mode of exploitation between peasant and lord.

The separation of land from kin allowed the integration of larger and more heterogeneous territories under feudalism and was linked to the building up of the state. Based essentially on historical data, Dodgshon (1987, 166-92) suggests that the key to the domination of the feudal lord was linked to the control over land, the acquisition of an estate; grants of immunities from royal dues and tribute and grants of jurisdiction. This control can be seen with the introduction of book-rights in the eighth and ninth centuries (see Brooks 1971). Book-rights, as opposed to folk-rights, provided estate holders not only with hereditary rights to an estate free from the payment of tribute, but also the right to alienate land. This was linked to the feudal concept of vassalage, the granting of individual jurisdiction over territory in return for fealty, homage and military services. It was book-land, linked to military obligations, which led both to the power of lordship as well as the feudal state. Grants of jurisdiction meant that the feudal state's relationship with its lords was mirrored in the lord's relationship with his underlings. Thus, feudal vassalage allowed the integration of larger territories within the state, with feudal relationships of servitude being reinforced on all levels of society. This ordering of regulated space was the means by which the king's rule was projected over his realm. Hence, as Marx pointed out in the 1844 *Economic and Political Manuscripts*, under feudalism '*the lord... appears to be king of the land*'.

The penetration of feudal relations to all levels of society meant that peasants were drawn into the feudal system of regulated space. Once the feudal lord obtained judicial rights to collect food-rents, feorm (see Stenton 1971, 287-9), which were previously rendered to the King, the lord could invest the increased resources into reorganising the relationship between himself and the peasantry in favour of lordship. Feudal relations thus dominated the day to day lives of the peasants. Through exercising structural powers of lordship, the relationships between lord and serf became firmly anchored to, and structured by, specific territories and specific spaces. Rents were appropriated directly from individual peasant families, linked to the size of the tenement they possessed and the strips of land they farmed. Surplus extraction was, therefore, mediated through a rigorous definition and demarcation of space.

'For the peasantry, feudal space was bounded space. It was no longer a world of boundless or unlimited opportunities to be colonised when the need arose. For each and all, it was a world delimited by the land assessment imposed on the settlement. In effect, the landscape became divided into a checkerboard on which occupation was legitimised in some spaces but not others'. (Dodgshon 1987, 192)

The early medieval landscape was divided into units of land, defined by measures of rents, services, renders and dues. So the class relationship between lord and peasant was set down in an explicitly spatial framework.

This structuring of social space was not simply a passive reflection of feudal social relations, but part of the means by which English society was actively constituted. As exploitation required extra-economic forms of coercion, politics and economics were fused at the level of lordship and this fusion became embodied within the fabric of the manorial village. The imposition of bounded space meant peasant movement could be regulated by the local lord. Spatial

structures were part of the feudal lords extra-economic means of coercion. The day to day exploitation of the peasantry was aided by the spatiality of feudal relations which effectively fragmented them as a class. Restricting peasant mobility curtailed the formation of a collective consciousness and the mobilisation of forces which could successfully resist feudal exploitation.

This important point has been made by Abercrombie, Hill and Turner in their work *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (1980) where they examine what Marx meant by extra-economic forces under feudalism and criticising the theory that the subordination of the peasantry was maintained through the imposition of Christianity, a dominant ideology. They maintain that, on the contrary, class rule was perpetuated through material means.

'Given the general problem of communication in a society based on isolated rural communes, there was no coherent peasant class consciousness which could have mobilised the peasantry against the landlords as a class of oppressors. Material conditions ruled out the development of anything but a localised sense of identity and solidarity'.

(Abercrombie et al. 1980, 72)

The spatial makeup of the medieval nucleated village was, therefore, part of the source of the lord's power and domination of the peasantry. Feudal space was thus the arena of class struggle (see Saunders forthcoming).

Research into the articulation of the feudal state through a hierarchy of rights connected to the ownership of land is a suitable area for historical geography on a macro-level. A more archaeologically-orientated research topic would be the analysis of the difference space made on a micro-level, exploring the class relationship between peasant and lord within the nucleated village to which we shall now turn.

SECTION 3: EARLY MEDIEVAL RURAL SETTLEMENTS

The archaeological study of early medieval rural settlements has evolved comparatively recently. Although research into deserted medieval villages provided the main impetus behind the establishment of the Society of Medieval Archaeology (Clarke 1984, 15-6), this did not stretch as far back as the pre-Conquest period. Anglo-Saxon sites left only ephemeral traces of their existence and were investigated largely in rescue excavations. The development of the subject, therefore, progressed in a highly fragmentary manner, with rural settlements excavated on an ad hoc, random basis. It was not until Philip Rahtz and Peter Fowler's papers in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (Wilson 1976) that there was any serious consideration of the accumulated evidence. These general syntheses stimulated research, with an increase in the rate of recovery and the publication of important excavations. Despite the substantial advances in the quantity and quality of the data base, the analysis of early medieval rural settlements has been constrained by the dominant empiricist methodology of medieval studies. The absence of any theoretical framework and the reluctance to use any but the most elementary interpretations, has limited the use of general research programmes to direct rural settlement studies. Hence, it has been seen as sufficient just to accumulate, describe and categorise sites and monuments.

THE RAUNDS AREA PROJECT:

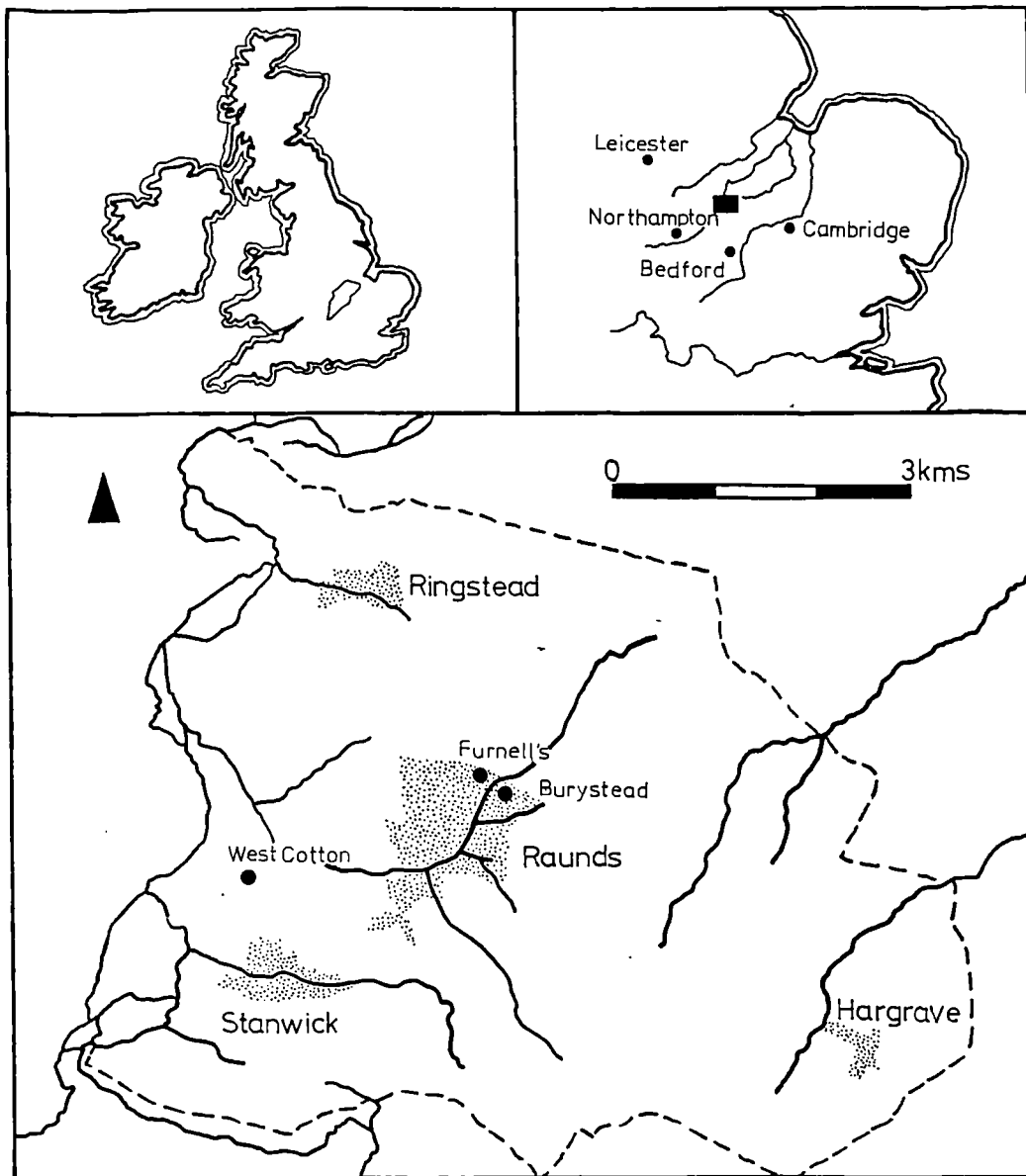
Recently, however, there have been improvements in the empirical study of rural settlements. Rather than isolated sites alone being examined, whole regions have been surveyed. The Raunds Area Project in Northamptonshire is the best example of this (Foard and Pearson 1985). The project stands out as one of the very few which have attempted to examine in detail the evolution of a rural landscape. It offers an

example of how field work into Anglo-Saxon rural settlements should be carried out. By combining large scale rescue excavation with field survey, it has yielded some extremely important information on the spatial development of an early medieval village. The Raunds Area Project illustrates the potential of archaeology to explore the origins of the English in terms of the social use of space. It will thus be presented as the principal case study by which the data from other settlements across the country can be compared

Raunds itself is a large village in East Northamptonshire, about twenty miles from Northampton, in the valley of a small tributary of the River Nene (see fig. 5). Field work started in the late 1970s as a rescue excavation of an Anglo-Saxon church and manor site (Cadman 1983). This showed Raunds to be the most intact area of historic landscape in the upper Nene valley. Subsequently, archaeological research developed into an extensive inter-disciplinary project examining an area of forty square kilometers. The project has a single conceptual framework, within which specific fieldwork is used to answer particular questions. One of the central questions was whether the origins of the typical Midlands medieval rural layout of nucleated villages and occasional hamlets surrounded by open-fields lay in the late-Saxon period.

The excavations at Raunds have revealed a sequence of continuous occupation from the sixth century AD onwards. Unfortunately, it has proved extremely difficult to distinguish between early and mid-Saxon phases. Only with the introduction of St Neots ware in the ninth century can a firm chronology can be established. However, occupation in the early/middle and late-Saxon periods is marked by a dramatic change in the spatial organisation of the settlement, a change which has been identified on other sites in the area, in particular at West Cotton. Despite the provisional nature of the evidence, these patterns offer us a clear insight into the

development of the early medieval landscape. The Raunds Area Project, therefore, provides an ideal opportunity to explore the temporal and spatial dimension of the origins of feudalism.



5. Location map of the Raunds Area Project (after Foard and Pearson 1985)

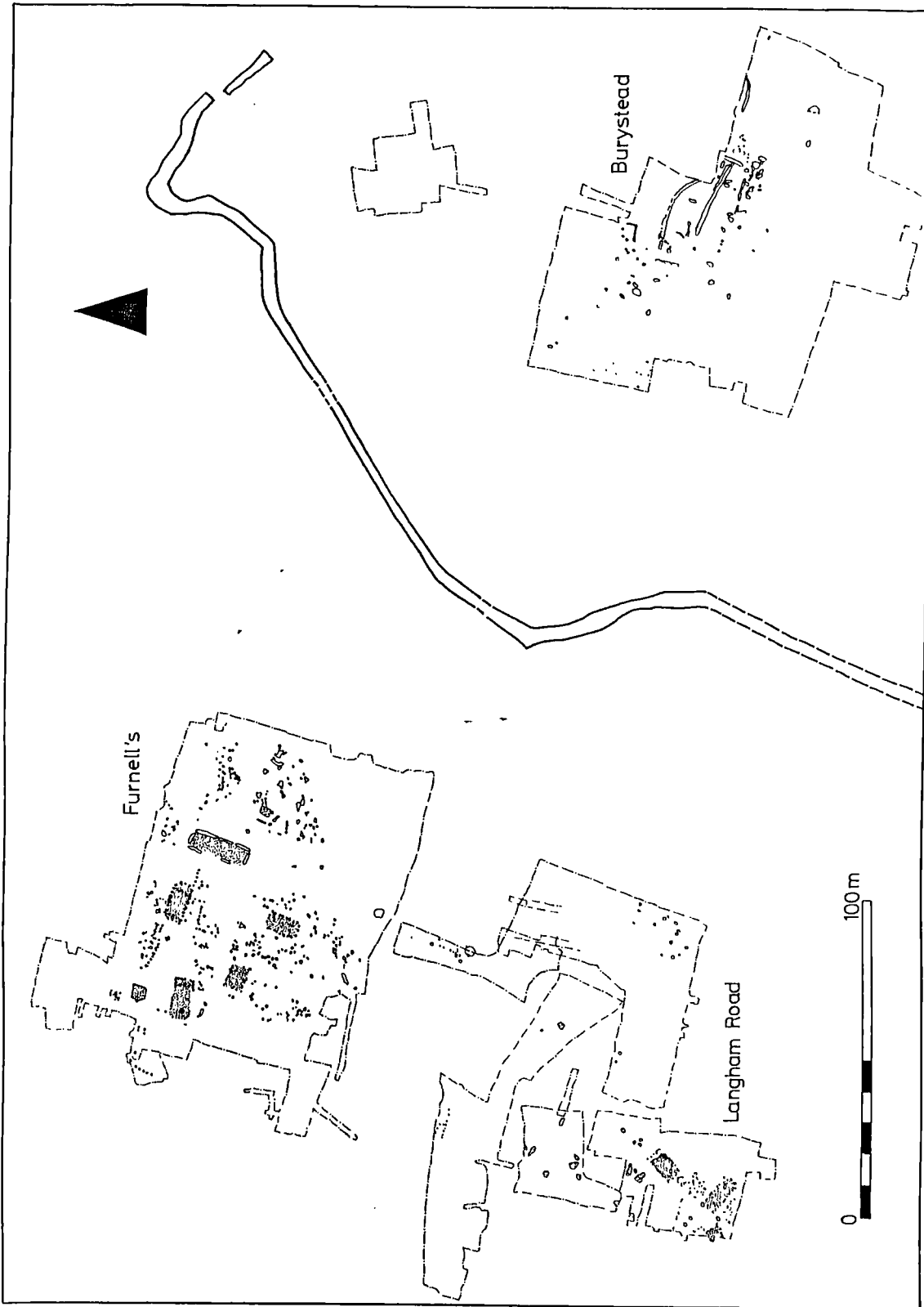
The early/middle Saxon occupation consisted of a dispersed settlement of post-built halls and sunken floored huts, extending over at least ten hectares of the ground on either

side of the valley (Audouy 1990). Although loosely agglomerated, the settlement was dominated by a sequence of large timber halls, planned around a central open space at the Furnell's site (see fig. 6). It remained unclear whether the sites identified were contemporary or whether the data collected represented a fluid settlement. However, by the end of the early/middle Saxon period, a small ditched enclosure was constructed at the Furnell's site and this appears to be associated with timber halls (see fig. 7).

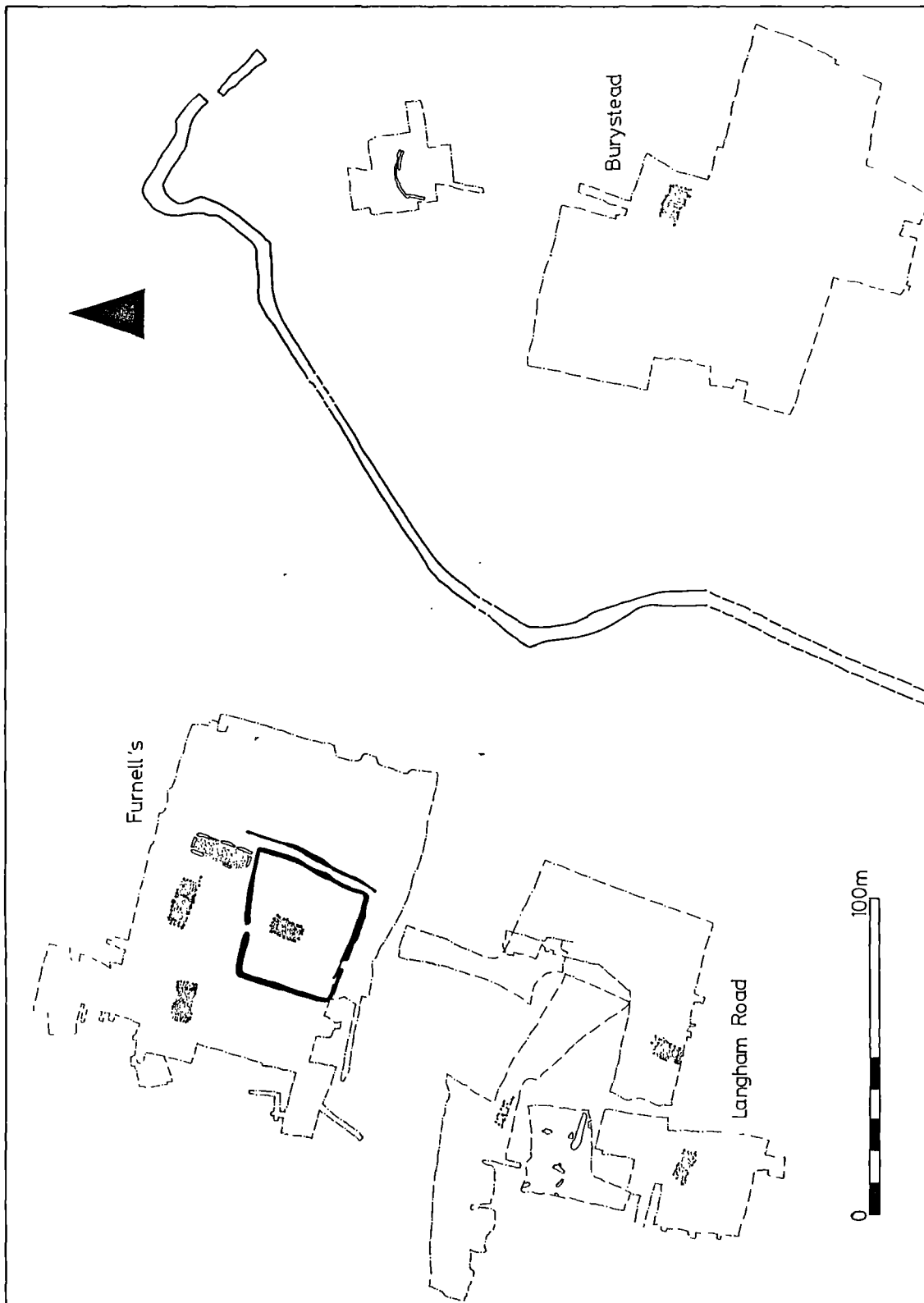
Steve Parry's (1990) field walking surveys in the immediate area have also identified a number of early/middle Saxon settlements. Although the surface scatters of pottery vary in extent and density, they appear to form pairs of sites across small valleys. It was unclear whether each site was contemporary or represented a change in location. However, where areas of pottery scatters have been excavated, such as at West Cotton (Windell 1990), the evidence points to small, short-lived occupation sites. David Hall's (1985; 1988) field surveys elsewhere in Northamptonshire have produced comparative material. He has also demonstrated that the early/middle Saxon period was characterised by a dispersed and frequently spaced settlement pattern (see also Foard 1978; Hall and Martin 1979).

The late-Saxon phase of occupation at Raunds represented a watershed in the evolution of the village. The settlement which emerged at the time was not only nucleated and planned, but, in its embryonic and immature form, it took on the appearance of the villages which survived throughout the medieval period (see fig. 8). Three important structural and spatial components of this settlement can be identified.

First is the appearance of manorial property at the Furnell's site: a proprietary church and a manor house. These two buildings, comprising a long trench built aisled hall



6. Plan of early/middle Saxon Raunds (after Audouy 1990)

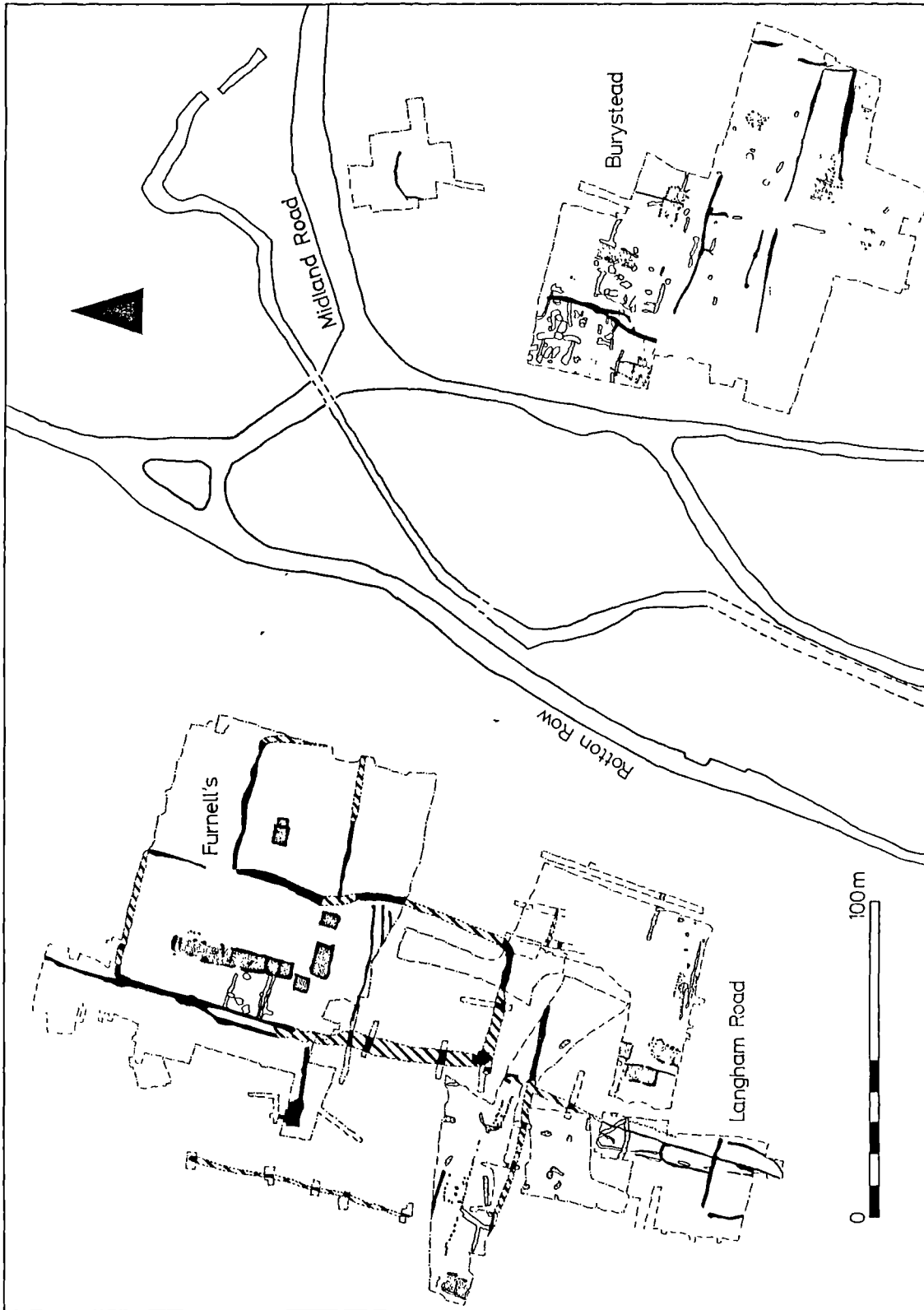


7. Plan of Raunds at the end of the early/middle Saxon period (after Audouy 1990)

(Audouy 1990) and stone built church of nave and chancel (Boddington and Cadman 1981), were by far the most substantial buildings of the settlement. This structural difference was reinforced by their spatial arrangement within the village. The manor and church, positioned at the north end of the village, lay adjacent and perpendicular to each other and were set within ditched and banked rectilinear enclosures. These enclosures were linked to each other and effectively separated the church and hall from the rest of the settlement to form a distinct manorial complex.

The second key component of the village was tenement rows. Immediately to the south of the manorial complex, was an area divided up by a series of rectilinear ditched enclosures varying in width from 12 to 22m (Audouy and Cadman 1987, 20). These tenements ran parallel to those of the manor, fronting on to what later became known as Rotton Row to the east and separated from the open-fields to the west by a headland, the southern continuation of the western manorial boundary. Inside and outside these enclosures was an area covered by small timber buildings and other features, including stone quarries, clay extraction pits, and trackways. Parts of a network of tenement ditches have also been identified at Midland Road and Burystead Manor and on a small plot of land towards the southernmost end of the village at Brook Street. The establishment of tenement rows, coinciding with the construction of the first church and manor, represents the creation of tofts, i.e. property boundaries defining the homesteads of individual peasant families.

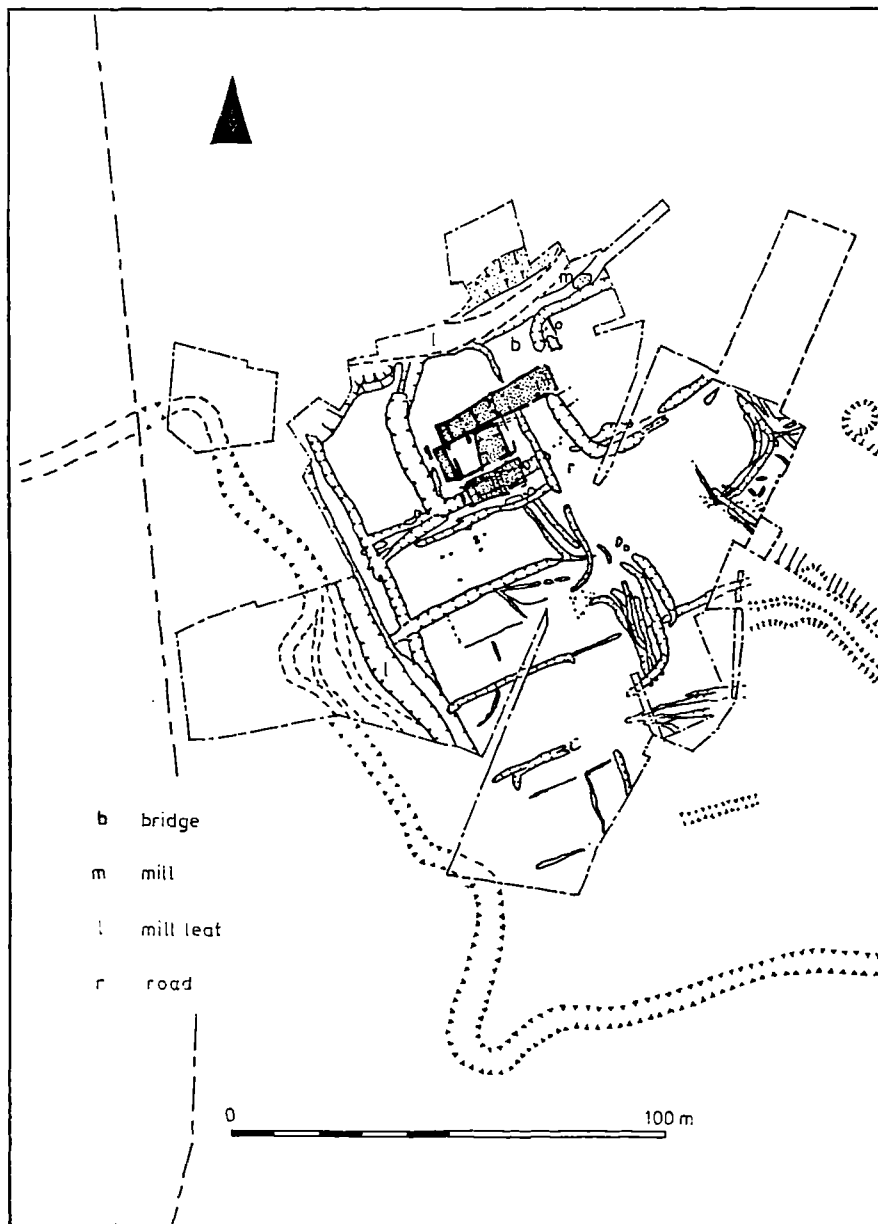
The third key element of the settlement was the streets. The peasant tenements were laid out at right-angles to clearly defined streets. At Langham Road, the ditched enclosures ran parallel and perpendicular to Rotton Row, the main north/south village street. A similar tenement/street relationship was evident on the east side of the village at the Midland Road



8. Plan of late-Saxon Raunds (after Audouy 1990)

site and to the south at Brook Street. The imposition of strictly demarcated access routes formed a critical structural and spatial component of the late-Saxon Raunds village. For example, Rotton Row, running perpendicular to the tenement plots and the manorial enclosures, linked the two components together.

The morphological arrangement of Raunds village was not an isolated pattern within the immediate region. The three components, manorial property, peasant tenements and roads, performed a key role in the spatial structuring of the neighbouring hamlet of West Cotton (Windell forthcoming; see fig. 9). In the late-Saxon period the whole site was divided by a series of parallel ditches forming a row of rectangular plots of consistent width: four rods (c. 20m). These plots lay on either side of, and fronted on to, the main road of the settlement. However, they did not appear to contain any major buildings. At the north/west end of the hamlet was a complex sequence of large timber buildings occupying a double plot. The early phases were partially enclosed by a ditch and, possibly, an up-cast bank giving a pretension of defence and representing a manorial complex. The main hall (13.5m by 5m) stood at the north end of the road with a further range (11m by 4m) to the west. This complex was almost identical to the 'Long Range' at the Furnell's site, Raunds. During the tenth and eleventh centuries the general form of this building complex was changed and an undefended courtyard arrangement was created. The main hall still stood over the hamlet's road and formed a gatehouse structure providing access to the enclosure. Significantly, the manorial complex also contained a horizontally mounted water mill, lying beside the river Nene and fed by a leat which ran around the tenement plots (Windell forthcoming).



9. Plan of the late-Saxon features at West Cotton (after Windell forthcoming)

Parry's field walking surveys have also produced comparative data for settlement nucleation. There is no evidence that the dispersed nature of early/middle Saxon surface scatters continued into the late-Saxon period. It appears that settlement was restricted to, and concentrated around, the existing villages and now deserted hamlets close to the River

Nene. Trial trenches of these late-Saxon pottery scatters at Hardgrave and Stanwick confirms the picture of widespread settlement planning with the laying out of tenement plots (Parry 1990). Elsewhere in Northamptonshire, Hall's surveys have conclusively proved that nucleation first occurred in the late-Saxon period and that this was accompanied by the laying out of landscape into planned open-fields.

EARLY/MIDDLE SAXON RURAL SETTLEMENTS:

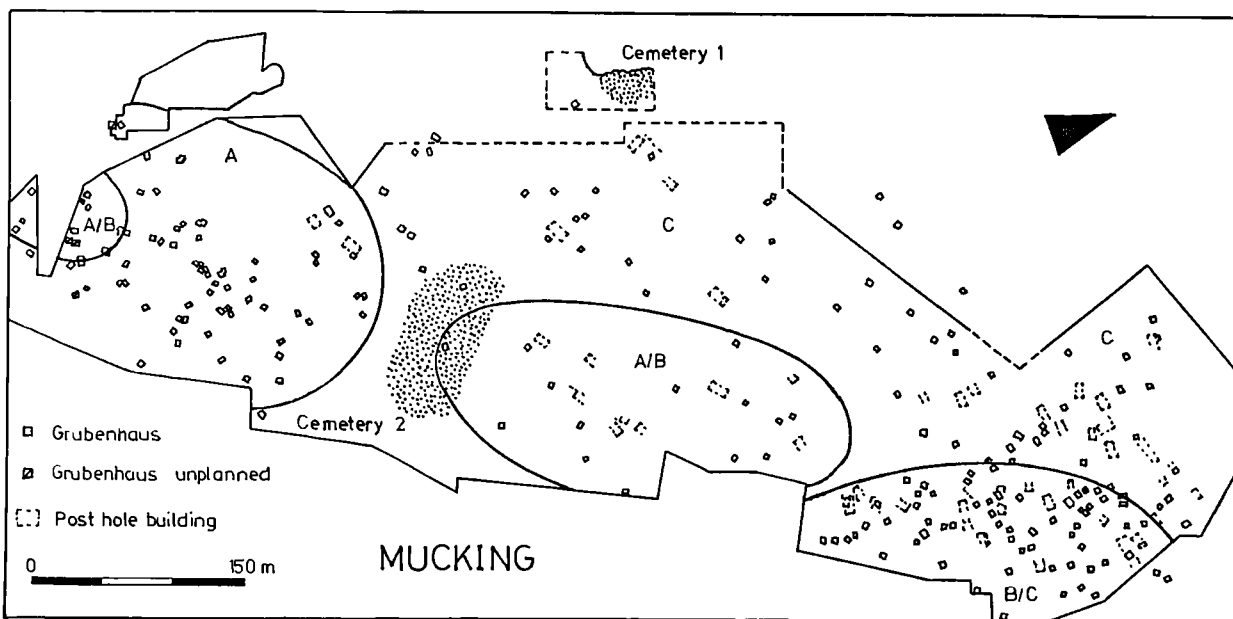
Although the Raunds Area Project represents one of the most sophisticated research programmes examining the evolution of a medieval landscape, comparative spatial patterns can be identified on other Anglo-Saxon sites. This data needs to be explored in order to provide a general picture of the social construction of space in the early medieval period.

The dispersed character of the early/middle Saxon settlement at Raunds appears to be a generalised pattern. Excavations have revealed that many rural sites of this period were also ill-defined, with no clear plan or formal lay out (see Taylor 1983, 107-24). Although the exact chronology at Raunds has proved difficult to establish, the availability of dateable sequences elsewhere allows us to study spatial patterning in more detail. Early and mid-Saxon settlements tend not only to be dispersed in character, but also fluid, shifting across the landscape through time. Further, important developments can be identified in the mid-Saxon period which are only hinted at at Raunds. Individual farmstead units emerge, defined by ditches and fences and, at particular sites, enclosures are established in association with halls.

There are many sites across the country which illustrate this recurrent settlement pattern of dispersal and fluidity, for example, Eynsham, Oxfordshire (Gray 1974); Bishopstone, Sussex (Bell 1977); Maxey, Northamptonshire (Addyman 1964);

Barton Court, Oxfordshire (Miles 1986). However, Mucking in Essex is one of the best examples.

Mucking, situated on the gravel terrace above the River Thames and covering approximately twenty hectares, was excavated by M and W Jones in the 1960s and '70s (Jones 1979) and has been the subject of a reinterpretation by Helena Hamerow (1988). Approximately fifty post-built halls were recorded, along with two-hundred-and-thirteen sunken floored huts. By studying the distribution of different pottery types (coarse slipped; combined and pinched ceramic assemblages), and linking them to building orientation, Hamerow has been able to phase the site. She concludes that Mucking was in no sense a village, but consisted of dispersed and shifting farmsteads (see fig. 10). The first identifiable

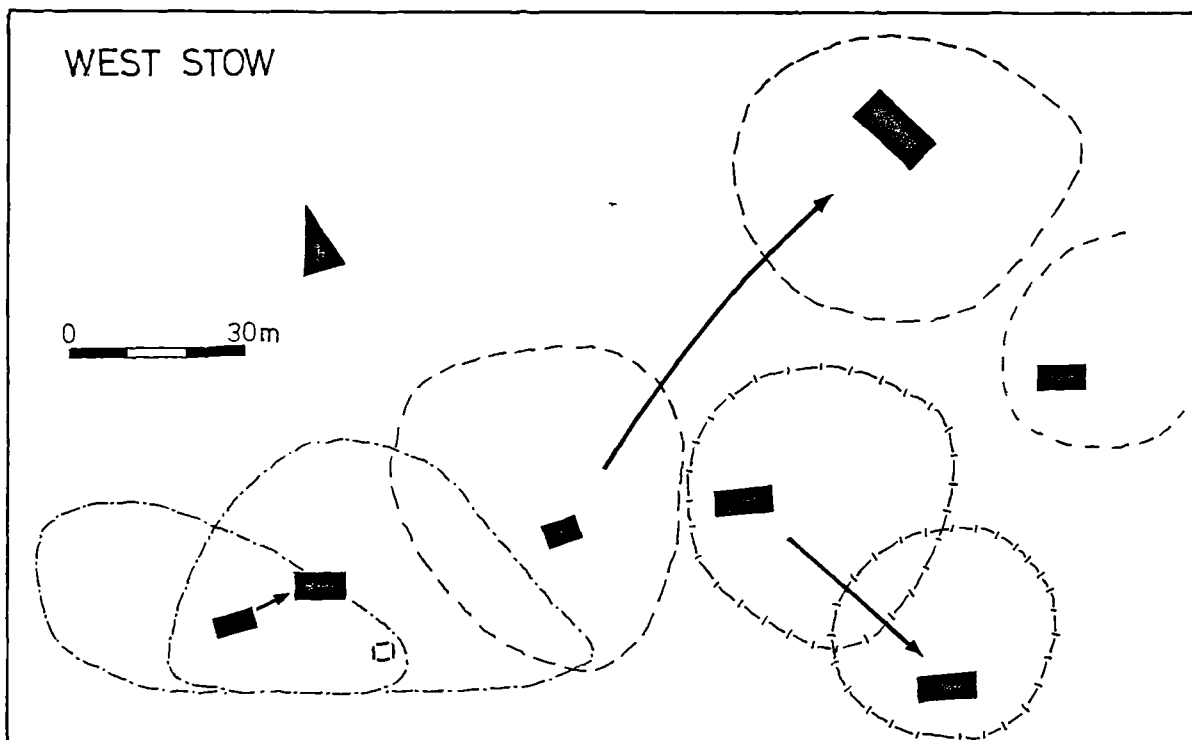


10. Plan of the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Mucking (after Hamerow 1988)

phase of occupation began in the early fifth century. In the early sixth century the settlement moved northward, becoming much smaller and more dispersed in the process. During the

early seventh century it moved again, to the north-east, and in the final phase, starting in the seventh century, it shifted westwards and consisted of more isolated and separate farmsteads.

The emergence of defined farmstead units during and after the seventh century, suggested at Mucking, is illustrative of the spatial developments within the mid-Saxon period. Separate settlement units have been observed on a number of sites of this period, for example at Brandon, Suffolk (Carr 1985; Carr, Tester and Murphy 1988). But the two clearest examples of this phenomenon come from the excavations at West Stow in Suffolk and Catholme in Staffordshire.



11. A schematic development of the Anglo-Saxon settlement at West Stow (after West 1985)

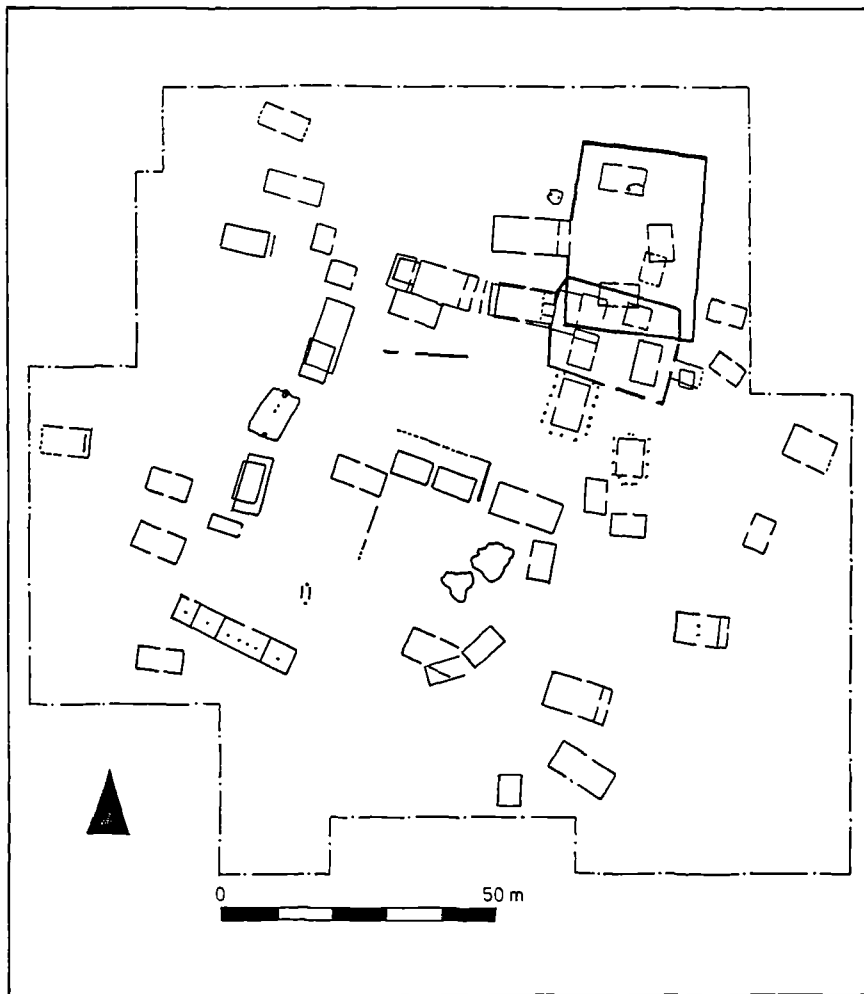
West Stow, excavated during the 1970s, comprised six post-built hall structures and seventy sunken floored buildings

within an area of approximately four-and-a-half acres (West 1985). Post-excavation analysis has demonstrated that these features were not all contemporary. West has shown that no more than four halls, with accompanying sunken floored huts, were likely to be standing at any one time (see fig. 11). As at Mucking, these groups of structures were dispersed and fluid in character and moved across an open landscape. In the later phases of the settlement, during the seventh century, boundaries between the individual settlement units were established. These boundaries formed fenced enclosures and defined the separate farmsteads of the settlement.

Catholme, in the Trent Valley, was excavated by Stuart Losco-Bradley (1977; 1984). The site covered an area of over two hectares and comprised the ground plans of sixty-six timber buildings, probably representing the continuous development of between five and seven farmsteads during the fifth to tenth centuries. Losco-Bradley suggests a sequence of five phases of shifting, expanding and shrinking farmstead units. These units were defined through the association of a number of halls grouped together by a surrounding fenced enclosure and linked by trackways. Although many of the proposed farmstead units appeared and disappeared within the life of settlement, the central unit survived throughout, being the principal enclosure.

There are also many examples of the other mid-Saxon pattern, the distinctive association of large timber halls with carefully defined and structured rectilinear enclosures. At Foxley near Malmesbury (Hinchliffe 1986), for example, a larger timber hall is situated perpendicular to a complex of rectilinear fenced enclosures. This pattern is similar to the crop marks surveyed at Hatton Rock in Warwickshire (Rahtz 1970). Likewise, at Sprouston, Roxburghshire (St Joseph 1982), Thirlings, Northumbria (O'Brien 1981), and Millfield, Northumbria (Hope-Taylor 1977, 15), the relationship between

fenced compounds and timber halls is clearly visible. The settlements at Chalton and Cowdery's Down, both in Hampshire, however, are the best comparative examples of this spatial configuration.



12. Plan of the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Chalton (after Champion 1977)

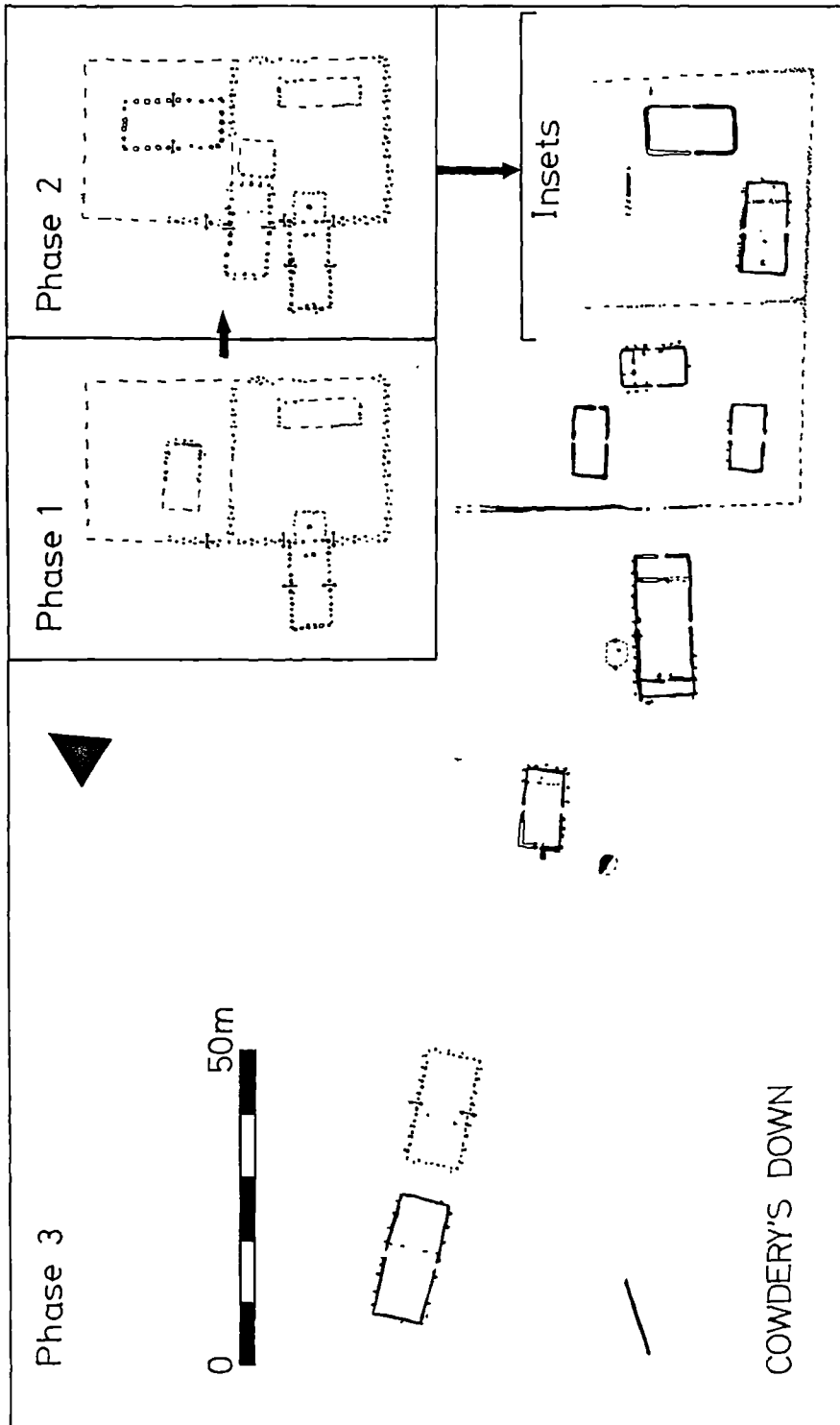
Chalton, excavated by Peter Addyman in the early 1970s, revealed sixty-one Saxon structures, both post and trench-built halls and sunken floored buildings, cut in the chalk subsoil (Addyman and Leigh 1973; Champion 1977). Although there was little stratigraphy, it was possible to phase the site through an examination of superimposed buildings and fences. The two main phases of the settlement, dated to the

seventh century by stratified sherds of grass tempered ware, were dominated by fenced enclosures (see fig. 12). The first rectangular enclosure at Chalton contained three post built halls. Although the fence was not continuous, the main entrance was through a larger hall projecting out at right angles to the enclosure. This hall was trench-built rather than post-built. The first enclosure was replaced in a second phase by a smaller one overlying its south end. Significantly, the spatial pattern remained the same. The second enclosure also contained three halls (post-built) with a larger hall (trench-built) projecting at right angles to it.

At Cowdery's Down, near Basingstoke, Martin Millet excavated a site yielding sixteen halls and two sunken floored buildings which possessed a remarkably similar spatial morphology to that of Chalton (Millet and Jones 1983). The three main phases of the settlement, dated approximately to the seventh and eighth centuries, consisted of halls arranged in and around a rectilinear fenced enclosure (see fig. 13). In the first two phases, halls straddled and projected at right angles from the enclosure. In the final phase, however, there was a major change in alignment and structural type of building. The halls were trench-built and the enclosure extended westwards apparently without a hall straddling, or projecting, from it.

LATE-SAXON RURAL SETTLEMENTS:

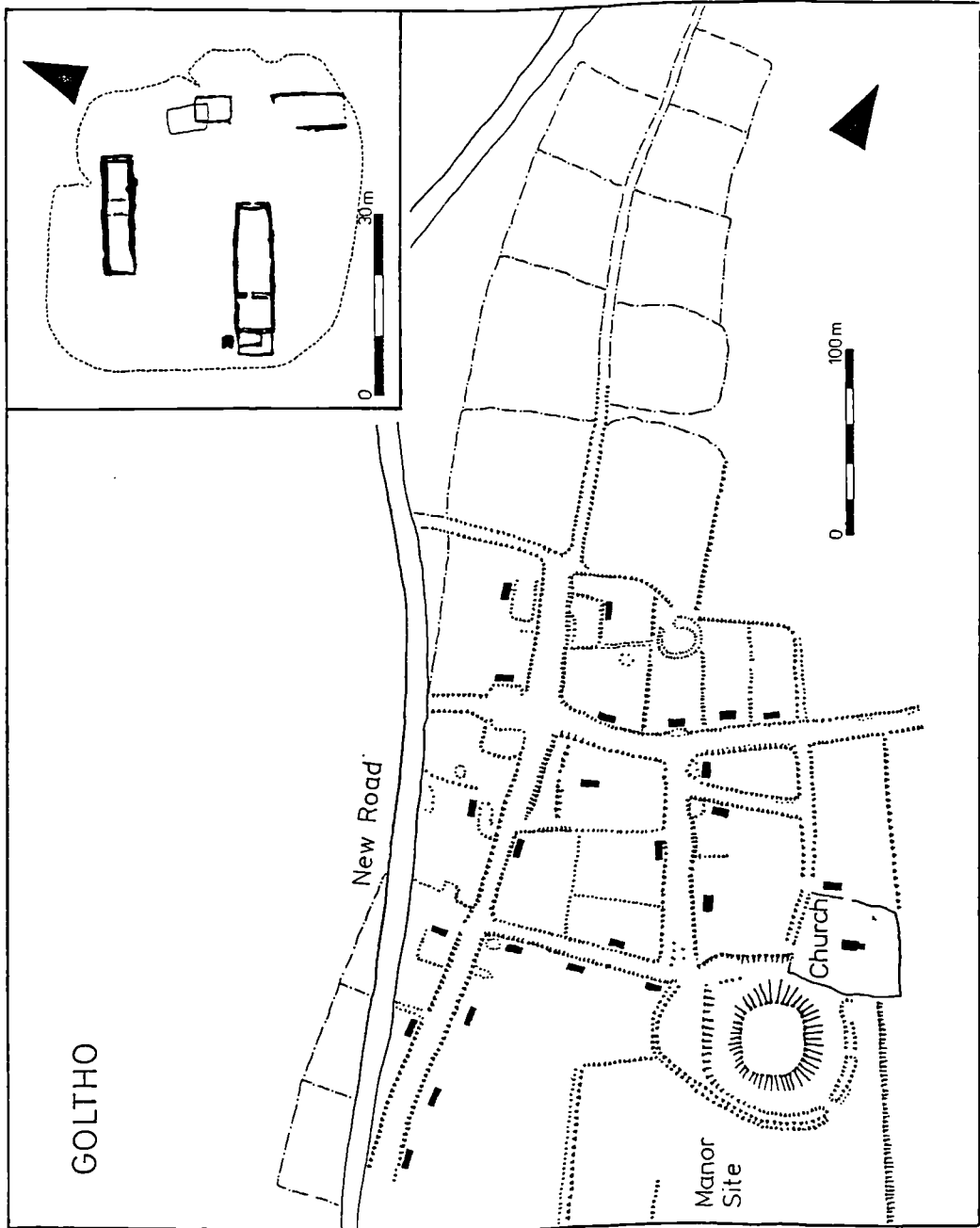
It was during the late-Saxon period that a generalised transformation in the spatial character of rural settlement occurred. The dispersed, frequently spaced and fluid early and mid-Saxon settlements were superseded abruptly by stable, nucleated villages. In many cases the location of medieval villages have their origins in these pre-Conquest developments. The genesis of the distinctive English medieval landscape of villages and hamlets, connected by roads and trackways and surrounded by open-fields, can be traced to this



13. Phase plans of the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Cowdery's Down (after Millet and Jones 1983)

period (Taylor 1983, 125-50). Although regional field surveys such as the Fenland Project (Hayes 1985; 1988) have produced some of the most convincing evidence for this dramatic modification of rural settlement forms, the data derived from excavations are poor. The lack of coherent research designs to investigate the processes of settlement nucleation has left numerous gaps in the archaeological record. Nonetheless, comparative spatial patterns to those observed in the Raunds Area Project can still be identified on other late-Saxon sites.

The excavation of the deserted medieval village at Goltho by Guy Beresford (1987) revealed that the late-Saxon period was formative for the planning and nucleation of the settlement. The village, situated on the clay-lands of Lincolnshire, nine miles from Lincoln, consisted of thirty-seven rectilinear crofts, adjacent to streets, with manor and chapel positioned at the south-east corner (see fig. 14). These excavations are famous for the uncovering and interpretation of a complex sequence of manorial enclosures and structures. The first manor was set within a rampart and a ditch, which enclosed three timber halls set around a central courtyard in a similar fashion to West Cotton. The main building was a boat-shaped hall, with small timber halls opposite and adjacent to it. Although Beresford dated this complex to the mid-ninth century, a more likely date for the first manor site is the tenth century as suggested by the sherds of Torksey and Stamford ware found within the enclosure ditch. Significantly, the manor complex, like the one at North Raunds, is positioned at one end of the settlement in close spatial association with the chapel. It also appears to be contemporary with the laying out of the village tenements. An excavation of one of the medieval crofts revealed that the first tenement was established in the pre-Conquest period. The boundary ditch between two crofts had silted up before the late eleventh

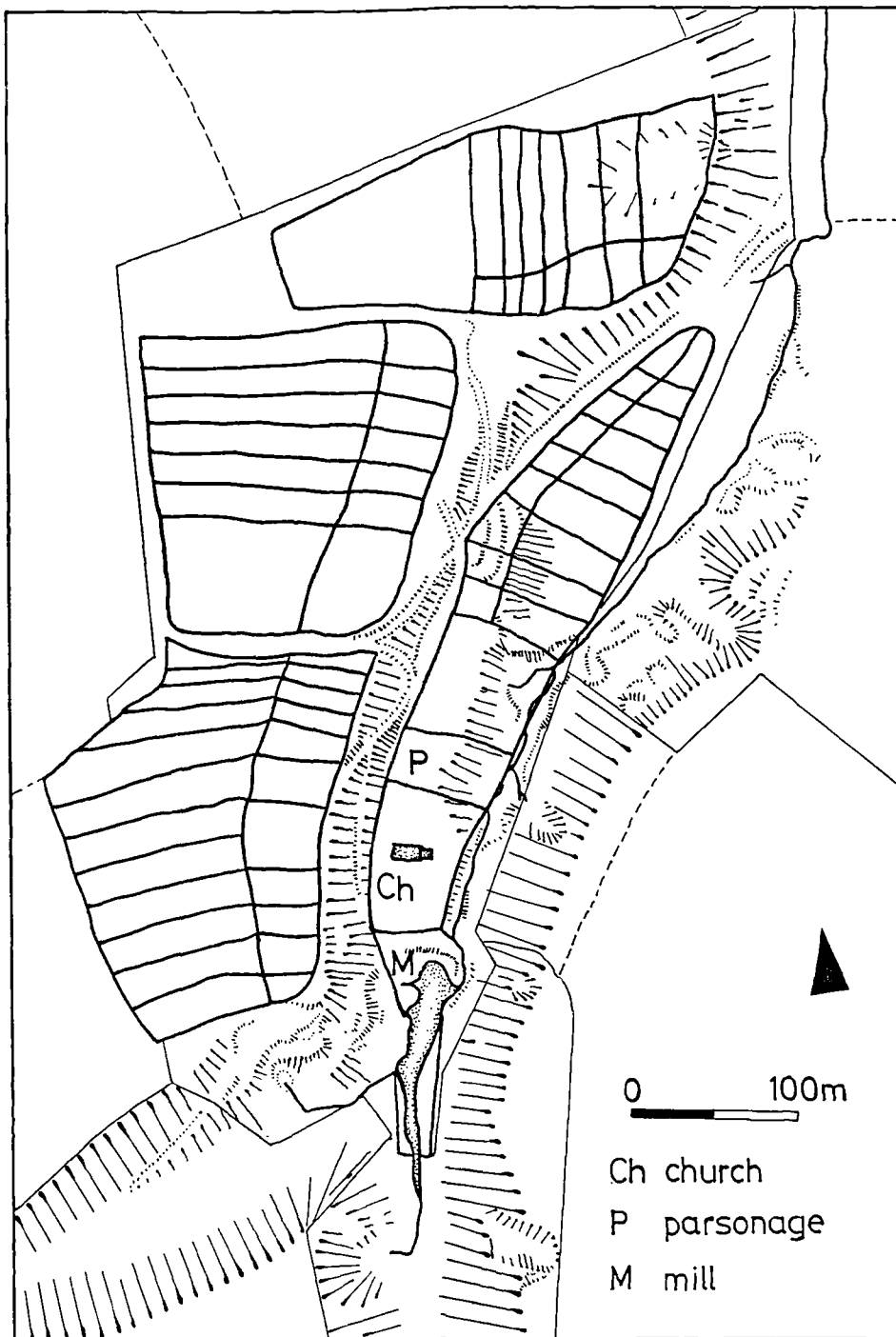


14. Plan of the deserted medieval village of Goltho and the late-Saxon manor (after Beresford 1987)

century when it was sealed by a post-built house dated by stratified pottery (Beresford 1975).

The excavations at Wharram Percy in North Yorkshire by Maurice Beresford and John Hurst (1990) have also produced interesting comparative material. Hurst (1984) suggests that, originally, Wharram Percy formed a regular two row street-green village with a headrow at the northern end (see fig. 15). These first tenements were observed under the north manor site and beneath the later medieval croft under the west row. It was notable that these crofts appear to have been laid out to a standard size on a module of 18m, or two selions. Precise evidence for the timing of the nucleation of the settlement and the planning of the village has proved elusive. However, Hurst (1984, 82-7) has argued that a late-Saxon date is most likely. It is in this period that the first church was constructed, initially consisting of a small timber nave, replaced in the pre-Conquest period by a stone nave to which a small chancel was latter added (Bell, Beresford and Thorn 1985). A major late-Saxon post-built hall structure, which could be interpreted as the initial manor of the village, lay immediately to the north of the church. Further, just to the south of the church, there is evidence that the settlement's stream was dammed for a series of water mills which were in use from late-Saxon times (Hurst 1984, 101). It was likely that the nucleation of the settlement was associated with the laying out of the field system. David Hall's (1982) survey of Wharram Percy and its surrounding townships has demonstrated that the open-field system must have been planned at one time. Not only was all the available flat ground on the plateau laid out in ridge and furrow, but almost all laid out north-south, often in long selions up to 1000m long.

Although Goltho and Wharram Percy are the best comparative examples, similar patterns have been observed on other sites.



15. A possible reconstruction of how Wharram Percy may originally have been laid out in the late Anglo-Saxon period (after Hurst 1984).

Despite regional variations, late-Saxon rural settlements appear to be characterised by several common features; viz, the growth of seigneurial property - the manor and the proprietary church; the establishment of tenements in association with roads; and the laying out of open-fields.

Late-Saxon manors have been identified in a number of excavations, in particular Porchester, North Elmham and Sulgrave. At Porchester Castle, Hampshire, a sequence of occupation from the fifth to eleventh century was revealed by Cunliffe (1976). The first two phases comprised post-built halls and sunken floored huts and represented the early and mid-Saxon period. In the tenth century, however, there was a complete change in the character of the structures. A thick deposit of occupation material was overlain by a coherent complex of three buildings, one of which was a large timber-aisled hall. These buildings flanked a courtyard within which lay a well and a latrine building. This courtyard complex was replaced by almost identical structures and is interpreted as a manorial complex. It is a pattern which has also been observed in the excavations of North Elmham, Norfolk (Wade-Martins 1980). Long, straight boundary ditches and four trench built halls of mid-Saxon date were replaced in the late ninth and early tenth centuries by a group of four trench-constructed buildings arranged around a courtyard. This late-Saxon complex was situated on higher ground at the north end of the settlement with the central village street and two tenement rows laid out to the south. It was interpreted as the halls and out-buildings of a bishop's palace. At Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, Davison's (1968; 1977) excavation inside the earth ringwork exposed a tenth century hall with accompanying post-built buildings, interpreted as a late-Saxon manor house. In the eleventh century the hall was modified and fortified with a surrounding earthwork. This manorial complex lay at one end of the village, with the main streets and tenements

situated to the west. It appears to have been built in association with the church.

The close, spatial relation of church and manor is extremely common. Morris (1989, 227-74) has drawn attention to this recursive pattern. At Barton-upon-Humber the church, constructed within the period c. 970-1030 AD, was situated just to the west of a large curving bank and ditch, an enclosure surrounding what became the manorial complex (Rodwell and Rodwell 1982). Similarly, at Earls Barton in Northamptonshire, the Anglo-Saxon church lies beside an earthwork. This involved a high degree of planning, a point reinforced by the fact that many early medieval village churches were situated in prominent positions on high ground or hills. For example, there are parts of the country where almost every church stands in an elevated position, such as in the Vale of York between the Rivers Wharfe and Nidd. It is probable that manorial complexes were likewise situated at these prominent places, but only the stone churches have survived.

The other distinctive feature of nucleated villages is the pattern of tofts and crofts concentrated along defined streets (see Beresford and St. Joseph 1979). Despite the number of excavations on deserted medieval villages (see Beresford and Hurst 1971; Clarke 1984, 15-62) very little work has been directed at exploring the development of this feature. However, many regional surveys suggest an early medieval date for the establishment of tenements and roads (see Hooke 1985). Taylor (1979), for example, has argued that the ninth and tenth centuries were the formative period for the emergence of the medieval road system. He has drawn attention to the close relationship between nucleated villages and the formalisation of road networks. In Yorkshire, Sheppard (1974; 1976) has examined the village morphology and observed how many conform to a regular plan, with the tenements being laid out along

streets to a standard measurement of an eighteen foot perch. Similar regularity in settlement morphology can be observed in other areas of the country (see Roberts 1977, 139-44), which suggests a planned rather than evolutionary development of the nucleated village and rural landscape.

Although dating has proved difficult, there is evidence to show that the origins of open-field farming lay in the pre-Norman period (Steane 1984, 152-5). The laying out of this distinctive medieval field system appears to be associated with the reorganisation of rural settlements into nucleated villages (see Rowley 1981). This is illustrated in Harvey's (1981; 1984) research into the planned field systems in Holderness in east Yorkshire, a landscape which preserves the medieval field system. She has shown how the typical townships in the region possessed two arable fields divided into parallel strips. Many of these strips were of great length, often extended from one field boundary to another, in some cases a distance of over a mile. Harvey hypothesised that the simplicity and uniformity of these fields suggest a planned origin, associated with village reorganisation occurring during the late-Saxon/early Norman period.

THE SOCIAL USE OF SPACE AND THE ORIGINS OF FEUDALISM:

The spatial patterns described above illustrate how important changes in rural settlement morphology were occurring during the early medieval period. Although excavators have noted their existence, they have offered very little in the way of social explanations, the all-embracing empiricist framework of medieval archaeology hindering the construction of general interpretations. However, by approaching the data sets with the theoretical propositions outlined in Section 1 and 2 of this chapter, a fuller understanding of the processes behind the production and reproduction of early medieval spatial relations can be grasped. The transformations in the social use of space will be explored in terms of kinship, tributary social relations and feudal production and exploitation.

KINSHIP AND FARMSTEADS:

The early/middle Saxon spatial pattern of dispersed and fluid rural settlements and the movement towards defined farmstead units, need to be placed in the context of kinship. Kinship ties dominated the relationship between the direct producers during this period and the landscape for these rural communities was thus boundless (see above, 205-8). This was physically embodied in the loose and fluid settlement patterns observed at Raunds, Mucking, West Stow and Catholme. These sites represent the primacy of kin in the mediation of property rights.

In early/middle Saxon England the household was the basic unit of production. Land was not cultivated communally through the kinship group, the tribe, but centred on the individual families operating from the farmstead. The fragmentary nature of this form of production gave rise to the fluid and dispersed nature of settlement morphology. Without communal

farming there would be no need for settlement stability or nucleation. The infield/outfield system of agriculture practised by these kinship groups represented a relatively low development of the productive forces. The particular areas for cultivation would be periodically moved, contributing to settlement impermanence. Although the kin was the basic unit of production, these household units were intergrated through alliances and lineages to form loose communities. Kinship lineages linked dependent kindreds to dominant kindreds. Intra-site spatial patterns embody these social ties. For example, the central farmstead at Catholme, with the fluctuating number of surrounding units, points towards the existence of dominant and dependent kinship groups.

Early/middle Saxon social relations were, therefore, not static and the fluidity of rural settlements is a reflection of this. In the latter period, kinship relations became constituted within the tributary social formation and the integration of the two generated an internal dynamic. In this context the existence of fences, boundary ditches and enclosures, is significant. The physical definition of property, the fixing of land in space at the level of the household production unit, is expressive of external forces infringing on kinship, undermining the boundless nature of social space. The establishment of fenced/ditched boundaries is a feature specific to the mid-Saxon period. New social forces were at play within the seventh and eighth centuries, marking the rise of territorial based polities and the introduction of tributary forms of surplus extraction. The establishment of states and distinctive social classes, was intimately connected with the growth of exploitative and antagonistic social relations. These social forces had a dramatic effect on the social use of space. Class and tribute was defined in terms of space and territory.

TRIBUTE AND ENCLOSURES:

In the mid-Saxon period, therefore, territory did make a difference, increasingly contributing to the production and reproduction of society. It became one of the mediums for exploitation and was embodied in the rise of the tributary proto-state. This is observable, not only in terms of the definition of kingdoms, but also at the level of rural settlements.

On the macro-level of states, territory became fixed with the construction of physical boundaries. The drive towards political accumulation, the competition over land between tributary elites and the subsequent cycle of military expenditure forced proto-states to express the nature and extent of their authority by defining a discrete territory. Controlling and exercising power over land units was affirmed most acutely at borders, marked by the construction of dykes. Although a discussion of Anglo-Saxon earthworks lies beyond the scope of this work, it is worth commenting on them in brief. Many are still identifiable in the English countryside and have been dated approximately to the mid-Saxon period, for example Wansdyke in Wiltshire (Green 1971) or Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire (Hope-Taylor and Hill 1977). The most notable from this period, however, is clearly Offa's Dyke (Hill 1974; 1977; 1985). It consists of a bank and ditch, stretching for 98 miles and marked the kingdom of Mercia from the north coast of Wales to the mouth of the river Wye. Offa's Dyke, and the possibly associated parallel, but shorter, earthwork to its east called Wat's Dyke, are examples of state works on an enormous scale. These systems represent the fixing of territory for the first time, the creation of bounded space as opposed to the boundless nature of the landscape under kinship. Not only do they physically mark out landed units to facilitate the collection of tribute, dykes also aided the control over land, constraining movement and access, in

particular of cattle which was a key component of tribute payments.

More importantly for present purposes, at the micro-level of analysis, this active use of social space in the constitution of tributary relations of exploitation began to play an important part in the structuring of space within rural settlements. The development of tributary relations in the mid-Saxon period is manifested spatially in the establishment of fenced/ditched enclosures, in particular, in the pattern of rectilinear compounds and large timber halls. These can be understood within the context of tribute, the king's feorm, and the need for tribute collection centres.

The drive towards military accumulation and the territorial expansion of tribute-based polities would lead to an intensification of the dominant form of exploitation. To assist the enhancement of surplus appropriation and the class control of larger territories, a shift was made in the mechanisms of tribute collection. Instead of the itinerant king moving around the territory, directly extracting annual tribute from the kinship based communities, royal farms, or vills, were established as tribute collection centres (see Stenton 1971, 287-90; Sawyer 1983). These centres were managed by the king's immediate kinsmen, middlemen within the tributary system, who formed a distinct social layer.

The association of halls and rectilinear enclosures clearly form distinctive settlement units. They differ from the other settlement components examined in a number of ways and can be interpreted as the material embodiment of tribute collection. Firstly, they have stability, unlike the fluid nature of the other farmsteads. For example, at Chalton and Cowdery's Down, although particular buildings underwent reconstruction, each replacement directly overlay its fore runner. The specialised role and function of these units is thus fixed in space and

continues through time. These complexes provided the focus for the accumulation of the king's tribute collected from communities of producers within the immediate vicinity.

Secondly, settlement space was used in a very distinctive manner. At Raunds, the Furnell's site, the focus of the settlement, the timber halls, were carefully planned around a central open space, while at Chalton access to the enclosures appears to be made through the projecting halls. Social movement was thus controlled and restricted physically. Unfortunately, at both Chalton and Cowdery's Down, the occupation deposits associated with the halls and enclosures has been truncated leaving only foundations. However, at Raunds, the Furnell's enclosure is associated with a large specialised pottery assemblage representing in excess of one-thousand pots of predominantly standard size storage vessels (Pearson 1985). Further, at other sites such as Wicken Bonhunt, Essex (Wade 1980); Yeavinger (Hope-Taylor 1977) and Whitehall Palace, London (Chaplin 1971), the environmental evidence indicates tribute collection centres (see Carver 1989 and Hinton 1990, 9).

Thirdly, the importance of these tribute collection centres is expressed not simply in social space, but also in the size and method of the construction of the projecting halls. This is seen most clearly at Chalton, where the halls were the largest structures within the settlement and the only trench-built buildings. The middlemen, supervising the collection of tribute, distinguished themselves physically from the kinship groups. Material culture was used to express differences and superiority. Thus, middlemen began to identify themselves as a separate group, a rising class in and for itself. These were the embryonic feudal lords.

The class dynamic of the tributary social formation can thus be located at the point of tribute collection, both between

the proto-states and the kinship groups. Spatially, this dynamic was reflected in and mediated through the construction of dykes at a regional level and through the emergence of complexes of enclosures and halls at a local level. The middlemen, supervising the articulation of the king's food-renders, can be identified as the structural agents in the transformation from the tributary to the feudal mode of production. They possessed a material interest in breaking the hold of the tributary relations between themselves and the state and thus in taking control and consuming the agricultural surpluses themselves. They also had material interests in breaking the hold of kinship relations amongst the direct producers in order to introduce more productive forms of technology and agricultural practices.

FEUDAL PRODUCTION AND OPEN-FIELDS:

The rise of feudal relations of production were intimately connected with the acquisition of private landed estates by lords. The alienation of land, the creation of private property, brought forth fundamental changes in agricultural production. Freed from the payment of tribute, the class of feudal lords possessed the structural capacity to adopt new forms of farming practices and technology.

'It was the labour renders of their subordinate peasants that made it possible for lords to pay the food-renders to the king, or whoever else held the "royal" estate. When these lords were freed from all, or part, of their obligation to pay this food-rent and to render other services, their resources were obviously increased, and it would not have been surprising if many of them attempted to reorganise their servile tenants to their own advantage'. (Sawyer 1976, 7-8)

The critical element effecting the organisation of the rural landscape was the adoption of the heavy plough. This marked an

intensive development of production, allowing a dramatic increase in labour productivity. The great advantage of the heavy plough was that it could handle the more clayey soils which produced a larger yield of crops. Human labour was spared by the fact that the heavy plough was pulled by a team of six or eight oxen. Its mould board turned the furrow, facilitating field drainage. The date of its introduction has been hotly debated by agricultural historians (see Payne 1947; White 1962; Hilton and Sawyer 1963). Direct archaeological evidence is lacking, but the widespread adoption of the heavy plough was accompanied by the development of open-field farming. The laying out of long strips was the most efficient field shape for its use and such strips have left physical remains in the form of ridges and furrows (Rowley 1982). Field surveys at Raunds, Northamptonshire, and elsewhere in the country indicate pre-Conquest origins for open-fields.

Crucially, this system of farming marked the breakdown of kinship relations of production. It was characterised by four elements. First, arable land was divided into strips, or selions, which were ploughed as discrete units either by the peasant tenant or by a number of peasants, according to the size of the holdings. Second, both arable and meadow land were pastured by the stock of the same farmers between harvest time and when the seed was sown. Third, where there was pasture, waste or common land, this was used for stock raising. Finally, and most importantly, the administration and implementation of this agricultural system had to be organised by a formal meeting of the farmers. Open-field farming involved collective, rather than kinship based production relations. The heavy ploughs and oxen teams were often shared by a number of peasant families farming strips on a number of fields. The rotation of cultivation, pasturing and laying fallow, therefore, required strict control of the number and types of animals involved. The nucleation of settlements into villages facilitated this new system of agriculture. There was

a direct relationship between the introduction of open-field farming and the development of nucleated villages.

It must be made clear, however, that the above outline does not mean a capitulation to either technological determinism, or, a functionalist perception of social space. The introduction of the heavy plough is not the primary explanatory factor in the rise of feudalism. Despite the dramatic social changes that the adoption of new technology brought, the rise of feudal relations of production could only be achieved with the rise of a class with the structural capacities and class consciousness simultaneously to break kinship relations and increase labour productivity. The growth of middlemen under the *tributary social formation* was key in the development of farming practices. Increased agricultural surpluses were connected with the increased exploitation of the peasantry, the individual and direct extraction of rent by the feudal lord. This qualitative rise in the powers of lordship had dramatic consequences for the organisation of the rural landscape. Far from being merely a passive reflection of developments in agricultural production, settlement nucleation was also an active embodiment of the growth of antagonistic class relations between lord and peasant, which characterised the imposition of feudal social relations of production in late-Saxon England.

FEUDAL EXPLOITATION AND BOUNDED AND REGULATED SPACE:

The creation of bounded space with the establishment of rows of tenement plots at Raunds, West Cotton, Goltho etc., marked the imposition of feudal relations of exploitation. Once the peasantry held the land of a lord in return for feudal rent, then the need arose for the lord to fix that rent against the amount of land held. The feudal village thus became divided into a fixed number of land measures, the size of each tenement being the basis of rent assessment. As the

relationship between lord and peasant was constituted within bounded space, the organisation of the nucleated village was important: feudal space was part of the means by which a lord maintained his dominant class position.

Class struggle was rooted in the very structure of the feudal mode of production. The development of the forces of production allowed increased surpluses to be consumed by the feudal ruling class, but it also created a class of peasants with the material interests to resist surplus extraction. In breaking kinship production and developing communally-based systems of farming, the lord faced the stronger resistance of the village community. As outlined by Mann (1986, 394-7) and Dyer (1984), there was no total monopoly of power within the rural landscape. It was divided between two institutions, the village and manor. Hence, the position of the feudal lord was potentially vulnerable to attack. The feudal ruling class was fragmented, with individual lords separated from each other by their private ownership of individual estates. Further, economic dominance was not guaranteed, as the lord had no fixed control of the means of production. Feudal rents were appropriated after the production process had been completed. The class position of the lords vis-a'-vis the peasantry, therefore, ultimately rested on physical force.

Because feudal exploitation necessarily took the form of extra-economic means of coercion, politics and economics were fused in early medieval society, the political power of the local lord being integral with his economic position as landowner. He entered into, and defined, the very existence of peasant life, operating as king of his estate. Social space was thus politicised at all levels and the feudal construction of space became part of the lord's extra-economic forms of coercion. The spatial morphology of the nucleated village enabled the lord to discipline the peasants, to keep them

under constant surveillance, and to attempt to monopolise certain key elements of the means of production.

The opposition between village and manor can be explored by examining seigneurial property (proprietary church as well as the manor), and its spatial relationship with the rest of the village. Investments in manorial property were a manifestation of the political dominance of the lord. At Raunds, the Furnell's enclosure, containing both proprietary church and manor house, was situated on the site of the earlier tribute collection centre, a physical reflection of the social origins of feudalism. Although there was a continuation in the location of the tribute collection centre and manor house, the increased investment placed in seigneurial property, the construction of a large aisled timber hall and the building of a church, the only stone building at Raunds, signified the increased power and political dominance of the feudal lord.

Other late-Saxon manors also display distinctive spatial patterns. The courtyard complexes with large halls, such as at West Cotton, Goltho, Porchester, North Elmham and Sulgrave, expressed the physical presence of lordship. The construction of ringworks, ramparts and ditches around the courtyard manorial complexes defined the lord as a military power, symbolising his dominant class position. Likewise the proprietary churches, usually the only stone buildings within late-Saxon villages, expressed class relationships. This investment gave the impression of permanence and stability not previously observed in rural settlements.

The church played an important role in structuring rural social practices. As Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980) have argued, Christianity was the dominant belief system of feudal society because it was influential among the lords, integrating that dominant class behind a set of common beliefs. Its ethical teachings gave moral support to the

system of inheritance, allowing the reproduction of the ruling class. At an ideological level, therefore, the church minimised intra-class conflicts and helped to unify the feudal lordship. Christianity was less an ideology of class exploitation than an ideology concerned with integrating the dominant class. However, the medieval church still played an economic role within the village. Ecclesiastics owned land and collected tithes, and were therefore directly involved in the exploitation of the peasantry. Rural proprietary churches usually started as simple two celled structures, a nave and chancel. But, by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, towers had often been erected. The ringing of bells within these towers not only structured liturgical time and religious observances, but also structured the daily work of peasants in the open-fields. The composition of the ecclesiastical calendar mirrored the seasonal cycles of agricultural practices. Further, church towers, though symbolising a reaching to heaven (Mann 1986, 404-5), also functioned as observation posts for the inspection of peasant labour (see Morris 1989, 255)

Late-Saxon village morphology illustrates conscious and careful planning. The spatial patterns are thus significant. The association of church and manor at Raunds and other places, represented and reinforced the integration of physical force and religious legitimation. The social use of space facilitated the physical dominance of these two manorial units within the village. The typical morphology of the nucleated village consisted of peasant tenements running in rows either side of a village street which led directly to the manor and church situated on prominent ground. As the political domination of the peasantry was a necessary component of economic exploitation, the positioning of these manorial property units provided a central focus for feudal surveillance.

The importance of political power in the maintenance of feudal relations, is also reflected in how property became rigorously defined through the establishment of tenement plots. This rigid demarcation of space was not simply a reflection of the calculation of feudal rent, but also a means by which the peasantry could be controlled. The tenements at Raunds and Goltho were concentrated alongside streets which enabled the lord to observe and restrict movement. Roads limited access in and out of villages and so helped the lord's political control and supervision of social movement, vital if the peasants were to remain a fragmented, and thus controllable, exploited class.

This regulation of space led to the definition of legitimate and illegitimate places for peasant movement. For example, the toft and crofts, and the strips of land within the fields, individually possessed by peasant families, were all individually defined, while the open village green, centrally positioned, was common land. More importantly, boundaries and enclosures defined manorial property as opposed to peasant tenements, in particular the demesne farm. David Hall's (1983) field surveys in Northamptonshire have demonstrated how many Saxon demesne fields survive within the framework of existing fields, remaining as defined and enclosed blocks of land adjacent to the manor house. The enclosure marking the demesne farm distinguished the lord's private monopoly of land from the surrounding open-fields. The establishing of boundaries created regulated space in which social access was checked and controlled.

Finally, the creation of regulated space actively aided the feudal lord's control of critical resources and the monopoly of key elements of the means of production. The development of the forces of production with the birth of feudalism was characterised by the introduction of the water mill. In the feudal village it was not unusual for the lord to control the

milling process and so extract renders for its use from the peasants. Historical documentation clearly reveals that the seigneurial monopoly of mills was the source of many tensions (Rahtz 1981; Harfield 1988) and the construction of enclosures to regulate access aided this form of economic control. This is vividly demonstrated at West Cotton, where the hamlet's manorial enclosure provided controlled and regulated access to the settlement's water mill. Similar inferences can be made in relation to the feudal control of fishponds (Aston 1988) and forests and woodland (Steane 1984, 143-85). Enclosing land with ditches and fences was the means by which manorial property areas were set apart and defined as private and regulated property.

These comments on the relationship between kinship, tributary and feudal modes of production and how they were reflected and constituted, are only provisional. However, they do illustrate the importance of a spatial dimension to concrete archaeological research. In the articulation of pre-capitalist class relationships, space did make a difference. In particular, the lords' reliance on extra-economic forms of coercion meant that feudal power and domination was embodied in the spatial construction of the nucleated village.

CHAPTER 7

TOWN AND COUNTRY IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Feudalism was forged on the land. Within the womb of the tributary social formation embryonic feudal lords emerged as lord/peasant class relationships arose at the interstices of tributary exploitation. The expansion of trade and exchange and the growth of urban institutions were an integral part of this evolution of society, but not its principal dynamic. The changing relations of production in the English countryside was the prime mover generating these social transformations. In Chapter 5, the development of production for exchange from the need of the non-producers for conspicuous consumption was demonstrated. Prestige exchange, the acquisition of luxury commodities to symbolise social status, was an expression of the drive towards political accumulation. But production for exchange remained a closed and separate sphere, markets being regulated and socially prescribed institutions. The source of social momentum was thus rooted within the rural economy. This raises the issue of why towns proliferated so rapidly in tenth century England. If long-distance commercial trade was in decline during the formative period of their development, what was the economic basis of the early medieval town?

Paul Sweezy, in his debates with Maurice Dobb on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, argued, albeit in a nonchalant fashion, that:

'Dobb's theory of the internal causation of the breakdown of feudalism could still be rescued if it could be shown that the rise of the towns was a process internal to the feudal system'. (1976, 40)

This chapter will attempt to show just this, that the early medieval town was not only a centre for the trade and exchange of luxury items, but was also integrated into the mechanisms of the rural economy.

The argument will be presented, primarily, using animal bone assemblages recovered from urban excavations. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 outlines a general theoretical framework, drawn to large extent from Rodney Hilton's historical writings on the medieval small town, within which the archaeological evidence can be analysed. In Section 2 a critical survey is made of the method and theory of environmental archaeology. Section 3 deals directly with the changing character of the faunal assemblages.

SECTION 1: THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF FEUDAL TOWNS

The expansion of regional urban markets in medieval England coincided with dramatic transformations in the rural economy. The late-Saxon period witnessed the birth of the nucleated village and the introduction of open-field farming (see Chapter 6). This reorganisation of agrarian economy must be seen as the economic basis of medieval urbanism (see Hilton 1976a, 18). The rise of feudalism permitted a striking growth in agricultural productivity, facilitating an expansion in the division of labour, the growth of artisans and merchants not directly concerned with agrarian production. The medieval town was very much part of peasant society, functioning as a centre of petty commodity production, and a nodal point in the articulation of agrarian surpluses.

PETTY COMMODITY PRODUCTION:

Early medieval towns were engaged in the trade of luxury items and prestigious commodities and were physically

separated from the rural hinterland (see Chapter 5). This trade was confined to a specialised-commercial sector of the economy, its practitioners reliant on feudal aristocrats to secure market privileges. Safeguarding monopoly rights was a necessary precondition for merchant capital. But the feudal town, though separate from the rural sphere, was also integral to it. Towns were founded through seigneurial initiative, not simply to gain profits from market tolls and stall rents, but also to provide a convenient market for the supply of simple commodities to sustain the peasant economy.

Hilton (1982; 1985; 1985a) has developed this point in his distinction between small town markets and large urban centres. The first category of town is defined as:

'....those places which arose from the operation of the simple commodity production of the peasant' economy. These were towns where the surplus from peasant family household production was converted into cash. This was partly, of course, so that peasants could buy salt and manufactured goods which could not be obtained in the village, but mainly so that they could obtain cash for the payment of rent, jurisdictional fines, and tax'. (1985, 180)

In the small town markets there was a considerable exchange of use values between peasants and artisans. The economic relationship between them was not exploitative in essence, unlike the profits reaped from mercantile exchange. The small town market was dominated by the produce market and a limited range of manufactured goods in wood, leather, iron, and woollen textiles. The critical importance of the small town should not be underestimated. Hilton has estimated that they comprised at least two-thirds of all medieval English towns by the end of the thirteenth century, containing over half the total urban population (1985, 180). In contrast, the larger urban centres functioned as markets for the specialised consumption needs of the feudal ruling class.

'They were the urban by-product, not of the conversion of

peasant surplus into the cash which became the income of the landowners and the state, but of the expenditure of this surplus after its preliminary realization as cash on the small town market'. (Hilton 1985, 180)

The exchange market at these larger towns can be regarded as part of the redistributed surplus from the peasant economy generated by the demands of the feudal aristocracy. It was this form of exchange which depended on the exclusivity of the urban market.

This integrated role for urban markets is extremely important when tracing the origins of English feudalism. Although Hilton's research focuses upon the high medieval period, his theoretical arguments, in all essentials, are relevant to the initial phase of urban foundations. The imposition of feudal relations of production marked a period of increased exploitation of the direct producers associated with a qualitative decline in their living standards. Daily toil on the fields increased dramatically as the labouring process became more directed towards surplus production. Consequently, time available for the manufacture of cloths, tools, household utensils etc., decreased. Instead of each kin group or settlement being self-sufficient, towns supplied these petty, but necessary, commodities. The parcellisation of land thus contributed to the process of urban development. Artisans and craftsmen were removed from the rural hinterland and resettled within towns. Peasants from the surrounding estates brought their agrarian surpluses to the local market town and exchanged them for cash to gain access to a full range of manufactured goods. In time, as feudal rents became paid increasingly in money, the needs of the basic producers for cash went far beyond what they required to buy food, clothing, tools and so on. But, from the start, the feudal town was incorporated into the peasant economy. Large or small

they acted as nodes in the articulation of agricultural surpluses.

THE ARTICULATION OF AGRICULTURAL SURPLUSES:

The process of medieval urbanisation was shaped by the expansion and intensification of agricultural production. One of the fundamental functions of towns was as centres for the distribution of surpluses from the land. This economic role emerged as the medieval landscape was divided into autonomous political and economic units. The feudal ruling class was a fragmented class. Each lord was separated from the next by his individual ownership of private estates and he could quite possibly possess units of land in different parts of a region, spread across a variety of geographical areas. Thus, urban centres developed within this patchwork of estates, becoming nodal points in the articulation of different forms of agricultural products. Towns provided the mechanism through which the diversity of surpluses extracted from a complex network of estates could be brought together and redistributed.

This conception of the feudal town carries a decisive implication for understanding town/country relationships. Feudal towns could possess a dual economic role, simultaneously operating externally and internally with respect to the peasant economy. On one level, the larger towns and ports which were engaged in mercantile trade were divorced from the production for use, thus forming a specialised-commercial sector within the feudal economy. On another level, all towns, large or small, were integrated with the countryside forming centres for petty commodity production as well as nodes in the articulation of agrarian surpluses. By seeing feudal towns as uniting these two economic levels, we can trace the origins of feudalism through the growth of urban institutions.

TOWNS AND THE TRANSITION TO FEUDALISM:

The rise of feudal social relations of production promoted the birth of the medieval town. Although mid-Saxon tributary society possessed emporia, centres specialising in the production and exchange of prestige goods, these were not urban institutions. The medieval town was defined by its specific integrated role within the rural economy, as well as its function as a commercial centre.

The emporium possessed one element of the dual role of medieval towns, but not the other. In contrast to the rural sphere of the economy, they specialised in the production and exchange of prestige goods, administering and regulating luxury trade for the exclusive privilege of tributary elites. This prestige exchange, as outlined in **Chapter 5**, was an expression of the structural contradictions at the heart of the tributary mode of production. The centres failed to stimulate intensification in agrarian production. Being cut off from the rural hinterland, they formed a separate commercial sector in the tributary economy. The nature of the relations of production militated against the integration of emporia within the rural economy. The strength of kinship relations amongst the direct producers limited the social mechanisms for distributing surpluses. Tributary society, being more of a subsistence based system, articulated surpluses by tribute payment, controlled by the state and middlemen. The supply of food and subsistence goods to emporia was thus mediated through tributary elites, with only limited interaction between the artisans and direct producers. Feudal towns, however, were not only engaged in the trade and exchange of luxury items, but also formed markets which integrated different spheres of the rural economy. They were essential institutions in the perpetuation of the peasant-agrarian production, being centres for the production and exchange of use values.

But the market relationship between town and countryside was contradictory. Although town/country integration distinguished the feudal town from the tributary emporium, the degree of market dependency among the peasantry should not be overstated. Market forces, penetrating into the countryside, had only a marginal effect on altering the peasant economy. Peasant involvement in market transactions was limited by the surplus generated after subsistence production had been completed. The English feudal economy was market dependent, in the sense outlined above, but not market responsive, not geared towards production and exchange for profit. Peasant producers set out to produce a livelihood, not livelihood plus a surplus. So long as they traded in use rather than exchange values, then it would not matter whether their market involvement was marginal or substantial. The intrusion of the market into the peasant economy was not itself sufficient to transform the character of feudal productive relations.

The transition from tributary to feudal society, thus, can be detected in the development of a town and country relationship. The rise of the feudal market has great potential for archaeological research. The division of labour between town and country, the growth of urban centres for petty commodity production might be explored using a variety of sets of data; ceramics, coins, metal-, glass-, leather-work etc. Despite the potential and the availability of evidence, such research avenues have yet to be pursued within medieval archaeology. The sub-discipline has been marred by an empiricism which has restricted theoretical work on medieval industry and urban agrarian practices (see for example Crossley 1981).

It is not possible to examine fully the archaeology of medieval urbanism here. This chapter, therefore, will analyse just one element of the economic basis of towns, the procurement of food. Environmental evidence will thus be used

to analyse the feudal town as a node in the articulation of agrarian surpluses. Through exploring a limited data base, animal bone assemblages, it is hoped that the differences between the tributary emporium and the feudal town can be revealed. A discussion of environmental evidence will also illustrate the wider problems and possibilities in using archaeological data for urban research.

SECTION 2: MEDIEVAL TOWNS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The core of the hypothesis presented in Section 1 rests on the role of the town in articulating the products of the peasant economy. Hence, the archaeology of urban settlements is the key to further analysis. Towns depended on the countryside for their resources. Land yielded the basic provisions for their population - cattle, sheep, pigs, wheat, barley, oats and rye etc. As a prime consumption site, the town would be a sensitive indicator of economic development. Rural settlements, primarily centres for the production for use, and subsistence production and consumption, have faunal and floral assemblages giving only this background noise, and so are not indicative of basic transformations in society and economy.

Although medieval urban archaeology is relatively recent, the corpus of environmental data which has been accumulated is enormous. Since the Urban Research Committee was set up in 1970 as a focus for research into towns, the number and quality of urban excavations on medieval towns has improved rapidly (see Clarke 1984, 166-74). Excavations in modern cities, for example at Ipswich, Lincoln, London, Southampton and York, continue to yield a rich variety of floral and faunal samples which span the critical period in question, the eighth to eleventh centuries.

Despite the potential this offers to assess the changing character of urban institutions in early medieval England, there remain fundamental problems within environmental archaeology which provide a major stumbling block. The methodological and theoretical weaknesses of environmental archaeology will be discussed and an alternative approach outlined to relate ecofactual assemblages to the question of the rise of the town under feudalism.

THE POVERTY OF EMPIRICISM:

Environmental archaeology has remained dominated by questions of methodology, the major preoccupations being recording, classification, sampling strategies etc. These methodological issues are important, but such a bias also reflects on empiricism within environmental archaeology.

The poverty of empiricism has meant that environmental evidence has been restricted to the realms of a natural science, divorced from archaeology as a whole and remaining a separate sub-discipline with its own priorities and procedures. Consequently, there is a distinct lack of integration between environmental data sets and archaeological interpretations and research strategies. This is an expression of a wider problem which also mars artefactual studies. It means that environmental reports have become detached from the excavation records, forming specialist contributions inserted in an ad hoc fashion at the end of site reports. This has certainly not helped the development of environmentally-based social interpretation.

The lack of integration between ecofactual evidence and material culture is reflected in the general character of the works of synthesis. For example, discussions of the plant and animal resource base in the medieval period, have tended to be long, descriptive lists of animal and plant species, their relative proportions, and their spatial and temporal diversity (see Clutton-Brook 1976; Grieg 1988; Grant 1988). Any advance into the 'heady' clouds of social theory is avoided on grounds that the data base is insufficient and that key methodological problems remain unanswered. This weakness, however, is not one specific to environmental studies, but part of the general problem of empiricism. There have been attempts to avoid this limitation (discussed in Section 3). However, it is all too common, when moving from empirical description to social

interpretation, to carry them out on a superficial, and sometimes extremely naive, basis. This is evident in the analysis of medieval exchange mechanisms. It is simply assumed that the market articulating town and country operated on the same principles as modern capitalist economies. Consequently, terms like profit, supply and demand, are treated as unproblematic analytical categories (see Grant 1988, 153, 165).

It is not methodological problems or the inadequacies of the data which impede the production of interpretative statements within environmental archaeology. On the contrary, the data base, as it stands, can be a highly sensitive indicator of socio-economic patterns. What is at stake is the integration of data and theory. The split between the two has been perpetuated, not only by the dominant empiricist philosophy within medieval studies, but also by the paucity of theory within archaeology as a whole.

THE POVERTY OF THEORY:

Despite the increased openness of archaeology to social theory in recent years, of environmental archaeology has not been obviously responsive. The movement away from empiricism and positivism to post-processual social theory was accompanied by a conscious rethinking of basic archaeological categories, such as the environment, food production and consumption and waste disposal and refuse. Post-processualists prided themselves on attempting to integrate archaeological ecofacts into structuralist and post-structuralist philosophy. Some of the theoreticians from whom they gained inspiration, Levi-Strauss (1970) and Barthes (1973, 65-71) analysed food within the context of cultural symbols. Thus, human exploitation of the environment was not simply a natural process of physical reproduction. Patterns of food production and consumption conveyed important symbolic and ideological

meanings within different cultures. Hodder (1982, 111-3) and Tilley (1981), for example, saw bones and seeds meaningfully constituted within the archaeological record. Food was essentially part of the symbolic construction of the social world. This had the positive effect of removing the interpretation of environmental data from the realms of positivism. However, it did not address the problem of integrating data collection, recording and interpretations. The separation of environmentalist and archaeologist, therefore, has not been resolved by the development of post-processual theory.

This is not to say that symbolism is irrelevant to food. Ecofacts are, indeed, meaningfully constituted in the archaeological record. But post-processualist theory peripheralises the essential fact that food is basic to the production and reproduction of human life.

'The idea that cooking is primarily a language, is food for thought only among those who have never had to worry about having enough to eat.....To explain food habits, priority must be given to material conditions, to messages in the stomach and intestines of hungry human beings, rather than to the cute thoughts in the heads of well-fed idealists'. (Harris 1979, 189-90)

This argument is of fundamental importance. Food is most open to socialisation precisely because it is so basic (see also Goody 1981). The post-processualists have lost sight of this. The idealism lying at the heart of their theory (see Chapter 1) has allowed them to abstract the symbolic and ideological content of food from the reality that food is the basis for human existence. Thus, the post-structuralists have focused their research on the 'exciting' consumption and disposal end of the food chain, while ignoring the 'mundane' aspects of food production and extraction.

The study of ecofacts can yield valuable information on the full cycle of the food chain. Any theory which does not accommodate the diversity of elements within the data, cannot do justice to environmental archaeology. As production is both the logical and chronological precursor to consumption, post-processualism, in marginalising these processes, precludes the integration of ecofacts and interpretative archaeology. These inadequacies are most sharply exposed in examining town/country relationships. Post-processualism fails to offer any coherent framework for an analysis focusing on the production and extraction of agrarian surpluses from the countryside in order to sustain the non-agricultural producers in the town. Given the poverty of archaeological theory, there is little wonder that the traditional superficial empirical generalisations drawn from environmental evidence have remained unchallenged for so long.

MARXISM, ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND URBANISM:

Historical materialism has the potential to integrate fully environmental data assemblages into interpretative archaeology and so provide a conceptual framework linking the processes of production, extraction and consumption of food to their economic, social and historical contexts. Marxism, therefore, gives the theoretical tools for avoiding the myopic empiricism and theoretical poverty of contemporary environmental archaeology.

In Chapter 1 it was argued that historical materialism starts from the premise of the primacy of production in social life. This is critical:

'....the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating, drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things.

The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself'. (Marx and Engels 1970, 48)

In order to maintain their material lives, human beings are forced to act on the world in certain ways - to engage in material production, which necessarily involves co-operation. Material production is thus a social activity and the relationships which it embodies provide the foundation of all human existence. Through understanding the base of society as a mode of production, aspects of the superstructure - ideology, cultural symbolism etc. - can be examined.

This argument has been applied to the study of food by the Marxist anthropologist Jack Goody, in his book **Cooking, Cuisine and Class** (1981). Criticising the idealism of Levi-Strauss's formalisation of culinary systems, Goody presents a materialist analysis of the whole cycle of food production, preparation and consumption. He attempts to:

'....link the nature of different cuisines to the ways in which food is produced, and to relate the system of agricultural production to the question of "manner", "cuisines" and more generally to the sub-cultures and social strata that are differentiated by their styles of life'. (Goody 1981, 38)

Goody, therefore, outlines a useful framework to examine the evidence relating to the processes of providing and transforming food. Specifically, he locates five main processes which represent the phases of production, distribution, preparation, consumption and disposal (1981, 37). Thus, the processes of primary production, the growing of crops or the raising of animals, fall under the category of **Production**, while those linked to the allocation, storing or extraction of food represent the phase **Distribution**. Crucially, this second phase examines the mechanisms of exploitation, the demands of rent or tribute and their effect

on the circulation of food resources. The third phase, **Preparation**, shifts the analysis to the arts of cooking and cuisine, the processes involved in the preparation of food for consumption. The arena of feasts and fast, of prohibitions and preferences, of communal and domestic, as well as table manners and modes of serving are represented by the phase **Consumption**. It is in the practice of eating that the identity and differentiation of classes and groups is brought out. Finally, the phase **Disposal** covers the processes of clearing up, the sorting and disposal of rubbish.

Through this framework Goody develops a comparative social explanation of major variations in the preparation of food across the world. It is an historical mode of analysis which is able to examine changes in terms of the patterns of local economic production and social differentiation. Goody's work is, therefore, of central importance for the study of environmental evidence. Ecofacts yield information directly on the processes involved in the social relations of food provision. Setting environmental data in the context of Goody's work is a useful starting point for the analysis of the food resource base of medieval towns.

The basis of the analysis is material production, the economic forces and social relations involved in producing food. It is this which provides the essential prerequisite for the study of urban ecofactual assemblages. Early medieval society was based primarily on agrarian production. This defined the social structures of both the tributary and feudal societies. At the heart of these two modes of production was the extraction of surplus labour in form of agrarian surpluses. The appropriation of agricultural products, whether articulated through tax or rent, was the basis for the social division of labour and facilitated the growth of urban units. Hence, to investigate the development of town/country relationships, the question of food distribution is critical.

Tributary emporia and feudal towns were not primary food producing settlements. They relied on the countryside for their provisions. Environmental archaeology can thus provide important information about this phase of distribution. The study of ecofactual assemblages yields data on the resource base of the settlements and the mechanisms of supply.

We can examine types, forms, and quantities of flora and fauna to throw light on the resource base of emporia and towns. It is at this level that the degree of rural integration can be assessed. The diversity of species represented, for example, will reflect the degree to which rural produce was being marketed in the towns. The theoretical propositions described in the previous section have predictive qualities. It has been hypothesised that the interaction between the artisans at mid-Saxon emporia and the rural producers was indirect, mediated via tributary elites. It could be anticipated, therefore, that the environmental evidence at these sites would indicate a narrow resource base, with limited foodstuffs. In contrast, late-Saxon towns, being products of the feudal mode of production and operating as nodes in the articulation of agrarian surpluses, should yield assemblages from a wider resource base. In terms of the types and forms of flora and fauna species there should be a greater diversity, illustrating a stronger link between town and its hinterland.

The distribution of food to emporia and towns can also be studied in terms of forms of surplus extraction. The ecofactual patterns to be considered at this level of analysis will be, for example, the kill patterns of animals; the distribution patterns and distance travelled by rural products; whether animals were slaughtered in the countryside or driven into the towns on the hoof. These patterns would cast light on the supply mechanisms articulating the movement of surplus from the countryside. Again it can be predicted

that tributary emporia would yield different assemblages from the feudal towns. In the mid-Saxon period, rural production would not be geared to supplying urban settlements. There would be little specialised production or processing. On the other hand, feudal towns should reveal a qualitative shift, with rural production geared to urban consumption and linked to specialised processing patterns.

Although it is at the phase of distribution that the developing relationship between town and country is most explicitly revealed, the study of ecofactual assemblages in terms of food preparation, consumption and disposal, can also prove useful. The strength of Goody's model is that these more cultural symbolic phases of the whole food providing process, are best understood through exploring patterns of production and distribution:

'.....the analysis of cooking has to be related to the distribution of power and authority in the economic sphere, that is, to the system of class or stratification and to its political ramifications'. (Goody 1982, 37)

Thus, the development of urban social relations with the establishment of the feudal mode of production will be reflected, albeit indirectly, in patterns of food preparation, consumption and disposal. At this level, issues such as butchery techniques and the spatial patterning of rubbish deposition, can be considered.

Mid-Saxon emporia were specialised settlements confined to the production and exchange of luxury and prestigious commodities. Internal stratification and the social division of labour was limited. Late-Saxon feudal towns, however, were nodal centres representing the economic interests of a number of social groups: - peasants, lords, artisans, merchants, the state, and the church. The increased complexity and diversity of food preparation, consumption and disposal patterns which would be predicted is linked to the division of labour and

social groups within the settlements. The symbolic side of food would thus be generated by these diverse social relationships, not by the binary codes of the unconscious mind (beloved of the structuralist).

This analytical framework of production, distribution, preparation, consumption and disposal is a dynamic model which encapsulates the antagonistic and transformative relationships between the rural producers and urban artisans which should be visible in environmental data sets. It should allow us to trace the movement from the tributary to the feudal mode of production in terms of developing town and country relationships. The next section applies this framework, with its predictions, to a specific corpus of data: early medieval animal bones.

SECTION 3: ANIMAL BONES AND TOWN/COUNTRY INTERRELATIONSHIPS:

Animal bones, rather than plant remains, will be studied in the analysis of town/country interrelationships during the early medieval period. They have been selected due to the size and availability of the data base, as they are frequently among the most numerous of all finds made during excavations. Remains of grains, chaff and straw, are not as easily detected and so tend to be less well represented. Consequently, while there exists a large number of reports on the faunal assemblages from urban excavations, comparative published work on plant resources is minimal. The study of faunal assemblages, therefore, offers the best opportunity to examine the role of the town within the rural economy.

Although archaeozoology has been traditionally constrained by the general problems of empiricism, being preoccupied by questions of methodology, there has been a growing concern among certain archaeozoologists that their work needs to be fully integrated into the traditional disciplines of history, geography and archaeology itself (see Carver 1990; Crabtree 1989, 1990; Jones 1986). At both York and Southampton, for example, the archaeozoologists Terry O'Connor (1989; 1990; forthcoming) and Jennifer Bourdillon (1979; 1980; 1988, 1990) have analysed the bone assemblages within broader interpretative frameworks. These moves away from the narrow horizons of empiricism are indeed welcome. However, they have been limited by the poverty of theory within medieval archaeology as a whole. For, example, O'Connor has analysed the York animal bone assemblages in terms of Hodges' explanatory perspective and thus inherits all Hodges' theoretical faults (see Chap. 3 and 4). This section will attempt to improve this situation by drawing on the theory and methodology outlined in Section 2. In particular, O'Connor's work at York will be used as the key case study by which the

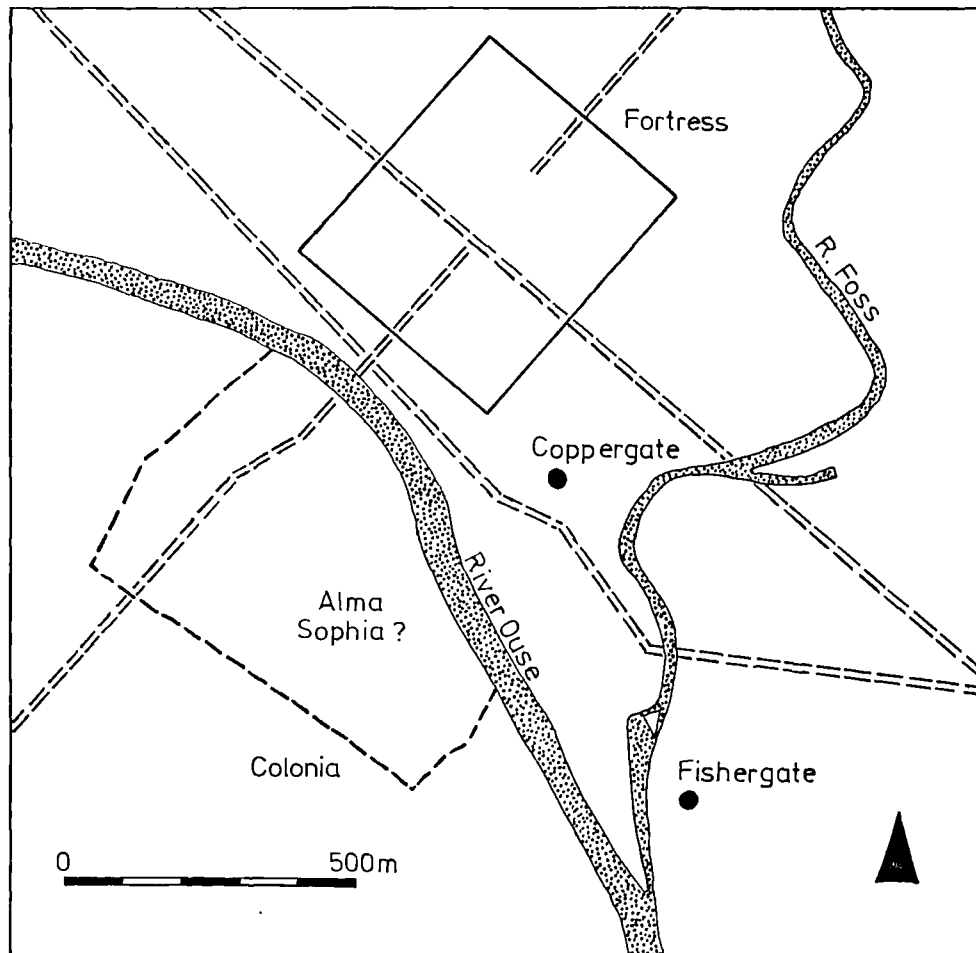
data from other towns, such as Southampton, Ipswich, Lincoln, London and Thetford, can be compared.

EARLY MEDIEVAL ANIMAL BONES FROM YORK:

York has a rich history in terms of archaeological research (see Addyman and Black 1984). Excavations have produced a very large archive of medieval animal bones from numerous sites distributed throughout the modern city. During the early medieval period, York was the premier settlement in north-east England. It was a key place within the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria and became a prosperous urban centre during the late ninth and tenth centuries. Two particular excavations carried out by the York Archaeological Trust at 46-54 Fishergate (Kemp 1986) and 16-22 Coppergate (Hall 1988; 1988a) have provided an opportunity to compare and contrast material from the eighth and tenth to eleventh centuries.

There is a clear break in settlement location between the Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian settlements at York (see above, 180). The eighth and ninth century site at Fishergate was situated around the modern confluence of the rivers Ouse and Foss, to the east of the Roman and later Anglo-Scandinavian town (see fig. 16). The excavations exposed about two-and-a-half-thousand squared metres of Anglian occupation with a boundary ditch, timber buildings with fences, areas of pits and a spread of pebbles which represented a metalled access. The site was abandoned in the mid-ninth century, when the town shifted to the area beside the old Roman fortress to reoccupy the area after four-hundred-and-fifty years of desertion. The one-thousand squared area excavated at Coppergate yielded a sequence starting with the operation of a glass furnace. At the beginning of the tenth century, Coppergate was divided into four tenement plots for timber buildings, which then underwent successive rebuilding

and appear to have continued in use into the early eleventh century.



16. Map showing the location of Fishergate and Coppergate, York (after Kemp 1986).

The faunal assemblages at Fishergate and Coppergate were well-preserved and, for the most part, closely dateable. Both assemblages have been analysed by O'Connor (1989; forthcoming) and so methodological procedures were similar and thus the results comparable (see O'Connor 1984, 5-9; 1989; 1990). To highlight the major patterns within the two assemblages, O'Connor's results will be set out in a schematic manner. They

reveal both similarities and differences which relate directly to the economic basis of the two settlements.

In terms of food distribution, the narrowness of the resource base at Fisheragate is striking. The overwhelming majority of the bone fragments were derived from butchered carcasses of cattle and sheep with a small quantity of pig. Beef provided the great majority of red meat. O'Connor has calculated that as much as eighty per cent of the meat consumed was derived from cattle. Wild mammals were notably under-represented with very few bones of hare, wild pig or deer being recovered. Further, the wild birds represented were from species likely to have been incidental to the settlement and only two bones could be interpreted in terms of hunted game. Although fish bones were recovered in very large numbers, the majority were freshwater fish available in the local rivers or nearby estuaries and there was very little in the way of shellfish. Hence the overall picture from Fisheragate is of a settlement which possessed a limited opportunity to diversify its diet.

The patterns indicative of extraction processes are also interesting. In terms of kill patterns, there is no evidence that young cattle were exploited. Most were aged between three and eight years at time of death. Sheep and pigs, however, were more carefully age selected. Sheep were slaughtered between one and seven years of age, with a concentration at either end of this range, and the kill patterns for pigs showed peaks at twelve to fifteen months and at two to two-and-a-half years. The livestock present were presumably extracted from herds outside the settlement, probably arriving on the hoof. Cattle and sheep were represented by all major body parts. Only pig bones suggested that the pork consumed at the settlement arrived on the site as dressed carcasses.

As for the patterns of preparation, consumption and disposal, there was little in the way of a spatial concentration of bone debris. The animals appear to have been butchered and distributed evenly about the settlement. Only in the northern part of the site was there a greater incidence of butchering waste, which may indicate the use of a particular area for this process. Apart from this rather tentative evidence there was nothing to suggest any special zoning of food related activities.

These patterns at Fishergate can be compared and contrasted with those at Coppergate. Although the two faunal assemblages share a marked lack of diversity, there are differences in the Coppergate assemblage which imply changes in resource exploitation patterns. Cattle was still the staple meat species, providing the majority of the red meat in the late ninth and early eleventh centuries. However, a widening of the resource base is indicated by the increased numbers of minority species. There is a relatively greater quantity and diversity of bird bones with domestic and wild fowl bones found in abundance. Similarly, fish bones illustrate an expansion of the catchment area with freshwater, marine species as well as shellfish being consumed in great quantities. There is also the presence of wild mammal species at Coppergate, such as deer, wild boar and hare, which are conspicuous by their rarity at Fishergate.

The kill patterns for the staple meat species also show similarities and differences. The majority of cattle were slaughtered between two and six years of age (O'Connor 1989, 159-63). Despite this slightly younger age of death compared to that of Fishergate, there was no evidence for a selective kill pattern. Sheep were mainly slaughtered between the ages of about eighteen months and four years, with no indication of a concentration within this range. However, a higher proportion of young pigs were killed with the majority

slaughtered between about nine months and three years of age, a result entirely consistent with slaughtering for prime pork carcasses.

The mechanisms of supply were similar to that of Fishergate. Complete cattle carcasses were butchered and disposed of on the site. This suggests that cattle were brought in from the countryside on the hoof to be slaughtered in the town, a pattern also true of the sheep. As for the pigs, although there was no hard evidence, O'Connor (1989, 183) suggests that some of the pig bone debris came from beasts which were bred and fattened in the town itself.

There was little indication of the existence of specialised meat retailers from carcass distribution and butchery procedures of the main meat supplying species. O'Connor (1989, 159) argues that beasts were brought in and slaughtered as required and shared amongst several households. This would account for the unsystematic nature of much of the butchering.

Although the assemblages at York present by far the best opportunity to explore the transition from mid-Saxon emporium to late-Saxon town, other urban sites have yielded important data sets. Before interpretations can be put forward to explain these patterns, these need to be explored in order to provide comparative material.

ANIMAL RESOURCES AND MID-SAXON EMPORIA:

Hamwic, Anglo-Saxon Southampton, is one of the best-studied emporia in Europe. Since archaeological investigations began in 1946, an enormous amount of data have been collected from nearly fifty large-scale excavations (Brisbane 1988). These have demonstrated that the settlement covered over forty hectares, with a coherent layout of streets and buildings. Hamwic was firmly dated to the mid-Saxon period, being

established from the end of the seventh century and falling into decline during the latter half of the ninth century. Its faunal assemblages are, therefore, contemporary with those from Fishergate. The bulk of the bones came from the Melbourne Street excavations and the Six Dials site, both of which have been studied and analysed by Bourdillon (Bourdillon and Coy 1988; Bourdillon 1988; Bourdillon 1990). These assemblages bear a remarkable resemblance to those at Fishergate.

The resource base at Southampton was extremely narrow, the inhabitants being fed overwhelmingly on cattle, sheep, and pigs, of which cattle were by far the most abundant species. Bourdillon (1988, 181) has calculated that cattle bones formed fifty-two per cent of the main domestic animals by fragment count, and seventy-five per cent by weight. Wild species, such as pigeon, rabbits, boar and fallow deer were conspicuous by their absence and there was no exploitation of a wider environment. Even though many fish bones were recovered, the species were readily available from the Itchen estuary. There were no purely freshwater species and bones of sea fish were generally rare.

It is clear from diversity of bone waste that Hamwic was a consumption site, with the cattle and sheep driven in from the countryside to be slaughtered in the emporium. All parts of their bodies were evenly represented in the pits. In terms of kill-patterns, there was little sign that young beasts were being selected for slaughter. Less than one per cent of the total bone assemblage represented very young animals. The majority of the cattle lived to full maturity (Bourdillon 1988, 181). While there was some evidence for young sheep being slaughtered at the Melbourne Street site, again the majority were killed when fully adult (Bourdillon and Coy 1980). Pigs were the only species which were killed young.

As regards the spatial distribution of carcass elements for these three main domestic animals, what is most striking is their broad homogeneity. There was no evidence for specialised butchery zones in the settlement and no one area enjoyed a more special diet than the rest.

Apart from Hamwic, there is little other comparative material. Animal bone archives in most cases have still to be assembled, or remain only partially assessed and without full publication. Unfortunately, therefore, the striking similarities between the York and Hamwic bone assemblages cannot be explored and developed much further. However, there is a limited amount of evidence from both Ipswich and London to suggest that the parallels can be drawn.

A restricted and narrow resource base in terms of meat supply might be suggested at Ipswich (see Wade 1988 for a brief discussion of the character of the settlement). Wild game species in the animal bone assemblages reported on by Jones and Serjeantson (1983) are poorly represented, with only a few bones of wild duck and some attributed to domestic pigeon. The main meat-supplying species were cattle, sheep and pig. Likewise, the sites in London yielded few wild birds, except from the Benedictine house at Westminster and Barking Abbey (Rackham 1990). Further, at Ipswich, although the main domestic taxa show appreciably more exploitation of pigs than at either York or Hamwic, the kill patterns closely resemble those from York. Examination of the mandibles indicates that pigs were certainly age-selected, with two kill-off peaks of young and older individuals. There is also similarity in the kill-off of sheep between Ipswich and Fishergate.

ANIMAL RESOURCES AND LATE-SAXON TOWNS:

This mid-Saxon pattern of animal exploitation, particularly the generalised feature of a narrow resource base, underwent a

distinct change in the late-Saxon period. The bone assemblages from towns such as Southampton, Lincoln, Exeter and Thetford illustrate of economic developments which mirror and enhance the picture outlined for York.

At Southampton, the late-Saxon town was in a new location, positioned about a mile to the west of Hamwic on the low gravel cliffs beside the mouth of the River Test. Excavations carried out by Colin Platt in the 1960s (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975), yielded a much smaller animal bone sample than that from Hamwic, with only some one-thousand fragments recovered by hand and five-thousand from sieving. However, their analysis offers some insights into the changing nature of the urban economy.

The bone assemblages recorded by Barbara Noddle (1975) have been compared to those from Hamwic by Bourdillon (1980). The majority of the samples were from twelfth century contexts, but they do indicate a widening of the resource base. Continuity with mid-Saxon Hamwic is shown by the fact that the bulk of the meat eaten derived from cattle, the majority of these being mature beasts. However, there is a clear indication of an increased consumption of pig (Bourdillon 1980, 186). More significant, though, is the presence of wild species, which were absent from Hamwic. Pigeon, rabbits and fallow deer, along with domestic poultry, were eaten to supplement the basic diet (Bourdillon 1980, 189). Further, fish bones were found in steadily increasing quantities and with greater diversity of species.

The kill patterns and butchery of the large domestic animals were similar to that of Hamwic, the bone recovered from the rubbish pits being derived from large joints, with all parts of the body represented. Thereafter, however, butchery techniques became more specialised, with the size of the joints reduced and the choice of meats widening appreciably

(Platt 1979, 68-9; Bourdillon 1980, 188-9). This change is contemporary with the presence of more young cattle and a more careful and selective disposal of bone debris.

The late date of most of the bone assemblage from medieval Southampton makes it difficult to compare directly the data patterns with those from Coppergate. The animal bones from Lincoln, however, come from the late ninth to the mid-eleventh centuries, approximately the same period as those from York. Hence, a more meaningful comparison can be made. Bone assemblages from the excavation at Flaxengate, in the lower walled area of Lincoln, showed a marked increase in the proportion of sheep bones after the mid-tenth century, with a corresponding decline in the proportion of cattle bones. There were other striking similarities with those from Coppergate. The main species represented were cattle, sheep and pig, with beef being the dominant form of meat consumed. But this diet, as at Coppergate and in contrast to the mid-Saxon settlements, was supplemented by a considerable number of fowls and fishes. The wildfowl included those typically abundant in estuarine and coastal areas during the winter months, implying a seasonal trade in hunted birds over distances of sixty kilometres or more. In addition, bones of marine fish were recovered, indicating regular trade with the coast (O'Connor 1982, 44-6).

The assemblage of animal bones from eleventh century deposits in Exeter, analysed by Mark Maltby, also exhibited both a wider and more diverse resource base to that of mid-Saxon emporia. Cattle again provided the largest number of bone fragments, around fifty per cent, followed by sheep and pig (1979, 15). Alongside these main meat supplying species, there were also a number of minority species. Red, fallow and roe deer, and hare and rabbit were recognised. Domestic and wildfowl were also present, including woodcock, pigeons and doves. The diet of the inhabitants of Exeter were also

supplemented by a large variety of fish, both freshwater and deep-sea. As at Southampton, the majority of the cattle were driven in on the hoof when fully mature. Although, the number of immature animals slowly increased during the middle ages, the single most impressive feature of this assemblage was its apparent stability through time. A qualitative change in the processes of production, extraction and consumption of the animal resources only occurs in the sixteenth century (Maltby 1979, 82-94). This is also the case at York (O'Connor 1984) and London (Armitage 1983).

Finally, a similar wider resource base, in terms of minority species, is evident in the bones from late-Saxon Thetford (Jones 1984). This site produced a remarkably varied list of species of wild and domestic birds, including hawks and other hunting birds. Freshwater and marine fish remains were recovered as well as evidence for the consumption of shellfish (Clutton-Brock 1976, 387-9).

EMPORIA AND THE TRIBUTARY MODE OF PRODUCTION:

The mid-Saxon bone assemblages are best interpreted through the concepts of the emporium and the tributary mode of production. As argued in Section 1, emporia were settlements specialising in the production and exchange of prestige goods. They regulated trade in luxury items for the exclusive privilege of the tributary ruling elite and were thus divorced from the rural economy. The animal bone archive certainly supports this. As highlighted by both Bourdillon (1988) and O'Connor (1990), the bone debris clearly indicates that Southampton and York were consumer-based settlements, for example the dearth of foetal and neonatal material which would be expected if these settlements were self-sufficient producer sites. The narrow resource base is a further indication of their removal from an agrarian, subsistence-orientated, economy. O'Connor (1990) has noted the lack of diversity in the Fishergate assemblage, with the important implication that the inhabitants lacked the facility of 'home-production' (see also O'Connor 1989a, 17-9). Compared to late-Saxon bone archives, there was considerable under representation of pigs, fowls and geese, species which are amenable to production in urban backyards, unlike cattle and sheep. The conclusion he draws is that the Fishergate settlement must have been supplied indirectly by a ruling elite. This argument would also seem true, by association of Hamwic, Ipswich and London. It supports the key theoretical proposition that emporia, as consumer units, did not trade directly with the rural producers.

The residents of these settlements were thus dependent on the tributary elite for the majority of their food. Such social relations of dependency inhibited their exploitation of a wider range of resources. Emporia dwellers had no economic control over land, so possessed little opportunity for backyard small holdings and lacked the facilities of home-

production. Food was supplied to the settlement on the basis of the food-render system, an expression of tributary relations of exploitation. The proto-state, in the form of the king, extracted food-renders from communities of rural producers and part of this surplus was then transferred to the emporia.

'Food renders were normally delivered to a royal vill, and some such system of dues being paid to the vill of Hamwic could have provided the basis of the provisioning for the town in the supplies that were needed both for manufacture and for food. The king and his servants could presumably arrange for such diversion, and for such provisioning, without actually living at Hamwic'. (Bourdillon 1988, 191)

Such a supply system would certainly explain the restriction in the resource base. As there was an intermediate social force, the tributary elite, standing between producer and consumers, food was procured indirectly. This supply system would have reduced the diversity of resources from what was potentially available to what was appropriated as tribute. Cattle and sheep would be ideal species for tribute payment as they could be easily moved around on hoof. Historical evidence, such as King Ine's law codes, refer to the importance of cattle as payments for food-renders (see Whitelock 1952, 146; Vince 1990a).

The indirect mechanism of extraction is also reflected in the kill patterns of the animals. Production in the countryside was not directly geared towards emporium consumption. For example, the age of death of cattle, the main source of meat, suggests that they were not raised solely for food. The majority of cattle and sheep were fully mature when brought into the settlement, not reared in the countryside to be marketed in the town. These animals were valued for the contribution they made in their lifetime, as much as for their meat - cattle for ploughing and dairy products, sheep for wool. The only major species raised solely for food were pigs.

These beast were subject to a highly age-selected kill-off pattern which suggests centralised processing for specialised consumption. Indeed, there is evidence in the mid-Saxon period for the careful management of pig production with the establishment of rural based processing sites, such as at Wicken Bonhunt in Essex (Wade 1980; Carver 1989; Crabtree 1990). Pigs were highly valued and were an important component of tribute payments (see Crabtree 1989). They were thus incorporated into the centralised provisioning of emporia.

The economic dependence of the inhabitants of emporia on the tributary elite affected the patterns of consumption and disposal at these settlements. The homogeneity of the animal bone assemblages suggests a prevailing uniformity of eating habits. Significantly, Bourdillon argues that:

'The basic dullness of the food would seem to rule out the conspicuous presence of any class of merchants.....Even allowing for some levelling out of food remains by joint disposal practices in the pits, there is no suggestion of the presence of any class of people with noticeably greater wealth than all the rest'. (1988, 189)

The feeding and refuse-disposal habits, therefore, point towards the insignificance of social stratification, distinctions and divisions. The craftsmen and traders in the mid-Saxon period do not seem to have held, in any sense, an independent position within the tributary mode of production.

TOWNS AND THE FEUDAL MODE OF PRODUCTION:

Far from being the dynamic of socio-economic development, the growth of mid-Saxon emporia appear to have been heavily dependent on the dominant tributary relations of production. These were not proto-urban settlements, naturally evolving into medieval towns. However, what is clear from the archaeological evidence is that there was a significant economic change in the late-Saxon period. A dramatic shift

occurred in settlement location with the establishment of new types of settlement and animal bone assemblages from York and elsewhere, show economic developments. In terms of production for urban inhabitants, the mechanics of extraction and supply, and processes and patterns of consumption itself, the assemblages described above point towards critical changes in town/country relationships.

As discussed above, the Coppergate assemblages possess some striking similarities to those of Fishergate and thus do not support the notion that we are witnessing the birth of a competitive market. There is no change in the trade of this bulk 'commodity', for example the move from the production for use towards the production for exchange which one would predict. Further, there is no evidence that the rearing of animals in the countryside was being directed primarily towards exchange for profit in the town. The mature age of death indicates that cattle and sheep served needs other than that of meat supply.

Feudal towns can be perceived as centres for petty commodity production and nodes in the articulation of agricultural surpluses. In contrast to mid-Saxon emporia, therefore, they were directly integrated into the rural economy. However, this integration was not based on the drive for profits, nor the dynamic of competitive markets. Peasants were engaged in urban market transactions in order to exchange surplus rural products for cash, so that essential commodities, such as salt, clothes, tools etc. could be purchased. The extent to which the peasantry was dependent on the urban economy was determined by the needs of subsistence (ie the purchasing of petty commodities), or the social relations of feudalism (ie. the exchange of agricultural products for cash in order to pay rents).

Feudal lords were likewise integrated into the urban market through the exchange of agrarian surpluses. Rents in kind from a lord's estate and the yields from demesne farms were marketed in the feudal town. For example, there is historical evidence from the tenth century of landlords possessing property, 'haws', in a neighbouring borough through which surpluses from the estates could be traded (Whitelock 1952, 128-9). As a fragmented class, the feudal lords required towns for integration. They depended on the town market, in a similar manner to the peasants, to obtain basic supplies for their estates, as well as prestige goods. The late-Saxon town was, therefore, primarily a centre for the production and exchange of use values.

The animal bone patterns support this notion of the feudal town. There are significant differences between mid and late-Saxon assemblages, notably in the increased role of minority species, and in the relationship between wild and domestic animals. At Coppergate, for example, there was a marked increase in animals suitable for raising in backyards. A similar contrast can be made between Hamwic and medieval Southampton and, although there is no comparable mid-Saxon material for Lincoln, Thetford and Exeter, such domestic species are also present there. Further, even though the number of bones representing boar, hare, deer, wild birds and sea fish is low in comparison to quantities of cattle, sheep and pig, their presence indicates a qualitative shift in the resource base. The inhabitants of feudal towns, therefore, possessed a far greater degree of independence, having more direct control over their means of subsistence. Firstly, meat was acquired through the facility of home-production. Secondly, the urban community could trade for meat via the market. The existence of a market was critical for the functioning of a feudal town.

It was in the category of hunted and fished based foods that the urban cash economy was most effective. Despite the feudal restrictions on economic activities, peasants had the opportunity to exploit the locally available wild species, whether that be wildfowl or fish, and take the surplus to exchange in the neighbouring town. This trade would not have disrupted the mechanics of the subsistence-orientated rural economy. These wild species were not essential for the maintenance of feudal peasant life. However, through their direct exchange at the town, peasants could obtain cash either to pay rents or to purchase petty commodities. Thus the feudal town drew in resources from a much wider area and a greater diversity of habitats. For example at York, Lincoln and Thetford, all inland sites, sea fish bones are present in some numbers in tenth and eleventh century deposits.

The staple meat species, cattle, sheep and pigs, however, were supplied by the feudal lords. The peasantry possessed little in the way of disposable wealth, least of all a regular surplus of highly valuable domestic animals. The demands of feudal rents would have been such that their market opportunities would have been limited to the sale of fish, wildfowl and small wild mammals etc. Only feudal lords were in the position to maintain the supply of staple foods to the town. Agrarian surpluses were extracted by the feudal lord by the systematic exploitation of the tenants living and working on their estates and exchanged for cash in the town. Although it is difficult, using the animal bone assemblages, to illustrate this process, there is evidence to suggest that cattle and sheep were indeed socially appropriated surpluses. In particular, the kill patterns of these animals from York and Lincoln are revealing. The cattle and sheep, although not young species, are not of any great age either. If these animals were being reared by peasants primarily for wool, dairy farming and plough-teams etc, and only then exchanged in the towns for their meat, a higher percentage of elderly

animals would be expected. As this is not the case then it suggests that the peasants were not in control of the processes of extraction and exchange. Instead, an outside force, namely the feudal lord, was intervening and appropriating animals for meat that would have still been economically useful while alive.

The processes of production and extraction in the provisioning of meat to the feudal town were therefore fundamentally different to that of the tributary emporium. Rather than being indirect and mediated through the tributary elite, the resource base of the late-Saxon town was brought to the population directly. Consequently, the inhabitants of feudal towns gained a degree of economic freedom which their predecessors in the emporium lacked. The increased economic freedom allowed the medieval urban dwellers to develop a complex web of social identities. The internal divisions of labour within the town and the rise of merchants and various groups of craftsmen, was expressed in cultural terms. Commodities of all sorts became symbols of social identities, part of the conspicuous display of urban wealth and power. Food was a significant element of this. The defining of social status would be partially expressed through the patterns of consumption and disposal of meat.

The relationship between animals, meat consumption and social status in medieval society, has been discussed by a number of scholars. The historian, Christopher Dyer (1983), for example, has illustrated how the consumption of substantial quantities of red meat was one of the central characteristics of the upper-class diet in the Middle Ages, the blood of red meat being important symbol of feudal inheritance. It was the ability to indulge in ostentatious feasts which marked the rich from the poor, *'the poor ate to live, while in too many cases the rich lived to eat'* (Mead 1931, 9). Feasting was a symbolic operation, an expression of

upper class social identity (Cosman 1976). It was the subject of competition between the feudal lords, an element of conspicuous consumption. Whole animals, or large parts of them, were brought to the table to be carved (Elias 1978, 117-122). As argued by Goody:

'Meat and its dismemberment played a great part in the cooking of this warrior aristocracy, whose pastime was the hunt but who left the management of the domestic livestock to their subjects'. (1982, 139)

The lavishness of the feasting table was part of the carnivorous culture of the feudal ruling class. However, the importance placed on the carving and cutting of whole animals at the table did not encourage the formation of elaborate cuisine.

Conspicuous consumption can also be identified in the larger hunted animals. In archaeological terms Grant (1981; 1988, 178-82) has drawn attention to the importance of deer remains from medieval excavations and has argued that deer, along with other hunted game, were high status animals. The medieval upper classes took great care to protect certain wild game (Grant 1988, 164-5; Whitelock 1952, 91). Although peasants had some access to wild mammals, birds and fish, game such as deer or boar were protected, hunted and consumed by the feudal ruling class. It is thus significant that the distinguishing feature of the late-Saxon urban bone assemblages is the number of these hunted game species represented. Although it is still remains difficult to identify internal differentiations in the spatial disposal of these bones, their presence is an expression of development of wealth, status and power, at these sites. The social position of craftsmen greatly improved with the rise of feudalism. Increases in disposable wealth allowed the urban population to obtain meat commodities in addition to the staple food resources. Meat consumption was, therefore, part of the cultural identity of the emerging urban classes.

Contrasting the animal bone assemblages from mid-Saxon and late-Saxon settlements can thus reveal an enormous amount about the economic development of early medieval urban institutions. Environmental data need not be confined to specialists' reports, nor simply to narrow, empirically-based generalisations. This chapter has hopefully demonstrated the potential wealth of information that can be gained from the study of ecofacts once the data is fully integrated into a theoretical framework.

The origins of English feudalism marked the birth of the medieval town. Rather than being an institution restricted to the production and exchange of luxury and prestigious commodities, the town was integrated into the mechanics of the rural economy. Analysing the animal bone assemblages from just a limited number of sites has illustrated this important economic development in terms of the changing character of town/country relationships. In association with the evidence from ceramic data discussed in **Chapter 5**, environmental archaeology can offer a radically new perspective on fundamental historical questions, such as the role of the town in medieval society and can certainly enhance a Marxist understanding of the development of feudal society.

This chapter was introduced with a quote by Sweezy from the debate on the transition from feudalism to capitalism. It is this debate which has set the theoretical context for both **Chapter 5** and **7**. Were towns external to the medieval economy, or one of its internal institutions? In answering this question it has been shown that the rise of the town was a process intimately connected with the origins of feudalism and through examining patterns of food supply, that the feudal town was not organically a dynamic institution. During much of the medieval period town/country relationships were stable. Urban markets did not stimulate developments in the rural

economy. It is only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as revealed at Exeter, York and London, that qualitative changes occur in the urban food resource base, with the significant increase in the supply of younger and immature beasts (see above, 277). The post-medieval period, therefore, marks the point of fundamental transformations in the economic basis of towns. It is with the advent of capitalist relations on the land that rural animal husbandry became fully integrated with, and geared to, urban markets. Before this period, medieval towns can only be studied as feudal institutions, set firmly in the context of the feudal mode of production.

PART 3
CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 8

ARCHAEOLOGY AND FEUDALISM

The archaeology of feudalism is a complex issue. Conceptually and empirically this subject is fraught with difficulties. However, the last three chapters have, hopefully, demonstrated the value of constructing archaeologically sensitive hypotheses on the issue of feudalism. Through linking theory and data in the development of social explanations, the value of Marxist approaches in archaeology can be demonstrated. However, the empirical research completed in this thesis has been extremely limited. Attention has been focused primarily on the conceptual analysis of specific data sets rather than a broad examination of early medieval material culture. The interpretations offered so far are partial and provisional. But the strength of the research programme developed here is that it can be used as a holistic base to explore and assess other data sets. In conclusion, therefore, prospects for future archaeological research on the question of feudalism are discussed. First, a few words need to be said about the development of archaeological theory and practice.

The relationship between theory and data lies at the core of archaeological knowledge. Unfortunately, that relationship has been severed by the institutional separation of field and academic archaeology, a separation reinforced by the traditional empiricist and positivist approaches within the discipline: - either data spoke for itself and there was no need for abstract theories; or the two were rigorously separated through the hypothetico-deductive method and data became the passive test of theory. However, the rise of post-

processualism, borrowing from post-structuralist philosophy, explicitly attempted to overcome this false dualism and to reconstruct archaeological theory and practice. Data were conceived as theory dependent and thus the dichotomy between the two was avoided (see Chap. 1, Sect. 2). However, resting on a strict anti-realist stance, post-processualism has simply dissolved the problem into theory: - everything becomes dependent on discourse. Hence, despite its many positive critiques of traditional archaeology, the institutional separation of field and academic archaeology has remained unchallenged and, in effect, reinforced because of the language used and the fundamentals of separating word from reality. The real relationships between theory, research programmes and data collection has been ignored.

This chapter addresses the issue of data and theory by making some concluding remarks on the archaeology of feudalism. The research programme developed in **Chapter 3**, through an abstract discussion of Marxist analytical concepts, has been explored empirically in **Chapters 5, 6 and 7**. Data have not been used as a test of theory. Hypotheses have been constructed around particular conceptual issues through which theory and data have become integrated in a manner which both elaborates the initial research programme and locates areas suitable for future research. Theory and data are thus integrated in a dynamic and reflexive fashion. This can be illustrated by considering two issues which seem central to the research programme: rural production and exploitation (**Section 1**), and trade, exchange and urban development (**Section 2**).

SECTION 1: RURAL PRODUCTION AND EXPLOITATION

The master concepts of historical materialism are the forces and relations of production which form distinct modes of

production. Thus, central to the exposition of the origins of English feudalism has been an analysis of the transition from the tributary to feudal mode of production, the key distinction being located in the changes and development of production and exploitation on the land during the seventh to tenth centuries. At the heart of the tributary mode was a tax collecting ruling class which formed a proto-state reliant on indirect and collective forms of exploitation. Feudalism, on the other hand, was based on a fragmented class of landlords engaged in a direct and individual exploitative relationship with a subject peasantry (see de Ste. Croix 1984, 103-6). Rent replaced tax and this forged and defined the social formation of the early medieval period. Feudal lords were the agents of this structural transformation. Emerging within the framework of tributary exploitation as middlemen in the collection of tribute, they strove to control land, the means of production. The critical hinge in the origins of English feudalism, therefore, was the process by which land became alienated, to form the private possession of the individuals. It was this break through in the relations of production which precipitated the intensification of the forces of production, physically embodied in the open-field system of agriculture.

DISPERSED AND NUCLEATED RURAL SETTLEMENTS:

This dialectical presentation of the interaction of forces and relations of production has been explored in Chapter 6 in terms of dynamic connections between social relations and spatial structures. Within the tributary social formation, kinship relations dominated the day-to-day practices of agrarian production. The rural landscape at this level appeared boundless, with kinship groups moving around roughly defined territories. The advent of feudalism, however, increasingly witnessed the fixing of territory and property. Feudal lords defined their interest and power in terms of land and thus the feudal landscape became bounded and regulated.

This development has been investigated through the changing morphology of rural settlements, a movement from dispersed and fluid settlements of the mid-Saxon period to the nucleated and stable villages which defined late-Saxon settlements and beyond. As illustrated in the Raunds Area Project and other places, tributary relations were embodied in the fixed enclosures and halls which emerged among the shifting farmstead units, to form collection centres for food renders. Feudal social relations, on the other hand, were both reflected and actively constituted in the spatial morphology of the nucleated village. Resting on extra-economic forms of coercion, feudal exploitation was shaped physically. The manor, church, tenements and roads all formed an active part in the subordination of the peasantry to the powers of lordship.

Unfortunately, the archaeological exploration of this issue has been limited. Discussion has been restricted both by the narrow selection of the data base, viz the mere consideration of spatial plans, and by the inadequacies of rural settlement archaeology, notably the highly fragmentary nature of data collection. But the strength of any research programme is that, with its auxiliary hypotheses, it can identify new areas for research. In the analysis of tributary exploitation, for example, there is a need to integrate the spatial evidence with artefactual and environmental assemblages. The material culture from the mid-Saxon enclosures needs to be more rigorously compared and contrasted with that from the farmstead units to test whether they did indeed operate as tributary enclosures. Further, much more systematic and extensive work is required in research into the nucleated village. Rather than pursuing the traditional preoccupation with manorial property, resources need to be directed to exploring the interrelationship between the different elements and units within the settlement. Tenements, roads and manorial property need to be analysed together rather than in

isolation. The Raunds Area Project is a good example of the productive way forward.

These suggestions, however, are concerned with supporting or confirming observations and explanations already made within the thesis. Obviously there are many gaps in the research programme and these all need to be filled through detailed empirical studies. But it would be more important to focus on those areas of archaeological research which would add a new dimension to the overall analysis. The hypothesis developed on the social use of space in early medieval rural settlements not only elaborates the initial research programme, but should form the basis for an extension of empirical work which has the potential to expand, advance and critically reassess the whole research programme.

TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL VARIATIONS:

The key to the origins of feudalism has been identified in powers of the nobility and the ability to alienate land from the demands of tribute payment. This has been associated with the reorganisation of landscape into nucleated manorial villages surrounded by open-fields. But this process of feudalisation of production was not even. There must have been an enormous degree of temporal and spatial variation which carries a great potential for archaeology.

The process of settlement nucleation has mainly been examined in the midlands, with Raunds, Goltho, Sulgrave etc. Indeed, traditionally, archaeologists, geographers and historians studying the development of settlement in Britain have focused their attention on these landscapes, landscapes dominated by a regular system of planned nucleated villages and fields established at a relatively early stage in the medieval period. Less attention has been paid to other areas of the country in which different forms of settlement and

field systems persisted or developed. In the south-east, for example, much more dispersed forms of settlements continued associated with a more irregular open-field systems. Tom Williamson (1988) has examined how the medieval settlements on the claylands of East Anglia and Eessex developed from the late-Saxon period as an agglomeration of hamlets and farmsteads within a framework of relatively discrete, rather than thoroughly intermixed, landholdings. East Anglia is not the only example. There are many other regions in Britain where either the pattern of nucleated villages and regular open-fields emerged at a later date than that in the midlands, or where a different system evolved altogether, such as in Cornwall and Wales.

Such temporal and spatial variations are significant and raise important conceptual questions. What is the cause of regional variations in field and settlement patterns? How are these different patterns related to the issue of the origins and establishment of feudalism? Such questions could form the basis of future empirically-based hypotheses. In particular, two points seem to be of significance. Firstly, that feudalism was born as a product of class struggle. Secondly, that the specifics of this class struggle are embodied in the morphology of rural settlements.

Feudal lords were the class agents of change because of the structural position that they held within the developing tributary social formation. But the realising of these structural capacities depended on the successful outcome of class struggle, a conflict directed both against the king and state to obtain effective control over land, and against the kinship communities of producers to impose feudal exploitative relations. Feudal lords were a fragmented class and thus gained control over land in a piecemeal fashion. Temporal variation in settlement nucleation and field planning,

therefore, focuses attention on the detail of class struggle and social change.

In the archaeological study of nucleated settlement plans the relationship between open-field production and the extraction of feudal rent was explored at some length. The growth of a class of peasant engaged in collective forms of agrarian production necessitated a need for feudal surveillance and discipline. This was reflected in the establishment of bounded units, the creation of regulated space. The same method of analysis, however, can be adopted to examine regions without nucleated villages and planned field systems, such as in East Anglia. These spatial variations represent subtle, but important, differences in the mechanics of feudal production and the means, or, methods of feudal exploitation.

Examining these temporal and spatial variations in the evolution of the early medieval landscape indicates that there is a need for different levels of analysis. This thesis has focused attention primarily on a general level. Specific details and particular configurations have tended to be overlooked in an effort to illustrate fundamental shifts and changes in early medieval social relations. These specifics need to be analysed to extend our understanding of the developing relationship between lord and peasant.

The feudal lords, as agents of change, realised their class power through asserting individual private control over land, thus becoming, effectively, kings of their estates. The study of individual villages and estates is of utmost importance to such an analysis, allowing us to study particular variations in the material culture patterning within and between rural settlements. Thus the issue of the construction of social identities in the feudal village can be explored. James, Marshall and Millett (1984), have drawn attention to the

existence of a highly characteristic building tradition within England during the fifth to eighth centuries. This tradition became less unified within the ninth century, with buildings tending to be less precisely laid-out and with different plan forms and different construction techniques. Analysis of this type of pattern can explore the issue of the fragmentation and individualising of class power with the birth of feudalism. It has been noted that the manor was architectually and spatially differentiated in the feudal village. How is this social distinction reflected in the artefactual and environmental assemblages? This raises an important question concerning the social differentiation within the feudal village. The development of feudalism gave birth to a class of peasants engaged in more collective forms of production. Archaeology could be used to detect the growth of peasant class identities and the cultural formation of a local village community. Certainly, exploring on a micro-level the similarities and differences in form, character and size of peasant tenements and houses within individual villages could help develop this line of analysis.

SECTION 2: TRADE AND EXCHANGE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT:

The phenomenon of medieval trade and exchange and urban development has been the source of numerous deep seated and perplexing debates throughout the social sciences. The strength of the research programme developed in this thesis is that it explores this issue through examining changes in rural production and exploitation. By portraying the growth of emporia and towns as products of the transition from tributary to feudal societies, radically new perspectives are presented, challenging the current dominant archaeological perspectives which focus on the role of trade in stimulating social change. Hence, Hodges is criticised here for fetishising the sphere of circulation and for conflating capitalism with commodity production and commercial exchange. Trade did not have its own internal dynamic propelling economic development, but was an expression of the pre-capitalist drive for political accumulation. Medieval towns and markets were not centres for the development of capitalism, but institutions central for the development of feudalism.

PRESTIGE EXCHANGE AND CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION:

The social factors underpinning the patterns of early medieval trade and exchange were described in **Chapter 5**. In the mid-Saxon tributary social formation the emerging tensions between king and noble promoted the growth of prestige exchange, while in the late-Saxon feudal social formation it was the existence of a highly fragmentary ruling class which underpinned the development of conspicuous consumption.

This transition in the character of commerce was explored through examining ceramic evidence, in particular the establishment of the late-Saxon pottery industry. Thus, the move towards mass-produced, wheelthrown pottery was perceived to mark the collapse of the tributary system of prestige

exchange and the birth of the feudal system of conspicuous consumption. This transition, however, was not promoted by the development of competitive markets. Critically, as feudal trade and exchange still rested on coerced labour, the sphere of circulation was confined to a discrete sector of the economy. The almost exclusive distribution of Saxo-Norman pottery is an illustration of this. Late-Saxon towns depended on the tight regulation of the market mechanism as merchants relied on monopoly to secure profits. Wheelthrown pottery was a commodity of feudal conspicuous consumption and so its production and exchange was centrally administered. Further archaeological research on this issue of early medieval prestige exchange and conspicuous consumption has the potential to offer new insights into the transition from tributary to feudal society.

Firstly, on the subject of tributary prestige exchange, it seems clear that mid-Saxon kings were actively involved in the promotion and regulation of continental trade. The animal bone assemblages from mid-Saxon emporia discussed in Chapter 7 suggest that these settlements were controlled by a centralised elite, presumably the king. Still partially restricted by the demands and obligations of kinship, the exchange of prestige goods helped the king generate and consolidate alliances. In particular, monopolising the luxury items which symbolised power and status enabled the proto-states to mask the antagonistic relationship between king and nobles. Certainly, there are enormous possibilities in exploring the ideological and symbolic elements of early medieval society in a study of imported artefacts (see Arnold 1988, 49-93). Huggett (1988), for example, has examined the distribution of imported artefacts in sixth and seventh century Kent and related the patterns to the emerging networks of alliances based on prestige exchange. Grierson and Blackburn (1986) have likewise carried out some extremely interesting work on the patterns within early medieval

coinage. These research avenues might elucidate the networks of tributary alliances on which the power of the mid-Saxon proto-state was based and the social tensions that this social formation produced.

Secondly, on the subject of conspicuous consumption, it has been argued that the birth of feudalism in England was accompanied by the expansion of medieval industries. The establishment of the late-Saxon pottery industry was one example of this development. Obviously, further artefact based studies can enhance our understanding of the mechanics of feudal commodity production. However, the pottery case study also illustrated how feudal social relations imposed constraints on the development of the medieval economy. Although technology was advanced in the manufacture of wheelthrown pots, the reliance of coerced labour meant that there was no structural mechanism within feudalism for the continuous and sustained intensification of production. By the twelfth century the late-Saxon pottery industry had collapsed, being replaced by technologically inferior medieval wares. This transition, it was argued, marked a shift in the character of conspicuous consumption. Pottery changed from being a prestige commodity to an item of everyday utility. Future research, therefore, needs to be directed at assessing other changes in artefact technology. Such archaeological analysis would advance considerably our conception of feudal production and exchange.

FEUDAL TOWNS:

The feudal drive towards conspicuous consumption promoted market development. Late-Saxon town foundations were an expression of this. The urban market regulated and administered the commercial trade, confining it to a discrete sector of the economy. However, the birth of the feudal town was also a product of the establishment of feudal productive

relations on the land. Towns were institutions central to the maintenance of the rural economy, not only centres for petty commodity production, supplying peasants and lords with everyday artefacts, but also urban markets functioning as nodes in the articulation of agrarian surpluses. This intimate relationship between town and country was analysed in **Chapter 7** through a discussion of urban animal bone assemblages. It was shown how late-Saxon towns differed from mid-Saxon emporia in the existence of a rural produce market.

The potential for research into this conception of the feudal town is enormous. Excavations in the last twenty years have yielded data on all areas of urban settlement, most of it still unanalysed. In particular, an assessment of the relationship between spatial morphology and urban social relations is of critical importance. The dependence of the medieval urban elites on extra-economic forms of coercion to control production and exchange means that analysing the physical make up of towns could offer valuable insights into the economic, political and social structure of urban life. The form of spatial analysis developed in **Chapter 6** can be used to investigate the distinctive social use of space within medieval towns.

Firstly, as medieval commerce depended on manipulating the sphere of circulation, rather than production, medieval markets were regulated. The late-Saxon state developed clear staple policies to divert and concentrate trade and exchange in the shire towns where it could be administered. This market regulation was also embodied in the physical structure of towns. As described in **Chapter 5**, the movement from mid-Saxon emporia to late-Saxon towns was marked by shifts and changes in settlement form. At London, for example, the tenth century town was relocated within the walls of the old Roman town. Indeed one of the principal features of early medieval towns is the use of walls or ramparts to define the urban space.

Although military explanations have dominated the interpretation of this phenomenon (see Biddle 1976), it would be interesting to reassess the enclosing of towns with walls and ramparts in terms of market regulation. Not only do they reflect the physical separation of town and country, giving the former special rights and privileges, but defences were also a means to restrict and control access in and out of the town through gateways. The urban social use of space was thus used to aid the administering of trade and exchange.

Secondly, the active involvement of the king in establishing urban foundations has frequently been emphasised by historians and archaeologists alike. It is around the issue of towns that the developing role of the feudal state can be explored. Taxes, rents and tolls from urban markets and tenements were an important source of revenue for the emerging state. Thus the king had a vested interest in guaranteeing market monopolies and privileges. The planning and the organisation of urban space should be considered in this light. To give one example, rather than see urban castle foundations in the eleventh century in terms of military requirements, they could be viewed in terms of the royal regulation of markets. Their spatial positioning in towns suggest that they played an important role in the surveillance of market transactions, being often located in one corner of the town overlooking the market (see Barley 1976 and Drage 1987). One of the best examples is York. There, two late-eleventh century motte and bailey castles are placed either side of River Ouse which then became the sole commercial river route, when the River Foss was dammed (Addyman and Priestley 1978). Castles are a vivid expression of the feudal needs of extra-economic means of coercion to control exchange, a physical embodiment of the drive towards political accumulation.

Thirdly, as towns operated as nodes in the articulation of agricultural surpluses, the feudal landed class, both secular

and ecclesiastical, played a critical role in the organisation of urban life. Much of urban property was owned by secular and ecclesiastical lords, through which their rural surpluses were exchanged and marketed. Urban tenement arrangements are ideal for archaeological research. The spatial patterning of tenements, buildings, streets and markets have the potential to reveal information about urban social relations, for example, the spatial relationship between minsters/cathedrals and markets. At many towns such as Bury St. Edmunds, Ely and Wells, market places are situated directly outside the cathedral and abbey gates (see Morris 1989, 168-226). This pattern represents the role played by the church in the marketing of an agricultural surplus. The church was indeed a major possessor of land and extractor of feudal rent and would market agrarian surpluses within towns.

On the point of urban church foundations, it is significant that many private churches were also constructed near, or, within town markets (see Morris 1989, 168-226). Feudal urbanisation permitted the growth of groups with a degree of economic and social independence. The multiplication of urban churches between the tenth and twelfth centuries may reflect the growth of wealth within the town, but also the cultivation of a separate sense of identity among the burghers. The manipulation of material culture through various forms of conspicuous consumption was the means by which different classes and distinct groups within feudalism expressed their social positions. Thus, the development of urban elites, merchants, guilds etc., can be traced through archaeological research. For example, Roskams (1986) has analysed the construction of stone walls around York in the mid-thirteenth century in terms of the growth of a number of powerful families in York and an expression of self-government with the granting of municipal independence.

Finally, on the issue of feudal towns as centres of petty

commodity production, it has been argued that the degree of direct control exercised by the feudal ruling class over production was limited. Without the existence of wage-labour the urban elites could find no mechanism to develop production systematically. Profits were extracted through the control and regulation of markets. However, it is clear from the discussion of the late-Saxon pottery industry that there was still a relationship between the control of production and the control of exchange. Obviously, this whole area is extremely complex, but it is a critical area for research. Archaeology can be used to enhance our understanding of the means and forms by which urban artisan production was managed. One direction would be to examine the organisation of urban space, in particular the functional zoning of production. The close administration of craft production is intimately connected to the regulation of the town's market in petty commodities and the concentration of trades within particular quarters would have aided the development and control of the craft guilds.

This brief discussion of the potential for future empirical hypotheses in terms of rural production and exploitation and trade and exchange and urban development, illustrates the progressive character of the overall research programme. Theoretical research programmes can form the foundation of data collection strategies and these empirical studies then provide the stimulus for a further conceptual elaboration of the research programme, thus challenging the interdisciplinary division between field and interpretative archaeology. This integration of theory and data is one of the strengths of a Marxist approach to archaeology. However, the challenge to the institutional separation of the practical and academic sides of the discipline raises much broader questions concerned with the politics of archaeology. It is to this issue we shall now turn in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 9

MARXISM Vs. RADICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

This thesis cannot be concluded without a few words being said about the politics of theory. Marxism is the philosophy of practice and so any consideration of the integration of historical materialism and material culture studies requires an assessment of the politics of archaeology. The rise of post-processual theory as been closely associated with the conscious politicising of discipline. Shanks and Tilley have been at pains to stress *'the exciting new possibilities for a self-reflexive, critical and political practice of archaeology'* (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, back page). This has been the basis for their reconstruction of archaeological theory and practice. In this final chapter, therefore, the relationship between Marxism and archaeology will be examined in the context of the current growth of 'radical' archaeology. This brings the thesis full circle, returning us to the themes outlined in Chapter 1.

SECTION 1: RADICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Traditionally, archaeology and politics have been strictly separated. Political ideas were seen as value judgments imposed upon the facts, extraneous elements which interfered with reality. Thus 'good' archaeology, 'objective' archaeology was perceived to be apolitical (Saunders 1986). Such a position dominated the discipline until the rise of post-processualism marked by the radical rethinking of the orthodox relationship between data and theory, past and present, and consequently archaeology and politics. Writing the past was

structured by the present, embodying its attitudes, its preconceptions and cultural concerns. Hence, there could be no escape. Archaeology was a thoroughly political practice.

The denial of the possibility of concrete knowledge of the world and the deconstruction of the 'scientism' and 'objectivism' of processualism meant that archaeology became firmly *'situated in the present as discourse in a political field, and as a practice located in relation to structures of power'* (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 186). Radical archaeology, thus, emerged as a form of critique of late capitalist society. The past is to be used to subvert the legitimacy of the present. The power relations constituted and reinforced in archaeological institutions, the racism, sexism, third-worldism, etc., are laid bare by this new critically self-conscious archaeology (see Hodder 1986a). There is no neutral discourse on the past, archaeology as a cultural practice is always political and therefore the validity of each *theory* rested upon the political intentions and interests it embodies.

'The point of archaeology is not merely to interpret the past but to change the manner in which the past is interpreted in the service of social reconstruction in the present. There is no way of choosing between alternative pasts except on essentially political grounds, in terms of a definitive value system, a morality'.

(Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 195)

Such conclusions are a bold step forward, explicitly challenging the implicit conservatism of the traditional archaeological community. However, despite the positive elements in the rise of radical archaeology, beneath the theoretical 'radicalism' lurks a conceptual void.

The critique of New Archaeology hinged upon an emphatic anti-realist stance. This, as argued in Chapter 1, Section 2, leads to a number of problems and unanswered questions

particularly in the realm of the politics of archaeology (Hawes 1990). If there are no rational, or, extra-discursive criteria on which to ground theory, politics also loses its anchorage in the real. On what basis then do we choose between different politics, value systems and moralities? Why choose Shanks and Tilley's radical archaeology rather than, for example, Renfrew's conservative functionalism? Who is to judge which politics are better? Hence, we arrive at an extremely dangerous position, which, as pointed out by Julian Thomas, *'comes close to a kind of archaeological Stalinism'* (1990, 21). Self-styled radical intellectuals become the arbiters of what is good or bad, right or wrong, in archaeology. The roots of this *'absolutism of the intellectual'* (Elliott 1986) which is implicit in radical archaeology lies within Althusser's concept of theoretical practice and Laclau and Mouffe's radical pluralism.

THE AUTONOMY OF THEORY:

The cornerstone of post-processualism, as defined by Shanks and Tilley, is archaeology as theoretical practice (1987a, 25-8). Such a position owes its origins to Althusser's notion that the social totality was composed of a complex unity of distinct practices; economic, political, ideological instances (see above, 20-2). Theory was regarded as one such practice with its own means and methods of production. It was not reducible to the other instances of the social formation and was thus semi-autonomous. The process of knowledge, for Althusser, takes place entirely within the practice of theory for there is a clear distinction between thought and reality (between theoretical practice and the other practices).

'The object of knowledge... (is) in itself absolutely distinct and different from the real object... the idea of the circle, which is the object of knowledge must not be confused with the circle, which is the real object'.

(Althusser 1979, 40)

Knowledge, therefore, is not immediate and direct, but has its own conditions of production which involves, above all, the activity of theoretical labour. However, this conception of epistemology severs the simple realist link between thought and reality and raises the obvious question: how do we establish the difference between various forms of knowledge, or, between science and ideology?

Althusser's solution to this question is wholly inadequate. The only criteria of the validity of theoretical discourses, he argues, are internal to them. There are no extra-discursive referents on which to test theory. Science is its own arbiter of truth. Marxism thus becomes the 'Theory' of theoretical practice, determining whether or not particular discourses are scientific. Such conclusions contain important implications. Marxist theory can only be developed through autonomous theoretical practice of intellectuals. It is produced outside the political practice of the real world and thus outside the working class. The intellectuals give the class the knowledge it needs.

'This is only the final consequence of every idealism: elitism. When knowledge celebrates its autonomy, the philosophers celebrate their dominance'. (Geras 1972, 84)

The idealism embodied in Althusser's notion of theoretical practice was taken to its logical conclusion by Laclau and Mouffe via the route of post-structuralism. For them, social reality becomes dissolved into discourse:

'....every object is constituted as an object of discourse, insofar as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence'.

(Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 107)

Thus there is no pre-discursive reality, no extra-theoretical objectivity. All the world is discourse and we are left without any foundation or reference points by which to choose

between opposing discourses. This position is indistinguishable from idealism.

The separation of ideas from their material basis was explicitly politically motivated. Laclau and Mouffe intentions was the construction of a 'new' socialist strategy (see Wood 1986). The movement from Althusser's Marxism to discourse theory removed the traditional privileged position given to the working class in the fight for socialism. There is no necessary correspondence between economics and politics, no objective conditions which mould the working class as a revolutionary force for change. The relationship between class and politics is entirely contingent and ultimately non-existent. Material interest is not external to discourse as all social identities, including class identities, are discursively constructed and thus politically negotiable. While Althusser saw Marxist theory coming from outside the working class, Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism goes one step further and denies the very centrality of the working class for socialist strategy. The struggle for socialism is now conceived as a plurality of 'democratic' struggles which bring together a variety of resistances to many forms of inequality and oppression. Therefore, the formation of a socialist movement can be constructed autonomously from economic and material conditions. As the social world becomes dematerialised, the discursive construction of social identities becomes the basis of a political programme for 'radical democracy'. Consequently, the social forces for change are articulated and constituted on an ideological plane.

But, as pointed out by Ellen Wood in her sharp polemic against post-Marxism:

'The silent question running throughout the Laclau-Mouffe argument is: who will be the bearer of discourse? Who will constitute the relevant social identities?' (1986, 63)

The silence persists because of a conceptual void at the heart of their reasoning. Any construction of a political programme out of a deconstructed social world is of necessity rootless. Stressing the indeterminacy of the social and the discursive construction of social identities robs Laclau and Mouffe of any basis for their 'progressive' politics. If there are no material conditions to support and bear any form of discourse, we are left with pluralism, a theoretical construct which could support any kind of politics.

But this is not all. In the background, beneath the arbitrary character of their politics, lurks an implicit elitism. As discourse is all, considerable weight is be attributed to intellectuals. The constitution of 'correct' political programmes for radical plural democracy, the selection of relevant social identities, rests ultimately upon the 'masters' of discourse.

'In the final analysis, everything depends upon the success of intellectuals in conducting a "complex set of discursive-hegemonic operations". And so here we have it: In the beginning (and the end) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the ultimate Subject made incarnate in Laclau and Mouffe?'. (Wood 1986, 75)

Travelling down the road from Althusser's Marxism to Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism, Shanks and Tilley inherit the same faults. Their call for a radical archaeology is at best politically vacuous and at worst elitist. This is not to say that radical archaeologists do not have the best democratic intentions in mind. The call for a 'value-committed', 'oppositional', 'critical' role for archaeology are indeed welcome. But, resting on a theoretical premise which defines the *'social (as) an open field fixed.....in the interpretative practices of discourses'* (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 210), such calls merely become empty rhetoric. The specific values, morality and politics of 'critically self-

conscious' archaeology remain conspicuously unstated. There appears to be no foundation on which to base radical archaeology. The indeterminate character of the social means that the choice of values, morality and politics is likewise indeterminate.

Shanks and Tilley do not want to embrace the true arbitrariness of their political position and so attempt to distance themselves from the 'repressive pluralism' of liberal relativism by arguing for a 'radical pluralism'.

'A radical pluralism involves discussion and critique according to the assessment of commitment. Subjecting particular archaeologies to ideology critique is to assess their commitment to the present, to assess the present and future worlds contained within any archaeological project'. (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 246)

However, who decides what is radical and what is repressive? There are two possible answers to the question, both of which are intimately connected. The first is that archaeology has an oppositional role in present society and radical pluralism attempts to challenge the dominant forces at large. The hegemonic ideological powers of society are encoded in value systems affecting all modes of thought and action. The aim of the radical archaeologist is thus to penetrate and subvert the *'complex and multifarious channels of ideological diffusion through which hegemony becomes sustained and is bolstered'* (Shanks and Tilley 1987a, 203). The radical archaeologist tends first and foremost to be an intellectual, a theoretician engaged in a 'war of position' through the establishment of a 'counter-hegemony' in the realm of ideas. Therefore it is the intellectual who becomes the arbiter of radical and repressive pluralism in archaeology. The implicit eliticism of idealism comes to the surface.

But Shanks and Tilley's political position also begs the quite simple question why, given the relativism of theory,

should we want to subvert the ideological structures of the present? In their own terms their progressive pluralism appears to be without firm footholds.

This question leads to the second answer which is only implicit in their work. To find a foundation for their radicalism, it appears that, in the end, there are extra-discursive factors, self-evident values which shape political choice. So, for example, Shanks and Tilley (1987a, 186-91) do support the fight against racism and sexism within archaeology. They talk about capitalism, capitalist economy, classes and class power and exploitation. Therefore, despite all the talk of the social being defined in discourse, about theory and politics being thoroughly subjective, the content of radical archaeology is not based solely on personal moralities. The social, after all, is determinate and there are material structures which need to be challenged. If this is the case, the politics of radical archaeology appear to be at odds with the theory of post-processualism (see Hawes 1990, 20). And if a challenge to capitalist society does lie at the heart of radical archaeology, surely good old Marx has got something more coherent to offer?

SECTION 2: MARXISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

This thesis has been concerned primarily with the development of Marxist theory, demonstrating its ability to answer general historical questions through the study of material culture. The project, therefore, has been a defence of Marxism through an archaeological application of the key concepts of historical materialism. Marxism can not only answer the criticism levelled at it by the post-processualists, but can also provide a more satisfactory foundation for the reconstruction of an archaeological theory and practice. This potential is illustrated through the analysis of the origins of English feudalism. However, the power of Marxism lies not simply in its ability to explain the past, but in its use of theory to criticise, challenge and change the present. This is in no way a pure academic exercise, confined to the university campuses, but a practical programme embedded in the project of socialist revolution, the destruction of classes, exploitation and oppressions. Thus, Marxism offers a more a coherent politics of theory than that pursued by the radical archaeologist.

'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it'.

(Marx 1975c, 423)

THE CONCEPT OF TOTALITY:

One of the most important concepts developed by Marx is that of social totality. This concept is central to his method. Despite the complexity, for Marx, reality was a '*rich totality of many determinations and relations*' (1973, 100), a '*unity of the diverse*' (1973, 101). Perceiving society as a structured whole was the key to understanding social change. Although reality appears much of the time to be chaotic, irrational and fragmentary, beneath this surface appearance there is an underlying, yet concealed, logic. To grasp the character of

the social whole requires the '*power of abstraction*' (1976, 90). So, for example Marx, within *Capital* (1976, 163-77) developed the notion of 'commodity fetishism' to explain how the hidden structure of capitalist production gives rise to a mystified, alienated and fragmented conception of the world. This point is extremely important for understanding the underlying limitations of bourgeois thought and in identifying the forces for social change.

THE FRAGMENTATION OF SOCIAL THOUGHT:

Marx criticised the political economists because they tended to treat society as a collection of isolated individuals lacking any real relation to one another. Since Marx's day this fragmentation of social thought has radically accelerated. The study of social relations was severed from the economic, political, ideological contexts in which they were embedded, a separation enshrined in the birth of the social sciences, the separation of academic knowledge into self-contained disciplines (see Wolf 1982, 7-23). Such fragmentation, as argued in Chapter 4, Section 2, has not only damaging effect on the development of social thought, but also contains important political implications.

On a general level the whole academic organisation of social knowledge into institutional structures, universities and colleges, gives the appearance that knowledge is wholly separate from the material structure of society. Thus, the intellectual world takes on an apparently autonomous form, removed from the social relations which underpin it. This basic dislocation of social knowledge is then reproduced and extended within the academic world itself. Intellectual knowledge is fragmented into the separate disciplines, thus masking the unity of social thought as well as concealing the common roots of ideas in the material world. Politics floats free from economics, sociology from history etc., and so lost

from view is the basis of ideas in the structure of the social whole.

The consequence of this fragmentation of social thought for a political challenge of capitalism is profound. Intellectuals are frequently hostile to the narrow and restricted structures of academia and critical of the dominant powers of society. However, attempts to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and to challenge bourgeois thought have failed because intellectuals have not faced the roots of the problem. Shanks and Tilley (1987, 243-6), for example, do wish to break down the arbitrary inter-disciplinary boundaries between archaeology, sociology, anthropology etc., but they can find no way out. The creation of radical archaeology is no solution, as it remains still trapped within the fragmentation of social thought. As Martin Shaw has argued, criticising 'radical' sociology:

'....so long as the development even of critical theory is confined within the academic structures of social knowledge, it is unable to confront the real problems of social theory, or to tackle the roots of its own problems'. (1975, 101)

Hence, there is no attempt by the radical archaeologist to link their theoretical criticisms of contemporary society to the practical challenges to capitalism. Shanks and Tilley define the aims of radical archaeology simply in terms of the discipline itself. Although joining a trade union or a party political organisation, are not dismissed out of hand:

'The problem is that they have no necessary relationship to the archaeologist's day-to-day work. The most powerful work the archaeologist is able to produce will be likely to be in the field he or she knows best - archaeological theory and practice'. (1987a, 203-4)

They are correct in saying that the relationship between archaeological practice and external political organisations

is not direct or mechanical. However, this is not to say that there is no link whatsoever. Their failure to grasp this fact is a fundamental weakness of the post-processualists' politics of theory. Shanks and Tilley are unable to define themselves in relation to a material force for change outside the world of academia. The solution to the fragmentation of knowledge lies outside the seminar room and away from the narrow and arbitrary confines of the discipline of archaeology. Marxism does define itself in relation to an external force, the working class.

MARXISM AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION:

The most basic proposition of Marxism is that: *'Historical materialism is the theory of proletarian revolution'* (Lukacs 1970, 9). Class struggle in general, and working class struggle in particular, is the nexus of Marxism. In 1879, Marx and Engels summed up their politics in these words:

'For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the most immediate driving power in history and in particular, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social upheaval....When the International was formed, we expressly formulated the battle-cry: the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself'. (1974, 374-75)

This might appear as a truism but the point is worth stressing. From its inception Marxism has suffered from numerous distortions: *'All I know'*, Marx once said in the 1870s, *'is that I'm not a Marxist'*. In Chapters 2, Section 1, it was argued that the transformation of Marxism into the ideology of the Russian ruling class led to an impoverished characterisation of his thought. It also led to the total separation of theory and practice through the distortion of historical materialism into a dogma, a series of static

economic laws, under Stalinism. The living tradition of Marxism as a theory intimately attached to the political and economic struggles of the working class was lost. This transformation has been compounded by the elitist and idealistic trends of Western Marxism. Theory has become autonomous from practice, as Marxism has been trapped within intellectual circles and university campuses.

'Contemporary western Marxism, unlike its classical predecessor, is wholly the creation of academic social theorists - more specifically, the creation of the new professoriate that rose up on the wave of university expansion in the 1960s. The natural constituency of this Marxism is not, of course, the working class, but the massed ranks of the undergraduate and postgraduate students in the social sciences; its content and design mark it out exclusively for the use in the lecture theatre, the seminar room and the doctoral dissertation'.

(Parkin 1979, ix)

But Marxism cannot be constituted purely in the realm of ideas, being itself a product of the birth of the modern proletariat and the development of its struggle against capitalism.

'The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, ie, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question'. (Marx 1975c, 422)

Identifying the working class as the agent of change stems from the concept of social totality. Marx studied capitalism as a '*unity of the diverse*', a unity of opposites. Capitalism, centred on the systematic exploitation of labour, contains a dynamic which leads to an ever increasing expansion of

production. This, however, creates both the material and social conditions for its destruction. Increasing the productivity of labour makes socialism, the abolition of classes, historically possible and capitalism, through its own dynamic, brings into being the social class to overthrow it, the working class. As the self-expansion of value depends on their labour, the capitalist system of exploitation gives the working class the power and capacity to paralyse the whole system of production. It socialises the labour-process, vastly increasing the size of the means of production, and making them dependent on the combined labour of the collective worker. The worker forced to sell his/her labour power to survive, exploited and alienated, is compelled to organise and act collectively to resist the powers of capital. Capitalism creates its own gravedigger. Thus class struggle, which is endemic to the capitalist mode of production, contains the potential for human liberation. The working class, by virtue of its structural position within the relations of production, is the only class capable of destroying capital and installing a socialist society.

The process of revolutionary change is, of course, not automatic. The movement from a class in itself, to a class for itself, conscious of its position and interests within society, is fraught with difficulties. However, Marx's understanding of human emancipation contains a number of important implications. First, there is a correspondence between material conditions and social consciousness. Although this is not a direct, or automatic link, extra-discursive structures do shape and influence social interests. Thus, there is an organic connection between socialist theory and the inherently anti-capitalist interests and struggles of the working class. Marxism, therefore, is far from being politically indeterminate. The politics and values it espouses are those which are aimed at intensifying that struggle, developing the ideas necessary for the destruction of

capitalist exploitation and the whole myriad of oppressions through which it is reproduced.

This leads to the second point. Marxism privileges the working class as the central revolutionary agent of change, not primarily on moral grounds, but as workers their position within capitalist production relations gives them the power collectively to challenge these relations. This, however, does not mean that Marxists reduce, for example, racial and sexual inequalities to class exploitation. Marxism certainly does not claim that all conflict is a product of class antagonisms. But it does seek to explain these deep-seated and pervasive inequalities, which are characteristic of modern society, in terms of their place in a system of class exploitation (see Alexander 1987 and German 1989). The strength of Marxism is that it is a holistic theory capable of illustrating the connections and interrelationships between a whole myriad of antagonisms and contradictions within capitalism. While, on the face of it, racial and sexual oppressions have nothing to do with class, they have become structured and institutionalised within capitalist relations, which means the fight against them is intimately connected with the fight against capitalism as a whole. The working class is thus the special class because it is the only social and political force which has the interest, power and creative capacity to found a new, non-exploitative society, free from oppressions.

Thirdly, and finally, the development of this class consciousness, the formation of a class for itself capable of realising the socialist goal, is not something imported from outside. Marxism is not developed in isolation by enlightened academics, and then imposed on the class from above. Who educates the educator? The nexus of Marxism is the class struggle, *'the emancipation of the working class is conquered by the working classes themselves'*. It is in the class struggle that socialist consciousness and theory develops. As Marx

argued in the Thesis on Feuerbach:

'The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice'.

(1975, 422)

Thus, socialism is not introduced from above by utopians, dictators or by radical intellectuals, but by revolution from below. This is the first principle of socialism.

'Revolution is necessary...not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew'.

(Marx and Engels 1970, 95)

MARXISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY:

Where does all this leave a Marxist perspective within archaeology? Obviously the solution to the fundamental problems of the contemporary discipline of archaeology lies outside the realm of academia. These limitations largely stem from the fragmentation of social thought which is enshrined in the institutional organisation of social knowledge. Challenging this, therefore, is not simply a matter of developing a totalising social theory, but requires a wider practical challenge to the whole basis of capitalist society. Marxism, as has been argued, is not merely a scientific research programme, but a practical movement whose goal is socialist revolution. This struggle for socialism is not inevitable but depends on the developing unity and strength of the working class. Marxism, therefore, has always been connected to political organisations and parties which strive enhance the process by which the proletariat becomes a class for itself (see Molyneux 1986). The ideal is thus not a Marxist archaeologist, but a Marxist, a member of a revolutionary organisation, who is working within archaeology.

However, this does not render the pursuit of Marxist approaches within archaeology, or any other social science, worthless. Marxism is a living tradition which needs to be renewed continually and refashioned. There is an ongoing ideological struggle within the social sciences and the living tradition of Marxism can only be sustained through an active intervention within this battle of ideas.

Classical Marxism has been confined very much to the margins of political and intellectual life. This is most true of the discipline of archaeology. Apart from Childe's attempt to develop a Marxist theory for prehistory, which in itself contains many problems (see Chap. 2, Sect. 1), there has been a dearth of classical Marxist approaches to material culture studies. Contemporary archaeologists have systematically distorted, misrepresented and caricatured Marxist thought. This thesis will hopefully go some way to establishing a Marxist perspective within archaeology and contribute, albeit, in a small way, to the living tradition of classical Marxism.

Marxist approaches in archaeology, however, are not simply a defence of ideas and theories. Conceptions of the past are intimately connected to the present. Marxism is a historical theory which attempts to illustrate how the past was radically different from the present, but also how the present emerged from the past. In particular, historical materialism is the 'tradition of the oppressed' (see Callinicos 1987, 218-33). It attempts to preserve, rescue or reconstruct past struggles and conflicts from the amnesia of the present. Such a tradition has been upheld for many years through the Marxist historians. Hilton, for example, has justified his detailed study of the English peasant revolt of 1381 by concluding that *'conflict is part of existence and that nothing is gained without struggle'* (1977, 236). Such an opinion has united diverse historical studies from Geoffrey de Ste. Croix's *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (1981) to Edward Thompson's *The Making of*

the English Working Class (1968). Archaeology can also be used in keeping alive the tradition of past struggles and revolutionary change. This is not an end in itself. Marxist approaches to archaeology can form part of the intellectual armoury for the transformation of the present.

The archaeological examination of the origins of English feudalism, ultimately, has this aim in mind. Post-processual archaeology, through its adherence to post-structuralist philosophy, has reduced social change to contingent conjectures, in which the process of making history is unintended, fragmented and randomised, in which there is no logic or reason in the past so that history becomes chaotic, a nightmare (see Chap. 1, Sect. 3). The implicit pessimism of this philosophy for socialist change in the present is not hard to detect. The underlying premise of this thesis, however, is exactly the opposite. History is patterned and the past is knowable. Marxism as an empirical theory can use archaeological data to reconstruct these patterns. The medieval world of feudalism, from which capitalism emerged, was itself born out of class struggle. This social upheaval was not a contingent conjuncture, but developed out of the logic and organic crisis of tributary social production. Landlords were the conscious agents of change. Feudalism was established once these lords realised their structural capacities and asserted their class interests against both the tributary state and the peasant producers. Although the detail of this social transformation lies in the distant past, far removed from present concerns and problems, there are still political lessons to be learnt. The capitalist world system is likewise facing an organic crisis. The visible signs of decay surround and confront us every day. Capitalism has failed. But where history creates a problem it also throws up a solution. The future thus rests on the struggles, fights and collective capacities of the working class to assert their interests in the making of socialism.

'Dum spiro, spero! As long as I breath I hope - as long as I breathe I shall fight for the future, that radiant future in which man, strong and beautiful, will become master of the spontaneous stream of his history and will direct it towards the boundless horizon of beauty, joy and happiness...Dum spiro, spero!'

Leon Trotsky 1900

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