Christianity and the Landscape of Early Medieval South-West Britain

2 Volumes

(Volume 1)

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Abstract

This thesis considers the development of the early Christian landscape of south-western Britain from the conversion period to the Norman conquest (AD *c.*450-1070). The study focuses on the early medieval ecclesiastical landscapes of Cornwall and western Wessex (here defined as the four counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire). Rather than focusing on individual sacred sites, it attempts to study the impact of ideological change across the whole landscape. Changes in the structure of the landscape are inferred from archaeological sites, monuments, place-names and the wider cultural landscape of fields and farms.

A review of existing models for the development of ecclesiastical landscapes in the region suggests considerable scope for re-assessment (Chapter 1). An interdisciplinary research method is outlined and appropriate source material discussed, together with an example from Cornwall of how the method can be used to study the developing landscape (Chapter 2). Such changes are mapped and studied for Cornwall (in Chapter 3, with detailed case-studies) & western Wessex (Chapter 4), and interpreted as reflecting or being caused by social, political and ideological changes which resulted from a range of adaptations to the new religion. Most obviously these included the foundation of churches, but they also encompassed changes to settlement patterns, the structure of agricultural resources, and the patterns of minor sacred and ritual sites.

Chapter 5 compares the development of the early Christian landscape in the two regions. Instead of widely differing practices, it identifies similar trajectories in the development of Christian institutions and landscapes. It suggests that a Christian 'ideology of settlement' lay behind much of the landscape organisation of the early medieval period in Britain, and that this is clearly reflected in the landscapes of both Cornwall and western Wessex.

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List of Accompanying Material

Compact Disc (CD) *Bound inside back cover of Volume 2*

Contents of CD:

Project database (see Chapter 2 & Appendices 1 & 2) in Borland Paradox v.7 (.fam, .tv, .val, .px, .db, .qbe, .fsl file extensions)

Project database tables as dBASE IV tables (.dbf file extension)

Project database tables as Ascii delimited text (.txt file extension)

Historic Landscape Characterisations (see Chapters 2 & 3) as ArcView (3.x) Shapefiles (.shp, .shx, .sbn, .sbx, .dbf, file extensions)

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Bartholomew Map Data

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Digital Elevation Model

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Chapter 1

Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to consider the development of the early Christian landscape of south-western Britain from the conversion period to the Norman conquest (AD *c.*450-1070). Rather than focusing on individual sacred sites, it attempts to study the impact of ideological change across the whole landscape. Changes in the structure of the landscape are here inferred from sites, monuments, place-names and the wider cultural landscape of fields and farms (see Chapter 2). These changes are mapped and studied, and then interpreted as reflecting or being caused by social, political and ideological changes which resulted from a range of adaptations to the new religion. Most obviously these included the foundation of churches, but they also encompassed changes to settlement patterns, the structure of agricultural resources, and the patterns of minor sacred and ritual sites (Chapters 3–5).

The study focuses on the early medieval ecclesiastical landscapes of Cornwall and western Wessex. These are two parts of south-western England that have traditionally been studied separately, but are here compared and contrasted (Fig. 1.1). The modern county of Cornwall forms the long tapering western end of the south-western peninsula. The Cornish language, a close relative of Welsh and Breton, was spoken here until the eleventh or twelfth century AD in the east and until the eighteenth or nineteenth century AD in the west (Payton 1999). Today a 'Celtic' Cornish identity is reinforced by a pattern of distinctive place-names which contrast sharply with the English place-names of Devon to the east. By contrast, Wessex is the heartland of the Anglo-Saxons, from which the united kingdom of England eventually emerged. Perhaps because of the linguistic demands of literary studies and documentary history, scholars of early medieval Britain have historically been divided into schools of 'Anglo-

Saxon' and 'Celtic' studies. Although some scholars studying medieval Cornwall have recently begun to break down these divisions (e.g. Orme 1991; 1996a; Padel 1999; Blair & Sharpe 1992), many have been content for their studies to remain within the 'Celtic' category. Likewise, scholars of Wessex and Anglo-Saxon England have only rarely ventured into the 'Celtic' west. This separation is not necessarily inappropriate, but a lack of comparison between neighbouring regions can sometimes lead to the overemphasis of local distinctiveness. The detailed study of ecclesiastical landscapes in Cornwall (Chapter 3) and their comparison with western Wessex (Chapters 5) suggests that the development of ecclesiastical structures in the 'Celtic' west and 'Anglo-Saxon' east were rather more similar than is allowed by some current models (below, this chapter). These have sometimes explained differences in the ecclesiastical landscapes of early medieval Britain in terms of ethnic differences and predisposition towards certain forms of religion (see Orme 1991: 6-8). It is hoped that the comparative landscape approach adopted here will allow a better understanding to emerge which explains changes in terms of social and political adaptations to a new ideology.

An important theoretical principle behind the present study is that changes in religious or political ideology (e.g. conversion to Christianity) can be manifested in material changes to the structure of the landscape (Carver 1993: 63-77; Dommelen 1999: 284). The physical form of the landscape and the way it is understood by the people inhabiting it results from a range of influences. The natural environment of topography, geology, soils, and climate affects what activities will be possible in any given landscape. Within these constraints the extent and nature of human action determines the appearance of the 'cultural' landscape. Whilst some scholars have stressed the importance of environmental constraints and mundane activities such as food production in the shaping of the landscape (e.g. Williamson 2003), it is clear that belief systems have also influenced not only perceptions of the landscape (including the 'natural' and 'economic' landscape) but also its physical form. In some societies, ideas and beliefs

about the world and the way it is (or should be) ordered leave little in terms of physical remains, even if they are of fundamental importance for the people concerned. In north America, for example, Mescalero Apache cosmology explains the physical and spiritual worlds as two parallel dimensions, with natural features such as rock outcrops, springs and caves acting as special places where one dimension can be accessed from the other. Such sites are regarded as very potent, though they are normally not elaborated in any physical way (Carmichael 1994: 92-95). In other societies, however, belief systems have guided significant alterations to the physical landscape. In India, the sacred geography of great Hindu holy sites like Benares have been reproduced at smaller scales in hundreds of lesser places, which take on some of their sanctity through imitation (Coleman & Elsner 1995; Gold 1988). Similarly, epigraphic evidence from west Africa shows how early Muslims in the region Islamicized the landscape, to the extent that one town came to be considered as a mirror of Mecca (Moraes Farias 1999). Idealised landscapes are occasionally realised in concrete form. In central America, elements of the landscape around the Classic Maya settlement of La Milpa in Belize appear to have been organised according to a 'cosmogram', which placed satellite pyramid and plaza groups at regular intervals around the central city (Tourtellot *et al.* 2002). Although complete re-orderings of the landscape sometimes occur, it is more common for utopian models to be adapted to accommodate pre-existing features, whether mental or material. Ideology and landscape are in a recursive relationship: old elements of the landscape are not normally wholly cleared away, but are given new meanings according to the guiding ideology (Snead & Preucel 1999). The cosmology of the Keres people of the northern Rio Grande region envisages a series of nested regions containing different landscape resources; at the centre lies the village, and at the margins a dangerous region inhabited by powerful supernatural creatures. Snead & Preucel's case-studies show how this model could be adapted to fit local topographical settings and pre-existing patterns in the 'natural' and 'cultural' landscape (1999: 176). Other examples are provided by the ways early medieval Muslim societies Islamicised elements of Christian and pre-

Christian religious landscapes (Carver 1996), or the way east Asian Buddhists assimilated local ideas about sacred mountains into Buddhist ideology, resulting in the creation of new kinds of Buddhist sacred landscapes (Barnes 1999).

Changes of this kind certainly occurred in the early Christian landscapes of Europe, where previous sacred topographies were altered to accommodate the new ideology rather than being swept away (Orselli 1999: 186). As discussed in Chapter 5, a re-invented Christian 'ideology of settlement' emerged from the new contexts that were created when the late Roman world was converted to Christianity. It will be argued there that this ideology had a profound effect on the early medieval landscape of Britain which resulted in distinctive forms of landscape organisation (the subject of Chapters 3 & 4), even if elements of the model were adapted through integration with local social and political contexts.

As noted above, the sources and methods used to investigate religious change and its wider impact are those of landscape archaeology. Whilst some recent studies have approached the religious traditions of early medieval Britain from literary and theological points of view (e.g. O. Davies 1996), the relative scarcity of relevant material makes this difficult for the South West and for Cornwall in particular. Previous studies of the region have often used archaeological or topographical approaches (e.g. Preston-Jones 1992; Thomas 1994), and one of the advantages of a landscape study are that it will allow direct comparisons to be made with previous work. Chapters 3 & 4 discuss the role of Christianity in the developing landscape of early medieval south-west England by analysing the relationships between churches and other sites using archaeological information, place-names, maps and written sources. Chapter 2 outlines a methodology for combining these sources and illustrates the way they can be used to investigate changes in the landscape. The remainder of the present chapter is used to put forward the topics that will be investigated in Chapters 3 & 4, and some of the previous work that has addressed them.

1.2 Background and research questions

The *lann *model of early ecclesiastical enclosures in the west*

The early ecclesiastical sites of the west of Britain have for the last thirty years been considered in relation to the model of cemetery development proposed by Prof. Charles Thomas (1971a: 49-51). With Christianity acting as the catalyst, unenclosed burial sites (commonly with long-cists or dug graves) were changed into cemeteries defined by a small curvilinear enclosure (sometimes known as a **lann;* Thomas' 'undeveloped' enclosed cemeteries), and in time became 'developed' enclosed cemeteries with the addition of a cross, a chapel, and then a parish church (Thomas 1971a: 49-51). Some scholars have suggested that this process took place at a relatively early date in Cornwall. For example, various churchyards on the north coast have been regarded as Christian settlements founded by voyagers from across the seas to the north (see e.g. Preston-Jones 1992: 122; see also Pearce 1982; Brook 1992). Although Preston-Jones points out that not all medieval Christian cemeteries can have had very early origins, it has commonly either been stated or implied that the **lanns* are of early post-Roman date (Pearce 1978: 92; Preston-Jones 1992: 105; Thomas 1994: 305-26). Preston-Jones and Rose go so far as to suggest that:

> 'With Christianity came a whole package of ideas...associated site-types, place-names, monuments...'

and that:

> 'The earliest Christian foundations, or *lanns*, were settlements of people dedicated to a religious life.'
>
> (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 155, 160)

Recent work has continued to examine the form of early medieval cemeteries in the South West. Examples include the recently discovered site in Kenn parish (Devon) where post-Roman dug graves with east-west alignments may represent Christian burials (Horner 1996). In Cornwall, St

Endellion and nearby Treharrock are similar sites, both with apparently linear cemeteries of long-cist burials which in the case of St Endellion follow the course of the adjacent road. Although the later parish church stands near the site, the cemetery is far more extensive than its graveyard and crosses the parish boundary, showing that it is likely to pre-date the division of the area into two ecclesiastical units (Trudgian 1987). No evidence suggests that these cemeteries were enclosed at any date.

Current research by Petts (2001; 2002a) on early medieval burial in western Britain has questioned the relevance of Thomas' model to the period before AD *c.*800. Although several sites in Wales have been excavated and radiocarbon dated, such as Tandderwen (Clwyd), Atlantic Trading Estate (Glamorgan) and Plas Gogerddan (Dyfed), there appear to be very few examples of western British cemeteries that were enclosed in the post-Roman centuries (Petts 2002a). Similarly neither in Cornwall nor in Devon does excavated evidence suggest that any simple cemeteries were enclosed before about the tenth century. Prof. Thomas' own excavations at St Dennis and Merther Uny show that these sites were only used for Christian burial from the tenth century at the very earliest (Thomas 1965; 1968b).

Documents and place-names have been used to support the model of early enclosure, but their evidence is no more supportive than the archaeology (Petts 2002a). Padel suggests that the **lann* element does not necessarily refer to ecclesiastical enclosures in Cornwall; for example, **lann*-sites without specifically ecclesiastical associations occur at Lewarne and probably Lampen in the parish of St Neot, which was itself an important pre-Conquest ecclesiastical community (Padel 1985: 142-4; below, Chapter 3). The earliest recorded use of a name in **lann* in Cornwall is possibly in a ninth-century charter granting land at Lawhitton (Sawyer 1968 [henceforth S] no.1296; Padel 1988: 108; Hooke 1994a: 16-17). Otherwise the earliest **lann* names are from tenth century charters (e.g. Lanow: *S* 810; Hooke 1994a: 33-7). Prof. Wendy Davies has suggested that some of the charters from south-east Wales in the Book of Llandaff could be dated to as early as

the sixth century (Davies 1978). The 159 charters contain references to many estates with *llan* names (the equivalent in Welsh of **lann* in Cornish). However, scholarly opinion on these documents is far from united: whilst some of these grants have early origins, it seems likely that the actual *names* of the estates concerned were recorded in their twelfth-century form since the charters were being used at that time to bolster the claims of a new bishop of Llandaff. The Book therefore is unlikely to contain reliable evidence for early *llan*-names (J. Davies 1998: 45-6).

Another type of material that has become associated with the **lann* model through its occurrence in place-names is records of dedications to saints with Celtic names. As Padel has recently observed, dedications to Celtic saints formed a highly distinctive aspect of the ecclesiastical culture of Cornwall, not just in the later middle ages when over half the parish churches in the county had dedications to Celtic saints, but also during the period before 1100, when recorded dedications to Celtic saints are more than ten times as numerous as dedications to universal saints (between 34-39 to Celtic saints and only 3 to universal saints; Padel 2002: 330). Many churches have a Cornish place-name that incorporates the name of the saint to whom they are dedicated (e.g. **lann*-x dedicated to St. X), though some are different (**lann*-x, dedicated to St. Y; see Padel 2002: 311-313). Saints' names are compounded in Cornish place-names not only with the element **lann*, but also with elements such as *eglos* ('church'), *merther* ('saint's grave, place with a shrine for relics': Thomas 1972: 89) and *alter* ('altar') (Padel 2002: 310-16). A very small number of the saints commemorated in Cornish dedications have hagiographical material dating to the early medieval period itself (e.g. St Samson of Dol, St Paul Aurelian; Flobert 1997; Cuissard 1881-3; Davies 2002: 380). Many others have later medieval *Lives* connected with them that commonly place their exploits in the earliest Christian centuries (Padel 2002: 319-20).

For Cornwall and Wales this hagiographical material was studied in the earlier part of the twentieth century by Doble, who published a long and

invaluable series of booklets on the *Cornish Saints* (later edited and collected together by D. Attwater and partly republished in six volumes as *The Saints of Cornwall* by the Dean and Chapter of Truro Cathedral (Doble 1960-97). Whilst he acknowledged the length of time between the composition of the saints' *Lives* and the period they were supposed to have lived in, Doble did not in general question whether these figures had indeed existed in an early 'Age of Saints'. In this he was followed by later writers such as Bowen, who used the distribution of saints' names and dedications to write history about the early Christian period (e.g. Bowen 1969). However, such work is largely based on the assumption that the saints in question were actually present during the sixth century and that their presence at that time and in those places led directly to the dedications found in the later middle ages. As Davies has noted, this approach had already been questioned in the 1950s by Chadwick on the grounds that dedications first recorded in the later middle ages were not necessarily the direct result of the presence of individuals who might have lived over 800 years before (Davies 2002: 364; Chadwick 1954). In the early 1970s Susan Pearce argued that many of the Celtic dedications of Cornwall and south-west England could have arisen after the so-called 'Age of Saints' as a result of later developments and cultural contacts with Wales, Brittany and England (Pearce 1973). More recently a number of other scholars have pointed out that church dedications and ecclesiastical place-names could have been given over a long span of time during the early middle ages and later, and that a dedication to an 'early' saint does not necessarily imply the existence of an early church site, even though it will sometimes (e.g. Sharpe 2002: 153; Davies 2002: 390-394).

In Cornwall, the most important early documentary source for the widespread existence of saints' cults is a list of Brittonic saints' names now preserved in the Vatican Library (Olson & Padel 1986). This document almost certainly records the names of at least 24 saints venerated in Cornwall in the early tenth century (see further below, Chapter 3). As noted above, Padel has shown that the cults of at least 34 Celtic saints were

maintained in Cornwall before 1100, and it is beyond doubt that many further cults were maintained by this time though they are not recorded in surviving documents. Padel has suggested that the 'most economical assumption' about many of these names, particularly those recorded at only one or two sites, is that they had been the names of real people, perhaps priests or church founders (Padel 2002: 312-14). These localised cults form an important and distinctive part of Cornwall's religious history. Nevertheless, dedications to these or other more widespread Celtic saints are hard to employ as a historical source to help explain the development of ecclesiastical structures in the period before A.D. *c.*1000, mainly because there is normally no way of discovering when they were first used at any specific site. Only one or two dedications are reliably recorded in the ninth century or earlier (Padel 2002: 329), and examples such as St Martin in Meneage, St Kew, Padstow and perhaps Bodmin show that the dedications of ecclesiastical sites ranging from the least to the most important could change over time (Padel 2002: 311, 322; see Chapter 3, below). It also seems certain that dedications to saints with Celtic names would have been given to churches of varying status founded over several hundred years, as was probably also the case in south Wales (Davies 2002: 384-394; see Chapter 3). Dedication to a unique saint Cornish saint or to a 'regional' or 'inter-Celtic' saint found elsewhere in Wales, Cornwall or Brittany does not seem to reflect anything about the status of an individual church, since such dedications were given at both major and minor ecclesiastical foci (Padel 2002). For these reasons, the present study will not rely on church dedications to provide evidence for the location or history of the earliest ecclesiastical centres.

The **lann* model and related theories as discussed above therefore present several problems. Most importantly, recent research has shown that there is very little evidence for the enclosure and 'development' of cemeteries in western Britain before the eighth or ninth centuries (Petts 2002a). This conclusion makes a reconsideration of the development of the early church in Cornwall necessary. Any re-assessment also provides an opportunity to

deal with other important points which have been marginalised in the **lann* model. For example, the suggestion that relatively large numbers of sites were founded in the post-Roman period has sometimes obscured potential differences between them, not only of date but also of status (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 157-8; Thomas 1994: 310-11). Finally, there is the question of the relationship between ecclesiastical sites and wider society. This is crucial to understanding life in early medieval Cornwall, but as in other parts of Britain and Ireland, it is a subject in need of further research (Monk 1998; Aston 2000a: 61-2).

The Cornish place-name scholar Oliver Padel has noted that **lann* may have been used to coin new names in Cornwall up to AD *c.*1200. It is therefore possible that ecclesiastical sites with **lann* names which later became parish churches were given their names in the tenth century or later. This is a particularly tempting interpretation in the light of Padel's observation that very few Christian sites that did *not* gain parochial status in the later middle ages (e.g. chapels or minor burial grounds) have names in **lann*, suggesting that they were specific to churches of a certain status at the time the parish system was developing (Padel 1985: 144).

It has been argued that the presence of an inscribed stone and a **lann,* either in name or enclosure form, indicate the existence of an early Christian site (e.g. Thomas 1994: 312). However, it seems equally likely that many such stones may have been moved to church sites towards the end of the early middle ages, when their significance as funerary monuments would probably still have been understood (see below, 3.8; for relatively late dates for inscribed stones see Okasha 1993 *passim*, and Thomas 1998; 1999). Furthermore, no excavation has shown an inscribed stone to be contemporary with a **lann*-type enclosure. Even at Beacon Hill on Lundy, the site of four inscribed stones, Thomas notes that their earliest recorded positions are likely to be relatively recent (Thomas 1994: 163-5).

These criticisms do not mean that the **lann* model should be rejected outright. Sites such as Capel Maelog in Wales show that the sequence could have occurred much as Thomas suggested, but that it took place over a period encompassing the whole of the early middle ages (Britnell 1990; Petts 2001). It is also clear that some sites did exist at an early date which comprised settlements of people dedicated to religious lives. They occupied centres which were sometimes enclosed and which accommodated activities such as Christian burial. However, these are much fewer in number than suggested by the **lann* model, and as a group they appear to have comprised early monasteries of superior status: examples include Llandough and Berllan Bach in Wales and the early ecclesiastical sites of Cornwall discussed in Chapter 3 (Thomas & Holbrook 1994; James 1992: 100-1).

Most discussions rely on the **lann* model to provide a framework in which to discuss the social context of early Christian sites in Cornwall. Preston-Jones and Rose have noted that the distribution of **lanns* concentrates in areas of fertile soils in south Cornwall which were likely to have been heavily settled in the early middle ages (Preston-Jones and Rose 1986: 156). In this model, early ecclesiastical settlements of largely undifferentiated status serve as local spiritual centres for groups of surrounding hamlets (Preston-Jones and Rose 1986: 143, 160). Pearce has outlined a similar model for the development of **lanns* in pre-Anglo-Saxon Devon, although she stressed local lordship as the determining factor in the location of early ecclesiastical sites (Pearce 1982).

Numerous small Christian centres such as these suit agricultural models such as that proposed by Harvey, who also regards early medieval Cornish society as relatively 'horizontal' and as lacking any strong central authority (Harvey 1997). This conclusion is based on an investigation of the tithing structure of West Cornwall. Although the evidence for the tithings comes from later medieval documents, Harvey speculates that it was in place early in the post-Roman period and provided the basis in relation to which Christian missionaries could locate their settlements (**lanns*) (Harvey 1997:

20). There are two main problems with this argument: firstly, it assumes that the **lann*-churches were established in large numbers at an early date, which may not have been the case, as discussed above. Secondly, it assumes that in early medieval Dumnonia there was an 'evolution' from a simple (horizontal and egalitarian) to a complex (hierarchical) society (see also Herring 1999b, 1999c).

However, there is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that there was a hierarchically structured society in Dumnonia throughout the early middle ages. In the earliest post-Roman centuries, the inscribed stones are the work of an elite consciously identifying themselves as such, sometimes with some literary sophistication (e.g. Howlett 1998; Thomas 1998; Knight 1992). Imported material from the Mediterranean and Gaul are probably also evidence for an exchange system run by an elite capable of raising and trading a surplus (Campbell 1996), and there is even some written evidence for the names of Dumnonian kings (Gildas 28:1-2; Winterbottom 1978). In the middle of the period, there are literary and historical references to kings of the region (e.g. Aldhelm's letter to Geraint; Lapidge & Herren 1979), and in the later pre-Conquest era charters show there was a class of land-holding minor nobles (W. Davies 1982; 1998; Hooke 1994a; see further below, Chapter 3). In Anglo-Saxon England emergent hierarchies and kingdoms are detectable in the archaeological and historical sources from the sixth and seventh centuries onwards (Carver 1989; 152). Societies in the west of Britain were probably structured in similar ways as suggested, for example, by the comparability of 'British' and 'Anglo-Saxon' social orders in Ine's laws, which probably date to the late seventh century (Wormald 1999: 103; Attenborough 1922).

Varieties of Christianity in early medieval Britain

John Blair and Patrick Hase have suggested that the prime consideration of church founders in Anglo-Saxon England was to provide a regular system of

pastoral care for those living within royal administrative territories (Hase 1994: 61; Blair 1988a: 37-8; although Blair has subsequently modified this statement: Blair 1995c: 207). This theory has roots in a body of scholarship that deals with the structures of the early church in Britain and across Europe (e.g. Stancliffe 1979; Constable 1982; Brooke 1982; Foot 1989). It has been challenged by Cambridge and Rollason who argue that this 'minster hypothesis' places too great an emphasis on the role of monastic foundations in the provision of pastoral care, and excludes bishops and priests who may have operated from local churches (Cambridge and Rollason 1995: 95). In his essay on the early church in County Durham, Cambridge has suggested that churches primarily founded to provide pastoral care filled in the gaps between monastic centres not concerned with this activity (Cambridge 1984), although Blair has argued that the archaeological evidence discussed by Cambridge fails to provide satisfactory grounds to differentiate between different classes of church (Blair 1988a: 36-7). This debate has highlighted one of the more difficult aspects of the study of the early medieval church in Britain, the problem of establishing the status of churches. It seems that almost any ecclesiastical establishment referred to in the documentary sources could be described as a *monasterium* (Blair & Sharpe 1992: 4-5). Although different sorts of churches are widely acknowledged to have existed, they are hard to detect by the terms used to refer to them (Blair 1988a: 36; Cambridge and Rollason 1995; Campbell 1979).

Carver has suggested that three main types of economic infrastructure were available to Christians in early medieval Britain, and that these are also familiar from more recent usage: the episcopal, the monastic and the secular or private. The choice between them was essentially a political one, signalling acceptance of certain political ideas (Carver 1998a). He has argued that it is possible to distinguish which of the three categories of Christianity had been adopted by a particular group using archaeological evidence, '...not withstanding the tendency of the documents to pretend, improbably, that all operated together as one harmonious project'. Carver

has suggested that one of the three 'options' generally tended to become dominant in any given society, and that different types of ecclesiastical centre were generally funded in different ways: monastic foundations through grants of land, episcopal systems by the payment of tithes, and 'secular' churches dependent upon '...the income and attitude of a local lord' (Carver 1998a: 22).The fact that episcopal, monastic, and secular infrastructures required different economic commitments meant that a given community might find one system easier to accept and implement that another. He gives the example of east Yorkshire, where the evidence of pre-Conquest sculpture suggests that a system based on monasteries in the seventh and eighth centuries was replaced by one of small secular churches in the ninth to eleventh centuries, under the influence of Viking political ideology (Carver 1998a: 26).

However, it is clear from Sharpe's re-analysis of early Irish sources that the 'episcopal', 'monastic' and probably 'secular' elements could be present as constituents of a complex system, perhaps not always harmonious, but nevertheless part of a whole (Sharpe 1983). In England, Palliser has shown that elements of the pre-Viking ecclesiastical administrative system survived the 'Christian-to-Christian conversion' described by Carver in the Yorkshire area so that 'monastic' and 'secular' systems would have been operating side-by-side (Palliser 1996), and Foot and Cubitt have investigated the interaction between episcopal authority and monastic foundations through documents recording Anglo-Saxon church councils (Foot 1989; Cubitt 1995: 191-202). It seems unlikely that 'monastic', episcopal' and 'secular' structures were adopted as a singular prescription in Anglo-Saxon England or elsewhere in Britain (Blair 1995c: 210-11).

Cubitt has noted that one of the major problems with the 'minster hypothesis' is its inflexibility, in part a result of problems of terminology, and the difficulty of applying the same theory rigidly to all parts of England (Cubitt 1995: 116-7). For example, the minster model may obscure differences between churches by demanding that they be interpreted as

equivalents in the context of an ecclesiastical administrative system. Carver's suggestion about the different sources of support which different types of churches drew on may provide a useful way to approach the problem of difference (Carver 1998a). Even in the absence of comprehensive written records or plentiful archaeological evidence, it is likely that an analysis of the relationships between ecclesiastical centres and certain other elements of the landscape may allow interpretations about the status and role of the church in contemporary society. For example, if a church can be shown to have shared a location with a royal vill and not to have possessed substantial independent estates, then it is likely that it would have been dependent for its status on the royal vill, as suggested by Hase (1994). By contrast, it seems likely that a church with extensive estates that was distant from a royal centre would have had a different status – perhaps 'monastic' in the sense that Glastonbury was (see 4.8, below). In Chapters 3 (on Cornwall) and 4 (western Wessex) the relationships between ecclesiastical sites and the secular elite will be investigated. This analysis will include the relationships between churches and royal vills (3.4; 4.6), between secular administrative structures and churches and their *parochiae* (3.5, 4.7), and the nature of ecclesiastical estates (3.6, 4.8). Different types of churches established by different groups at various times will also be considered (3.9; 4.9, 4.10). The exploration of these topics and the identification of a certain degree of diversity will lead to conclusions about the nature of developing religious institutions, royal power and social structure in Cornwall and Wessex.

The church in the landscape

A group of related questions focus on changes in the structure of the wider landscape. In the following chapters, these will be investigated in relation to church sites, and the new Christian 'ideology of settlement' that they brought. Blair and Gem have recently described the major ecclesiastical sites of early medieval Britain as 'Holy Cities' (Blair 1996a; Gem 1996).

Their model, which regards ecclesiastical centres as central to the worldview of early medieval people, will be discussed and developed in Chapter 5. It will be argued that early medieval churches did indeed become central places in early medieval society, not only in terms of ideological self-understanding, but also in the landscapes of production, consumption, settlement and belief. This discussion will be based on the material presented in Chapters 3 & 4, where the subjects outlined below will also be considered.

It has been argued that ecclesiastical sites in early medieval Britain comprised not only a church or a series of churches, but a whole range of structures with a variety of uses. These are typified by the small buildings that have been excavated on sites such as Whitby, Whithorn, Hartlepool and elsewhere (see e.g. Blair 1996a; Smith 1996: 29-30; Hill 1997). Partly on analogy with these well-known sites and partly because of rich archaeological finds, other middle Saxon settlements like Brandon and Flixborough have been interpreted as ecclesiastical, although without documentary corroboration this interpretation has not been universally accepted (Blair 1996a: 9; Carr *et al.* 1988; Loveluck 1998). The boundaries of church complexes were sometimes marked out with banks and ditches. Alternatively, religious settlements could be bounded by thorny hedges, or natural boundaries such as marshy ground. Sometimes church complexes re-used pre-existing Roman or prehistoric precincts, and there were also examples that lacked physical enclosures but used crosses, boulders or mounds as boundary markers (Blair 1992: 231-246; Everson 1977: 69; Costen 1992a: 102; Yeoman 1997; Bitel 1990: 63-4). Blair has recently described these early ecclesiastical sites as 'monastic towns', and has suggested they are analogous to examples in neighbouring regions of Europe such as Ireland and Gaul, '...bigger, more populous and more permanent than any lay settlements' (Blair 1996a: 9; Gilchrist and Morris 1993: 113). The nature of ecclesiastical sites in south-west England, their role as centres for production and consumption, and the ideological associations of their form will be examined below (3.2; 4.4).

The physical location of churches will also be considered. Blair has stressed the prominence of many early church sites in Anglo-Saxon England, including those on hill-tops, headlands, or islands in flood-plains. He has noted possible influences from outside the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms for the choices of locations and has drawn comparisons with Ireland, Wales and Gaul (Blair 1992: 227-31; 265-6). Corcos' recent Somerset case-study has suggested that early churches were normally located in spectacular sites that visually dominated surrounding landscapes (Corcos 2001). On the contrary, Hase has argued that Wessex minsters are normally in low-lying positions, often in the hollows of hills. He suggests kingdom-by-kingdom analysis is necessary and argues that 'general statements drawn from a handful of examples from all over England should be avoided' (Hase 1994). In Cornwall, Preston-Jones has identified valley-bottom locations as the most common church sites, although her statistic refers to *all* medieval parish churches, not just early ecclesiastical communities (Preston-Jones 1992: 110, fig.11.2). The physical location of churches may have affected their perception and may have been related to their status and type. The ascetic 'Celtic' monastery, for example, is often pictured on a small offshore island or a remote hilltop: such stereotypes will be discussed and evaluated (3.3; 4.5)

The physical position of churches is one aspect of their overall location in terms of cultural geography. It has been suggested that some early medieval churches were deliberately sited in remote and inaccessible locations to reinforce their identity as eremitic settlements (Stocker 1993: 105-12). On the other hand, some churches may have been sited centrally in relation to agricultural resources and the local administrative geography because they had pastoral functions that necessitated physical proximity to the most densely populated areas (Hase 1994). The location of the churches of Cornwall and western Wessex will be assessed, not only in relation to administrative structures, but also to with regard to agricultural resources and settlement patterns (3.5-6; 4.7-8).

The long-term perspective afforded by a landscape archaeology approach allows changing patterns in the countryside to be investigated (3.7; 4.3). The sequence of settlement patterns and changes in the geographical distribution of agricultural resources can be used to illuminate social and cultural changes (Alcock 1993: 55-72). In Chapter 3, three detailed case-studies of parts of Cornwall will be undertaken in order to establish what relationships existed between the development of settlement patterns and the establishment of ecclesiastical centres. Changes in settlement and in the structure of the landscape between the fifth and tenth centuries will be interpreted in part as reflections of social and ideological adaptations caused by the establishment of Christianity.

The final topic of study will be the relationships between major ecclesiastical sites and minor sacred foci in the wider landscape. Whilst there may have been fewer churches in the Cornwall than is envisaged under the **lann* model, this is not to deny the existence of other places with ritual or specifically Christian religious roles. These included burial grounds, holy wells and, particularly in the late Saxon period, small chapels and crosses. However, in both Anglo-Saxon England and the Brittonic regions, the role of pre-Christian sacred sites in early medieval Christianity is unclear.

In both regions, the 'pagan' societies of the Iron Age, Roman period and immediate post-Roman periods maintained networks of sacred foci dispersed across the landscape (Cunliffe 1997: 190-208); many of these could have had continuing religious significance during the conversion period. The majority of minor pagan religious places that maintained a sacred significance seem likely to have been natural landscape features such as trees, wells, or stone pillars that were imbued with a special significance (Morris 1989: 76-92; Blair, forthcoming). Blair has conjectured that holy wells may represent sites where early Christian missionaries first evangelized in the post-Roman period (1996a: 10). Stone pillars, another possible type of pagan site, may have acquired Christian significance, with possible examples from both Anglo-Saxon East and Celtic West, including

Bampton (Oxfordshire) and the standing stone in Cornwall that St Samson is supposed to have inscribed with a cross (Blair 1994: 64; Thomas 1994: 229). In view of the various early medieval law-codes, penitentials and church councils which prohibited pagan activity during the early middle ages, it seems likely that '...undercurrents of heathen belief...' survived in the countryside, gradually dwindling to hints and superstitions in the later middle ages (Morris 1989: 62). The contrasting nature of Christian and earlier sacred landscapes will be discussed below, together with the mechanisms for 'converting' earlier sites (3.8; 4.2).

In addition to pre-existing sacred sites, new types of minor sacred foci were established including crosses, chapels and burial grounds. The nature of the sites that were established and their locations in relation to major early churches may reflect not only the processes by which the wider landscape was 'converted' to Christianity, but also the development of social institutions such as local lordship. As discussed below, in the late Saxon landscape the provision of Christian monuments such as chapels and crosses may have provided a way to articulate competing claims to land and local authority. These developments are investigated in detail below (3.8-9; 4.9-10).

These are the subjects that will be investigated in Chapters 3 (Cornwall) and 4 (western Wessex). In Chapter 5, the two regions will be compared and explanations will be suggested for the differences and similarities that emerge. In Chapter 2, a methodology for studying the development of the early medieval landscape is outlined, with examples of the way a combination of archaeological data, place-names, documentary and cartographic sources can contribute to the understanding of developing landscapes.

2. Methods for studying medieval landscapes in south-west Britain

2.1 Introduction: landscape archaeology

'Landscape archaeology' is characterised by work which collects information about ancient landscapes and the histories of land use. Archaeological sites are located and recorded and the relationships between them are studied. Although it has to some extent gained the status of a sub-discipline (many academic departments of archaeology list 'Landscape Archaeology' as one of their areas of research interest, and people describe themselves as 'landscape archaeologists'), it is not something that exists outside of the theoretical concerns of archaeology in general. 'Landscape' approaches have been adopted by practitioners of all theoretical persuasions in the last century, and have borne all the strengths and shortcomings associated with those various theories (Knapp & Ashmore 1999: 7-8). 'Landscape archaeology' does not provide a package consisting of a single theoretical position or indeed any one methodology.

The present study adopts a problem-oriented approach to the study of the early medieval landscape of the South West: it seeks to address the topics and answer the questions outlined in Chapter 1. It is important to take account of recent discussions of landscape archaeology which have stressed that entire landscapes must be examined when seeking to answer such questions about past societies, rather than concentrating on individual aspects of landscape such as the 'sacred' elements (e.g. Dommelen 1999: 284; Given *et al.* 1999). This is because the whole landscape affects and is affected by people (Knapp & Ashmore 1999: 20-1; Crumley 1999: 270). To approach past societies through landscape it is therefore necessary to have as much information about the landscape as possible.

The methodological implications of this for the present project are that information about the landscape of the South West has to be assembled from the widest possible range of sources before being subjected to specific

questions. This must include interdisciplinary work and investigation of evidence such as historical documents and place-names, as well as archaeological sources (Moreland 1992; Bender 1993: 3).

This position has not always been accepted in archaeology. The New Archaeology movement which began in the 1950s largely rejected the use of historical texts as a source of evidence suitable for archaeologists, and this approach has also been applied by processualists in early medieval archaeology (Clarke 1968; Arnold 1997: 15). In the 1980s, postprocessual archaeology rejected the positivism and structural determinism of processual theory, and sought to stress the 'textuality' of material culture and also of the practice of archaeology (Hodder 1986; Shanks & Tilley 1987: 16). However, as Morris has commented, postprocessual archaeology has often kept 'history' at the most theoretical level and has failed to engage profitably with written material (Morris 2000: 24; Feinman 1997: 372). Partly as a result, considerations of context and longer-term changes have been marginalised (Parker Pearson *et al.* 1999: 234). Since the early 1990s, however, scholars such as Moreland and others have outlined ways forward for those interested in using written texts and material culture in a practical way to investigate whole landscapes (Knapp 1992; Moreland 1992; 1998: 90-99; 2001)). They argue that in the same sense that material culture is in a recursive relationship with people, texts or images are too: people decide their content, and in turn that content affects people. Texts and artefacts can therefore be regarded as similar categories of things, and can be apprehended in the same discussions.

There are problems with this sort of approach. One of the greatest obstacles is that it requires the student to command a wide range of methods and techniques and to address a very great body of evidence (e.g. M. Johnson 1999: 33). Unfortunately, relatively few scholars are well enough equipped to deal with all types of evidence that may be relevant to any given topic (*cf.* Thomas' review of Okasha's *Corpus of Early Christian Inscribed Stones of South-West Britain* (Thomas 1995) and Lane's review of Thomas' *And*

Shall These Mute Stones Speak? (Lane 1996)). This is certainly not a problem the present study can avoid, and unfortunately certain topics will be dealt with less thoroughly than others. As Morris points out, however, the fact that an interdisciplinary approach may be difficult does not invalidate it; he goes on to argue that an awareness and appreciation of the problems of previous scholars could in fact give greater depth to future work (Morris 2000: 28, 30).

Morris' work clearly draws on the important twentieth-century historical tradition of *Annalisme* (Morris 2000). A loosely-defined method rather than a coherent 'school', *Annalisme* is history with a concern for interdisciplinary analysis of a wide variety of social and historical subjects, via the 'thick description' of specific contexts (Morris 2000: 24-5; Knapp 1992a: 6-8; for discussion of *Annalisme* and archaeology, see Knapp 1992b; Bintliff 1991b; but *cf.* Delano Smith 1992). Landscape archaeology and *Annales* history share many concerns. For example, it was noted above that landscapes need to be analysed in as much detail as possible; similarly, *Annales* history demands that context is described as fully as possible. The present project takes as one starting point the belief that all aspects of the historical context both affected and were affected by people, including material culture, written documents and images, and verbal culture (such as place-names). It is therefore crucial that all the available categories of data receive thorough and balanced treatment as important sources for early medieval cultural history.

The following sections outline some of the problems associated with using different categories of data, with a particular concern for place-names and historical documents. It outlines 'historic landscape characterisation' which is used in Chapter 3 to provide a description of the whole landscape, and a context in which the other data collected can be analysed and compared. The section concludes with a discussion of the appropriate methods for integrating data from different sources in this project, and a short discussion

of the database and GIS which have been designed to accommodate much of the relevant information.

2.2 Categories of data

2.2.1 Place-names

Problems of interpretation

As Tilley has stressed, place-names are crucially significant elements of landscapes; named places and things '...become captured in social discourses and act as mnemonics for the historical actions of individuals and groups' (Tilley 1994: 18). Historians of landscape and settlement have long appreciated this significance, and place-names have been used in particular for discussions of population movements and ethnic change. It is true that place-names can be very useful for this kind of exercise when looking at distribution maps of wide areas, and can allow broad but interesting generalisations to be made about settlement history (see e.g. Fellows-Jensen 1995). Nevertheless, despite the frequent presentation of this kind of analysis as relatively straightforward, it is now realised that there are considerable problems inherent in this use of place-names. Previous generations of scholars have often accepted equations between the appearance of names in a given language and the settlement of invaders speaking that language, with controversy centring on issues such as the volume of settlers (Stenton 1971: 519-524; *cf.* Sawyer 1957-8). However, there are other possible contexts for continuities or changes in naming practice, and it is now argued that this kind of work has sometimes relied on narrow assumptions about the use of language by different ethnic groups and their social relationships with each other (e.g. Hadley 1997). In the South West peninsula Cornwall provides an interesting example: minor place-names continued to be coined in the west of the county in Cornish throughout the late- and post-medieval periods, despite effective

administrative control by the English kingdom of Wessex and its successors from the tenth century onwards. In central Cornwall around Bodmin Moor, however, where English administrative control was established slightly earlier, names were generally given in English from around the eleventh century or shortly after (Austin *et al.* 1989). The use and adoption of place-names are governed by complicated patterns of influence and cultural interaction, not simply 'ethnic' factors.

Place-names contain a great deal of information, and historians and archaeologists have been keen to use them to illustrate historical processes. One area to which much study has been dedicated is the meanings of place-name elements. Many names relate to topographical features, and Gelling has clearly shown how carefully interpreted names can be related to specific landscape features (Gelling 1984; 1998). This can be useful, but is sometimes deceptive: places bearing the name of a feature are commonly not at or close to that feature, but rather part of a land unit encompassing it (see e.g. Faull 1984). In Cornwall for example, this might lead to a reconsideration of the significance of place-names in **pen gelli* ('grove's end': Padel 1985: 180). Rose & Preston-Jones (1995: 53 citing Pounds 1947) suggest that this shows how much woodland has contracted since the names of the fifteen places so called in the county were established: none is now nearer than a quarter of a mile to a wood. However, as in the case of the Yorkshire hill-forts discussed by Faull, it is possible that the name applied to the area of land attached to the farmstead as much as to the specific location of the settlement (Faull 1984: 139).

Another valuable type of information contained in place-names refers to tenurial status. Faith (1997) has pointed out that different English place-name elements were given to settlements with different service obligations. Thus a place-name with the generic element *-tun* represented a different type of settlement to one in *-worth* (Faith 1997: 141; 173-7). In Cornwall, Padel has noted the probable difference in legal status of places with *bod-* names compared to those with *tre-* names (Padel 1985: 25). Differences of

this kind are important, but it is necessary to use them with care: such names are coined in reference to specific social contexts. For example, by the time Domesday Book was compiled both *bod-* and *tre-* names were applied to estate centres, indicating that any legal differences may have become less important by the mid-eleventh century (Thorn & Thorn 1979a; but note Padel's comments on *bod-* place-names and medieval tithing names: 1985: 25). It is important not to apply certain values to place-names anachronistically when analysing relationships between settlements in any given period.

A related problem is establishing relative chronologies of place-names. Historians of settlement patterns have sometimes used the distributions of different place-name elements to track the geographical expansion of settlement, leading to complicated descriptions of landscape development. However, as Thomson has recently shown for Orkney, it is critical that the relative chronology and relationships between place-names are understood before this technique can be used to produce valid results, particularly when many closely related elements in the same language are involved (Thomson 1995). Place-name evidence rarely gives the chronological definition which can sometimes be provided by documentary records or excavated archaeological evidence. A limited number of Cornish place-name elements are used in the distribution maps derived from the present project's GIS to illustrate different periods of landscape development. They generally follow the chronological limits suggested by Padel's recent linguistic analysis (Padel 1985; see below, 2.3 & Chapter 3). As Padel notes, these limits are not hard-and-fast, but provide an approximate guide to the periods when these elements, such as *tre*, were commonly in use (Padel 1985: 223-4).

There are therefore many problems involved in interpreting the significance of place-names, and these issues must be treated critically when using them as a source. Furthermore, there are also some practical considerations that are important for landscape historians and archaeologists.

Practical problems

One aspect of historical onomastics that is stressed over and over again by place-name scholars is the crucial importance of early name-forms (e.g. Crawford 1995: 7-8). In comparison to surviving medieval forms, modern name-forms often represent significant changes and these mutations can be very misleading, particularly if the relevant medieval forms have not been recorded or identified. It is therefore vital to base interpretations on the earliest recorded forms, and important to make sure that the sequence of forms suggested is philologically plausible (see e.g. Thorn 1986: 42; Padel 1988: 4-7). Fortunately, the place-names of Cornwall have been subject to very thorough recent study by Padel and his team at the Institute of Cornish Studies, resulting in the *Index of Cornish Place-Names*. This work has incorporated the contributions of previous scholars (particularly Gover (1948) and Henderson's largely unpublished corpus) and subjected them to careful scrutiny and source-criticism in conjunction with original documentary research. The results are the unpublished *Index* itself (incorporating all place-names, both Cornish and English) and Padel's *Cornish Place-Name Elements* (Padel 1985). This substantial and modern collection of place-names from Cornwall means that there has been a reliable database for the present project to draw on. For example, it is now much clearer which *tre* names are genuinely Cornish medieval forms, which contain *tre* as corruptions of other Cornish or English name-elements, and which have simply had *tre* added by analogy during the later medieval or post-medieval periods (Padel 1985: 228-9).

Despite this careful modern work, there are still problems. Whereas many Cornish settlement-names have surviving medieval forms, most minor place-names (e.g. field-names, road- and street-names) do not. In the case of field names, most were not recorded until the production of the nineteenth-century tithe maps and awards. These names still form a valuable source of evidence, particularly when they are linked to closely defined areas, as field

names usually are. Subsequent archaeological survey has shown that minor names of this sort often relate to the location of archaeological sites. In Cornwall, minor place-names have proved particularly useful for locating possible prehistoric settlement sites. For example, Thomas lists several rounds identified partly from the Tithe Award field names in the Gwithian area (Thomas 1964b: 38-41), the round at Shortlanesend (rescue excavated in 1979) was identified from the 1840 Tithe Award name 'Round Field' (Harris 1980), and more recently Tithe Award field-names have been used by Johns & Herring (1996) as their primary source to identify a number of possible rounds in the St Keverne area. In Wales, place-names of known locations have been linked to sites discovered by air photography (e.g. Castell Draenog, Dyfed: James 1998: fig. 4.9). In western Wessex, work in Somerset has shown that habitative place-name elements preserved as field-names (in this case in medieval documents) can also be used to identify the likely sites of long-abandoned early medieval settlements (Aston *et al.* 1998; Aston & Gerrard 1999). However, if early forms are lacking, any identifications of locations as a 'site' made on the basis of minor place-names must be treated with care. In the case-studies of the present project, evidence has been collected from Tithe Award or other early map names which suggest the presence of archaeological sites, such as 'Castle Park' in St Neot (SX 2042 6983) or 'Goon an Gear' ('round down') in St Anthony-in-Meneage (SW 7800 2330). Their details have been incorporated into the database used in Chapter 3, but these sites have only been assigned 'Possible' status unless there is other evidence (e.g. well-preserved earthworks) to confirm their existence.

Matching recorded place-names with the sites to which they refer is not always possible. This is often the case when a name has 'lost' its place. This commonly happens, for example, if names are recorded only once or twice in medieval or earlier documents and subsequently forgotten in the local area. Place-names also sometimes move about, referring to different locations in different periods. These problems can be particularly acute for landscape archaeologists who want to develop an in-depth understanding of

a particular locality at particular times, rather than produce generalised distribution maps at very small scales (see e.g. Bennet 1998). Although some scholars have been able to link archaeological sites to place-names by drawing on surviving oral tradition and analogies with other sites, the reliability of such a technique is hard to demonstrate if names are not recorded independently in historical documents (Stummann Hansen & Waugh 1998). It is therefore necessary to exercise considerable caution before attributing 'lost' settlement-names recorded in medieval documents to archaeological remains or to surviving settlements now known by other names.

This is particularly the case in areas of dispersed settlement such as Cornwall, where there may be numerous candidate sites for names which have lost their places (see e.g. Austin *et al.* 1989; Thorn 1986). Most of the place-names included in the Institute of Cornish Studies' *Index of Cornish Place-Names* have been related to sites and settlements by Padel and his colleagues using maps or other documentary sources to trace their descent, and these appear in the *Index* with a six-figure grid reference. Sites from the *Index* have been included in the database used for Chapter 3 only after their location has been checked against the modern and historic mapping. A minority of place-names first recorded in the medieval period have not been linked to any known modern, post-medieval or medieval settlement location, and these have not been included in the present database under their *Index* name. These place-names are therefore excluded from the analyses of settlement patterns which use name-element distributions in Chapter 3, since these only include names recorded in the medieval period (before A.D.1550) and linked reliably to known locations. However, it is likely that the sites referred to by these 'lost' names still form part of the database, since settlements recorded by other means (e.g. through archaeological excavation or survey) are included under their modern names. In parts of Anglo-Saxon England, some scholars have argued that the present landscape of nucleated villages replaced an earlier landscape of dispersed settlements in or around the tenth century (e.g. Lewis *et al.* 1997).

At Shapwick in Somerset 'habitative' place-name elements that were recorded as field-names in late- and post-medieval surveys may indicate the sites of earlier medieval settlements (Aston & Gerrard 1999). The discussion of developing settlement patterns in Wessex included in Chapter 4 uses data from specific projects such as the Shapwick research that have undertaken detailed case-studies of the medieval documents (see e.g. Corcos 1984; Aston & Costen 1994).

In some ways, there are similarities between place-names and other more conventional archaeological sources such as survey data derived from fieldwalking (for methodology and discussion of recent survey techniques see Davis *et al.* 1997; Given *et al.* 1999). Neither fieldwalking data nor place-names indicate the complete settlement pattern in any given period, and both could be said to suffer 'erosion' from 'post-depositional' processes. Similarly, neither place-names nor survey data demonstrate clearly the status or size of the sites to which they refer, although both may suggest general hierarchies within settlement patterns. Neither fieldwalking data nor place-names necessarily give the exact location of sites; instead, both suggest the approximate area of a settlement. The two types of data are far from completely analogous, but it is true that there are various problems in common between the two methods. These have not stopped critically-aware archaeologists making effective use of survey data (e.g. Alcock 1993), and they should not stop them using place-names, nor from incorporating place-name evidence into analyses of landscapes which include archaeological data from other sources.

Place-names have been used in the present project with careful reference to the problems outlined above. The names of medieval settlements have only been used when they can be linked reliably to locations. Other classes of site included in the analysis on the basis of place-name evidence are clearly identified as such in the database. Some of the classes of place-names used to analyse the development of the medieval landscape in the case studies (Chapter 3) are discussed below (section 2.3).

2.2.2 Historical information

The second major category of evidence used in this project is historical information. This is generally data from any relevant documentary source (in addition to the place-names discussed above). Three main sorts of historical information have been used: firstly, that which relates to defined areas of the landscape; secondly, that containing information about the status and chronology of individual sites; and finally there are sources which provide general frameworks for the cultural history of the early medieval South West.

Documents relating to defined areas of the landscape

In the first category fall documents such as Anglo-Saxon charter boundary clauses or later medieval manorial extents. These have been used for two main purposes. Firstly they have provided information about specific sites (e.g. boundary marker points) which can be incorporated into a database as 'point data'. Secondly, they have provided information allowing the extent of estates or other units of land to be mapped using a GIS. Boundary clauses are of great value for landscape archaeology, and the following examples from Anglo-Saxon charter bounds show the kind of information that can be derived from these documents.

References to topographical features such as rivers, hills, and woods are common, and in early charters are sometimes the only things mentioned (e.g. S 57 (Kemerton, Worcestershire): Hooke 1981: 20). Prominent features such as ditches are often used (dikes and 'old' dikes; e.g. S 755 (Lesneage, Cornwall), S 422 (Bradford Abbas, Dorset): see Costen 1994: 104), together with other landmarks such as Iron Age hill forts, routeways and Roman roads (Hooke 1981: 20-22). Certain burial and execution sites are also

mentioned in clauses from some parts of the South West (e.g. S 647 (Stanton St Bernard, Wiltshire); Reynolds 1997).

Evidence for land use is relatively common. References to *furhes* and furlongs in Wiltshire show that by the tenth century arable farming was affecting the boundary areas between settlements (Costen 1994). In Cornwall, one charter records common ownership of enclosures and other appurtenances of the settlement (S 1019 (Trerice); Herring & Hooke 1993). Open grazing land is also mentioned in some boundary clauses (S 473 (Langely, Wiltshire), S 508 (Weston, Somerset): Costen 1994: 100-102). However, it is important to note that as with the place-names discussed above, topographical details in boundary clauses must always be treated critically. For example, a place which acquired a *leah* place-name in the early Anglo-Saxon period may no longer have been wooded in the tenth or eleventh century when it was recorded in a charter (Costen 1994: 102-103).

Hooke comments that settlements are rarely mentioned in charters unless they were particularly important (Hooke 1981: 22-23). Settlements that are used as boundary features are commonly referred to as 'old' (i.e. 'former': e.g. *eald treo sted* (S 478: Beeching Stoke, Wiltshire), *ealdan ham stede* (S 696: Ebbesborne, Wiltshire). The significance of such names is probably that the sites mentioned were abandoned at the time (or before) the boundary moved to pass through them (Costen 1994). They may be related to former dispersed settlement patterns in areas where settlement nucleation occurred in the later pre-Conquest period. Otherwise, the main types of settlement to be found close to the boundaries of territories are generally those that make use of some natural resource there, such as water-mills (e.g. S450 (St Buryan, Cornwall); S951 (Tinnel, Cornwall).

Ephemeral features such as individual trees and ponds are common in detailed charter-bounds, although they are often hard to locate today. Indeed, solving charter bounds depends not only on features surviving to the present or until modern mapping, but also on secure translation of boundary

clauses and interpretation of place-names. Hooke notes that the pioneering work of Grundy in identifying bounds sometimes relied on mistaken interpretations of place names, and that it can often be improved by a combination of modern scholarship and fieldwork (e.g. S 1314 (Beckford, Worcestershire): Hooke 1981: 30). Where too little information survives, it is sometimes difficult to offer a secure interpretation, and even the work of modern scholars sometimes seems to gloss over these difficulties by presenting unclear maps at inappropriate scales (e.g. Hooke 1994a) or failing to point out alternative solutions.

When estates can be mapped using charter bounds (either Anglo-Saxon or later medieval) it is often possible to understand contemporary land-division and land-use quite clearly. If contemporary charters exist for surrounding estates or individual land units in the same estate, it is possible to build up a detailed picture of elements of the landscape. A number of Anglo-Saxon and medieval charters relate to the St Keverne study area in Cornwall, and they have been used to provide information about features in the landscape, and the nature and extent of estates in Chapter 3. Charter-bounds from western Wessex have been used extensively to provide information about the landscapes discussed in Chapter 4.

Status & chronology of particular sites

A second type of historical information used here relates to the status and chronology of specific sites. Pre-Conquest documents can contain useful information relating to both these aspects of a site's history. Documents such as charters and Domesday Book can confirm the existence of (and provide a *terminus post quem* for) any places which are mentioned, and sometimes also indicate the status of sites. However, this information normally only relates to high-status sites such as royal vills or major churches (for royal vills see e.g. Gelling 1978: 184-5; Sawyer 1983; Faith

1997: 32; for churches see e.g. Olson 1989; Blair 1985). Associations with specific individuals may also suggest status or dates.

However, as with all other source material, this type of evidence needs to be treated carefully. Apart from the practical issue of relating recorded names to the correct locations (see above, 2.2.1), the information provided by historical documents is not necessarily reliable even when it directly mentions specific sites. St Neot in Cornwall provides an example. Asser's *Life of King Alfred* (Keynes & Lapidge 1983) appears to associate the monastery here with a pilgrimage by the king, but it has been argued that the passage in question is a later interpolation (Stevenson 1904). Although this analysis is not universally accepted (cf. Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 254-5), the small measure of doubt means it is impossible to be categorical about Alfred's visit to the church. Whilst he may have visited, it is not certain that he did.

Later medieval sources have generally only been used in the present thesis to provide information on the institutional status of individual churches and the histories of their estates. Typical of this sort of historical evidence is information about the relationships between a mother church and its dependent chapelries (for a recent summary and application of methods for identifying minster churches in Wessex see Hall 2000: 4-29). This kind of information at best represents the most likely pre-Conquest arrangements, and does not describe certainties (see below, this section). Nevertheless, in combination with other types of material, this type of historical evidence can add valuable social and temporal dimensions to the analysis of historic landscapes.

Framework and cultural context

Historical documents such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the corpus of charters have also provided historians with the main body of evidence for

the narrative history of Saxon settlement in the South West and other major events, such as the Danish incursions. Classic contributions to the debate on the significance of this material include those by Finberg (1953a) and Hoskins (1960); more recently, useful syntheses of the history of early medieval south-west England have been produced by Insley (1998), Yorke (1995) and Todd (1987: 287-94). A major problem with the narrative sources is that they are very few. This means that many important issues are almost completely omitted (e.g. the migration of British-speakers from Dumnonia to Armorica in the post-Roman period; Fleuriot 1980), and even those that are mentioned (such as the 'conquest' of Cornwall by Wessex) generally receive very short entries in the sources (Svensson 1987: 3-7). The omissions and indeed the content of the entries underline the fact that the *Chronicle* and comparable sources were produced in specific historical contexts for specific audiences. Methodologically speaking, this problem underlines the necessity of interdisciplinary studies which incorporate evidence from a range of sources.

A wider variety of historical sources, and different aspects of those already mentioned (including literary and administrative productions), are also important for analysis of the wider social and cultural context. The problems of combining documents and archaeology to this end have been discussed by Andren and others, who suggest an approach using certain types of 'correspondence' between texts and artefacts (Andren 1998). One of the potential pitfalls for this method is anachronism: it is critical that the sources under consideration relate to the same contexts. For example, it would not be methodologically sound to relate descriptions in the *Odyssey* to the archaeology of the Mycenean Peloponnese: though they purport to describe the same contexts (and though many people still believe this to be the case), the two sources are the result of different periods and differing worldviews (Davis 1998: xxxv-vi). Once again this highlights the necessity of 'thick description' and thorough investigation of context (see further below, 2.2.5).

2.2.3 Archaeological data

The 'archaeological data' used in the present project include evidence from the full range of available archaeological sources, including excavations, air and ground surveys, analysis of standing buildings or surviving monuments and environmental studies. Although they are all 'archaeological', these different 'classes' of data can have as many differences between them as one 'class' of 'archaeological' evidence and a non-'archaeological' source such as place-names. It has therefore been important to use the archaeological data just as critically as the place-names or historical evidence.

Data from excavations

Excavation projects can provide some of the most comprehensive archaeological information available. Modern excavation, followed by careful post-excavation analysis and publication often presents the most precise dating evidence, and the clearest information about a site's history.

Regrettably, relatively few excavations have taken place on early medieval sites in the South West, and many sites that have been excavated present considerable problems for interpretation. Sometimes this is because early excavations were not conducted to very high standards, so that valuable information was lost (e.g. Trebarveth, St Keverne; see Serocold *et al.* 1949). On more recent occasions sites excavated under time pressure have not always been adequately recorded, even when substantial volumes of artefacts were recovered (e.g. Bodmin Priory excavations, undertaken in the mid-1980s; O'Hara 1985). Research excavations, such as those in Tintagel churchyard in 1990-1, have commonly suffered from incomplete publication when site directors have been unable to dedicate time to the completion of projects (see the interim publication on Tintagel churchyard, a site which

has yet to be written up to archive standard; Nowakowski & Thomas 1992). This means that some of the archaeological information from recent excavations which has been widely discussed is based on interim reports, and should not necessarily be treated as fully considered data. It is also common for excavations to investigate only small parts of any site, so that the character and extent of the site remains unclear pending further work (as at Tintagel churchyard).

The lack of excavated sites in Devon and Cornwall also means that topics such as the early medieval pottery typologies of the area are relatively poorly understood, and that dating sites through pottery finds is often difficult. Although Thomas has argued that pottery production and use continued throughout the early medieval period (Thomas 1968a), this has yet to be proved (cf. Johns & Herring 1996: 84). A further effect of this uncertainty is that pottery of the period may not be recognised or reported when found; there are certainly relatively few sites which are known to have produced grass-marked or bar-lug pottery of the 'native' types (see Hutchinson 1979; Bruce-Mitford 1997: 71-80).

If using only excavation data were desirable, the paucity of excavated sites means it would be impossible to understand the early medieval landscape in the South West. However, as discussed above it is methodologically important to include a wide range of data categories. This means that the lack of a large sample of excavated sites, though regrettable, should not be seen as a bar to conducting archaeological research.

Standing buildings and surviving monuments

Standing buildings of the pre-Conquest period are extremely rare in the South West. Although those that do survive are undoubtedly of great importance, they are hard to interpret owing to a lack of standing or excavated comparanda in the region. Current work is addressing this problem, for example at Buckfastleigh (Devon) where a sequence of well-preserved and clearly datable pre-Conquest structures is being excavated (Reynolds & Turner, forthcoming). However, this work is only just beginning and the status, date and significance of churches in the far west like St Piran's Oratory in Cornwall is presently unclear (Olson 1989: 35-6). In central Wessex there are a few more buildings that preserve pre-Conquest fabric (e.g. Alton Barnes, Wiltshire; Taylor & Taylor 1965), but even here there is little well-understood material dating from before the tenth century.

Individual monuments of the early medieval period are considerably more common. About seventy examples of the monuments known as 'inscribed stones' survive (or are reliably recorded) in the counties of Devon and Cornwall (Okasha 1993). In addition, there is an as yet unknown number of monuments or fragments bearing characteristically pre-Norman sculptural styles (possibly as many as fifty in Cornwall alone; Preston-Jones & Okasha, forthcoming).

There are numerous problems involved in using these monuments, including issues of dating, function, origins and cultural influences (work on the inscribed stones is the most developed: Okasha 1993; Thomas 1994; Thomas 1998; Knight 1999: 136-142; see below (3.8) for discussion). For the purposes of the present study, the database allows possible date-ranges for the monuments. An additional problem is that many of the inscribed stones and crosses are known to have been moved in the post-medieval period: in these cases all known sites have been noted, but the positions used for discussion in Chapters 3 & 4 are the earliest known locations, rather than the modern sites.

Air and ground survey

Survey methods such as air photography and earthwork survey have been used extensively in the South West to complement the limited amount of excavation data. The archaeology of certain periods is particularly visible to such techniques. For example, the use of these methods has enabled the Cornwall Historic Environment Service to build up its database of certain and possible rounds (settlement sites typical of the late Iron Age and Romano-British periods) to around 1400 sites. Whilst this data has been used extensively in the study areas of this project, there are a number of cautions that must accompany it. Most importantly, the sites have generally been identified on the basis of earthwork or cropmark morphology. This clearly means that the date range of any site identified by this method is not certain, and by analogy with the excavated sites the rounds recorded on the SMR could date to any time from the fourth century BC to the sixth century AD (Johnson & Rose 1982; Rose & Johnson 1983; Rose & Preston-Jones 1995; see 2.3, below). It also means that some sites may have been mis-identified, and/or mis-attributed to the Iron-Age/Roman period, despite belonging to other eras (Griffith 1994: fig 2).

It is also important to realise that though evidence from air or ground surveys can sometimes present a very full description of certain types of evidence, it is not possible to claim that any distribution pattern derived from this method is complete. For example, soil- or cropmarks may not always be visible, only showing occasionally; many probably remain undiscovered at present (e.g. Griffith 1994: 87-8). Another common problem for both air and ground surveys is sites being obscured by vegetation (Johnson & Rose 1994: 9-11). This is a problem which is shared with other archaeological methods such as the intensive fieldwalking surveys which have been used in Chapter 4. The individual records from unpublished databases (e.g. Cornwall SMR) for all types of sites identified

by air or ground survey have been fully consulted before inclusion in the database and case studies of the present project.

Environmental evidence

The value of environmental information from techniques such as pollen studies have recently begun to be realised for the post-prehistoric South West, although relatively few projects have been undertaken to date (Caseldine & Hatton 1994). One of the main problems of these techniques for landscape archaeology is that they often provide only a generalised picture of landscape and land-use, rather than one which can be related unambiguously to individual sites. Where samples are taken from large raised bogs or valley mires like those on parts of Dartmoor, the nature of deposition and sampling means it is often hard to suggest where specific types of land-use occurred in relation to the sampling site (Geary *et al.*1997: 208). Nevertheless such research clearly provides data that can confirm or question the patterns of settlement identified through other techniques such as historic landscape characterisation or analysis of settlement patterns. For example, woodland clearance indicated by the disappearance of tree pollen which has been radiocarbon dated to the late Saxon period at Broad Amicombe Hole, northern Dartmoor, has been linked to increasing levels of mineral extraction in the valley-bottom (Caseldine & Hatton 1994: 44). Where environmental studies have been undertaken they form an important source for understanding the general context of the historic landscape (Walker 1989; Geary *et al.*1997: 208). In this sense they are used in a 'correlative' or 'contrastive' way, similar to the method used for certain types of written material (2.2.5, below).

2.2.4 Historic Landscape Characterisation

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a method for understanding and mapping the nature of the landscape with reference to its historical development (McNab & Lambrick 1999: 54). The technique is different in important ways to traditional methods for describing the historic resource such as Sites and Monuments Registers, although the maps that result from Historic Landscape Characterisation are also used for landscape management and research. The first characterisation work was carried out by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit and partners with support from English Heritage on Bodmin Moor in late 1993. This project was extended to cover the whole of the county of Cornwall in 1994 (Countryside Commission 1994; Cornwall County Council 1994; Cornwall County Council 1996). English Heritage has been instrumental in developing and applying the method since the Cornwall project was completed (Fairclough *et al.* 1999; Fairclough 1999).

The technique draws on methods which have long been in use in other disciplines, for example in geology to show soil-type or in ecology to map habitats. In the same sense that all parts of the landscape are forms of habitat, Historic Landscape Characterisation recognizes that all parts of the landscape have historical significance which is the result of human activity and use over the millennia. Herring has explained the basis of the Cornish method as follows:

> 'Closer examination [of the landscape] reveals that particular groupings and patterns of components which recur throughout the county can be seen to have been determined by similar histories. Cornwall's historic landscape can, therefore, be characterised, mapped and described, using a finite number of categories or types of "historic landscape character".'
>
> (Herring 1998: 11)

Essentially this means that the present-day landscape is examined using modern Ordnance Survey maps and characterised according to its physical appearance into landscape 'types'. These 'types' are classified in advance of

the characterisation mapping and define the broad characteristics which areas of land with similar past uses exhibit. In the Cornwall assessment, seventeen 'types' of landscape were identified:

1. Rough ground
2. Prehistoric enclosures
3. Medieval enclosures
4. Post-medieval enclosures
5. Modern enclosures
6. Ancient woodland
7. Plantations and scrub woodland
8. Settlement (historic)
9. Settlement (modern)
10. Industrial (disused)
11. Industrial (active)
12. Communications
13. Recreation
14. Military
15. Ornamental
16. Water (reservoirs etc)
17. Water (natural bodies)

(Herring 1999a: 21)

Historic landscape character 'types' are mapped onto a base-map, either by hand (as in the Cornwall example) or using a GIS (now the standard practice; see e.g. Wills 1999). In different areas of the country, different 'types' may be appropriate because of differing landscape histories, or because the landscape characterisation has been designed to reflect more or less detailed differences at larger or smaller scales than in the initial Cornish work. The method can therefore be very flexible. For example, in the Peak District and Hampshire characterisations, several different 'types' were used which related specifically to the landscape histories of the areas under consideration. In Hampshire 85 different 'types' were used across fourteen broad categories, and in Cornwall recent characterisations of localised areas have been undertaken at 1:10,000 and 1:2,500 scale using project-specific 'types' (Barnatt 1999; Lambrick 1999; Herring 1998: 20-1).

In the Cornish HLC, mapping was carried out to some extent according to the archaeological principles of stratigraphy. The most recent elements in the landscape were mapped first (e.g. reservoirs, golf courses, airfields), leaving the more ancient elements (anciently enclosed land, rough pasture) to last. However, as with all archaeological work, historic landscape

characterisation is not entirely without problems. One example is that the categorization of blocks of landscapes into types relies on the researchers' ability to consistently identify areas in the 'correct' categories, introducing elements of subjectivity. Another potential problem is that some areas may have more than one major landscape component contributing to overall character, so that it is unclear which is the dominant 'type' and the one that should be mapped. This consideration also leads to problems associated with 'time-depth'; a 'recent' landscape (e.g. one created by nineteenth century enclosure) may conceal strong elements of another kind of landscape (e.g. prehistoric enclosures; although see the review of Wright 1997 in Herring 1998: 106-9). In the Cornwall HLC, text accompanies historic landscape characterisations to alert users to the many potential historic components of given 'types' of landscape. Various techniques have been used to overcome these problems, but GIS now appears to provide the best solution (Herring 1999a: 22). Using a GIS gives considerable flexibility and allows each of the character areas or 'polygons' (i.e. coherent blocks sharing the same historical development) to be given more than one descriptive characteristic (Wills 1999: 38-9). In current landscape characterisations, the database linked to the GIS allows a range of attributes to be linked to individual 'polygons' so that a detailed picture can be built up of the historical development of the landscape (e.g. DCC 2001).

In terms of the kind of perspective on the landscape it provides, Historic Landscape Characterisation has several advantages. The coverage of SMRs tends not to be even, but to vary between and within counties. Any plotting of SMR entries on maps to try and present a picture of the historic landscape therefore presents an imbalanced picture – for example, often showing now destroyed medieval field boundaries, but ignoring those that are still *in situ* (N. Johnson 1999: 121). Furthermore, the very act of displaying an SMR or NMR entry as a point on a map (so-called 'point' data) also detracts from the value of the feature being referred to as part of a historic landscape; concentration on '...discrete features does not clearly reflect historic landscape character' (Herring 1998: 9, fig.10). Historic Landscape

Characterisation is a significant methodological improvement because it allows the historic landscape to be given archaeological significance on a wide scale. As discussed above (2.1) it is crucial to build up an in-depth understanding of the whole landscape before investigating its constituent elements. The whole landscape has been the context for past action, and it is necessary to comprehend as much of it as possible (Darvill 1999; Knapp & Ashmore 1999). HLC maps help to allow a '..break-out from the site-based myopia' of the past (Herring & Johnson 1997: 54)

Historic Landscape Characterisation and the present research

In Chapter 3 (below) Historic Landscape Characterisations of the study areas are starting points to examine the landscape and the relationships between different types of site. Purpose-built interpretative maps using an adapted form of the HLC method form the basis for the presentation of data gained from the various sources, and provide the essential spatial structure for interpretation of this information. In essence, these maps are representations of past landscapes in the study areas. Johns & Herring (1996) have pioneered this approach in Cornwall in a detailed examination of part of St Keverne parish on the Lizard which combines conventional archaeological and historical data with historic landscape characterisation to interpret and describe the historic landscape of the area.

The St Keverne study was fairly generalised and intended to answer questions for management and conservation purposes, but a similar technique has been applied more recently in pursuit of more closely defined research objectives. Ann Preston-Jones has been able to combine data describing the locations of medieval stone sculpture in Cornwall with a basic historic landscape characterisation 'time-slice' in an analysis of stone crosses in St Buryan parish in West Penwith. The interesting results included new light being cast on the possible extent of St Buryan's medieval sanctuary and the role of sculpture in relation to early medieval land-use

(Preston-Jones & Langdon 2001; Preston-Jones & Okasha, forthcoming). It is this kind of approach that the present project seeks to build on by developing interpretations based on more varied sources of information in relation to specific research questions. Using Historic Landscape Characterisations, analyses of different types of data at different scales can be combined to create a more comprehensive picture of the way sites fit into their landscape contexts, and of the relationships between them (see below).

One of the most valuable potential applications of the technique for research projects such as the present one is the possibility that it can help in the reconstruction of past landscapes and the mapping of general areas of past land-use. Historic Landscape Characterisations generally map the historic character of the present-day landscape, and this map includes elements that have been introduced at all times over the last few thousand years. For each individual period of the past, however, the map will present only certain areas of land that are unchanged or little changed. However, further interpretation can help to illuminate more of the nature of various historic landscapes as they were in the past. For instance, in the Peak District national park characterisation, historic maps including tithe and estate maps have been used to produce a series of 'time-slice maps' depicting the landscape *c.*1650 and *c.*1850, in addition to the conventional characterisation map of the modern-day landscape (Barnatt 1999: 44-6).

In Cornwall Nicholas Johnson has produced a characterisation map of the rural landscape in the sixteenth century by combining upland rough ground, coastal rough ground, dunes and recently enclosed land zones on the modern characterisation map to give the rough extent of former grazing grounds. This technique of stratigraphically 'removing' layers of later impositions from periods after that under research by necessity involves the use both of some analogies and assumptions derived from the archaeological evidence of other parts of the landscape and from historic maps and documents (DCC 2001). For the present project, this new

technique means that it will be possible to create character maps of case-study areas in the medieval period (Herring 1998: 49; see below).

HLC in the Cornish study areas

The HLC method has been adapted for use in the Cornish study areas of Chapter 3. The aim of using HLC here is to give an approximation of the extent of agricultural land, woodland and unenclosed pasture/rough ground in the medieval period. The method cannot provide an exact map of the medieval landscape, but rather is intended to reflect the general distribution of these elements. Various types of evidence can be used to provide a sharper focus than has previously been available.

Peter Herring has argued that Historic Landscape Characterisation can be used to 'reconstruct' the ancient Cornish landscape, by removing later 'layers' – e.g. the industrial, urban, ornamental or military landscape 'types' – and concentrating on the medieval arable and other enclosed land, the rough ground and wooded steep-sided valleys. Herring notes that some of the land characterised in this way as 'anciently enclosed' will only have been taken into cultivation in the later medieval period. However, he argues that most of it will have been enclosed in the early middle ages and that land enclosed later may be identifiable by its position (usually on the edge of downland; Herring 1999b: 20). It is likely that land enclosed in the later middle ages will be identifiable by the size and shape of the fields, and by characteristic place-names.

A problem with the methods presented by Herring (1999b) and Preston-Jones & Langdon (2001) is the dating of the landscape revealed by their interpretations of the HLC information. Herring claims that his HLC reconstruction map would probably reflect a landscape of *c.*AD 1000. This may be true, but he also points out that some areas will not have been enclosed until the later medieval period (Herring 1999b: 20). Johnson has

used the Cornwall HLC 'Zones' map to outline the likely extent of rough ground, woodland and enclosures in the sixteenth century (Herring 1998: 49-50).

The method for this project has similar aims to that used by Herring (1999b) and Preston-Jones & Langdon (2001). However, these essays do not include detailed methodologies, and the approaches described presented a number of problems. This has necessitated the development of a revised method with a number of differences compared to the earlier Cornish HLC mapping.

The first problem relates to stratigraphically removing later landscape 'types' such as airfields, motorways or urban sprawl to present an earlier landscape, and to the changes in the landscape that have occurred since the mid-nineteenth century. Modern features in the landscape can be 'imagined' away (Herring 1999b) - or physically removed from the map using GIS - but this would leave a characterisation with large blank spaces. The difficulty lies in deciding what should replace the gaps on the final map. This is particularly acute where HLC projects use only *modern* sources – for example current Ordnance Survey maps and recent air photography, as in the Cornwall Historic Environment Service example (Herring 1998). In such cases, the loss and alteration of field boundaries from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, but particularly after the Second World War, means that the earlier historic character of significant areas has been obscured in some parts of the South West peninsula. For the purposes of the present project, entirely new HLCs have been prepared for the study areas using a wider range of sources than in the case of the original Cornish HLC (Herring 1998; Cornwall County Council 1994). The method adopted here has been to use a combination of modern and historic maps to produce a completely new characterisation for each of the study areas. Using the historic maps has enabled the problem of the 'blank' areas to be avoided (see Appendix 1 for a discussion of the sources used). Virtually all of the 'impositions' that would otherwise need to be removed in the Cornwall study areas are mid/late-nineteenth or twentieth century developments (e.g.

urban developments or large military sites). By basing the characterisations in Chapter 3 on a combination of early estate maps, Tithe maps (which were prepared around 1840 before the main period of field boundary loss began) together with modern OS maps the historic character of the landscape before the mid-Victorian High Farming period and mid-twentieth century agricultural intensification can be established more clearly (for the causes and effects of recent field boundary loss in the South West see e.g. Dymond 1856; Williamson 2002; Finneran & Turner, forthcoming).

Secondly, unlike previous landscape characterisation work in Cornwall, the HLCs in Chapter 3 also used evidence for relict field-systems from archaeological air and field surveys where available. This allowed areas that are not now under cultivation (included in a 'rough ground' category in the earlier Cornwall Historic Environment Service characterisation) to be included in the 'medieval farmland' character type in Chapter 3 (surveys used include: Bodmin Moor: Johnson & Rose 1994; St Keverne: Johns & Herring 1996; Tintagel area: English Heritage National Mapping Programme (consulted at Cornwall Historic Environment Service offices in Truro).

Thirdly, the present characterisations have been prepared using GIS at a scale of *c.*1:10,000, whereas the initial Cornish characterisation was prepared on paper at a scale of 1:50,000. This has allowed the present characterisation to be undertaken with far more attention to detail, and more accuracy has been achieved in the mapping of polygon boundaries.

The Cornwall HLC has also been consulted in detail for each study area (Cornwall County Council 1994), although it has been subject to very close scrutiny. The significantly more detailed research and the much greater number of sources used for the present project means that substantial differences exist between the characterisations of the present project and the Cornwall HLC. The characterisations of the study areas in Chapter 3 are new interpretations of the primary evidence. Because the questions to be

investigated in the following chapters relate to the medieval landscape, the HLCs used here have been designed to represent the character of the historic landscape in the middle ages rather than that of the present day as the Cornwall Historic Environment Service HLC prepared in the 1990s does.

The HLCs in the study areas present three different historic landscape character 'types', rough ground, medieval farmland, and woodland. Characterisation has been undertaken on the basis of the following criteria:

Rough Ground

Rough ground consists of areas of land which were used predominantly as pastures and fuel-grounds in the medieval period. They were normally unenclosed, or divided only by long sinuous boundaries, some of which were already in existence in the prehistoric period (Johnson & Rose 1994).

A good deal of rough ground survives in Cornwall from the middle ages without significant subsequent alteration. It is typified by six modern habitat types, which are heath, bracken, gorse, scrub, unimproved grassland and wetlands (Herring 1998: 25). Some areas which are characterised today by these habitats were enclosed in the medieval period, but have since reverted to rough ground (see Johnson & Rose 1994). These areas have not been included in the 'rough ground' HLC type, but in 'medieval farmland'.

A large amount of land has been taken out of the 'rough ground' type since the middle ages for use as enclosures of various sorts (see Herring 1998: 29). These have been identified on the basis of their field boundary morphology and have been included in the 'rough ground' historic landscape character type. They are typified by field boundaries that are perfectly straight after being laid out according to post-medieval surveying techniques. In a few cases there is archaeological or cartographic evidence that a post-medieval field system has replaced a system of medieval type. In

these examples the area has been included in the 'medieval farmland' type (e.g. the field system in the St Neot study area centred on SX 150663 which was altered in the mid-nineteenth century to give its present appearance as shown by a comparison of the eighteenth century estate map (CRO G1872) and the modern OS map).

Prehistoric enclosures, which cover extensive areas in parts of Bodmin Moor and in some coastal zones, have also been included in the 'rough ground' type (Johnson & Rose 1994; Johns & Herring 1996), except where there is evidence for their re-use in the medieval period.

Medieval Farmland

The 'medieval farmland' type represents all land that was cultivated in the middle ages, including that which has subsequently gone out of agricultural use. This includes several different types of land-use including arable fields, watermeadow, orchards and gardens. Medieval enclosures have been identified by their highly characteristic irregular sinuous boundaries. Although there are a number of clearly identifiable sub-types relating to date of enclosure and type of land-use (described by Herring 1998: 27-8; 78-9), these have not been mapped for the purposes of the present project. The most common type of field included in the 'medieval enclosure' category are those derived from open strip fields. The existing field boundaries result from the enclosure of former open strips and bundles of strips leading to so-called S-, J- or C- curves (all these terms refer to the same phenomenon: see e.g. Austin *et al.* 1980). For comparative purposes, an example of a open strip-field that remains unenclosed survives at Forrabury in the Tintagel study area (centred on SX 0950 9100). Such survivals are the exception, however, and the vast majority of open field systems were enclosed in the late medieval and very early post-medieval period (Flatrès 1949; Preston-Jones & Rose 1986; Herring 1998: 28; Fox & Padel 1998: lxviii-c); for similar developments in Devon see Finberg 1969a; Fox 1975). Whilst there

has been considerable loss of late medieval field boundaries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to create bigger fields (Dymond 1856; DCC 2001), comparison with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maps reveals that before this time there had been relatively little replacement of medieval boundaries with post-medieval ones in the South West peninsula, particularly in comparison to parts of England further to the east (DCC 2001). The 'medieval farmland' character type mapped by the HLC is therefore likely to correspond quite well to the actual area under cultivation in the late medieval period. Also included in this character type are less common irregular medieval field patterns, which are sometimes derived from prehistoric fields (e.g. Kestlemerris in the St Keverne study area (see also Rackham 1986; Herring 1998: 29). These may also have been used for arable exploitation although this cannot necessarily be inferred from their surviving boundary morphology. Areas of earthwork ridge-and-furrow which probably indicate areas of periodic outfield / rough ground cultivation have also been included in this character type, even though they probably only represent very sporadic use for arable (e.g. on Bodmin Moor in the St Neot case study area; Austin *et al.* 1989; Fox 1973).

Woodland

Earlier 'woodland' has been identified from the historic maps. In some cases woodland boundaries with distinctive morphology can also indicate the extent of former woodland, particularly in steep-sided valleys. Unlike the other two HLC types, identification of 'woodland' has also made extensive use of the interpretation provided in the Cornwall HLC. A major source for the Cornwall HLC was the detailed survey of ancient woodland by the Nature Conservancy Council (Lister & Walker 1986; Herring 1998: 30-2). However, where the historic maps contradicted the Cornwall HLC, the maps were relied on in preference to the HLC.

It is important to note that the characterisation has been performed with reference only to boundary morphology derived from modern and historic maps and areas of strip cultivation recorded by archaeological surveys. It has not used place-names or other types of documentary or archaeological evidence (e.g. locations of deserted medieval settlements).

The HLCs prepared for this project show the known extent of all medieval farmland in the 'medieval farmland' type (this includes areas of strip fields in the uplands which were probably only used for a short period and never subsequently enclosed; see Fox 1973). Certain factors mean these HLCs are unlikely to provide a completely accurate model of the medieval landscape. For example, it is possible that some areas of medieval cultivation that were not enclosed during the medieval period have not been detected through archaeological surveys and have therefore not been included in the HLCs. It is also possible that small areas of medieval enclosure have been completely obscured by later developments (although it is very rare indeed for this to have occurred in Cornwall before the mid-nineteenth century, and there are almost always some surviving medieval boundaries in field systems where re-organisation has taken place; see e.g. Holtroad Downs: CRO G1872). Nevertheless, the HLCs produced for Chapter 3 represent the approximate extent of farmland in the medieval Cornish landscape at the time of the climatic / demographic optimum of the thirteenth / fourteenth centuries (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 153; Johnson & Rose 1994: 114).

Demonstrating the validity of the HLC landscape model

The landscape model presented in the HLCs is therefore an approximation, of the shape of the medieval landscape in the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries. Relatively little work has been undertaken in the study areas on categories of archaeological material other than field survey, so it is fairly hard to compare these HLCs with other material such as pollen studies to demonastrate their accuracy. In other HLC projects, case-studies of specific

sites and localised landscapes have been used to provide analogies for character types in other places. For example in Devon, well-understood landscapes such as Holne Moor (Dartmoor), Challacombe (Dartmoor), Houndtor (Dartmoor) and Axminster have provided models for identifying similar landscape types in other areas based on similar morphologies (e.g. DCC 2001). Sequences of field boundary types and field morphologies at sites where detailed archaeological fieldwork and/or historical research has taken place have been used to provide comparanda for other field systems elsewhere.

Comparison with surviving Anglo-Saxon and medieval charter boundary clauses indicates that in many cases the landscapes described by the HLC technique and the charters are very similar. A good example is the late Saxon boundary clause of Trerice in St Dennis (S1019). A convincing solution to the boundary clause of this tiny estate has recently been published, and this is followed here (Herring & Hooke 1993; Hooke 1994a). Fig. 2.1 shows the charter bounds as solved by Hooke and plotted onto the first edition OS map (after Herring & Hooke 1993, Fig. 2). Fig. 2.1 combines this with an HLC map of the same area which was independently prepared using the methods outlined above. It can be seen that 'rough ground' historic landscape type on the HLC map occurs at the points on the boundary clause described as the 'heathfields'. This suggests that in Trerice there has been little change in the organisation of the landscape since the charter boundary clause was written. Indeed Hooke states that 'the enclosing banks of the fields have probably changed little since Anglo-Saxon times' (Hooke 1994a: 68).

Another method for assessing the validity of the distribution of historic landscape 'types' as shown by the HLC maps is to compare them with the distribution of place-names known to date from various periods. For example, place-name scholars have demonstrated that Cornish habitative place-name elements (e.g. *tre-* and *bod-*) originated mainly between the sixth and eleventh centuries (Padel 1985; see above, section 2.2.1). There is

some uncertainty about the dates such elements were used beacuase occasionally they could be incorporated into names formed later. Nevertheless this problem can often be accounted for by analysing records of medieval name-forms (which are used exclusively here; Padel 1985; see *ICS Index*). The study area HLC maps were prepared entirely without reference to the place-names, but in Figs. 2.2a, 2.2b & 2.2c, genuine *tre-* place-names recorded during the medieval period are plotted against the HLCs of each study area prepared for Chapter 3. It is clear from these maps that settlements with names in *tre-* occur exclusively within the 'medieval farmland' character type. This reflects the fact that the 'medieval farmland' historic character type has early medieval settlements at its core (see further 2.2.1, above; and below, 2.3).

Although no certain early medieval settlements have been exacavated within the study areas, there have been excavations on several later medieval settlements at several sites including Bunning's Park and Colliford (St Neot; Austin *et al.* 1989) and Treworld (Lesnewth; Dudley & Minter 1965). These settlements all occur within the 'medieval farmland' character type. Indeed, at Bunning's Park there is an area of relict strip-cultivation within the 'medieval farmland' character type which Austin *et al.* tentatively suggest may belong to the early medieval period (1989: 229-30).

Few pollen studies have been undertaken in the South West on landscape that have been subject to HLC. Unsurprisingly, the Cornwall Historic Environment Service's HLC cannot be compared with the results of pollen studies on Bodmin Moor (e.g. Geary *et al.* 1997) because this is a characterisation of the modern, rather than the medieval, landscape. However, the results of recent pollen work south of Exmoor in north Devon are beginning to provide evidence for landscape changes off the high moors very similar to those in Cornwall that are discussed below based on settlement studies (2.3; Ralph Fyfe, pers. comm. 2003). Little analysis of pollen from sites within the study areas has taken place, but the results of work at Bunning's Park within Chapter 3's St Neot study area complement

the interpretation of the landscape provided by the HLC. Pollen from peat radiocarbon dated to around the fourteenth century suggested the existence then of a mixed of agricultural landscape, which included a limited amount of arable land (although an increased amount in relation to earlier periods of land-use) and large areas of grazing (Walker 1989: 183-5). This is exactly what is represented by the HLC for this area (Fig. 2.3).

Without combination other sources such as numerous detailed archaeological excavations and/or pollen cores from a specific area the model of the landscape provided by HLC must always rely on analogy with other places, and as such a degree of uncertainty is unavoidable. In the study areas in Chapter 3 such corroborative evidence is not plentiful so the model provided by the HLC is necessarily an approximation. Nevertheless, the nature of the field archaeology (i.e. well-preserved surviving and relict medieval field boundaries and cultivation ridges) means that the approximation provided by HLC is more accurate and more practical to use for the medieval south-western landscape than those provided by many other methods (e.g. pollen studies, which are costly and limited to defined areas around the source of cores). This is particularly the case when used at the scale of the study areas in Chapter 3.

Finding and mapping the early medieval landscape

The medieval land-use pattern of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which is mapped in the HLCs in Chapter 3 is fundamentally related to the historic landscape of the early middle ages. The early medieval landscape was at the core of this later landscape. The close relationship between the the two periods can be demonstrated by plotting evidence derived independently from other sources, such as place-names and SMR data against the study area HLCs. For example, Cornish habitative place-names currently provide the best available indication of the location of early medieval settlements (as discussed above, 2.2.1). Although there is always

some uncertainty about the date place-names were coined, the vast majority of Cornish habitative place-names first recorded during the middle ages are early medieval in origin. As noted above, plotting Cornish habitative place-names against the HLC shows that they lie exclusively within the 'medieval farmland' character type. Therefore even if a few of these place-names are later medieval coinages, using independently derived data of this type shows that early medieval agricultural sites lie at the core of the 'medieval enclosure' character type.

The major difference between the early and later medieval land-use patterns appears to be that an expansion of farmland onto former rough ground occurred between the tenth and thirteenth centuries (Herring 1999b: 20; Johnson & Rose 1994: 114-4). This is characterised in Cornwall by settlements with Cornish topographical names (although these had existed before) and, particularly in the east of the county, by settlements with English names (e.g. Colliford in St Neot; see further 2.3, below). The main difference between the model of the medieval landscape given in the HLCs in Chapter 3 and the actual early medieval landscape is therefore that *less* ground will have been under cultivation before the tenth century. It is therefore extremely unlikely that any areas that were farmed for arable before this time are not included in the 'medieval farmland' character type of the HLCs in Chapter 3.

Herring has compared the evidence of Domesday Book with the Historic Landscape Characterisation results. Herring has calculated that approximately 30% of Cornwall consisted of rough ground before enclosure of heath and moorland began in earnest in the eighteenth century using the Cornwall HLC (Herring 1999b: 20). Rackham has argued from the Domesday data that 33% of the county was rough ground in the eleventh century (Rackham 1986: 335). The study area HLCs in Chapter 3 show that 35% of the 300km^2 characterised was rough ground in the middle ages. This suggests the overall quantity of rough ground had changed little over the course of the middle ages. The survey of ancient woodland by the Nature

Conservancy Council also suggested that the distribution of woodland in Domesday Book was broadly similar to today's landscape (Rose & Preston-Jones 1995: 52-3; Lister & Walker 1986).

In conclusion, the HLC maps of the study areas in Chapter 3 provide a representation of the approximate structure of the early medieval landscape, although they also include extra areas around their margins that were brought into cultivation between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. These extra areas can sometimes be identified by distinctive English place-names (not used in Cornwall before the tenth or eleventh centuries) or archaeological excavation (e.g. Austin *et al.* 1989). HLC is a particularly effective tool for studying the landscapes of areas like Cornwall where the early post-medieval changes have been slight. The strength of the HLC maps is that they describe the whole landscape, and present a relatively complete framework within which data from other sources can be analysed in greater depth. They are a valuable tool for a landscape archaeology approach which seeks to understand all the available data in detailed contexts.

2.2.5 Making use of the data

Data for the present project have been drawn from sources usually associated with a range of traditional academic disciplines. Archaeologists have not always agreed on the best ways to integrate such data (see above, 2.1). This section discusses the most appropriate methods for this project.

On the basis of the above discussion, the available data can be divided into two broad bodies of material. Firstly, there are data which can integrated by methods of 'correspondence' like those Andren calls 'correlation' (Andren 1998), and secondly those which can be 'localised' (Andren's 'identification'; 1998: 163).

Depending on the context, some data (or some aspects of some data) may fall into both groups; for example, pollen samples may provide information that is hard to relate to a closely definable area (this relates partly to questions of scale, which are considered further below 2.4)). Table 2.1 provides a simple illustration of the relationship between the two bodies of material, and notes some representative types of data which fall into the respective types.

Correlation and contrast

Andren describes 'correlation' as '...a search for similar structures or patterns in artifact and text' (Andren 1998: 164). 'Correlative' analysis is therefore concerned with broad social or economic concepts. The texts and artefacts which are analysed do not have to be concerned with identical objects (e.g. a written description of a type of pot), since relevant textual material may refer to concepts without direct material correlates, for example land ownership. Instead, textual and artefactual data can be regarded as 'contemporary analogies' for one another in the analysis of

structure and pattern (Andren 1998: 156, 164; hence the importance of avoiding anachronism).

This approach has been criticized on the grounds that it subordinates archaeological interpretations to the level of contexts which can be placed into historically-derived models (e.g. Small 1999: 122-3; see also Kepecs 1997a; 1997b). Small argues instead for 'evidential independence', by which he means that archaeology and history (and other sorts of source material) should be considered separately, and by different scholars. This is one of several approaches which Andren and others note have been adopted by 'historical' archaeologists using textual evidence. These 'strategies' include regarding historical archaeology as a testing ground for prehistorians' theories (Clarke 1971: 18); using archaeology to fill in gaps not covered by the historical evidence; seeking to appropriate texts as archaeological objects (M. Johnson 1999: 32); and Small's strategy, which sets up contrasts between the archaeology and evidence from history or other disciplines in order to look for differences and oppositions. Finally, there is an approach which recognises the active role of both artefacts and texts, and subjects them to certain forms of 'correspondence' analysis, such as the 'correlative' method (Andren 1998: 181-2; Funari *et al.* 1999: 5-11).

As noted above (2.1), any study using 'landscape archaeology' should employ the greatest possible range of evidence to investigate the landscape. It was also argued that text, artefact, or image both affect and are affected by people; all are in recursive relationships with people and can be analysed within the same general framework (Moreland 1992; 1998). The approaches which use archaeology or history to fill in the gaps in the other sources are therefore not suitable here. They risk ignoring the recursive nature of one or all of the bodies of data, of privileging one source over another, and of ignoring those pieces of evidence from one discipline that do not fit conveniently into another's gaps.

This leaves two approaches which could be taken to the kind of material under consideration, both of which rely on correspondence between artefact and text, 'correlations' and 'contrasts'. Some scholars, particularly those working from positivist and structuralist perspectives, have criticised the 'correlation' method on the grounds that it fails to account for (and risks ignoring) possible contradictions in the sources. This criticism locates a real tension: the difficulty of judging where the difference lies between two contradictory sources (Andren 1998: 172; Small 1999). However, solutions such as Kepecs' or Small's 'evidential independence' fail to address this problem: instead, they treat text and artefact as different categories which should not be discussed together. This denies the recursive nature of all the evidence, and implicitly treats one dataset as somehow more 'true' than another. Although this may not be a problem for individual research projects if the sources agree (Kepecs 1997b), it becomes one if there is difference between them (Small 1999). It also increases the risk of the uncritical use of data traditionally discussed by other disciplines (Small's use of the (possible) monuments in the Kerameikos cemetery and of the Athenian laws of 317 BC governing memorials clearly illustrates these problems; Small 1999: 132-4).

Andren separates the methods of 'correlation' and 'contrast' (which he calls '...a kind of negative correspondence..' 1998: 171). However, this separation only seems necessary as long as 'contrast' seeks to set up oppositions rather than investigate them, or to demonstrate the superiority of one discipline's narrative over another's. Recent studies have shown that both 'contrasts' and 'correlations' between text and artefact can be incorporated into the same studies, resulting in discussions which are not only 'thicker' in their descriptions of past contexts, but which also address the ambiguities and subtleties in the evidence (e.g. Hall 1999; Parker Pearson et al. 1999; Morris 2000).

Andren and Morris both stress that the way problems of 'difference' are approached depend on the background and perspective of the individual

researcher, and so stress the way different traditions in archaeology have used various bodies of evidence (as much of an issue for processualists as others: thus Small (1999) considers the archaeological evidence as more reliable than the historical and literary). Ultimately, any analysis of correspondence between text and artefact rely on what seems probable based on research tradition and specific context, including both 'correlations' and 'contrasts'; as Morris points out, this kind of probabilistic reasoning forms the basis of historical argument (Andren 1998: 166, 172; Morris 2000: 25). In order to grasp the subtle relations between different sources, it is necessary to make the fullest investigation of detailed contexts: '...we must examine verbal and nonverbal languages together, comprehensively, in contextual detail, to identify cleavages which often have little to do with the medium through which people expressed them' (Morris 2000: 27; for similar views see M. Johnson 1999: 32-3; Hall 1999: 202; Carver 2002a).

Comprehensively integrating different sources in this way is clearly compatible with the traditions of *Annales* history and the needs of landscape archaeology, which base their interpretations on 'thick description' of detailed contexts. It seems the most appropriate way for the present project to integrate the different sources relating to the structures and patterns of social life in the early medieval South West. Additionally, it provides a way for the new contexts developed through detailed case-studies of 'localised' data to be analysed in relation to broader themes.

'Localizable' data

The second type of data is information which can be localised to particular points in the landscape. Much of the data gathered for the present research relates to specific sites and locales (see e.g. the case studies in Chapter 3, which are detailed investigations of relatively small areas). Detailed analyses of localised data produce interpretations which form new contexts.

These can then be analysed by correlative and contrastive methods against comparanda from a range of contexts which may not have a specifically physical spatial dimension.

'Localizable' data comes from sources such as the SMRs, old and new maps, place names, and historical records such as charter bounds. The data are defined by their relationship to specific sites: each individual piece of information must either have a grid reference or be capable of representation on a map (see Astill & Davies 1997: 241-2, who stress the importance of '...being able to localize – precisely...'). In terms of relating artefactual/archaeological and textual sources, this exercise falls within Andren's method of correspondence by 'identification', '...the most specific correspondence in the historical archaeologies'. As he points out, for the method to be successful there must be '...great closeness...between artefact and text', or as here between location and text (Andren 1998: 162-3; see e.g. 2.2.1 above). The ability to relate data to specific locations enables the temporal and spatial relationships between the places identified to be compared using GIS or another geographical method.

The Project Database and GIS

The historic landscape characterisations discussed above provide a starting point for the analysis of the landscape in the project's study areas in Chapter 3. These have been produced in ARC/INFO GIS using copies of first edition Ordnance Survey maps which were georeferenced to the modern base map using ARC/INFO's 'Gridwarp' facility. The data were digitised on-screen at a scale of *c.*1:7500. The HLCs have been saved as ArcView shapefiles and can be analysed using any compatible package. Additional layers can be built into the GIS as necessary to represent linear features such as estate boundaries, parish boundaries or routeways. 'Point data' can then be displayed in the GIS against the HLC and other layers. In order to do this, it was necessary to devise a database for the project which was capable of

accommodating data from the full range of sources (see below). This approach to database design is similar to that adopted in a number of recent projects relating to medieval settlement in England (see e.g. Lewis 2000: 78-83).

The database needed to be fully relational and yet easy to enter data and perform queries in order to get meaning from the data. The programme chosen was Borland Paradox v.7. Using Paradox it is easy to export data derived from queries in a format suitable for use in ArcView or ARC/INFO GIS programmes.

The purpose of the database is to hold the 'localisable' point data derived from the archaeological, place-name and historical sources listed above ('point data' refers to information relating to a specific grid reference; it is the kind of data which makes up most SMRs and other archaeological databases: N. Johnson 1999).

The database used for this thesis was designed by the author who also entered all the data. One major advantage of this work being undertaken by one person is that there is a high level of consistency in the classification of data.

The database has a simple structure and consists of four principal tables, two minor tables and a sub-table (see Table 2.2, and Appendix 2). A guide to using the database and the glossaries developed for the project are included in Appendix 2. The database was designed in compliance with the standards laid down in the RCHME *MIDAS* data standard for archaeological inventories (RCHME 1998a).

The database is fully relational and can be queried on any field or combination of fields. These queries are used to provide data for the GIS which are exported as dBASE tables (.dbf file extension). A copy of the database is included on the disk bound into the back of this thesis in its

original format (Borland Paradox v.7), as .dbf tables, and as comma-delimited text files. ArcView shapefiles of the HLCs used in Chapter 3 are also saved on the disk.

In conclusion, the database and GIS allow a range of 'localisable' data from different sources to be compared and analysed together with reference to the questions outlined in Chapter 1. This analysis allows new interpretations to be made about the data in Chapters 3 and 4.

2.3 Tracing the development of the landscape

Many of the questions which the present project is seeking to address are concerned with the ways in which the organisation of the landscape may have changed in the early middle ages, and the reasons for those changes. Shifts in settlement pattern, for example, may reflect social and cultural changes, and it is therefore of great importance to identify any such shifts in the available evidence (Alcock 1993: 55-72). To argue that the settlement pattern of one period is different to that of another period, it is clearly necessary to have information about the settlement patterns in both periods which can be compared. Any changes which may be detected can then be compared with other data, for example information about the location of sites of other types in the same area (e.g. sites known to have had religious significance), or similar settlement pattern analysis from other areas.

This sort of approach is commonly used when analysing the results of archaeological field surveys to compare distributions of settlements based on pottery scatters and other diagnostic finds. For example, many scholars have used data derived from regional fieldwalking projects in the Mediterranean to compare settlement patterns at different points in the region's history (e.g. Andel & Runnels 1987; Barker 1995; Mee & Forbes 1997; Millett *et al.* 2000). Alcock has taken the results of several such surveys in Greece and compared them to derive a wider understanding of the way the landscape developed during a particular period of history (Alcock 1993). A similar approach has been applied in south-west England by Leech in western Wessex (1982: 249-251) and by Preston-Jones and Rose in Cornwall (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986; Rose & Preston-Jones 1995), who have discussed settlement pattern changes between the Roman and early medieval periods.

Different data relate to different periods, and the data for different periods may come from different sources. Section 2.2 (above) outlined arguments about the comparability of such data and methods for combining them.

However, before embarking on an analysis of the way the landscape may have changed, it is necessary to understand thoroughly which information relates to which period and how this is known. This section shows how the present project has approached these issues. It uses the example of settlement patterns in Cornwall from the Iron Age through to the late medieval period to show the way that models of south-western landscapes can be derived from the different kinds of data available. The following discussion uses data drawn from the whole county to argue that four main phases of settlement development can be distinguished in the available evidence between AD *c.*300 – 1400. The following example refers specifically to Cornwall, but a similar range of sources has been used in Chapter 4 to study the developing medieval settlement pattern in western Wessex.

Phase 1: Cornish Settlements from the Iron Age to the Sixth Century AD

Modern Cornwall and Devon approximately cover the area of the Roman-period *Civitas Dumnoniorum.* The region is commonly regarded as one of the least 'Romanized' parts of Britain, owing to the relative lack of evidence for many aspects of 'Roman' cultural life such as the towns and villas so abundant in neighbouring *civitates* to the east (Todd 1987). This relative lack of 'Romanization' is reflected in the region's Roman-period sites and artefacts, particularly in the west. Small amounts of imported objects of characteristically 'Roman' types are found on many sites in Cornwall, and it is clear that Roman objects influenced the form of local ones, as indeed late Iron Age pottery from northern France may have influenced the form of contemporary pottery in Cornwall (Quinnell 1986: 119-20). However, Quinnell has pointed out that around 95% of all pottery from Roman-period sites in the county was locally produced on the Lizard peninsula. This echoes the situation during the preceding Iron Age, when almost all the pottery in Cornwall derived from the county's southernmost peninsula, and suggests that distribution channels may have remained relatively

undisrupted by any political changes (Quinnell 1986). Excavated settlement sites have provided the contexts where most such objects have been found. It is perhaps here that the continuities from the Iron Age through the Roman period and beyond are most striking.

One change in the local settlement pattern seems just to antedate the Roman conquest of Britain in the first century AD. Dumnonia is not rich in large hillforts when compared to neighbouring areas of Wessex, but there are several small hill-top fortifications and numerous promontory forts or 'cliff castles' along the coast (see Fig. 2.4). Although some of these sites date from the middle Iron Age or earlier (e.g. Maen Castle; Crofts 1955), the majority of those that have been subject to excavation were occupied (at least periodically) during the later Iron Age until the first century BC or earlier first century AD (e.g. Trevelgue; the Rumps; Penhale Point; Castle Dore; Quinnell & Harris 1985; Quinnell 1986: 114-5; Smith 1988: 185-6). This change cannot necessarily be related to Roman military activity, and even major sites may have been abandoned some time before Claudius' invasion (e.g. Hembury, Devon; Todd 1984: 261). This is important because it means that the settlement pattern which existed at the time of the Roman invasion and continued to exist thereafter was essentially a 'native' Iron Age pattern, and was not significantly changed by the Roman presence.

The most commonly recognised type of late Iron-Age settlements in the South West were not the hillforts or related heavily defended sites, but the rounds. These were settlement sites that were normally enclosed by a bank and ditch. Commonly they are approximately round, though rectangular, square and even triangular examples are also known (Johnson & Rose 1982). Many hundreds of sites are known in Devon and Cornwall; the locations of the known Cornish examples are plotted on Fig 2.5. Cases such as St Mawgan-in-Pydar (Threipland 1956), Trevisker (ApSimon & Greenfield 1972), Castle Gotha (Saunders & Harris 1982), and Carvossa (Carlyon 1987) show that rounds date principally from the second century BC onwards, and that occupation continued into the first centuries of the

Roman period with few changes. Only at one excavated round has abandonment been demonstrated before the beginning of the Roman period, Threemilestone near Truro (Schweiso 1976).

If there was an alteration from the prehistoric settlement pattern in Cornwall during the Roman period, it may have taken place in the second and third centuries AD. A few excavated rounds are believed to have been occupied from prehistory through to the fourth century AD or later (e.g. Goldherring; Guthrie 1969), but it seems that while some old rounds went out of use in the second century AD, many new rounds were established at around the same time. These include Grambla (Saunders 1972), Shortlanesend (Harris 1980), Kilhallon (Carlyon 1982), Reawla (Appleton-Fox 1992), and Trethurgy (Miles & Miles 1973; Quinnell *forthcoming*). The reasons for any changes in settlement locations between the earlier and later Roman periods is unclear, although Quinnell has argued that there is likely to have been an increase in the number of settlements in the second century AD to accommodate an expanding population (by analogy with the rest of Roman Britain; Quinnell 1986: 124).

The rounds occupied in the Iron Age and early Roman period cannot be distinguished morphologically from those of the later Roman and post-Roman periods. It is therefore not possible to plot two distribution maps of the two periods on this basis. Despite their name, rounds are not necessarily curvilinear, and there are also rectangular, square, and triangular examples. Rectangular rounds seem just as likely to date from the Iron Age as later (e.g. Carvossa), whilst near-circular rounds can date from the Roman- and post-Roman periods (e.g. Trethurgy). Quinnell (1986: 126) has noted that the shapes of buildings may have been subject to Roman influence, since Roman-period structures are likely to be oval or boat-shaped, as at Trethurgy and Grambla (i.e. more rectilinear than typical Iron-Age roundhouses). However, the site at Threemilestone, the only round known to have been abandoned before the Roman period began, contained oval structures of a similar size to those interpreted as houses elsewhere

(Schweiso 1976, fig. 20; cf. Quinnell 1986, fig. 4). The only certain way to differentiate between rounds of different periods is therefore by dating excavation assemblages.

Whilst Cornwall seems to have been less 'Romanized' than other parts of Britain, it also appears to have been less severely affected than other areas by the 'ending' of Roman Britain. In terms of settlements, this is demonstrated by the cases of Trethurgy and Grambla, both excavated rounds which have yielded imported Mediterranean pottery of the fifth and sixth centuries. Halligye round near St Mawgan-in-Meneage may be another example (Dark 2000: 168). It seems likely that other rounds would also have been occupied in these centuries, but may not have been supplied with pottery imports. Quinnell has demonstrated that much Roman-period pottery at Trethurgy was not deposited in the archaeological contexts where it was found for up to two hundred years after manufacture (Quinnell 1986: 129). Furthermore, her recent research has allowed her to state that the local pottery production centre of the Lizard '...definitely continued into the fifth century' (Quinnell 1995: 128). Saunders' interim publication on Grambla also states that the '...usual coarse ware...' (i.e. '...Cornish 'Roman' pottery...') was excavated from contexts stratigraphically shown to post-date those containing post-Roman pottery imported from the Mediterranean (Saunders 1972: 52). Recent work at Tintagel has established a sequence of radiocarbon dates which clearly imply local pottery production continued into the fifth century (Morris *et al.* 1999: 212). Finally, large quantities of imported Mediterranean pottery have recently been found in association with gabbroic forms from the Lizard at the post-Roman beachmarket site of Bantham Ham in Devon (Horner 2001: 8). It now seems almost beyond doubt that following the final publication of Quinnell's research (Quinnell *forthcoming*) many rounds whose final phase has until now been dated on the basis of the 'native' Romano-Cornish pottery to the fourth century will be re-assigned to the fifth century or later.

Although the rounds form the majority of known Cornish sites dating up to and through the Roman period (owing to their distinctive morphology), several other types of site also remained relatively unaffected after the end of the fourth century AD. In parts of Penwith, the westernmost peninsula of Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly, settlement sites known as 'courtyard houses' have been recognised in substantial numbers. These normally unenclosed settlements comprise buildings set closely around a yard to form houses which occur both singly and in small groups. They appear to have been a localised development of the second to fourth centuries AD (Quinnell 1986: 120). The excavated sites at Goldherring and Porthmeor, both groups of courtyard houses set within rounds, have produced possible ceramic evidence for their continuing use in the fifth and sixth centuries (Guthrie 1969; Hirst 1936). A courtyard house at Halangay Down on St Mary's, Scilly may have been occupied as late as the seventh or eighth centuries (Ashbee 1996). Although unenclosed settlements may have existed elsewhere in Cornwall during the Roman period, none has yet been reliably identified.

As noted above, Quinnell (1995) has stated that the production centre of the Lizard continued to provide pottery in pseudo-Roman forms in the fifth century. The exact location of the kilns is uncertain, but other 'industrial' sites also appear to have continued from the Roman-British era into the period conventionally termed 'post-Roman'. Grass-marked pottery found nearby at Carngoon Bank, Landewednack suggests that this small production site continued in use into the sixth century and later (McAvoy 1980: 38). At Trebarveth in St Keverne a large quantity of late- and probably post-Roman pottery was recovered from excavations in the early twentieth century close to the Roman saltworking site discovered later by Peacock (Serocold *et al.* 1949; Thomas 1959; Peacock 1969; Johns & Herring 1996: 84).

It also seems likely that patterns of trade and exchange continued into the 'post'-Roman centuries, and may even have developed over longer distances

than formerly. Cornwall is well known for its tin, and scholars have argued that tin production increased sharply in Cornwall during the third and fourth centuries to feed an increasing demand for pewter objects in Britain, and to compensate for the increasing difficulties faced by the Roman administration in exploiting the Iberian tin supplies (Quinnell 1986: 129-30; Todd 1987: 231-2). Tin ingots have been found in several late- and post-Roman contexts in Cornwall and the South West. These include Par Beach, St Martin's, Scilly, where an ingot was excavated within a late Roman building, and Trethurgy, where an ingot was found in a fourth-century midden (Quinnell 1986: 130). The find of four ingots at Praa Sands, Breage suggests strongly that the extraction and exchange of tin continued into the post-Roman period, since they were found in probable association with timbers radiocarbon dated to 600–790 cal AD (Penhallurick 1986; Biek 1994). At the mouth of the Erme in south Devon a large group of ingots were found just offshore, presumably coming from a ship wrecked on the rocks in the estuary. Although it was not possible to date the ingots from associated contexts, they are mostly similar in size and shape to the Praa Sands examples. The wreck site is also adjacent to the possible post-Roman beachmarket at Mothecombe, where sherds of imported Mediterranean pottery were excavated from an eroding land surface (Fox 1961). These associations suggest a post-Roman context is most likely for the Mothecombe ingots (Fox 1995; Thorpe 1997).

Significantly, several of the well-known 'high status' post-Roman sites were also occupied in the late Roman period. The most important example is Tintagel; here occupation probably commenced in the third century, continuing until the seventh. During this time Tintagel may have become the main centre for the contemporary rulers of Cornwall, and it received vast quantities of imported goods, including tableware, coarsewares, amphorae and glass from the eastern and western Mediterranean. In the third and fourth centuries, however, the site received a similar range of goods as important rounds like Trethurgy and Reawla (Thorpe 1997: 82). Smaller, but still significant, quantities of both late- and post-Roman material have

been recovered from the small hillfort of Chun Castle in Penwith (Thomas 1956; Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 138), and also more recently at St Michael's Mount (Herring 1993: 60-1; CAU 1998: 18; Herring 2000: 119-122).

This evidence strongly suggests that the major 'post'-Roman centres of Cornwall were in fact established (or re-established, as some are on sites originally dating to the Iron Age) as part of a late Roman settlement pattern (as Ken Dark has also recently argued; Dark 2000: 164-170). This pattern also comprised rounds (and in Penwith and Scilly courtyard houses), production sites, and centres for trade/exchange, many of which appear to have come into being by the third century and to have continued into at least the sixth century.

Based on the material from the settlements which have been excavated so far, there is some good evidence for continuities between the settlement patterns of the Iron Age and earlier Roman period (*c.*200 BC-*c.*AD 200) and later Roman period and post-Roman period (*c.*AD 200-*c.*AD 600). There is also little to suggest that the Roman presence had a substantial effect on local settlement practice, and it seems more likely that 'native' social, political and economic factors had most influence on these aspects of life. With reference to the material culture of the Cornish late Roman period, Quinnell has argued that:

> 'Close fostering of local traditions may have produced a community which was successful for far longer than those in regions of Roman Britain usually appraised as comparatively civilised both in classical and modern terminology'.
>
> (Quinnell 1993: 40)

It seems likely that the same local cultural resilience is detectable in Cornish settlement practice in and around the 'Roman' centuries.

The distribution map of rounds (Fig. 2.5) shows the excavated sites, those known from field and air survey, and those possible sites known from other

sources such as place-names. The map is based on the Cornwall Historic Environment Service's (CHES) SMR database which has been built up over several decades. The majority of 'certain' rounds are known from ground survey or air photography, and their interpretation as Iron-Age or Roman-period relies on analogy with the excavated examples (see also 2.2.3, above). Griffith has argued that it is difficult to assign dates to enclosure sites in Devon based on crop- or soilmark morphology, and has pointed out that some sites which look similar to the Roman-period rounds in air photographs have proved on excavation to be earlier prehistoric or later medieval (Griffith 1994: 95). Since the present map relies on morphological analogy to identify sites, it is likely that even some of the monuments shown on Fig. 2.5 as 'certain' have been mistakenly identified as rounds. However, more rounds survive as earthworks in Cornwall than Devon (as opposed to crop- or soilmarks), and the occurrence of a large number of earthworks, which tend to be quite distinctive, may reduce the level of error in the Cornish database. Nevertheless, Fig. 2.5 also shows those sites identified by CHES as 'possible' rounds. These include sites known from minor place-names (e.g. Tithe Award 'Round Parks'; see 2.2.1, above), and those identified less certainly from air or ground survey.

Only those sites believed by CHES to date from the Iron-Age to Roman or post-Roman periods and recorded as 'rounds' in the SMR have been included on the map. This means for example that sites recorded as 'enclosures' (typically referring to Bronze Age sites in the Cornwall SMR) have been excluded. Inevitably there are problems of subjectivity in other workers' data that are hard to quantify, particularly with a map produced at such a large scale. Nevertheless, the distribution indicated on Fig. 2.5 should be broadly representative of the settlement pattern in the period *c.*200 BC - *c.*AD 500.

Phase 2: Early Medieval Settlement Patterns from the Sixth to Ninth Centuries AD

Significant changes in the form of Cornish settlements occurred in the centuries between c.AD 500 - 900. Settlements ceased to be defined by large banks and ditches, and the most common settlement form became the 'unenclosed' farmstead. The evidence for these unenclosed early medieval farmsteads comes from two sources, archaeology and place-names, of which the latter are presently the most informative.

The archaeological evidence for unenclosed early medieval settlement sites in Cornwall is so far very slight. One site has been confidently ascribed to the period by its excavator, GM/1 near Gwithian in west Cornwall (the original place-name is lost; Thomas 1958). Unfortunately the site has never been fully published, and the sequence of excavated contexts described by Thomas (1968a) is unclear (cf. Hutchinson 1979: 86, but note that several of her criticisms are rather inaccurate: cf. Thomas 1968a: 314). Thomas notes that the stratigraphy had been much disturbed by animal action and other factors, and that it was therefore only possible to attach '...stratigraphical value...to overall percentages, rather than to individual sherds' (Thomas 1968a: 314). On this basis Thomas devised a typology of pottery for early medieval Cornwall from the fifth to the eleventh centuries. 'Gwithian-style' pottery, dated by association with imported Mediterranean A- and B-wares of the fifth and sixth century and with Gaulish E-ware, formed the earliest 'native' post-Roman types, being a direct continuation of Roman-period pottery types (occupation layer C). This was replaced by the earliest 'grass-marked' wares in the subsequent occupation layer B, which were substantially different. However, this grass-marked pottery was also associated with imported E-ware and a little A- and B-ware: Thomas dated it on these grounds to the sixth–eighth centuries. The final occupation layer (A) contained no imported pottery (apart from a few sherds which Thomas considered residual), but included 'bar-lug' pottery, which was all 'grass-marked' (Thomas 1968a: 314-6). This layer was dated to the ninth-eleventh

centuries by comparison with pottery and architectural features from Mawgan Porth (see below; Bruce-Mitford 1997).

There are several problems with Thomas' typology, particularly the difficult stratigraphy which makes the associations between the different pottery types at site GM/1 hard to accept; they are summarised by Hutchinson (1979) and Preston-Jones & Rose (1986: 175-6). Although it is certain that much grass-marked pottery is early medieval, it is not clear that it should be dated as early as the sixth or seventh century, and it may have originated as late as the ninth (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 176). Campbell states that grass-marked pottery in both Cornwall and Ireland post-dates the period of E-ware importation (i.e. sixth-eighth centuries), since the two fabrics are normally stratigraphically separated on sites where both occur (Campbell 1997). Excavation at other west Cornish sites has not indicated that 'grass-marked' pottery necessarily antedates bar-lug pottery (either that with or without grass-marking; cf. Morgan Porth and Gunwalloe; Bruce-Mitford 1997: 74; Jope & Threlfall 1956: 137; Hutchinson 1979: 85-6).

Although 'grass-marked' sherds (other than bar-lug) have been found at a number of occupation sites in Cornwall and Scilly (mainly in unstratified contexts), the uncertainty of the pottery dating means that these sites cannot necessarily be assigned to the sixth-eighth centuries, even if this date is accepted for site GM/1 (Hutchinson 1979: 89-90). GM/1 is therefore the only excavated settlement site from the Cornish mainland which may date from the seventh or eighth centuries.

The place-name evidence for early medieval settlement has been considered by Preston-Jones, Rose and Herring (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986; Rose & Preston-Jones 1995; Herring 1999b; 1999c). Padel has provided the foundation for this work through his collection and analysis of medieval Cornish place-names (Padel 1985; 1988). He argues on linguistic grounds that habitative place-name elements (i.e. those denoting a settlement) such as *tre* and **bod* were used to coin names principally between the fifth and

eleventh centuries. Many such names must have been coined in the seventh century and before, since names with both elements occur in Devon in areas of otherwise strongly Anglicized nomenclature. He also notes that the formation *Trenowyth* ('new *tre*') is found in a tenth-century charter indicating that even names of this type will date to the early middle ages (Padel 1985: 223-5; Padel 1999: 88-90). Preston-Jones and Rose have plotted the distributions of *tre* settlements and other place-names to analyse the early medieval settlement patterns in five different parts of Cornwall (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986; Rose & Preston-Jones 1995). They state that there is little reason to doubt that the locations of medieval (and modern) tre settlements represent the locations of their early medieval predecessors (1995: 52). Unfortunately, this hypothesis remains untested since no suitable sites have been subject to excavation. Nevertheless, there is documentary evidence from the tenth and eleventh centuries which suggests that *tre* settlements can have moved little since that time. Several Anglo-Saxon charter boundary clauses describe very small estates with the same names as the medieval and modern settlements. In these cases it is physically impossible for the settlement to have moved more than a couple of hundred metres since the time of the charter (since the settlement must have been within the charter bounds), and even this seems unlikely (e.g. Trethewey, St Keverne (S832); Trerice, St Dennis (S1019); Hooke 1994a).

It is probable that many settlements with topographical name-elements were occupied during this period, although it is not yet possible to demonstrate conclusively which were established at what stage before the Norman Conquest. Preston-Jones and Rose have shown that early medieval settlement in the upland parish of Davidstow occurred in at least two phases (1986: 143). They noted that places with Cornish topographical names generally occur on higher ground than sites with tre names, and that the former do not 'fit' into the relatively regular pattern of tre settlements in the valley. This suggests the topographical place-names are part of a later episode of settlement. However, Preston-Jones and Rose also found that in the Padstow area some places with topographical names do form part of a

pattern otherwise made up of *tre* settlements. They concluded that whilst '...some topographical names must be later [than *tre* settlements], not all are' (1986: 143-4). This argument implies that in early medieval Cornwall there were 'core' areas of settlement typified by settlements with *tre* names, and that these areas were subject to some kind of organisation (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 141-144; Rose & Preston-Jones 1995: 52-6; Padel 1985: 127). It is therefore possible to be fairly confident on both linguistic and topographical grounds that many settlements with habitative name-elements (e.g. *tre, *bod*) existed in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries on or very close to their later medieval sites. However, it is not possible to be certain using either sort of evidence that many topographical name-elements were applied to settlements until the centuries immediately before the Norman Conquest (when they are first recorded in documents; see below).

Fig. 2.6 is a map showing the location of *tre* settlements whose names were first recorded in the middle ages (data kindly supplied by Dr Oliver Padel). Following the arguments referred to above, it seems likely that this distribution represents the 'core' areas of settlement in Cornwall during the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries. Exceptions to this are the two easternmost areas of Cornwall where very few *tre* place-names occur in Stratton hundred and around Callington in East hundred. Here, most Cornish place-names were replaced by English place-names during the late Saxon period, as also happened in Devon during the early middle ages (Svensson 1987).

The exact nature of the relationship between the rounds and the *tre* settlements is important for settlement history but as yet unresolved. The latest occupation in rounds or other settlements which had been in use during the Roman period appears to have been in the late sixth or early seventh century at sites such as Tintagel or Trethurgy, or exceptionally in the seventh or eighth centuries, as at Halangay Down, Scilly, and possibly Chun Castle, Penwith (Ashbee 1996; Thomas 1956). Unless there was total

desertion of the landscape when the rounds ceased to be occupied, unenclosed early medieval settlements such as those with *tre* place-names must have originated at this time or before. Several possible scenarios for their development have been discussed by Rose & Preston-Jones (1995). Firstly, it is possible that unenclosed settlements apart from the courtyard houses of Penwith had existed in Roman Cornwall, and that the *tre* settlements have their origins in these. No firm evidence for such Roman-period settlements has been discovered, but Rose & Preston-Jones note that some of the Penwith courtyard houses '...appear to be part of [the] medieval pattern' of settlement (1995: 64). The implication is that medieval settlements are on the site of earlier unenclosed settlements, and perhaps have their origins in the third century AD. Secondly, and similarly, it is possible that while some rounds were abandoned, others became *tre* settlements and that their defences have been obliterated by later use. Those rounds close to later settlements may have been preserved as a result of slight settlement shifts (Rose & Preston-Jones 1995: 56-60). However, no firm evidence has yet been recovered for Romano-Cornish settlements on the site of early medieval settlements, and few rounds appear to have been re-occupied as settlement sites at any time in the middle ages (Thomas 1966: 97). A third possibility is that the rounds were completely abandoned and that the unenclosed settlements represent a break with the earlier tradition. This seems to be suggested by the settlement pattern of the Padstow area, where Rose & Preston-Jones comment that the relationship between rounds and medieval settlements '...appears random and could indeed be so' (1995: 61-2). Rose & Preston-Jones also note that in some areas there appears to be a retraction from higher ground at the end of the Roman period which is reflected by abandoned rounds situated at higher altitudes than early medieval settlements (1995: 57-60). If such a shift can be equated with a decline in the size of the population, this may also help explain why no new rounds seem to have been built in the fourth century or later.

In their paper's conclusion, Rose & Preston-Jones propose a model which envisages retraction in the area settled during the Roman and post-Roman periods, '...with many [sites] deserted but most continuing or shifting only slightly, to become the *trefs* etc. of the early medieval period' (1995: 66). They consider the early medieval settlement pattern to be a continuation and development of the Romano-British pattern (1995: 67). However, they also argue that the end of 'defended' settlements implies an important political and social dislocation (1995: 62). Herring has argued that the desertion of the rounds shows that major social and economic changes took place in or around the sixth century which led to a complete re-organisation of the countryside, resulting in an early medieval landscape of strip fields and unenclosed settlements (1999b; 1999c).

Cornwall is a relatively small county, and Roman-period settlement extended over a very great part of it (as shown by the distribution of rounds, Fig. 2.5). Any subsequent settlement pattern was bound to include some of the area occupied during the Roman period, unless it had concentrated solely on the uplands such as Bodmin Moor. In the absence of evidence for any direct continuity from Roman to medieval settlements, a model emphasising the difference between Roman and early medieval settlements rather than continuity is arguably more acceptable at present. The apparent contraction of the settled area in the early middle ages was noted above. Rose & Preston Jones (1995: 57-60) and Rose & Johnson (1983) have shown that the fields surrounding some rounds were completely abandoned, only to be reoccupied later in the middle ages when new fields and farms were established on different alignments. There are also significant political and social differences between enclosed and unenclosed settlements, and changes in settlement form may imply important changes and developments in social relations (Rose & Preston-Jones 1995: 66; Herring 1999b; 1999c). At a local level, there seem to be differences between the locations of rounds and the locations of *tre* settlements. Whilst the latter tend to be about half way up valley sides (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 143), commonly in

sheltered positions near the break of slope, rounds tend to occupy more exposed spurs and the upper edges of valleys (Thomas 1966: 87).

In conclusion, the post-Roman period witnessed a retraction in the area settled, and radical changes in the form of most settlements. Rose & Preston-Jones place these changes in the fifth century and link them to the decline of the Roman administration (1995: 66). However, as the settlement evidence discussed above shows, late Roman administrative structures in Cornwall may have endured into the sixth or early seventh centuries (see also Dark 2000: 168-70). The change from rounds to *tre* settlements may be associated with the changes in local power structures shown in the rapid decline of late- and post-Roman sites such as Tintagel and Trethurgy in the later sixth or early seventh centuries. The evidence from settlement studies suggests that this may have been a more turbulent period politically than the fifth century.

Fig 2.7 is a map showing the distribution of both rounds and *tre* settlements. It can be seen that while the two occur together in many areas, there are some definite differences between their distributions. Noticeable areas where *tre* place-names are absent but rounds present include the parish of Cardinham south-west of Bodmin moor, the hills east of Crowan and west of Stithians in the northern part of Kerrier hundred, Helston Downs, and St Agnes Downs. The general impression given by the map confirms the arguments advanced above about the relationship between rounds and *tre* settlements, that is to say they do not equate. Unfortunately, however, the map is full of detail and hard to interpret at such a small scale. Furthermore it has not proved possible to check in detail all the data used to locate all the sites shown (1499 rounds and 1294 tre place-names). This emphasises the need for detailed case-studies where careful control can be exercised over the data (such as those undertaken in Chapter 3).

Phase 3: Settlement Patterns of the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries AD

There is a greater variety of evidence for settlement patterns from the second half of the early middle ages in Cornwall, and it further confirms the idea of 'core' areas of settlement (identified above through *tre* and other habitative place-names). The evidence comes from three sources, archaeology, historical documents, and place-names.

The settlement at Mawgan Porth is still the region's most completely excavated and best understood site of this period (Bruce-Mitford 1997). It comprised at least three houses set around small 'courtyards' and a cist-grave cemetery which was assumed to have been associated with the settlement. The site is particularly notable for the large quantity of 'bar-lug' pottery (over 2000 sherds), as well as several other forms of bowls and platters, and for the form of the dwellings there, which seem to be longhouses similar to those of later medieval Cornwall. The excavator has estimated the life-time of the site to have been AD *c.*850-*c.*1050 on the basis of the excavated pottery and a coin of Aethelred II minted at Lydford in Devon AD 990 x 995. The site appears to have been abandoned in the mid-eleventh century when it was inundated with blown sand from the adjacent beach. The site is located between two dense distributions of *tre* settlements in the areas around Padstow and Crantock which are broken by the St Breock Downs (see Fig. 2.8; Padel 1999: 89). In addition to the excavated material, Mawgan Porth's marginal location suggests it is a relatively late component in the pattern of settlement. The later phase at Gwithian site GM/1 also appears to date to the later part of the pre-Conquest period. It too was abandoned after encroachment by sand probably in the eleventh century (Thomas 1968a).

Around 30 other sites have also been identified as dating to the later part of the early medieval period on the basis of pottery similar to that from Mawgan Porth (sites catalogued by Hutchinson (1979), with amendments suggested by Bruce-Mitford (1997)). A few of the these date to the period

after the Norman Conquest (e.g. Launceston castle: Saunders 1977), but many seem to be pre-Conquest sites. Perhaps the most notable example is Winnianton, site of the head manor of the hundred of Winnianton (Kerrier) at Domesday, where large quantities of grass-marked and bar-lug pottery have been recovered from the eroding cliff-section (Jope & Threlfall 1956; Thomas 1963). However, in common with most of the other settlement sites believed to date to this period, no excavation has been undertaken to modern standards. The majority of finds of grass-marked and bar-lug pottery are therefore from uncertain or unstratified contexts (e.g. Hellesvean: Guthrie 1954; 1960; Phillack Towans: Somerscales 1957) or have not been adequately recorded or published (e.g. Perran Sands: Penna 1968). However, it is important to note that when associated with medieval settlements, the pottery is found in places with a variety of types of Cornish place-names, not just those with habitative name elements. This suggests a range of Cornish place-names were in use for settlements by the later pre-Conquest period.

Two main sources of documentary evidence cast light on the nature of later early medieval settlement in Cornwall, charters and Domesday Book. The Anglo-Saxon charters record the names of estates and also often document the estate bounds. As noted above, charter bounds can be useful as they demonstrate that a number of settlements can have moved only slightly (if at all) since the tenth or eleventh centuries. They also show that in addition to *tre* place-names, Cornish topographical names were definitely in use as settlement names by the tenth century (e.g. Grugwith: S832; Pennare: S755; see below).

Domesday Book is also a rich source of pre-Conquest settlement names. Around 350 names are recorded in the document, some 93 of them being *tre* place-names (Padel 1985: 224). The other 250 names include those with other habitative elements as well as a variety of topographical place-names. Nevertheless, a distribution map of the settlements recorded in Domesday Book for Cornwall is far from a representation of the full settlement pattern

in 1086, since many hamlets are not mentioned separately from head manors (including some mentioned in earlier Anglo-Saxon charters, e.g. Traboe in St Keverne: S832 – see Chapter 3, below; for maps and discussions of the Cornwall Domesday evidence see e.g. Ravenhill 1967; Thorn & Thorn 1979a; Thorn 1986; Thorn 1999). Pre-Conquest charters and Domesday Book therefore both provide partial reflections of the pattern of settlement.

Place-name evidence can help to fill in the picture provided by the other sources, but once again it must be used with caution. Many Cornish topographical names are likely to date from ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, although some could still have first been applied to settlements in the later middle ages. The location of individual settlements may suggest which form part of the early medieval settlement pattern: by analogy with settlements with English place-names in similar locations, those on high moorland or in other 'marginal' positions may be late medieval (see below; Austin *et al.* 1989: 28-31; Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 143-5). Preston-Jones and Rose have suggested that settlements with topographical names which form an integral part of settlement patterns otherwise identified by *tre* place-names are likely to be of early medieval date (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 143-4). Nevertheless, many Cornish topographical names make reference to flora, locations or land-use which clearly suggest the colonization of areas marginal to the previous extent of settlement. Examples proving this process to have begun in the early middle ages include Draynes in St Neot parish (first recorded in 1086; *dreyn* = 'thorns' or 'thorn bushes'), Penharget in St Ive (1086; *pen* 'top' + **hyr-yarth* 'long-ridge'), Halvana in Altarnun (1086; *hyr* 'long' + *meneth* 'hill'), and Hammett in Quethiock (1086; **havos* 'summer shieling'; this is particularly significant as it indicates that this formerly seasonal settlement had become a permanently settled estate centre by the time of the Domesday survey: see Herring 1996 on transhumance; other data from Thorn & Thorn 1979a; Padel 1985).

Padel has noted that English place-names were first given to settlements in Cornwall in any significant numbers in this period. He suggests that names with the generic *tun* are likely to date to the centuries immediately before the Norman Conquest (Padel 1999: 91), although it is uncertain when the other English place-names of Cornwall were coined. In the eastern areas of the county between the Lynher and Tamar and in Stratton hundred (where Cornish names are virtually absent), it seems likely that the English toponymy has a similar history to that in neighbouring parts of Devon (Svensson 1987). However, in the rest of Cornwall many English place-names may derive from the later medieval and post-medieval periods (Austin *et al.* 1989: 30-1). Except in the areas around Stratton and Callington, very few English place-names are recorded in the Domesday survey or in Anglo-Saxon charters (Thorn & Thorn 1979a; Hooke 1994a).

The archaeological information, historical documents and place-names provide a range of sources on which to build an understanding of the settlement pattern in the pre-Norman period.

The general impression is that more settlements were founded in comparison to the preceding centuries. These settlements were beginning the process of 'colonization' of heath, moorland and other 'marginal' areas which carried on into the later middle ages. Nevertheless, the pattern was still focussed on the core lowland areas where the earlier *tre* settlements had been located, and it was therefore a development based on the earlier medieval pattern rather than a break with it (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986).

Small-scale distribution maps once again fail to provide more than a generalised impression of the distribution of settlement (see e.g. those in Hutchinson 1979: 88; Padel 1999; Thorn 1999). They are of limited value for understanding the development of individual settlements or local areas in relation to other elements of the landscape. This further highlights the need for detailed local studies along with flexible methods for presenting and interpreting the data.

Phase 4: Later Medieval Settlement

The fourth and final phase of settlement under consideration in the present thesis is represented by the continuation of medieval expansion onto the heaths, downs and moors of Cornwall in the post-Conquest period. This led to the greatest extent of land being cultivated in the area since the late Roman period. Although a reasonable number of medieval settlements in Cornwall have been excavated, as Preston-Jones & Rose point out (1986: 150) the vast majority have been found to date only to the later medieval, post-Conquest period. This appears to be because these are typically the settlements which were founded latest and abandoned earliest, and now provide recognisable earthwork sites for study. Misleadingly, some sites have come to be known by reference to the closest inhabited farmstead. In this way the excavated site in Lesnewth parish at SX 12369016 has come to be known as Treworld, although in fact it is around 600m from the medieval hamlet of Treworld (Dudley & Minter 1965). Medieval documents show that the first element of the place-name of another example, Tresmorn, is **ros* 'promontory, moor' rather than *tre*. The lack of excavated evidence for pre-Conquest settlement in part reflects a lack of excavation projects at lowland sites in Cornwall (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 150).

The sites which have been excavated suggest that in common with other parts of the South West medieval colonization of Cornwall's moors and heaths accelerated after the Norman Conquest, and that settlement density in 'marginal' areas reached a peak in the fourteenth century (see Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 146-153; Austin *et al.* 1989; Johnson & Rose 1994; Fleming 1994; Henderson & Weddell 1994; Allan 1994).

Medieval documents such as manorial surveys begin to provide a very rich source of settlement names in the later medieval period. Such records are the main sources which Oliver Padel and his colleagues have used to develop the Institute of Cornish Studies' Index of Cornish Place-Names

(discussed above, section 2.2.2). Certain place-names are also indicative of later medieval settlements. In west Cornwall, where English did not become the common vernacular until the late- or post-medieval period (Payton 1999), settlements with the generic *chy* 'house, cottage' (as opposed to *ti,* the earlier form of the same word) are likely to date to the later thirteenth of fourteenth centuries, and seem to refer to minor dwellings and low-status tenements (Padel 1985; see St Keverne area in chapter 3, below). In more easterly parts of the county, English place-names became more common in the centuries after the Norman Conquest. This is reflected in the relatively dense distributions of English place-names on upland parts of Bodmin Moor when compared to neighbouring lowland areas (Johnson & Rose 1994; Austin *et al.* 1989).

By plotting the locations of all settlement names recorded before AD 1550 (where these are known) in addition to medieval settlement sites recognised through excavation or survey, it is possible to produce a very detailed map of later medieval settlement in Cornwall. Although such a map would undoubtedly have some omissions (sites never recorded in documents, or those names which cannot presently be linked to locations), it would provide a very good general impression of the distribution and density of settlement. However, any more detailed discussion would require local case-studies to be developed.

Using the Historic Landscape Characterisation

The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) technique was introduced above (section 2.2.5). It shows the approximate extent of late medieval cultivation and enclosure at the peak of that movement's expansion, in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. The HLC provides a background or context against which data about settlement patterns can be plotted for each of the study areas. The results of this exercise are noted in the case studies (3.7, below); however, it shows clearly that places with *tre* place-names are at the

core of the medieval settlement pattern. It also illustrates the extent of landscape change in many areas between the late Roman period and the medieval period. Even though the HLC depicts the maximum extent of medieval farmland, many rounds still lie outside this area in land that was rough ground during the middle ages.

Summary: the Development of Cornish Medieval Settlement Patterns

The evidence outlined above suggests four main phases of development in the medieval Cornish settlement pattern. The first is the late (and 'post-') Roman phase, typified by rounds. The second is the earliest medieval pattern, reflected by habitative place-names such as those with the generic *tre*. The third phase is the pre-Conquest pattern. This still has *tre* settlements at its core, but around its edges and in the spaces many settlements with Cornish topographical names, and in the east some with English names (e.g. those with the generic *tun*) have begun the process of colonization of the unenclosed heath and moor. The final phase is represented by the late medieval settlements which commonly occur on higher moorland and in other 'marginal' areas.

This summary presents a quick overview of the development of Cornish medieval settlement, and a simple model against which more detailed data from the study areas discussed in Chapter 3 can be compared. This thesis will use this kind of method to identify monuments and patterns belonging to different stages in the development of the landscape and to compare them, not only in terms of the development of settlement patterns, but also when discussing topics such as burial sites and ecclesiastical centres. All these elements of the landscape will be brought together in Chapters 3 and 4 in an attempt to gain a wider understanding of changes at a local level.

2.4 Scales of analysis

2.4.1 Spatial scales

As discussed above (2.1), the approach taken in the present project, in common with much recent research concerned with landscape history, is to use evidence from a wide range of different sources (see e.g. Aston & Costen 1994; Kowalewski 1997; Fleming 1998). However, different sources can however supply very different categories of evidence, which are not necessarily immediately comparable with each other at the same scales or before certain kinds of interpretative work have been carried out. Furthermore, by using evidence at only one scale, relationships which might have been apparent at another scale can be lost.

For example, archaeological evidence often comes in the form of point data, for example information about single find spots or the exact positions of monuments. A south-western example is provided by the sites of early medieval inscribed stones. The locations of these monuments have been plotted at a regional level by Thomas (1994) as part of his discussion of the putative settlement in the South West by incomers from Wales in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. Thomas develops an argument using linguistic evidence from the inscriptions and from his proposed typologies of the stones to suggest progressive immigrant settlement from the north coast southwards. This kind of approach has been described as the 'cartographic' view (Petts 1998: 81); it results in 'flat maps' which do not give weight to local contexts. Information which could have been gleaned by analysis at a more localized scale, such as the relationships of the stones to local communications routes or local land-use are not visible at the regional level and are therefore not discussed, even though the position of the stones in relation to their local context is likely to be crucial to their understanding. The distribution maps of rounds and *tre* place-names (Figs. 2.5 & 2.6) provide another example. Although the maps provide a general impression

of their distribution, their relationships at the local scale are lost in such small-scale mapping. Even though for certain research questions this could be combatted by the use of GIS (e.g. distance to nearest neighbour analysis), other important relationships between individual sites could remain unclear or hard to appreciate. Local settlement patterns are easier to understand at larger scales, where more local detail can be taken into account.

Similarly, in Ann Preston-Jones' study of churchyard morphology in Cornwall (Preston-Jones 1992), the scale chosen (county-wide) meant that the author was unable to investigate potentially important relationships between the shapes of churchyards and the surrounding field systems, or between churchyards and settlement morphology. The present project bases its analysis at the local level and aims to concentrate on selected study areas in order to avoid the practical problems of time involved in conducting a very detailed county- or region-wide study.

Investigating a small area in very great detail is an approach which can provide a very thorough understanding of the subtleties of landscape development in a particular area, and can be a powerful tool in pursuit of research questions. However, detailed local studies run the risk of only illuminating their own specific circumstances if no attempt is made to relate their results to wider patterns and interpretations. It can sometimes be difficult to relate detailed information won at the local level to wider patterns of lands-use or to regional and national research questions. Another difficulty, particularly in the case of excavations, is that sites of local significance can appear much more important than they really are in the absence of suitable comparanda at the regional level (Gwithian site GM/1 is perhaps an example: Thomas 1968a).

It is important to ensure that data are analysed at an appropriate scale so that that the perspectives which emerge from landscape research are not skewed either by heavily weighted discussion of individual sites or by under-appreciated local detail. In Chapters 3 and 4, different sorts of data will be

discussed at different scales according to the kinds of relationships under investigation.

Region

This scale refers to the whole South West region. It is at this scale that comparative discussion of the different ecclesiastical landscapes from across south-western Britain is conducted in Chapter 5.

County

The historic counties of the South-West remained largely the same in extent from the early middle ages to the re-organisation of local government in 1974. Some data mapping and analysis will be undertaken at this level, for example of the location and spacing of important early ecclesiastical settlements (3.3-5; 4.5-7).

District

The extents of many medieval hundreds have remained largely unaltered since Domesday (see e.g. Thorn & Thorn 1985 *Appendix*). The hundreds were probably already well-established by the late pre-Conquest period, since the earliest English hundreds are generally reckoned to be those of the south-western counties (4.7; see e.g. Klingelhofer 1992). Hundreds are therefore ancient territorial blocks and often seem to have influenced patterns of ecclesiastical provision, at least in southern parts of Anglo-Saxon England (Hase 1994: 52-54; Heighway 1987: 100). Modern scholars have often used them as geographical areas to structure their studies (as in the *Victoria County Histories*) with the result that they are both familiar and convenient to use. In this study the *district* or hundredal scale provides the opportunity to look at ecclesiastical sites' context in relation to themes such as large-scale patterns of land-use and the locations of high-status settlement sites (3.3-6; 4.5-8).

Local areas

Studies of localities made up of several parishes are generally the most detailed level at which information is analyzed and presented. At this scale it is possible to look in detail at local information such as settlement patterns, the locations of and relationships between minor religious sites, and local patterns of land-use and land-holding. This scale provides opportunities to build up detailed case studies concerning the landscape contexts of individual Cornish ecclesiastical centres in Chapter 3 (3.7-9).

GIS provides a flexible method for data mapping with the added advantage that data for analysis at one or more different scales can be held within the same database. This helps to minimise the practical problems that could be involved in producing maps and conducting analysis at several different spatial scales.

2.4.2 Temporal scales

Different types of evidence are not only suitable for analysis at different geographical scales, but also at different temporal scales. Information about some elements of the landscape may be available over very long periods of time, whereas other types of evidence may only be available over relatively short periods. Phenomena that develop over different time-scales may be linked by important relationships.

All these different phenomena may be relevant to the study of social and political structures, and they are also likely to have complicated interrelationships. For example, as shown above (section 2.3) it is possible to analyse settlement patterns in Cornwall over relatively long periods of time. The investigation of these patterns therefore needs to be approached using a relatively long time-depth, perhaps extending to over a thousand years.

On the other hand, the tradition of early medieval stone crosses bearing distinctive types of 'Hiberno-Saxon' ornament appears to have a much shorter period of development – perhaps only from the ninth to the eleventh centuries (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997). Its landscape context can be studied over a relatively short period. Nevertheless, the role of these monuments in society is likely to have been related to their position in the landscape, and this was almost certainly related to contemporary patterns of settlement and land-use. Comparing the distributions of this 'Hiberno-Saxon' sculpture with settlements or ecclesiastical sites may help illuminate the role of stones (and settlements or churches) in society, and the sculptors' society's relationship to past settlement and land-use (see Darvill 1997: 78). Relatively short-lived phenomena can owe their forms and meanings to long-term developments.

Braudelian concepts of different time-scales such as *longue duree, conjoncture & l'histoire evenementielle* are clearly relevant to these considerations (Braudel 1972; Knapp 1992a; Morris 2000: 4). However, the present research does not use events at one temporal scale to explain processes which occurred at other scales in a deterministic way. Nor does it regard this tripartite division of temporal scales (or variations on it) as the most important contribution to a contextual methodology, as some archaeological applications of *annalisme* have done (Bintliff 1991a). Instead, it recognises that different aspects of the landscape and human intervention in the landscape will affect each other in different ways at different times according to context.

The demands of different types of evidence to be analyzed at different geographical and temporal scales call for a flexible approach to data mapping and comparison. In Chapters 3 and 4 this is achieved by using a database linked to a GIS to present and analyse the 'localizable' data. The relationships between different types of sites established by different social groups will be analysed in the context of the wider landscape. In Chapter 3 different patterns of settlements and religious sites derived from sites,

artefacts, post-medieval maps and place-names will be mapped for the four phases discussed above (2.3) at the regional and district scales and in three detailed local case-study areas. This will show the landscape changes experienced in Cornwall. In Chapter 4, a similar range of sources will be used to study the developing early medieval landscape of Wessex. The evidence for a similar sequence of ecclesiastical provision and settlement development will be discussed at the regional and district scales. Brief discussions of more detailed local contexts will be based on recent research such as the Shapwick project (Aston & Gerrard 1999).

The correlations and contrasts between Cornwall and western Wessex will be discussed in Chapter 5. In this way the interplay between agriculture and production, elite sites and social control, and the religious ideology of ecclesiastical sites will be investigated in two different regions through the spatial patterning of successive early medieval landscapes.

Chapter 3

The early medieval church in the Cornish landscape

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will investigate the impact of the conversion to Christianity and the establishment of early medieval churches on the landscape of Cornwall. As noted in Chapter 1, the work of scholars including Olson (1989) and Petts (2002a) has shown that existing models for the development of the early church in the Cornish landscape are in need of revision. The discussion below focuses on the questions and issues indicated there.

The list of likely early medieval churches used here is based on the work of Lynette Olson (1989). Her identifications of probable early monasteries are accepted, with the possible exceptions of St Carroc, St Anthony in Roseland and Paul (which she regards as very uncertain cases; Olson 1989: 105; these are indicated as 'possible' cases in the relevant maps and tables, below). In addition, Phillack and Minster (with Tintagel) have been added to the list (Table 3.1). Thomas suggests Phillack was an early ecclesiastical centre based on archaeological evidence for fifth/sixth-century activity (1994; 1973). High status is also suggested by the late pre-Conquest sculpture from the site and the large burial ground which extends well beyond the modern graveyard (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997; Petts 2001). Phillack was also the mother church of nearby Gwithian in the later middle ages (below, 3.9). Whilst there is no written evidence to suggest specifically monastic status, it seems likely that Phillack was a very important pre-Conquest foundation. Olson does not discuss Minster or Tintagel, presumably on the grounds that the former was probably not a very early foundation and there is no written evidence for a community at the latter in the late Saxon period. Pearce considered Minster to have been an ecclesiastical community founded in the ninth century (1978: 106-8). Minster and its probable sister-church at Tintagel are discussed further below (3.4).

As far as is known, none of the Cornish churches recorded in Domesday Book are 'monastic' in the later pre-Conquest sense (i.e. had not been reformed according to the Benedictine Rule in the tenth century; see Chapter 4, below). However, the majority of those identified by Olson had communities of priests or clerks in the eleventh century. As Olson notes, there was a tendency in the early middle ages for communities to change from 'monastic' houses to clerical ones (Olson 1989: 3-4). This has also been observed elsewhere in Britain, for example in Wales (Charles-Edwards 1970-72) and Anglo-Saxon England (below, Chapter 4). Which monastic or clerical Rules may have been followed in early western British ecclesiastical communities, and where the dividing line lay between 'monks' and 'clerks' is very unclear. For example, the foundation at St Germans is described as a *monasterium* in an eleventh-century excommunication formula added to a tenth-century pontifical, despite the fact that it was also the seat of the bishop of Cornwall at the time (the so-called 'Lanalet Pontifical'; Olson 1989: 62-3). Shortly afterwards in Domesday Book the community staffing the foundation are referred to as *canonici* ('canons'; Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 2,6). The appropriate terminology for describing important pre-Conquest ecclesiastical centres has been a recent subject of debate (Blair 1995c). In Cornwall the possibility of episodes of reform and refoundation exists, no attempt is made in the present chapter to differentiate between different types of ecclesiastical communities on historical grounds. Early churches will therefore be referred to at different times as 'ecclesiastical centres', 'ecclesiastical settlements' or 'monasteries'; no distinctions are implied. 'Church' is generally used to refer to a church building.

Data will be discussed in the chapter at a variety of different scales (see above, 2.4). The most detailed level of discussion is based around three case-study areas focussed on three early medieval churches. The boundaries of the case studies are formed by the early modern parish boundaries, which probably closely match medieval parishes (Orme 1999). This choice of boundary has facilitated the extraction of records from historical and

archaeological databases. The case study areas form roughly coherent topographical units. The St Neot area comprises the four medieval parishes of Cardinham, Warleggan, St Neot, and St Cleer. It is bounded to the north by Bodmin Moor and to the south largely by the River Fowey (Fig. 3.1). The Tintagel area consists of the medieval parishes of Tintagel, Minster, Forrabury, Trevalga, Lesnewth and St Juliot. It is bounded by the sea to the west and north and Tresparret, Otterham and Waterpit Downs to the east (Fig. 3.2). The St Keverne area is made up of the medieval parishes of St Keverne, St Anthony-in-Meneage, Manaccan, St Martin-in Meneage and St Mawgan-in-Meneage. It is bounded to the north, east and south by the sea and Helford estuary, and to the west mainly by the Goonhilly Downs (Fig. 3.3). Each of these areas includes land at a range of different altitudes and a range of different geologies and soils (Edmonds *et al.* 1975).

The data used in the case studies have been derived from various sources, as discussed in Chapter 2 (above). All the information used in the case studies has been incorporated into the project database after careful verification of the relevant sources, including cross-referencing locations against the modern Ordnance Survey maps.

3.2 Morphology of ecclesiastical centres

Little is presently known about the physical layout of Cornwall's early medieval ecclesiastical communities, either from survey or excavation. Documentary sources suggest that more than one saint was probably venerated at many sites, indicating that more than one church or altar may have existed at each centre. For example, the original dedication of St Kew was to Docco, as recorded in the earliest record of a Cornish monastery in the *First Life of St Samson* (Olson 1989), but Kew (earlier Cywa) was co-patron by the mid-tenth century (S810). Hooke comments that Kew was originally patron of a subsidiary chapel, but was later moved into the parish church (Hooke 1994a: 37). At St Neot, an otherwise unknown St Gueriir may have venerated in the ninth century and before (Orme 1996a; Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 254-5). St Guron may have been at Bodmin before being joined by St Petroc's cult, and the twelfth-century *Life of St Petroc* maintains a tradition that Padstow was home of St Gwethenek before St Petroc, perhaps also indicated by the Domesday Book name-form *Lanwenehoc* (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,4; Orme 1996a: 109; Olson 1989: 58). Dedications therefore indicate the name of the saint venerated, but do not necessarily date to the time when the church was first founded.

It is possible that there was more than one church at important ecclesiastical centres in the early middle ages. In the later medieval period several of the earlier monasteries had subsidiary chapels within their graveyards which could have perpetuated the sites of earlier structures. These include Crantock, Bodmin, and St Kew (Olson 1982). The excavators of a probable late pre-Conquest building discovered in the graveyard at Tintagel have claimed that it is the earlier incarnation of the parish church (Nowakowski & Thomas 1992). However, churches were most commonly re-built on the same site as their predecessors (Blair 1996a: 13-18), and the standing Norman structure at Tintagel may well be the successor to another pre-Conquest building. If so, then the foundations excavated by Nowakowski &

Thomas may relate to a second chapel, or another building that was part of an ecclesiastical complex.

None of the churches belonging to the earliest ecclesiastical foundations have been excavated or identified as standing fabric. Examples from the later pre-Conquest period include St Piran's Oratory, a small rectangular structure now buried beneath the sands of Perran Bay, which perhaps belongs to the tenth century (Todd 1987: 293). At Minster Charles Thomas has claimed the chancel of the present building, dedicated to St Matheriana, preserves the fabric of a small church dating to AD *c.*1000. It is of similar dimensions to the structure excavated nearby at St Matheriana's other church, Tintagel (Thomas 1993: 109).

As suggested in Chapter 1, although there is little evidence that field cemeteries were enclosed before the ninth century, the religious centres of early ecclesiastical communities may have been bounded with simple enclosures from an early date. At the probable early monastery of St Buryan in Cornwall (Olson 1989), excavation of part of the churchyard boundary suggested that the site's founders had re-used an existing Romano-British round as an ecclesiastical enclosure (Preston-Jones 1987: 156-7). Such enclosures are paralleled at some other important early ecclesiastical sites in western Britain (Petts 2002a: 30-2). Petts notes that the space within these boundaries was divided up in increasingly complicated ways from the eighth century onwards. In Cornwall, the presence of crosses from the ninth century onwards (e.g. St Neot) may have been linked to increasingly complex division of space within the communities' enclosures. Crosses were used for this purpose on monastic sites in various parts of the insular world including Ireland (Bitel 1990: 63-4) and Anglo-Saxon Wessex (see Chapter 4).

Early ecclesiastical centres also provided a focus for burial. Whilst they did not receive all burials in any given area (see 3.8, below), they may have catered initially for the social elite. Material recovered from a ground

surface cut by early burials at Tintagel churchyard suggests ritual feasting at the graveside, a practice that Thomas argues may have been derived directly from Mediterranean models (Thomas 1994: 206). Nevertheless, the modern graveyards around the sites of several early ecclesiastical centres seem considerably smaller than their early medieval predecessors. Large numbers of burials have been unearthed outside the burial grounds at Tintagel, Crantock, St Piran's and Phillack (Petts 2001), implying that the wider community gained access to burial at these ecclesiastical sites. Crantock, St Piran's and Phillack may also perpetuate the sites of pre-Christian burial grounds which could already have been important in the spiritual life of the district when the churches were founded (Olson 1982).

3.3 Physical locations

> **'When I had set out for nasty Devon and was proceeding through Cornwall – which is devoid of any flowering vegetation or grasses in any abundance – the mighty elements and the chaotic masses (of the universe) were driven to collision under the fiery dome of the vaulted sky...'**
>
> Aldhelm, *Carmen Rhythmicum*
> (trans. Lapidge & Rosier 1985: 177)

With the notable exception of his fellow poet Ted Hughes, Aldhelm's view of the South West is not one that is likely to resonate with many modern visitors (Hughes 1979). On the contrary, Devon and Cornwall have long striven to promote themselves as desirable holiday destinations (Shaw *et al.* 1999). Hundreds of thousands of tourists still come each year to admire a landscape that is virtually unique in England, one that has been formed by distinctive human action within the equally distinctive natural environment of the Cornubian peninsula (Todd 1987: 1-3). Whilst the land form itself remains much as it was at the end of the last glaciation, almost every square metre of the landscape spread out across it has been altered fundamentally over the last 5000 years as a direct result of human action (Caseldine 1999).

Cornwall is notable today for its coastline, much of which is dominated by spectacular cliffs. On the south coast these are broken by the drowned estuaries of rivers like the Fal, Fowey and Tamar; on the north coast, where the cliffs are most dramatic, the wide sandy mouth of the Camel provides the only substantial anchorage for boats between Newquay in Cornwall and Barnstaple in Devon. Also characteristic of the coast south west of Padstow are the large areas of wind-blown dunes that border the sea shore at Perran Bay and St Ives Bay, and now cover former farms, fields and churches (e.g. Thomas 1958). Moving inland, Cornwall is a county whose landscape is dominated by rolling hills and deeply-incised valleys. The valleys are cut largely through Devonian rocks including complex areas of sedimentary

slates, siltstones, gritstones, sandstones and limestones (Edmonds *et al.* 1975: 21-33; Todd 1987: 3-6). Valley-bottoms are normally narrow, and lack the broad floodplains so common to the east in Wessex. Valley sides are mostly convex in section, so that valley bottoms cannot normally be seen from hilltops, and vice-versa. The highest ground is in the eastern and northern part of the county, where Brown Willy on Bodmin Moor rises to 417m above sea level. The same geological processes that led to the igneous intrusion of Bodmin Moor also gave rise to the granite masses of Hensbarrow, Carnmenellis, Penwith and the Scilly Isles. These are roughly aligned in a row leading westwards which begins with Dartmoor in Devon (Edmonds *et al.* 1975: 43-51). In some areas variations in the local geology mean less steeply incised plateaux and broader, shallower valleys occur, for example in north Cornwall around St Kew and above cliffs on the north coast around Newquay. In general, however, these tend to be small areas amidst otherwise rolling hill-country.

The contrasts between the steep valleys and the rolling hilltops and plateaux are accentuated by the different land-uses to which they have been put. A fundamental characteristic of the Cornish landscape is the close juxtaposition of these different elements. Woods, meadows, pasture, gardens, rough grazing and arable land are all found side-by-side in complex patterns (Williamson 2002: 118). Most commonly it is woodland, meadow and pasture that occur on the steeper, lower valley slopes, with arable land on gentler hillslopes above. Rough pasture is characteristic of the moors, ridges and sea-clifftops (Herring 1998). With the exception of parts of the dunes, virtually none of Cornwall's soils have escaped alteration by human action. Even the acidic podsols of the uplands are anthropogenic: they first began to form around 8000 years ago as a result of mesolithic tree-clearance, and replaced earlier brown soils which are sometimes found preserved beneath prehistoric monuments (Caseldine 1999: 29). Bronze-age and late medieval fields on the high moors show that virtually all areas can be farmed with sufficient effort. Indeed, Caseldine suggests that the relatively minor climatic variations of the last 5000 years would not

necessarily have had an effect on the ability of people to support themselves from the land in any part of the Cornubian peninsula (Caseldine 1999: 32; see also Caseldine & Hatton 1994: 44-45).

Nevertheless, there have been variations in the area exploited over the last three thousand years. It will be argued below that important variations in the area under cultivation occurred in the first millennium AD (3.7). The reasons for this are likely to have been complicated, and not result from one single factor, such as climatic change or disease among the human population. It will be suggested that the newly-introduced Christian religion made a major contribution to the way the early medieval countryside was re-structured.

Cornwall has an extremely varied countryside, which can often seem intimate and secluded, particularly when viewed from within the steep narrow valleys. In this sense it is quite different to most of England further east, where the broader valleys tend to create a more open countryside. In the popular imagination this sense of difference is linked to the 'Celtic' people who live there, and certainly to their churchmen. Influenced by examples like Skellig Michael (Co. Kerry, Ireland) some scholars have suggested that isolated hilltop and island sites were the classic locations for monasteries in early medieval western Britain (e.g. Thomas 1971b: 94-5; Aston 2000: 31-41).

Of around twenty likely early medieval monasteries of Cornwall, two are located on hilltops or ridges and two on islands in the sea. St Buryan, which existed from at least the tenth century (S450) and almost certainly earlier (Thomas 1988), stands on top of a ridge of high ground at 123m above OD. Whilst the site is prominent, it is not spectacular. Hills of similar height rise all around, and just over 3km to the north there are several that rise much higher, including the considerably steeper hills of Carn Brea (198m) and Bartiney Downs (224m), both of which are topped by prehistoric enclosures. The church at Constantine, a possible monastic site (Olson

1989: 90), also stands on a ridge (90m), although in this case the valley sides are steeper than at St Buryan. Nevertheless, higher hills rise within a short distance to the west and the north. As the ridge where the church is sited continues south it does not descend significantly for some 600m. If a dominant hilltop position had been the most important factor behind siting the church, there are many more impressive sites in the vicinity that could have been selected.

The church at Bodmin may have become the seat of a Cornish bishop for a period in the early middle ages, and was the greatest Cornish ecclesiastical landholder at Domesday. It has been suggested that the ecclesiastical centre here could have originated on a hilltop site and later moved down into the neighbouring valley (Olson 1989: 66-78). The most obvious comparison is with the probable pre-Saxon foundation at Glastonbury in Somerset. Here, post-Roman activity on Glastonbury Tor was indicated by the presence of imported Mediterranean pottery and associated features, and the site also appears to have functioned as a hermitage in the late Saxon period (Rahtz 1971; 1991; see below, 4.9). However, at Glastonbury, the occupation of the main Abbey site on lower ground *c.*1km to the west probably dates to only shortly after that on the Tor and may even be contemporary with the occupation there (Rahtz 1993). At Bodmin, Olson suggests that the establishment in the valley was founded at some point after AD 800 as a successor to St Petroc's earlier centre at Padstow, and the evidence from settlement studies tends to support a late foundation date (see below, 3.7). If there was an earlier ecclesiastical settlement near Bodmin, it may have been some sort of minor centre such as a hermitage rather than a major monastic centre (Olson 1989: 53-56). It has been suggested that the fifteenth-century Berry Tower may be the remains of such a complex. It stands on the ridge to the north of the medieval church, and was originally part of a chapel of the Holy Rood. However, archaeological evidence has not yet been recovered in support of early medieval occupation here (Adams 1959-61; 1962-4).

Early ecclesiastical sites on islands in the sea are also considered typical of the 'Celtic' west, although the evidence from Cornwall is ambiguous in this respect too. Sites at both Looe Island and St Michael's Mount have produced small quantities of imported Mediterranean pottery. At Looe Island, one sherd of B-ware suggests occupation in the post-Roman period (Thomas 1981a). There was a chapel of St Michael here in the later middle ages, but also a medieval chapel and associated buildings on the mainland opposite (Picken 1982-6; Todd 1983). These were excavated in the 1930s and seem to have produced no early medieval finds (Olson & O'Mahoney 1994). The documentary sources do not help clarify which site should be regarded as the earlier. Whilst it may have been the island chapel, it is important to note that at Tintagel, where substantial late Antique activity has been demonstrated by archaeology, the main early religious focus appears to have been on the mainland cliffs where the present parish church now stands, opposite the 'Island' promontory (see below, 3.4). Looe Island may have been either a secular or religious centre in its earliest phases and more archaeological work is required to clarify its nature. The same is true of the other Cornish island monastery, St Michael's Mount. Here, an ecclesiastical community probably existed before the Norman conquest (Olson 1989: 89-90), and a charter (of doubtful authenticity) suggests it could have been granted to Mont St Michel in Normandy as early as the reign of Edward the Confessor (S1061). Like Looe Island, a limited amount of imported Mediterranean pottery has been recovered from the site (Thorpe 2000; Dark 2000: 167), and the nature of the earliest medieval occupation remains unclear. Many scholars presently favour an interpretation that sees the Mount as a secular stronghold which only became predominately ecclesiastical in the tenth or eleventh centuries (Herring 1993: 62-66; Herring 2000: 120-124).

Of around 20 likely pre-Conquest Cornish ecclesiastical communities, at only four were the sites of the most important church on an island or hilltop. In these cases the nature of the earliest occupation, where any evidence of it

survives, does not make it clear that they were originally ecclesiastical centres rather than secular ones.

The remaining sites occupy a variety of locations (Table 3.2). Four are sited on hillslopes, above the break of slope but below the ridge line (though the church at Paul is located quite low down in its valley). The other major churches all occupy positions on low ground or well within valleys. St Piran's now lies buried beneath the dunes of Penhale Sands, but before this inundation may have stood in an area of low-lying coastal fields, perhaps similar to those excavated at Gwithian (Fowler & Thomas 1962). St Germans, St Neot and Crantock stand a short distance above their valley-bottoms, and Minster is secreted at the head of a side-valley, now completely hidden from view by trees. St Kew, the church with the earliest reliable pre-Conquest documentary evidence (Olson 1989), is situated in a valley-bottom close to a small river, as is Bodmin. This shows that the early Cornish religious communities did not always locate their centres on remote hilltop or island sites, but instead chose a range of locations, most commonly in valleys. It will be argued below (3.7) that far from being remote, the early monasteries were located at the heart of contemporary patterns of settlement and agriculture.

3.4 Churches and royal centres

The Christian church and the social elite were closely linked in early medieval Britain, and the church often drew its most prominent members from the ranks of royal and noble families (see Higham 1997). It seems likely that church and elite in Cornwall were also closely related, although the evidence discussed below (3.6 and this section) hints that the churches of Cornwall may have been less dependent upon royal power than their equivalents in western Wessex.

The limited evidence of sixth-eighth century written sources suggests both the existence of kings and that the social elite of Cornwall were responsible for establishing the earliest churches and granting them estates. Gildas famously described how the ruler Constantine (the 'tyrant whelp of the filthy lioness of Dumnonia' (Winterbottom 1978: 29)) killed two royal youths in front of an altar, probably in a monastery church. This episode apparently occurred at the time Gildas was writing, probably in the sixth century (Olson 1989: 8; Thomas 1994: 212). A *comes* named Guedianus, perhaps a lower-ranking member of the royal elite, appears in an episode in the early *First Life of St Samson*, which may date to as early as the seventh century (Olson 1989: 16). Around the end of the seventh century, Aldhelm wrote a letter concerning ecclesiastical affairs to Gereint, then king of Dumnonia, admonishing him to ensure regularity according to the Roman tradition in the ecclesiastical affairs of his kingdom (Lapidge & Herren 1979: 155-160). Not only did Aldhelm write concerning bishops in Dumnonia, but he also visited Devon and Cornwall and spent some time in churches in the region (see 3.3, above). Davies has argued that there was a British charter tradition which allowed estates to be granted from the king to the church in the west, in the same way that there was in the Anglo-Saxon east (Davies 1982). The practice is suggested at this time in Cornwall by the record of King Gereint's early eighth-century grant of land at Maker to the church of Sherborne, where Aldhelm was bishop (Finberg 1953b: 16). In addition, some tenth century Cornish charters apparently maintain

distinctive 'Celtic' elements, and there are references to possible Cornish kings in a few later pre-Conquest sources (Olson 1989: 78-84; James 2001: 245).

Constantine, Guedianus and Gereint were clearly members of a hierarchical social elite and were also closely involved in the religious affairs of the region. There can be little doubt that Cornwall had kings in the post-Roman and early medieval periods, and that they would have provided some or all of the region's churches with estates by grants. However, the archaeological and topographical evidence suggests that the relationships between royal elite and churches may have been through a number of changes during the period from the fifth to the eleventh centuries.

Identifying Royal Centres in Cornwall: Archaeological Evidence

The archaeological evidence for early medieval royal centres in Cornwall is limited to a very few sites. Among them is the most spectacular of all post-Roman or early medieval royal centres in the west of Britain, the cliff-top peninsula fortress of Tintagel.

The greatest volume of archaeological evidence relates to settlements of the earliest phase discussed in section 2.3 (above), those belonging to the period between the third and sixth centuries AD. The excavated sites likely to have been high-status centres in post-Roman Cornwall were also occupied in the late Roman period, which strongly suggests that like other contemporary settlements they continue a pattern established during the third century AD. Quantities of imported post-Roman goods have been recovered from the strongly fortified site at Chun Castle in Penwith and from St Michael's Mount, hinting that they may have been elite residences at this time (Thomas 1956; Herring 1993: 60-1; Herring 2000; although the interpretation of the latter site remains uncertain (3.3), it may have had a dual secular and sacred role). Chun and the Mount are significant sites, but

if volume of imported goods and density of occupation can be considered to reflect status, then neither are anywhere close to the importance of Tintagel.

Thomas (1993: 82-5) and Morris *et al.* (1999) have summarised the evidence for the use of Tintagel Island in the late Roman period, including a small coin-hoard and a large amount of pottery which probably dates to the third and fourth centuries. Thomas speculates that Tintagel Island may have been the *Purocornavis* of the Ravenna Cosmography (a Byzantine collection of itineraries compiled from earlier sources), and that its occupation (though of uncertain nature) may have been linked to the tin industry (Thomas 1993: 83-4). The presence of official imperial agents is implied by the presence of two late-Roman 'milestones' in the area, one at Trethevy and one now in Tintagel parish church (of uncertain original location).

The main phase of occupation at the site in the first millennium is dated by a very large amount of pottery and other goods imported from the Mediterranean region, and by radiocarbon dating (Thomas 1981a; Fulford 1989; Morris & Harry 1997). The forms of pottery and other artefacts present indicate that the active trade with the Mediterranean lasted from the later fifth century to the mid-sixth century, reaching a peak around AD 500, and radiocarbon dating suggests that occupation on the site may well have continued into the seventh century (Morris & Harry 1997: 120). As the excavators have argued, a site such as Tintagel requires a special explanation:

> 'In the social context of post-Roman Britain, it would...seem perverse not to accord sites such as Cadbury [Somerset] and Tintagel 'royal' status, with a descending hierarchy of other royal sites identified as *urbs* or *villa regis*...'
>
> (Morris & Harry 1997: 124)

Tintagel was at the peak of the post-Roman settlement hierarchy, and it was a centre for trade or exchange controlled at the highest level. The most likely commodity to have been traded from Cornwall over such long

distances in the early medieval period is tin. In order to be in a position to trade the elite must have had effective mechanisms for collecting produce and storing it prior to trading. Strictly speaking this is speculation – no tin ingots, for example, have been discovered so far at Tintagel. However, the remains of other produce such as cereals (particularly barley and oats) have been recognised in the recent excavations, and it is likely that these were the result of organised production in the local area (Morris & Harry 1997: 118).

The form of the settlement at Tintagel 'Island' is quite unlike anything else known from Cornwall in the first millennium AD. The main difference lies in the number and density of buildings. A field survey undertaken in 1985 by the RCHME recorded the earthwork remains of well over a hundred structures on the 'Island's' plateau and terraces, and excavations on both the terraces and on the landward part of the site beneath the Lower Ward of the thirteenth-century castle have revealed the remains of further structures (Thomas 1993: colour plate 4; Morris *et al.* 1999). Thomas has commented that the insubstantial nature of some of the excavated buildings suggests that many would not have been permanently occupied (1993: 88-92), although Morris *et al.* have pointed out that many of the less substantial buildings could have had a storage function (1999: 210), and others could have been used for industrial processes as shown by finds of probable metal-working debris (Morris & Harry 1997: 72-3). The possibility that the settlement at Tintagel was divided up into different zones for different activities, the evidence for industry and extensive trading activity, and the form of the buildings at the site has led Dark to argue that Tintagel was '...very much a 'Late Antique' settlement' (Dark 2000: 156). He has suggested that there may have been a Byzantine mercantile element in the community at Tintagel by analogy with sites in continental Europe, and there are certainly morphological parallels between Tintagel and some contemporary newly-founded Byzantine trading places in the Mediterranean like Monemvasia (Laconia) (Dark 2001: 91; Kalligas 1990: 29-30). The ideological and political implications of these likely links are important when considering

the relationships between Tintagel and early Christian institutions in Cornwall (below).

Few other early medieval high-status sites have been investigated, and the only one to have produced a substantial volume of material is Winnianton on the west coast of the Lizard peninsula. This is much later than Tintagel, and belongs to Phase 3 of Cornish medieval settlement, the period of expansion and strong Anglo-Saxon influence (2.3, above). It is an isolated English place-name in the far west of Cornwall, and in Domesday Book was King William's principal manor in Cornwall and the head manor of the hundred which took its name (though this was later known by its Cornish name of Kerrier) (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 1,1). A large quantity of late-Saxon pottery has been recovered from the eroding cliff-section at Winnianton, although the size and layout of the settlement are not known (Jope & Threlfall 1956; Thomas 1963).

Identifying Royal Centres in Cornwall: Documentary Evidence

There are no documentary sources that cast light on the location of high-status sites of the earliest phase of settlement in Cornwall discussed here, the post-Roman or late Antique period. As Preston-Jones and Rose have noted, although some sites traditionally associated with (semi)-mythical kings were excavated earlier in the twentieth century, none apart from Tintagel have produced any evidence for post-Roman occupation (e.g. Castle-an-Dinas & Castle Dore; Ralegh Radford 1951; Quinnell & Harris 1985; Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 138). For the following phase of settlement, from the sixth to the ninth centuries, the most useful source for the identification of possible royal settlements is place-name evidence. The Cornish place-name element **lys* ('court') is believed to indicate the likely sites of royal centres (Padel 1985: 150-151; as its equivalent *llys* did in medieval Wales: see e.g. Longley 1997; 2001). A cautious approach is necessary since the limited amount of archaeological work has not yet

shown that place-names in **lys* will reveal archaeological evidence of early medieval activity. For example, excavations at Arrallas did not produce any early medieval material (although the site investigated was a cropmark near to the hamlet, rather than the later medieval settlement of Arrallas itself: Preston-Jones & Rose 1986: 138). There were almost certainly other royal centres in this period which have not yet been identified through place-name or archaeological evidence. Nevertheless, a number of sites with **lys* names were important manorial centres at the time of Domesday including Liskeard (probably **lys* + personal name (Padel 1988: 110), Helstone and Helston (both *hen-*lys* 'ancient court' with later English *tun* 'estate centre' (Padel 1988: 96)). The Domesday manor of Lesnewth (**lys* + *nowyth* 'new': Padel 1988: 109) was the administrative centre of the medieval hundred of the same name. These examples suggest firstly that places with **lys* names may indeed represent high-status settlements of the pre-English period, and secondly that there was a certain degree of continuity between Cornish and English secular centres. The identifications of possible secular centres of the sixth to ninth centuries here follows Preston-Jones & Rose (1986: 137-139), with the addition of Helset in Lesnewth parish (within the Tintagel study area). Like Helstone and Helston, this place-name may incorporate the Cornish elements *hen* and **lys*, 'the old court' (plus an unidentified suffix: *ICS Index*; Gover 1948: 71). It seems likely that Helset was the earlier administrative centre of the area, and was replaced at some time by Lesnewth (rather than Padel's suggestion of Helstone, which is some distance from both (Padel 1988: 96; Fig. 3.4).

There appears to have been a significant shift of royal centres between Cornish settlement phases 1 and 2 (2.3, above). Judging by the archaeological evidence, first-millennium occupation at Tintagel and Chun Castle came to end some time in the seventh century at the latest (Morris & Harry 1997; Thomas 1956). The **lys*-named settlements appear to be part of the early medieval pattern like settlements with *tre* names, rather than part of the late-/post-Roman settlement pattern (2.3, above; 3.7, below).

Any continuity between Cornish royal or secular administrative centres of the sixth to ninth centuries and later ones of the Anglo-Saxon period was only partial. This is shown by Domesday Book, which is the main source for the location of phase 3 high-status settlements (the ninth to eleventh centuries (2.3, above)). Whilst some of the probable Cornish high-status sites of phase 2 continued to be larger than average manors held by important people, they did not necessarily maintain any wider administrative functions. A good example can be seen in West hundred. Whilst Liskeard remained an important manor in the hands of the major Anglo-Saxon landowner Merleswein in 1066 (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,2), the head manor of the Domesday Book hundred was Fawton (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,1). This had also been held by Merleswein, but its English name (the *tun* by the Faw stream: *ICS Index*) and topographical position on the edge of rough ground suggest it was a new centre established in the tenth or eleventh centuries (Fig. 3.5; and Section 3.6, below). This appears to be an example of an earlier Cornish centre being replaced by a new administrative centre after the area came under direct Anglo-Saxon political control. Similar examples come from west Cornwall, where Connerton and Winnianton were the administrative capitals of their respective hundreds at the time of Domesday. Both have English place-names which are otherwise rare in this part of Cornwall in the middle ages (Padel 1999; for example, only one is testified to before 1550 in the four parishes of the St Keverne case study area, at Anhay (*ICS Index*)). Identification of late Saxon period high-status centres is here based on Domesday Book royal manors and hundredal administrative centres.

Cornish high-status centres can therefore be seen to have had three main periods of development in the early middle ages. Firstly, there were those centres of which Tintagel is the best example which continued a pattern established in the third century and which lasted until the seventh century (Phase 1). Secondly, there are the probable **lys* centres of the early medieval Cornish elite (Phase 2) which appear to have developed after Tintagel and its contemporaries were deserted; some of these continued

through into the high middle ages, but some lost their importance (Fig. 3.4). Finally, there are the royal and noble manorial centres of Domesday Book (Phase 3), many of which developed when the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex took control of the region in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Secular and Ecclesiastical Centres

Any discussion of the relationships between religious and secular centres in early medieval Cornwall must begin with Tintagel. Discussion over the last three decades has cast significant doubt on the theory that the Island at Tintagel was an early monastic centre, and it is clear that Ralegh Radford's initial interpretation of the site as an ascetic 'Celtic' monastery must be seriously in question (e.g. Thomas 1993; Ralegh Radford 1935; 1962). This 'deconstruction' of the monastic interpretation is based partly on the wealth demonstrated by the exotic finds from the site, which have been thought inappropriate to a monastic setting. However, work on monasteries elsewhere in the early Christian world has shown clearly that ideal and reality did not always match up in this respect: the consumption of luxurious foodstuffs on monastic sites in Egypt was not uncommon, yet it was far from the monastic ideal (Harlow & Smith 2001). An abundance of high-status goods is not necessarily enough to define a site as 'secular' rather than 'sacred'. At Tintagel, scholars seeking to re-evaluate the theory that the site was a monastery have perhaps been overzealous in removing all ecclesiastical elements from the history of the site. The recently excavated inscription from the Island hints at a close connection between the secular elite and the literate culture of the church (see Morris et al. 1999: 213-4), and it is possible that the settlement on the Island would have comprised both ecclesiastical and secular elements. The Island settlement at Tintagel may owe its form to models derived from continental Europe and the Mediterranean world. It would hardly be an exaggeration to describe the dense settlement here as proto-urban, particularly when compared to other settlements in western Britain. In other parts of the late Roman world, the

church was closely linked to urban centres (Brogiolo 1999: 120-5; Gauthier 1999: 205). In many regions these had changed in late Antiquity almost beyond recognition from their form in the Classical period to be little more than small fortified areas incorporating churches and administrative centres (Haldon 1999). Christian centres were normally in towns (or their remnants), and the idea of the town had become closely linked to the ideology of the church (see Chapter 5, below). The rich range of imports at the kingly settlement at Tintagel suggest it may have developed under Mediterranean or continental European influence. It may also have been a centre for significant Christian ideological influence coming from the same regions.

This interpretation seems reasonable in the light of the excavations at Tintagel churchyard. At this site, which stands on the cliff-top around half a mile south of the Island, evidence for early Christian funerary activity was revealed in the early 1990s. Graves in the earliest levels were surrounded by spreads of burnt clay containing sherds of imported pottery as well as foodstuffs; as the excavators argue, this could reflect the influence of Mediterranean practice in funerary rituals at the site (Nowakowski & Thomas 1992; Thomas 1994: 197-209). As at the probably contemporary Christian burial site at Phillack (Thomas 1994: 197-201; Okasha 1993: 205-207), the burial ground at Tintagel is known to extend some way beyond the confines of the modern graveyard from chance finds of cist-graves in the adjoining fields (Canner 1982). It seems likely that here at St Matheriana's church is a 'sacred' site which was closely linked to the early royal site on the Island (Thomas 1993: 99). In summary, the ecclesiastical and royal sites at Tintagel of the fifth to seventh centuries exhibit close physical and ideological links. As in Anglo-Saxon Wessex throughout the early medieval centuries (see 4.6, below), there appears to have been an intimate relationship between the royal elite and the new Christian church at Tintagel. Although further archaeological research is needed before proper interpretations can be made, it is likely that similar sites may have existed around the same time at Looe Island and St Michael's Mount.

Judging by the limited evidence which is presently available for the location of royal centres in the succeeding period (Phase 2, sixth-ninth centuries), this close physical relationship between royal and ecclesiastical sites did not continue. Although it seems likely that Cornish kings were involved in endowing monastic centres (as discussed above), they do not appear to have founded them at or adjacent to royal administrative centres. The closest physical relationships belonging to this period are between the church at Minster and Lesnewth, and the church at St Keverne and Lesneage. Nevertheless, both of these are probably exceptional cases. It is likely that Minster was not founded until the ninth century or later (see below), and that it replaced Tintagel as the head church of its area. Lesnewth may also have been established relatively late, after both Tintagel and perhaps Helset had ceased to act as (successive) secular administrative centres of the area (see above). The spatial relationship between Lesnewth and Minster would then have been typical of the pattern that developed in the pre-Norman period (Phase 3) between royal manors and high-status churches (see below). On the Lizard, it is possible that Lesneage was an administrative centre held by the ecclesiastical community of St Keverne rather than a secular centre. The name, first recorded in 967 (S755) as *Lesmanaoc* probably means either 'the monks' court' or 'the court of the Meneage', which may originally have been an area over which St Keverne had some sort of ecclesiastical jurisdiction (Padel 1985: 156; Olson 1989: 108). The **lys* of Lesneage may have been an administrative centre for the estate along the lines of the barton-farms which Faith has noted in Anglo-Saxon England (Faith 1997: 37).

Other cases seem to be more typical. For example, the closest **lys* centre to St Kew was Helstone, around 8km away; St Buryan was 6km from Lesingey, Bodmin 12km from Lanescot, and St Germans 12km from Liskeard. This was also the closest **lys* to the community at St Neot, some 7.5km to the north-west (see Table 3.3). Although this discussion is extremely unlikely to be based on identifications of all the royal sites that

existed during this period, the distance between churches and **lys* estate-centres does suggest that churches in early medieval Cornwall were not immediately dependent on royal power (unlike many in Wessex; see Chapter 4). This is also suggested by the nature of the Cornish churches' estates, which are discussed below (3.6).

The establishment of Anglo-Saxon political control and cultural supremacy in the ninth and tenth centuries appears to have led to a substantial re-structuring in the relationship between ecclesiastical centres and royal power in Cornwall. Whilst some royal centres of the previous period appear to have continued into Phase 3 (e.g. Liskeard, Helston and Helstone; see above), in other cases new royal and elite manorial centres were established. Several of these established to act as administrative centres for their wider regions, and their names became the English names of the hundreds used in Domesday Book (Thorn & Thorn 1979a). In terms of their relationships with important ecclesiastical sites, these new centres appear to have represented another sort of change. Several of them were located much closer to collegiate churches than their Cornish predecessors had been, for example the hundredal centres of Connerton, around 3.5km from Phillack, and Tybesta, about 4.5km from the church of St Probus. The new hundredal centre at Fawton was mentioned above, and this was established only 1.5km from the church of St Neot. Fawton also provides a likely example of a new royal centre encroaching onto the estates of an established collegiate church. In several cases this encroachment appears to have been even more extreme. The manor of St Kew, the earliest Cornish monastery attested in the documentary sources (Olson 1989: 16-20), was in the possession of King Harold in 1066 even though at least part of the estate had been granted (or confirmed) to the church in the tenth century (S810). A similar history seems likely at both Probus and Launceston where kings Edward and Harold (respectively) had held the manors before the Norman Conquest. Neither estate paid geld in 1086, suggesting they had formerly been ecclesiastical (see further 3.6, below).

In the Tintagel study area, a slightly different process may have taken place: here, it seems that the site of the most important church foundation in the area was moved closer to the hundredal administrative centre at Lesnewth ('the new **lys*': Padel 1988). As noted above, Lesnewth was a successor to the earlier royal centre at Tintagel, and this secular centre's move seems to be mirrored by a similar shift in the ecclesiastical centres from Tintagel to Minster at some time between the seventh and the early eleventh centuries. There is little doubt about the status of Minster as the superior church in this area during the eleventh century. The name 'Minster' implies high status, and the site was refounded as a small house of Benedictine priors in the twelfth century (monastic refoundation was a common part of the history of many former Saxon minster churches: Olson 1989: 97). The church housed the remains and shrine of Saint Matheriana, patron of both Minster and Tintagel. The dedication to Matheriana is not found elsewhere, and this suggests that the two churches were closely linked (Orme 2000: 189-190). In addition, Thomas has claimed that the chancel at Minster is basically the remains of a small church dating to *c.*AD 1000, similar in its dimensions to the structure which was excavated at Tintagel (Thomas 1993). He argues that the shared dedication arose in the later middle ages, and that the Bottreux family of Boscastle may have re-built and re-dedicated the church at Tintagel to the patron saint of Minster to boost both their prestige and the saint's (Minster lay within their Boscastle estate in the twelfth century; Thomas 1993: 19-20). However, there is no evidence to suggest that the de Bottreux family re-built Tintagel nor that they were in possession of the estate of Bossiney, where Tintagel church then stood (Thomas 1993: 19-21; 112-3; Canner 1982: 8-13; 16). It is more likely that the shared dedication arose in the period before the Norman Conquest, and Matheriana's shrine is probably located at Minster because that church was of higher status in the later pre-Conquest period. Both churches would then have been part of the territory controlled in ecclesiastical terms by St Matheriana and her community, which may have originally been centred at Tintagel, and was certainly later focussed on Minster. Such a movement of ecclesiastical sites is not unparalleled, since the community of St Petroc also moved from a

coastal position at Padstow to a more sheltered inland site at Bodmin, probably some time after AD *c.*800. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (version C) records that Vikings raided *Sancte Petroces stow* in 981, and then proceeded to raid up and down the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. It is possible that this kind of activity could have prompted St Matheriana's community to move their main centre from the exposed position on Tintagel cliff-top to the hidden valley of Minster at around the same time. Whatever the specific reason, it also seems likely that Minster's patrons, who were probably members of a newly established Anglo-Saxon elite, would have been keen to have an important ecclesiastical centre close to the hundredal centre of Lesnewth, *c.* 2km to the west.

Taken together, this evidence shows that in the late pre-Conquest period the manorial centres of the Anglo-Saxon elite were increasingly close to (and sometimes adjacent to) ecclesiastical centres. In this way the new elite were creating in Cornwall a pattern that had long existed in Wessex, where churches and royal centres had commonly been closely associated since the seventh century (below, 4.6).

In summary, significant changes can be outlined in the spatial relationships between secular administrative centres and important churches in Cornwall over the course of the early middle ages. At the earliest stage (Phase 1), there appears to have been a close link between royal and ecclesiastical sites. The example of Tintagel suggests that at this time both secular and religious elements could be found within the same settlement. In Phase 2 (c.AD 600-900), there appear to have been a greater distance between churches and **lys* centres. Finally, in the centuries before the Norman Conquest, the new Anglo-Saxon political elite appear to have established new centres closer to ecclesiastical centres (or in the cases of St Kew and Probus, at the same places). These changes suggest that there was a strong relationship between church and secular elite established in the post-Roman period, the time when Christianity was first introduced to Cornwall. This was altered in succeeding centuries when churches seem to have been

established on self-sufficient estates that were free from direct day-to-day secular interference, and distant from secular centres. This accords with the evidence from Domesday Book and other sources relating to ecclesiastical estates (see 3.6, below). Finally, a higher degree of control over ecclesiastical affairs by the late Saxon elite is suggested by the increasingly close juxtaposition of new manorial and administrative centres with important churches.

3.5 Ecclesiastical centres and early medieval administrative structures

The origins of the Cornish hundreds are rather obscure. Whilst Picken argued that they date to the period after Anglo-Saxon control of Cornwall had been established, Thomas prefers an earlier origin (Picken 1965-7; Thomas 1964a; 1994: 216-7). The earliest list of Cornish hundred-names occurs in the folios of the Geld Inquest of *c.*1084-6, which are bound into the Exeter Domesday Book (Picken 1965-7; Thorn & Thorn 1979a). The names recorded here are not Cornish, but the English names of the manors which acted as their administrative centres around the time of Domesday. However, this does not necessarily mean that the hundreds themselves were English innovations. Elsewhere in England the late Saxon kings were undertaking administrative re-organisations which often involved focussing administrative functions at central manors. This process commonly led to hundreds losing earlier names and taking on the names of the administrative centres (Turner 2000).

In all but one case, the earliest mention of the Cornish names of the hundreds occurs in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries (Picken 1965-7). However, the name of one hundred, Trigg, is recorded in two pre-Conquest documents. The first is King Alfred's will, which records that Alfred left to Edward his eldest son the estate of Stratton in Triggshire (*æt Strætneat on Triconscire*; S1507, composed AD *c.*872 x 888; Keynes & Lapidge 1983). The earliest reference to Trigg is in the *First Life of St Sampson*, in a discussion of the saint's journey through Cornwall ('when he was walking through the district they call Trigg' (*...pagum quem Tircurium vocant...*; Olson 1989: 16). Thomas has discussed the name and suggests it may be derived form two words meaning 'three' and 'armies' or 'tribes' (Thomas 1994: 216). The later medieval hundred of Trigg or Stratton was sub-divided into three smaller hundreds (Stratton, Lesnewth and Trigg), and Thomas suggests that this division may have its origins in the early medieval period (Fig. 3.6).

The hundreds as they are recorded in Domesday may have been subject to some reorganisation. In particular, there are hints that there had been subdivisions of the hundred. These may have been analogous to Welsh 'commotes', of which there were commonly two or three to each *cantref* (Jones 1998). Besides Trigg, a number of other hundreds were also subdivided. In south-east Cornwall, the names of East and West Wivelshire suggest that a larger region had been subdivided (the name is Anglo-Saxon *twy-feald-scir*, 'two-fold shire'; Picken 1965-7). In the Geld Inquest, Rielton and Pawton hundreds appear to represent the area of medieval Pydar hundred. In addition, the hundreds of Trigg and Lesnewth each contain approximately one hundred settlements with *tre* place-name elements (Padel 1985: 216; and see below, 3.7). Although the hundred of Stratton contains very few place-names with *tre,* it seems likely that these were replaced by English names (e.g. those with the suffix *-tun*) in or before the tenth century (Padel 1999: 88-94). Padel notes that Kerrier has approximately 228 settlements whose name contains *tre* as the first element, and he suggests that this may be because it was a 'double hundred' (*cf.* Welsh *cantref*, 'one hundred trefs': Padel 1985: 227). The evidence relating to the hundreds therefore suggests that there could have been a fairly complex administrative system in development in Cornwall during the early middle ages, but that it may have gone through changes and re-organisations that cannot now be easily understood and are not clearly reflected in the earliest source, Exeter Domesday Book.

In Wales a similar system of *cantrefi* was probably established between the seventh and ninth centuries to act as a basis for the extraction of dues and for public administration (Charles-Edwards 1970-2; Jenkins 1988; in some parts of Wales this process may have begun at a later date: Jones 1998: 174-7). Here, the *cantrefi* were closely linked both to royal power and to ecclesiastical organisation (Longley 1997). For example, in Glamorgan there appear to have been 'twin' sites of royal and ecclesiastical centres a couple of miles apart (Jenkins 1988: 44-45). In Dyfed the seven hundreds each had an important monastery (Charles-Edwards 1970-2).

In Cornwall it is less clear that there was a close link between ecclesiastical and hundredal administration. The map of medieval hundreds and likely early monasteries shows that in each hundred there were several high-status churches. If the hundreds had previously been subdivided into smaller units, it is possible that there could have been a regular distribution of churches, perhaps one per administrative unit. For example, it is possible that in Kerrier hundred the division might have occurred along the boundary provided by the Helford River. The church of St Keverne might then have served the land to the south of the river and the church of Constantine the area to the north. However, because the dates of any administrative reorganisation remains unknown and the foundation dates of the various churches are uncertain, any such arrangement is purely hypothetical.

The evidence for pastoral provision in Cornwall and the *parochiae* through which it might have been administered also seems relatively slim. In a few cases there is clear evidence for large numbers of dependent chapels, which might suggest the area formerly dependent on a church for pastoral care. Launceston Priory had at least twelve dependent chapels in the later middle ages (Hull 1987: xxi). However, rights over these appear to have been granted to the church at various times, and did not necessarily represent an area administered by it since its foundation. Indeed, it has been suggested that Launceston was a relatively late foundation that encroached on the territory of an earlier monastery of St Padern at either North or South Petherwin (Hull 1987: xxii-xxiii; but *cf* Finberg 1953a). Nevertheless, there is no clear relationship between the secular administrative units and Launceston's possible *parochia*, which crosses both hundred and county boundaries in an area with a complex administrative history.

There are numerous other churches with signs of superior status in Cornwall, including many with dependent chapels, some of which never gained full parochial independence. Many of these are also churches identified by Olson as pre-Conquest clerical communities. For example, the

medieval parish of St Kew contained a chapel dedicated to St Aldhelm (Adams 1957; Orme 2000) whilst St Buryan had chapelries at Sennan and St Levan (Thomas 1988). In St Neot there was a chapel at St Luke's which had a kind of semi-official parochial status in the later middle ages, and although it eventually won burial rights the dead were originally buried at the mother church (Hull 1987: 36-7; see below, 3.8).

If the relationship suggested above (3.4) between the churches of Tintagel and Minster is correct, then both must have been part of a single early *parochia*. Thomas has stated that Minster served a larger area comprising several later parishes. The extent of Minster's influence is hinted at by the *Life of St Nectan,* a twelfth-century document which Orme has shown to have as much relevance to the ecclesiastical politics of north-east Cornwall as to hagiography (Orme 1992: 45-50). The *Life* appears to record an attempt by the important church of Hartland (Devon) to extend its influence over the other churches of north-west Devon and north-east Cornwall. However, it avoids claims over those churches in the area whose saints were well-known cult figures (such as St David and St Petroc), or those saints whose churches are of superior status (and their dependencies). In the study area the churches of Minster, Tintagel, Trevalga and Lesnewth fall into one or other of these categories since they are omitted from the document (Orme 1992: 50), suggesting an established ecclesiastical territory in the area.

The medieval church of St Keverne was paid a pension by Helston, which hints that there may have been a dependent relationship between the two (Hockey 1976: 223). Helston was the head manor of the hundred of Kerrier at the time of Domesday and any such relationship could suggest St Keverne formerly had a larger *parochia* than its later medieval parish, which was nevertheless the biggest in the Lizard peninsula. Historically, St Keverne parish is the heart of the region known as the 'Meneage'. This name is derived from the Cornish *manach* 'monk', and appears to stand for 'monkish (land)' (Padel 1985: 156; Olson 1989: 108-9). It is related to the Cornish *meneghy* 'sanctuary' (Padel 1985: 163). The Meneage is today

considered to be the parishes of St Keverne, St Anthony-in-Meneage, Manaccan, and St Martin-in-Meneage, with the eastern half of Mawgan-in-Meneage (Henderson 1958: 262). The earliest recorded use of the element *manach* is in a place-name recorded in a charter of 967 when King Edgar granted the estate of *lesmanaoc* (**lys* + *manach,* i.e. Lesneage) to his 'faithful *minister*' Wulfnoth Rumuncant, a man bearing both English and Cornish names (S 755; Hooke 1994a: 37-40). The earliest recorded use of the 'Meneage' to describe the region is in a charter dated *c.*1070 (Hull 1962: 1-2). Olson notes that the 'monkish land' of the Meneage '...corresponds to no known civil or ecclesiastical unit' (Olson 1989: 108). In her analysis she tries to identify the name with estates of land or another recorded unit of property, rather than in terms of the ownership of ecclesiastical or other administrative rights. However, it seems likely that this regional name could refer to the area of land over which a major landholding monastery held such powers, rather than to property it held. Olson identifies St Keverne as the major monastery in question. The 'Meneage' also forms a coherent geographical unit bounded by the sea to the east (with rough grazing on many of the cliff-tops), the Helford River to the north (with woodland near the shore along most of its length), and the upland rough grazing of Goonhilly Downs and Helston Downs to the west (Fig. 3.3). The small parishes of Manaccan and St Anthony to the north of St Keverne look likely on topographical grounds to have been later divisions of a pre-existing ecclesiastical administrative unit. However, there is no historical evidence from later medieval institutional links or other sources to suggest St Keverne had rights over the whole area. By the end of the Anglo-Saxon period it must have shared its ecclesiastical rights in the area with the church of St Mawgan-in-Meneage, which is mentioned (by place-name) in Domesday Book, and which had a dependent chapel with probable pre-Conquest origins at St Martin in Meneage (see below, 3.9). The suggestion that the Meneage formed a large *parochia* of St Keverne must therefore remain tentative. Other large parishes in Cornwall may also indicate the partial extent of pre-Conquest *parochiae*, and some churches such as

Perranzabuloe and (Old) Kea had very large medieval parishes (Orme 1999: 212-3).

The evidence of post-Conquest dependencies and large medieval parishes suggest that in Cornwall high-status churches had once had rights for the provision of pastoral care over fairly extensive areas. However, unlike the hundreds of Dorset and elsewhere in Wessex, it is hard to see hundreds and hypothetical *parochiae* in Cornwall which share the same boundaries (see 4.7, below). In part this may be because more minor churches were founded earlier in Cornwall than in Wessex, so eroding the traces of *parochiae* which survived in other areas (see 3.9 & 4.7, below). Administrative reorganisations may also have obscured any relationships, but it seems likely that unlike much of Wales and Anglo-Saxon England, there was not a very close correlation between ecclesiastical and secular administrative units in early medieval Cornwall.

3.6 Ecclesiastical estates in Cornwall

Evidence for early medieval ecclesiastical estates in Cornwall comes mainly from the folios of Domesday Book, although there are a small number of pre-Conquest charters containing valuable information about certain churches. In Domesday Book the Cornish church with the largest estate was St Petroc's at Bodmin, although it is important to note that the Bishop of Exeter's estates in the county were of considerably larger (these partly perpetuated lands earlier granted to the bishops of Sherborne, and to the bishop of Cornwall whose see was combined with Devon in 1050; S1296; Orme 1991: 22).

In the later eleventh century Bodmin's estates did not form one contiguous block, but were dispersed over a wide area (even including some land in Devon at Hollacombe and Newton St Petrock: S388; Thorn & Thorn 1985: 51,15-16). To a lesser extent the churches of St Piran's and perhaps St Kew also held estates dispersed along the north coast of Cornwall in the later pre-Conquest period (Olson 1989: 90; Thorn & Thorn: *Notes* E 1,4)). As a result there were blocks of detached ecclesiastical land, for example those in the area around Tintagel. St Petroc's held land at Treknow and Bossiney (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4, 20; 4,13), and St Piran's probably held the estate of *Tregrebi*, centred on Genver in Tintagel parish (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,8,10). However, comparison these estates with those of the other Cornish clerical communities recorded in Domesday Book suggests that they are not typical (see below). Rather than being ancient endowments, analogy with the late-Saxon growth of dispersed estates held by some major Wessex monasteries like Glastonbury (below, 4.8), suggests some of these Cornish estates may have been the result of processes whereby more favoured houses were granted land in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The fourth chapter of the Exeter Domesday Book for Cornwall (and in modified form, of Exchequer Domesday) records the land of various churches. Most of the entries note that the canons of a particular church hold

a particular estate; for example 'the canons of St. Achebrans hold St Keverne' (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,23). Apart from the dispersed estates noted above, all the other ecclesiastical estates appear to comprise the immediate areas around the landholding church. One of the most notable features of the Domesday Book entries for these estates is that without exception they are described as never having paid tax before the Norman Conquest. Olson argues that this geld-free status reflects an arrangement that had persisted since before the Anglo-Saxon political take-over of Cornwall, and points out that the Cornish estates of English ecclesiastical land-holders (the Bishop of Exeter and Tavistock Abbey) did not hold the same privilege (Olson 1989: 91-3). The case of St German's suggests that previously exempt land had tax levied upon it when it passed out of the hands of its the original owner. Here, a 24 hide estate had been split into two parts, with one half held by the canons of Germans and the other by the bishop of Exeter (and previously the bishop of Cornwall; Hooke 1994a: 18; Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 2,6). The canon's twelve hides remained exempt in 1066, whereas the bishop's paid tax for 2 hides. The exemption from geld may indeed represent a pre-Anglo-Saxon arrangement.

These Cornish ecclesiastical estates and their workers did not pay geld to the king, but only dues to their churches. Such exempt 'inlands' are not unique to Cornwall in Domesday Book, and can be found all over England (Faith 1997: 16-38). Nevertheless, the concentration of them in Cornwall is highly significant, and indicates an unusually large body of churches with freedom from secular dues (including Launceston (St Stephens), St Neot, St Piran's, Crantock, St Buryan, Probus, Constantine, St Germans, St Michael's Mount and St Petroc's, Bodmin: Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,1-29). This evidence is complementary to the above discussions which showed how Cornish religious communities were generally distant from Cornish royal vills and were not closely tied to secular administrative organisation. It suggests once again that major Cornish churches of the pre-Anglo-Saxon period had been relatively free from secular interference.

Information about Cornish churches' estates also suggests that this independence was eroded in the later pre-Conquest period. Several Anglo-Saxon charters record grants of land to Cornish churches. At St Buryan, King Athelstan granted the church one *mansa* 'divided in seven places' (*septem loca divisam*), which can probably be equated with the single hide the church held in Domesday (S450; Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,27). King Edgar granted the estate at Lanow in St Kew to the monastery of SS Docco and Kew, whose site is most likely that of the present parish church (Olson 1989: 81-4; Hooke 1994a: 33-7). The estate at St Kew later passed into secular hands, since in Domesday Book it is recorded as having been a manor of King Harold in 1066, although part of the manor became ecclesiastical again in the twelfth century (Olson 1989: 82-3). These Anglo-Saxon charters probably represent re-foundation grants, and there is some evidence to suggest that during the late Saxon period there was serious secular encroachment onto formerly ecclesiastical estates. The fate of St Kew's lands provides one example, and King Harold had also taken land from St Petroc's (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,21). Another charter records how a large estate at Tywarnhayle was granted into secular hands in the tenth century, probably at the expense of St Piran's, in whose later medieval parish (Perranzabuloe) all this territory lay (S684; Olson 1989: 95).

A more detailed examination of pre- and post-Conquest material from two study areas suggests that the estates of other Cornish collegiate churches suffered similar depletions after both Anglo-Saxon and Norman control had been established in the region.

St Keverne

St Keverne was the only land-holding religious house recorded in Domesday Book in the Lizard peninsula. The estate is recorded as 11 acres in 1086 (Thorn and Thorn 1979a: 4, 23). The size of the estate in 1066 is not recorded, but Domesday states that it paid 40s when it was received by the

Count (of Mortain), as opposed to 5s in 1086. This suggests that the estate had been acquired and reduced in value and perhaps size by the Count between 1066 and 1086 (discussed further below). The 11 acres of the Domesday tax assessment probably represents the core of the community's estates. It is almost certain that this was the same land which later formed Beaulieu Abbey's manor of Lanheverne. Beaulieu was granted the church of St Keverne in 1235 by Earl Richard of Cornwall, who had in turn been granted the land by his brother Henry III. The lands of the Counts of Mortain had previously reverted to the Crown after being forfeited for rebellion in 1106. It is very likely that the land given to Beaulieu had once been held by the Counts of Mortain. The main centre of Beaulieau's lands in St Keverne was at the barton of Tregonning, just north of the churchtown (Johns & Herring 1996: 85; 210-13; Henderson 1931: 51-3). In the mid-thirteenth century the Abbey's estates in the parish also included the properties of Rosenithon, Trelean Veor, Treleage Vean, Treskewes, Gwenter and Carnpessack; Henderson 1958: 264-8). The majority of these are in the immediate vicinity of the churchtown, and this is the area where *tre* settlements cluster most densely (see below, 3.7). None of the places just listed are recorded as separate estates in Domesday Book. It is therefore likely that the land where these settlements are located had been attached to St Keverne before the Norman Conquest, and had probably formed the core of the estate of St Keverne's community since its foundation.

Nevertheless, it seems likely that the estate granted to Beaulieu was smaller than St Keverne's original early medieval estate. Some evidence to suggest the extent of this comes from another eleventh-century document. The earliest use of the term 'Meneage' to describe the region is in a charter dated *c.*1070 in which Earl Robert, Count of Mortain and the greatest post-Conquest landholder in Cornwall, conveyed to Mont St Michel three estates in *Amaneth* or *Manaek*, one of which had its centre at the same *Lismanoch* or *Lesmanaek* (Lesneage) that had been granted to Wulfnoth Rumuncant in an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 967 (Hull 1962: 1-2; Henderson 1958: 270; S 755; Hooke 1994a: 37-40).

Henderson argued that it is likely to have been as a result of its monastic history that Earl Robert granted the estates at Traboe and Lesneage to Mont St Michel in *c.*1070 (Henderson 1958: 270). Henderson also suggested that all pre-Conquest grants by Anglo-Saxon kings in Cornwall should be regarded as the appropriation of Celtic monasteries' lands (Henderson 1958: 270). In the specific case of St Keverne, Hooke has followed this argument by suggesting that the three Anglo-Saxon charters from the Meneage show St Keverne's estates being broken up and put into secular hands in the tenth century (Hooke 1994b: 83-4). It may be more accurate to say that the estates were being granted into private hands, since the grant to Aethelweard (S832) is not certainly authentic, and estates defined by the same boundary clauses (S1027) were granted in 1059 to Bishop Ealdred of Worcester (formerly abbot of Tavistock, and subsequently archbishop of York).

The Anglo-Saxon charters do not state who was in possession of the lands concerned before they were granted, so it is not possible to be certain that it was the community of St Keverne in the case of the Meneage documents. However, the *c.*1070 grant by the Count of Mortain to Mont St Michel suggests that this was indeed the case, since it deals with much of the same area. The estates granted in this document were Traboe and Lesneage (in St Keverne) and Trevegris and Carvallack (in St Martin-in-Meneage). Henderson mapped the area he believed to have been encompassed by the *c.*1070 grant, and it includes almost all of the lands also involved in the major Anglo-Saxon grants of Traboe and Lesneage. In addition, it takes in further land in an area reaching down to the Helford River in the north of St Martin-in-Meneage (Henderson 1958: 272; Hull 1962: xxiii; Fig. 3.7)).

The grant of *c.*1070 appears to encompass a large area of land in the Meneage, but according to Henderson's reckoning of its extent it only included one estate which was recorded in Domesday Book (out of sixteen in the Meneage recorded in the survey). Domesday Book records neither of the important estates of Traboe or Lesneage, even though they had been the

subject of tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon charters. This strongly suggests that the area of the *c.*1070 grant had been part of another estate at the time of Domesday. As noted above, Domesday Book states that the Count received *Lannachebran* some time after 1066 and shows that the estate decreased significantly in value between this event and 1086. As noted above, the Count also granted a substantial estate to Mont St Michel in *c.*1070. It seems most likely that either a part or the whole of the area of the *c.*1070 grant had been deducted from *Lannachebran* in the interim by the Count and granted to the monastery of Mont St Michel. If only a part of the *c.*1070 grant was taken out of *Lannachebran*, it is possible that before conveying it to St Michael's the Count had re-united an area of formerly monastic land which had been broken up by the Anglo-Saxon grants to Wulfnoth Rumancant and Ealdred. Whether all or part of the land came from St Keverne's estate, it seems likely that the monastery had once held extensive estates in the Meneage, including the nucleal area around the churchtown, and probably the estates in the centre and north of the region mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon charters and Earl Robert's grant to Mont St Michel.

St Neot

In 1066 the church of St Neot and Godric *presbiter* together held the two manors of St Neot, a total of three hides of land which had never paid tax. These estates probably lay in the valley of the St Neot or Loveny River, south of the moorland edge and north of the River Fowey. The population of the two estates is enumerated in Domesday Book as 3 *servi*, 3 *villani*, and 10 *bordarii.* Such a high proportion of bordars is just what Faith has argued should be expected of the 'inland' of a monastic estate (Faith 1997: 70-4).

By the later middle ages, St Neot had become an ordinary parish church and had lost the collegiate status recorded in Domesday Book. The road from land-owning community to parish church is documented in Domesday Book

and later sources, and other evidence suggests it was a journey that had begun well before the Norman Conquest. Although three hides had been held by Neot's community in 1066, by 1086 all but one Cornish acre had passed into the hands of a certain Odo, who held the estates from the Count of Mortain. Between 1086 and 1095, William of Mortain probably acquired the rest of the church's property. Around that year the priory of Montacute in Somerset (a foundation of the Count) acquired St Neot church together with its remaining estates and the demesne tithes (Henderson 1929: 40-1). Thus the whole of the estate of St Neot had passed into secular hands and subsequently been granted to a newly founded church by the end of the eleventh century, a similar history to that described above for the estates of St Keverne.

It seems likely, however, that the area from which St Neot drew revenue had once been greater than that recorded in Domesday Book. As mentioned above (Section 3.4), Fawton, the head manor of the hundred and administrative centre of the Count of Mortain at Domesday, was probably first established in the late Anglo-Saxon period. The exact extent of its estates is unclear: at two hides, the area of agricultural land attached to Fawton in Domesday Book seems relatively small (particularly in comparison to nearby Liskeard's 12 hides). However, the Domesday entry also records that Fawton had land for 30 ploughs, with 20 *servi*, 30 *villani*, and 20 *bordarii*, suggesting that the hidation recorded may not reflect the actual size of the estate. Perhaps Fawton's most significant attribute was the massive area of pasture it controlled (described in Domesday Book as 7 leagues long and 4 leagues wide). This mainly represents the rough grazing land on the moors north of the manorial centre.

Topographical considerations and later documentary sources encourage the tentative suggestion that this area would once have been attached to St Neot's church. This was the only known major high-status centre between the moor and the River Fowey before the foundation of Fawton, and on purely geographical grounds is the most likely place to have controlled this

land. In the later medieval period, several grants were made of estates north of Fawton to the priories of Launceston and Montacute (Austin *et al.* 1989: 26-30). This hints that the land had been ecclesiastical in the pre-Anglo-Saxon past, like the estates in the Lizard (discussed above) that were granted by Robert of Mortain to Mont St Michel (Henderson 1958: 270).

The general historical context and the specific local conditions also suggest this reconstruction is correct. As discussed by Austin *et al.* (1989) and Gerrard (S. Gerrard 2000), the moors in the northern part of the study area contain rich tin deposits which were probably exploited on a more-or-less continuous basis from prehistory to the nineteenth century. Maddicott has argued that the Anglo-Saxon kings of the late ninth and tenth centuries relied increasingly on south-western resources such as tin for the prosperity of their kingdom, and that they (re-)established centres such as Lydford and Exeter in Devon to control trade and distribution (Maddicott 1989: 35-6). It is known from Alfred the Great's will that the kings of Wessex owned land in Cornwall, and it is fairly certain that Alfred himself was active in the area south of Bodmin Moor (e.g. his visit to the shrine of St Gueriir, probably at St Neot; Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 173-178; 89). Many ecclesiastical centres in England saw their estates reduced by royal powers at about this time for specific political and economic reasons (see e.g. Nelson 1983; Fleming 1985; and 4.10, below). It is reasonable to suggest that much of the land over which St Neot had exercised control was appropriated by the crown when Fawton was established, at least partly in order to supervise trade and distribution of the resources of the moorland, including tin.

To summarise, the church of St Neot may have controlled an extensive area of land around the southern edge of Bodmin Moor in the later part of the ninth century, comprising its Domesday estates, and probably those of Fawton as well. As a pilgrimage centre it was famous enough to attract kings of Wessex such as Alfred the Great. However, in the late ninth or tenth century, the same kings established the manorial centre of Fawton to bring the resources of the moorland more firmly under their control and to

act as the centre of the hundred. This meant that the resources St Neot drew on were reduced. This impoverishment continued in the eleventh century when first the estate held by Godric in 1066 and later all but one acre of the rest of the community's land were seized by the Count of Mortain, who had also gained control of Fawton. Finally, the church lost its independence and its remaining land when it was taken by Earl Robert of Mortain and granted to his foundation at Montacute at the end of the eleventh century.

It was noted above (3.4) that the tradition of granting land to churches had probably developed in Cornwall from an early date, certainly before Anglo-Saxon control over the region was established. Domesday Book records at least some of these ecclesiastical estates before most of them were completely secularised or granted to distant monasteries during the later middle ages. Various sources suggest that in their heyday the estates of communities like those of St Keverne and St Neot had comprised fairly large, contiguous areas. By the time Domesday Book was compiled many of these had suffered extensive secular encroachment, which is reflected both in Domesday Book itself and in other documentary sources (see also 3.8, below, for a discussion of archaeological evidence which may relate to these developments). However, they were still free from secular dues, and Domesday Book makes it clear that it was the saints for whom the communities and estates were named who were the sole beneficiaries of their own lands. The saint and his or her church were at the heart of the ecclesiastical estate, and acted as the central focus for life in the region. This centrality is also visible in the distribution of ordinary settlements, the subject of the next section.

3.7 Ecclesiastical centres and ordinary settlements

Four phases of settlement development in Cornwall between the Romano-British period and the late medieval period were suggested above (Chapter 2.3). This section will attempt to investigate at a detailed local level the relationships between the three main early medieval settlement phases. It will also use the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) introduced above (Chapter 2.2) to set the settlement sites in a wider context, and to relate them and patterns of agricultural exploitation to ecclesiastical centres.

The HLC methodology used for the case studies in this chapter was described above (Chapter 2.2). As outlined there, HLC is a technique for understanding and mapping the landscape with reference to its historical development (McNab & Lambrick 1999: 54), and the aim in the Cornwall case studies was to outline the extent of three broad types of landscape resource in the medieval period: medieval farmland, rough ground, and woodland. The sources used to create these HLCs were historic maps (Tithe maps, estate maps and early Ordnance Survey maps) and archaeological field surveys. The area identified as 'medieval farmland' is intended to represent this landscape type at its maximum extent, which means the area under cultivation around the time of the climatic/demographic optimum of the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries (Johnson & Rose 1994: 114). As a result, the HLC maps used for the case studies certainly show a greater area as 'medieval farmland' than would have been in the pre-Norman Conquest period. The area under cultivation was larger in the later medieval period for several reasons. As described above (2.3), there was an expansion of settlement into formally 'marginal' zones from around the tenth century onwards, and in particular during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (settlement Phase 4). The fields of these settlements are included within the 'medieval farmland' zone of the HLC maps. There were also areas that were normally rough ground in the medieval period, but were occasionally ploughed for arable. These may be indicated by areas of apparently unenclosed ridge-and-furrow cultivation, such as those that occur within the

St Neot study area on Bodmin Moor (Austin *et al.* 1989; Johnson & Rose 1994). These have also been included in the HLCs where they have been identified through archaeological surveys. Nevertheless, settlements of different periods have different patterns of distribution in the three landscape zones identified in the HLC, and it is argued below that important information about the structure of the medieval landscape can be discerned from these differences (see below).

In all three study areas, the medieval farmland and rough ground identified in the HLCs covered the greater part of the medieval landscape (Fig.s 3.8, 3.9 & 3.10). In the 296km^2 which make up the study areas (8.2% of the total area of Cornwall), 35% of the land was rough ground, 59% medieval farmland, and 6% woodland. This accords well with Rackham's estimate for the county of 33% rough ground in the eleventh century (Rackham 1986: 335) and Herring's of 30% (Herring 1999b: 20) (see Table 3.4). Both fields and rough ground provided important economic resources, although there are relatively few sources which show how they were exploited. Archaeological excavations are beginning to provide environmental evidence (e.g. Morris & Harry 1997), and documentary sources such as pre-Conquest charters (and their boundary-clauses) sometimes make mention of fields or ground cover (see Hooke 1994a, *passim*). Domesday Book provides approximations of the amount of each of the three resources, although it does not specify exactly how or where they were distributed across the landscape. The medieval farmland zone must have been the principal area for arable, although as noted above some crops were periodically grown on what was normally rough ground. The medieval farmland also provided most year-round grazing land, and was the area where early medieval settlements were located (as shown below). The rough ground also had an economic value, and probably provided resources such as turf, furze, and summer grazing (Herring 1986: vol 1, 98-113; 1999b: 20). The rough ground occurs largely on the higher hills and downs in the study areas, in particular around St Neot and Tintagel. Nevertheless, significant amounts of it occur at lower altitudes in both study areas. In

Tintagel, the cliff-tops were used extensively for rough ground, and in St Neot areas of rough ground occur below the 200m contour at Goonzion Downs, Treslea Downs and Cardinham Downs, and below the 150m contour at Tawna Downs and Holtroad Downs. Environmental or climatic determinism is not adequate to explain the distribution of these different resources. As noted above, Caseldine has claimed that the climatic fluctuations of the last 5000 years would not necessarily be great enough to prevent effective agriculture on almost any of Cornwall's soils (above, 3.3; Caseldine 1999: 32). The only likely exception to this are the gley soils which occur in particular on the Lizard peninsula, to the south and east of St Keverne (Caseldine 1999). These may have retained so much moisture throughout the year that agriculture would have been difficult, and may help to explain why the relatively low-lying downs of St Keverne parish were not farmed for arable in the medieval period. Even so, the distribution of Romano-British settlements suggests that there were attempts to use this land for agriculture in the pre-medieval period (see below). Finally, woodland provided grazing, fuel and building materials; in all three study areas this was mainly located in the steep lower slopes of the river valleys.

Settlement Patterns in Early Medieval Cornwall: Three Case Studies

The main phases of settlement pattern change and development were outlined above (Chapter 2.3). This section will examine the three case-study areas in detail and discuss the relationships between different types of settlements, HLC land-use zones, and early medieval churches. The value of selecting case-studies for close scrutiny were also discussed above (Chapter 2.2); in particular it is important that the data about every individual site included has been carefully verified and mapped.

St Neot

Although no settlement site in the St Neot study area dating to this period has been excavated, analogy with other parts of Cornwall suggests this was the time when enclosed Romano-British settlements (rounds) were replaced in the settlement hierarchy by unenclosed early medieval settlements (identifiable by habitative place-name elements, e.g. the generics (first elements) *tre* and **bod*; see Chapter 2 above for discussion, 2.2-2.3). There are fifty-three likely or possible rounds in the St Neot area, and they are distributed fairly evenly across it. The HLC shows that rounds frequently occur on the extreme edge of the area of medieval farmland or just within the zone of rough ground (Fig. 3.11). For example, of the seven certain rounds, five are in such positions. As the medieval farmland appears to have been expanded considerably in this area in the late pre-Conquest and later medieval periods (see below), it is likely that most of these rounds (e.g. Higher Langdon, Berry Castle and Lestow) would have been well within the rough grazing zone in the earlier middle ages. This indicates a likely contraction in the area under cultivation between the end of the Romano-British period and the early middle ages, since rounds are most likely to have been surrounded by their fields, as has been demonstrated elsewhere in Cornwall (Johnson & Rose 1982: 173-175 & Fig.12; Rose & Preston-Jones 1995: 60 & Fig.3.2). The distribution of rounds also shows some variations. Although rounds are fairly evenly distributed in the south and west, there are few know examples in the south-east part of the study area. There are scattered examples in the northern sector and several cases in the valley of the River Fowey.

Settlements in the study area with the *tre* place-name element occur exclusively in the zone of medieval farmland (Fig. 3.12). This distribution exhibits a number of important differences compared to that of Romano-British rounds. Particularly striking is the area of medieval Cardinham parish. Here there are two certain and two likely examples of rounds, and twelve further possible cases. There is also one example of a large round or

small hillfort at the multivallate enclosure of Bury Castle in Cardinham, perhaps a central place in the Iron Age. However, there are no examples of *tre* settlements at all, and only very few Cornish place-names with habitative elements (one *tyr* at Trezance and one *hendre* at Hendre (see Padel 1985)). In the northern part of the study area there is a complete lack of habitative Cornish place-names anywhere north of Trebinnick (see Fig. 2.2a), although there are a number of rounds (Fig. 3.11). This strongly suggests that settlement in these zones was considerably more dense in the Iron Age and Romano-British period than in the early medieval period.

Places with names in *tre* and other habitative elements tend to cluster in the southern portions of the medieval parishes of Warleggan, St Neot and St Cleer. It is likely that this area formed the 'core' of the zone of early medieval settlement. Within this zone the church of St Neot appears to act as a focus for settlements with Cornish habitative name-elements (Fig. 3.13). There are virtually no *tre* settlements outside a 3km radius of the church to the north, west or south, the zone beyond this being characterised by a belt of rough grazing and woodland several kilometres wide. It is only to the east in the southern part of St Cleer parish that they continue to occur. This distribution is likely to depend upon the location of Liskeard, some 7.5km to the south-east of St Neot. Liskeard was almost certainly a major secular administrative centre in the early middle ages (3.4, above), and it is possible that it acted as a focus for early medieval settlement in a similar way to the monastery at St Neot (although detailed study to confirm this has not been undertaken).

There seems to be little correlation between the location of the later parish churches in the area and the distribution of early medieval settlements with habitative name-elements, suggesting they did not act as focal points when the early medieval settlement pattern was being established. Cardinham is completely outside the distribution of *tre* settlements, and Warleggan lies on its western edge. The chapel at St Luke's, which may have had semi-parochial status in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is at the northern

extremity of St Neot parish far distant from the main areas of medieval farmland (Rose 1994: 79). Only St Cleer and St Neot are within the main zone occupied by settlements with *tre* names (Fig. 3.14).

The 'core' of early medieval farmland was probably expanded into the woodlands and on to the moors and downs from the late pre-Norman period onwards, continuing with greater momentum in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (settlement phases 3 & 4; see 2.3, above). This process and the evidence used to investigate it is discussed at length by Austin *et al.* (1989: 17-38) and Johnson & Rose (1994: 77-87), and is based on a combination of place-names, medieval documents, archaeological excavations and environmental evidence. For example, the analysis of pollen cores and excavated material from the Bunning's Park research project strongly suggest that this area of rough ground was only occupied by permanent settlements from the late eleventh century at the earliest (for Bunning's Park pottery and pollen analyses see respectively the contributions by O'Mahoney (pp.133-141) and Walker (pp.179-189) in Austin *et al.* 1989). Post-conquest documents which give a rough indication of the limit of cultivated ground also suggest that expansion was a relatively late phenomenon (see Austin *et al.* 1989: 23-38; Rose 1994: 79-80). The main distribution of settlements with English place-names is on the edge of the woodland and rough ground, and it is likely that many of them were established during this expansion of the settled area. Parish churches like Cardinham and Warleggan stand in areas with many such place-names, and it is possible that they were established around this time to serve newly-independent estates in these areas of 'secondary' settlement (Fig. 3.15).

Tintagel

The major post-Roman centre at Tintagel Island was discussed above (above, 3.4). It is the only settlement in the Tintagel study area with excavated evidence for occupation in the early medieval period, dating from

the third to the seventh centuries AD. Of eight certain or probable rounds in the study area, the HLC shows that three are located in the zone of medieval rough ground, and two further examples are immediately adjacent to it. This contrasts sharply with the pattern of settlements with *tre* place-names, which are focussed in the area of medieval farmland above the coastal rough grazing on the clifftops (Fig. 3.16).

Both rounds and settlements with *tre* place-names are quite densely distributed in the (later medieval) parish of Tintagel. This illustrates the fact that there were also some significant continuities between the Roman and medieval periods: the re-adjustment of the sixth-seventh centuries was a re-focussing and retraction of the farmed area, not a complete shift to previously unused land. This area had been the immediate hinterland of the elite centre at Tintagel Island, and it is likely to have been the core of the estate which provided an agricultural surplus for the Island's rulers. If so, the farmers of the settlements with *tre* names which cluster in the medieval farmland around Tintagel would be the successors to this estate. It was noted above that Tintagel churchyard may have remained active as a Christian centre throughout the early middle ages, despite the demise of the neighbouring high-status centre in the sixth or seventh centuries (3.4). It is possible that the early Christian centre here took on some of the central-place attributes of Tintagel Island after its demise; it appears to have continued to act as a focal point for the surrounding agrarian landscape.

As in the St Neot study area, settlements with English place-names are largely peripheral to the pattern of Cornish names, and probably represent later pre-Conquest or even post-Conquest expansion from the earlier medieval 'core' (settlement phase 3 (2.3, above); Fig. 3.17). The HLC reveals that many of these settlements are on the very edge of the medieval rough ground, (e.g. Treven, Treway, Ringford, Trela, Vendown and Downrow). Some have names that indicate their relationship to rough grazing land such as Anderton ('under-the-down'), Vendown ('marsh on the down') and both the Trevens in the study area (that in Tintagel was *atte*

Fenn in 1317; the St Juliot example was *la Fenne* in 1314: *ICS Index*). Nearby Newton stands isolated high (c.230m) amid Tresparret Downs, and Padel has recently commented that 'Newtons' in Cornwall are likely to date to as late as the twelfth to fifteenth centuries (this example was first recorded in 1317: *ICS Index*; Padel 1999: 92).

St Keverne

Rounds are distributed fairly evenly in the area around St Keverne. Sixty-two examples have been identified, of which fifteen are certain instances and a further twelve are considered probable examples. The remainder have been identified through field- and place-names or through preliminary field or air survey. Compared to the other two Cornish study areas, rounds are relatively infrequent in the zone of rough ground identified by the HLC, with only four possible examples in rough ground and one probable example in woodland (Fig. 3.18). This may suggest that the directly cultivated area in the Meneage remained more constant throughout prehistory and up to the late- or post-medieval period than in the other study areas in Cornwall. Johns & Herring also point out that the terminal reave of the Trebarveth Bronze Age field system may be the boundary which still defines the edge of the area of rough grazing known as Main Dale, although they note that in the past it probably extended further to the east than today (south of St Keverne churchtown: Johns & Herring 1996: 79). In addition, several certain or possible prehistoric standing stones are close to (or still mark) the division between the rough ground and the anciently farmed land, for example those at Crousa, Tremenheere and Trelanvean. In the neighbouring region of West Penwith, where standing stones are much more common than on the Lizard, it has been argued that marking this division was originally one of the main roles of the stones (Peters 1990). As noted above, the downs of the Lizard are one of few areas of Cornwall where poor soil conditions may have prevented effective agriculture, and this may have

acted to constrain agricultural activity in the past to certain areas (Caseldine 1999).

While the general extent of cultivated land in the St Keverne area may have remained more or less constant, it is nonetheless possible to identify areas with different concentrations of rounds. In particular, the area around St Keverne churchtown seems not to have been densely settled with rounds. As Johns & Herring note, this may have been because settlements of the period in this area were not enclosed and have therefore not left substantial earthworks or cropmarks, or perhaps because sites have not been identified (1996). It is also possible that rounds were destroyed more in areas of land which saw more intensive medieval exploitation, such as that around St Keverne (see below). Nevertheless, sites like Gear (a major round or small hillfort now in St Martin-in-Meneage parish) and the many rounds which have been identified close to it suggest that the foci of the settlement pattern were different in the Iron Age and Romano-British periods to later times.

Only one site possibly dating to the immediate post-Roman period has been excavated in the study area, at Trebarveth. As well as stone artefacts, a large quantity of pottery was recovered which Thomas has described as Romano-British to early medieval, and the site may have been occupied as late as AD 1100. The site could represent a rare example of an ordinary unenclosed settlement of the post-Roman to early medieval periods (Serocold *et al.* 1949; Thomas 1959). However, the identification and typology of much of this material is not secure and the site and its archive is in need of re-excavation and re-examination (Johns & Herring 1996: 84).

This study area, and St Keverne parish in particular, has the densest distribution of *tre* settlements in the whole of Cornwall, and the early medieval landscape of settlement can be mapped here with some confidence (Johns & Herring 1996: 56-8). As in the other study areas, *tre* settlements occur exclusively in the zone of medieval farmland. This shows that as elsewhere in Cornwall distinctions were made between the area of cultivated

land and settlements, and the area of rough ground used mainly as pasture. Particularly notable is the area around St Keverne itself, which has been identified by Olson from tenth- and eleventh century documentary sources as a probable early monastic centre (Olson 1989). There is a particularly marked concentration of settlements with *tre* names here (Fig. 3.19; Johns & Herring 1996; Padel 1985). This pattern of early medieval settlement around the church of St Keverne strongly suggests that it was acting as a central focus when the early medieval settlement pattern was being established between perhaps the sixth and ninth or tenth centuries. The area with the densest distribution of *tre* settlements seems likely to have been the core of the estate of St Keverne's monastery which was held by Beaulieu Abbey in the later medieval period (discussed above, 3.6).

Early medieval settlements do not appear to cluster in the same way around the other sites which later became medieval parish churches in the area (St Mawgan-in-Meneage, St Anthony-in-Meneage and Manaccan; Fig. 3.20). It has been suggested that St Mawgan-in-Meneage could have been an early medieval monastic centre, and the place-name *Scanct Mawan* is recorded as dependency of the royal manor of Winnianton in Domesday Book (Orme 2000; Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 1,1). However, if St Mawgan was a monastery it does not seem to have influenced local landscape organisation in the same way as St Keverne, which may suggest it was a later foundation or a less important site. An interesting comparison can be made with St Petroc's at Bodmin. This site was traditionally not founded until some time after AD *c.*800, when St Petroc's main house was supposed to have been moved to Bodmin from Padstow (Olson 1989: 53-56). Oliver Padel's maps of Cornish place-names reveal that the area around the new foundation is largely devoid of early medieval *tre* place-names, like its neighbour Cardinham parish (see above; Fig. 2.8; Padel 1999: 89-91).

Conclusions: Important Churches and Early Medieval Settlements

The evidence discussed above strongly suggests that the early medieval settlement pattern was based around 'core' areas of settlements and their farmland which were surrounded by outer zones of rough moorland and woodland. It has previously been suggested that Cornwall's early churches were located in isolated positions (e.g. Aston 2000a: 41; Todd 1987: 244). However, this opinion is not consistent with the evidence from settlement studies. As shown above, early ecclesiastical centres at St Keverne, St Neot and Tintagel lie at the heart of 'core' areas of early medieval settlement (Figs. 3.13, 3.16, 3.19). In addition, the settlement pattern established during the early medieval centuries was substantially different to that of the preceding period. Although much farmland remained under cultivation, there was a general retraction and re-focussing of medieval farmland onto the new core settlement areas. Important ecclesiastical centres commonly lay at the centre of such core settlement areas.

Padel's maps of Cornish habitative place-name elements suggest that similar concentrations surround many other likely early ecclesiastical communities such as Padstow, St Kew, Crantock, Probus, St Germans and St Buryan (Padel 1999: 89). In some cases, these settlements may represent the dwellings of members of the religious community as with the example of St Keverne (discussed above). Elsewhere, it is possible that the *domus* of Wrmonoc's ninth-century *Life of St Paul Aurelian* represent settlements held by individual members of religious communities rather than separate monasteries (Olson 1989: 23). The tenth-century charter for St Buryan (S450) grants land divided into seven places (...*in septem loca divisam*...). Five of the six places whose names survive in the charter have habitative place-name elements in either *tre* or **bod* (Hooke 1994a: 22-27), and shows that the religious community directly held settlements in the surrounding area. The Domesday Book entries for St Neot also hint that individual members of communities may have held particular farms from their

churches, since a named priest (*Godric presbiter*) is recorded as holding part of the community's estate (Thorn & Thorn 1979a; 4.28, 5.14.2; see also Pearce's discussion of the estates of Hartland in Devon: Pearce 1985). It is therefore possible that the ecclesiastical centre would not have had extensive living accommodation, but perhaps just churches or chapels where members of the community could congregate for meetings at certain times.

The early Cornish ecclesiastical centres appear to have been at the very centre of the re-ordered landscape of early medieval settlements and landscape resources, and to have provided focal points in landscapes of highly dispersed settlement. It seems likely that rather than being determined by pre-existing farming practice or patterns of secular endowment, much of the emerging medieval landscape of settlement and agriculture was organised according to a model driven by the ideology of the newly established churches.

3.8 Ritual sites and monuments in the wider landscape

Christianity was not introduced into a religious vacuum in post-Roman and early medieval Cornwall, and a pre-existing belief system must have existed. Though little evidence survives for how this system worked, a number of sources reveal faint traces of it. In west Cornwall fogous are associated with rounds, and normally take the form of long, thin underground chambers, (e.g. Halligye fogou, St Mawgan-in-Meneage; Startin 1982). Their function is uncertain: though they have been thought to be ritual structures, it seems more likely that they were stores (Todd 1987: 173-5). Whatever the case, no examples are known to have been in use later than the fourth century (Todd 1987: 173-5). Other classes of pre-Christian sacred sites may have been incorporated into the new Christian landscape. Various Cornish place-names may allude to pagan sacred *loci*, such as the element 'nemet' in 'Lanivet', meaning a sacred grove (Padel 1985). The early hagiographical sources set incidents at caves, standing stones and paths. In one incident in his *Vita Prima* St Samson convinces some apostates he finds worshipping at a standing stone to return to the Christian faith (and is supposed to have Christianised the monument in question with his mark); in another, a fearful cave-dwelling serpent or dragon is killed by the saint who then lives temporarily as a hermit in the cave whilst his followers build a monastery nearby (Olson 1989: 14-28). While these may be commonplaces of the hagiographical genre, it seems likely that such sites were venerated in pre-Christian times, as they were elsewhere in Britain and Europe (see also 4.2, below). Archaeological evidence cannot often demonstrate clearly the way such sites were used, or even the period of use. However, it does show that monuments such as standing stones were common in the Cornish landscape (e.g. the Longstone at Tremenheere (St Keverne; i.e. 'the estate' (*tre*) 'at the menhir' (*men hir*), whose medieval place-name is first recorded in 1312 (*ICS Index*)). Some holy wells, commonly regarded as the quintessential 'pagan' Celtic survivals (Rattue 1995: 46), may indeed perpetuate the sites of pre-Christian sacred springs. Probably the earliest standing medieval building in Cornwall is a well-

chapel at Constantine, St Merryn (perhaps of ninth-century date); this may provide evidence for the elaboration of a site which already had sacred significance (Todd 1987: 293). Nevertheless, holy wells were also a fundamental element of the medieval Christian landscape, providing water for baptisms and other purposes; all the probable early Cornish monasteries had holy wells in the middle ages, as did many parish churches. The geographical positions of many of these wells, which tend to stand very close to later medieval chapels or churches and within their glebe or estate land, probably suggest that they acquired their holy status by association after the church in question was founded. The dedication of the holy well of St Keverne hints at this. The well is first recorded in the thirteenth century as *funten kiran* (Henderson 1958: 277). The patron of St Keverne seems to have been identified with St Ciaran of Saighir and commonly referred to as *Kieranus* in the Latin sources from the thirteenth century onwards (Orme 2000: 160). The fact that the well was associated with Kieran rather than a saint with the earlier name form *Achabranus* (as recorded in Domesday Book) may suggest that it post-dated this change and was therefore of late medieval origin. Without reliable archaeological evidence for continuity of use, it is impossible to identify which are very ancient and which only gained their sacred associations in the middle ages. For this reason the discussion below focuses on sites where excavated evidence can provide clearer evidence of continuity, as at some burial grounds.

Besides an currently unknown number of existing pre-Christian monuments, new minor religious *foci* were created in the early medieval period including burial sites, crosses and chapels. Minor churches and chapels are discussed below (3.9); the present section will assess some evidence for other types of sites that may have had a sacred significance and the roles they played in the developing Christian landscape.

Burials and cemeteries

Some elite burials may have acquired a new social and political significance in early medieval period, probably connected to the emergence of an independent polity and the establishment of a Christian ideology. Some may have been used to show power over the land, like those under inscribed stones in boundary locations. Others expressed the ability of the deceased to access the spiritual power of the church through burial in the cemeteries of major ecclesiastical centres like Phillack, Crantock or Tintagel. These may also have provided opportunities to enact new rituals such as the funeral *cenae* which may have taken place in Tintagel graveyard in the sixth century (Nowakowski & Thomas 1992).

However, the historical and archaeological evidence suggests that most burials continued to take place in cemeteries that were not directly associated with churches or chapels until at least the ninth or tenth centuries. In Cornwall, the burial customs of the early medieval period developed and continued traditions that had existed since the Iron Age. There were certain modifications, such as the development of oriented burial and the elongation of cists, but the kind of locations employed for burial remained substantially the same (Petts 2001). Indeed, some cemeteries were probably used more or less continuously for burial from the Romano-British period until the later middle ages (e.g. Trevone and Trethillick near Padstow, both sites of later medieval chapels; Preston-Jones 1984: 176; Petts 2001).

Most burials of the early medieval period took place in stone-built cists or dug graves. Grave-goods are virtually unknown, and without good stratigraphic evidence or radiocarbon dating it is very hard to date the burials accurately because of the similarity to pre-Christian and later medieval practice. Cemeteries away from religious centres could exist as late as the tenth century. At Mawgan Porth, a cist-cemetery was found in probable association with a settlement that was not deserted until the tenth

or eleventh century (Bruce-Mitford 1997). Other probable early medieval cist cemeteries in the same parish include Carnanton and Lanvean (Preston-Jones 1984: 168). In the parish of St Kew, the earliest documented Cornish monastery, two cist-burial grounds have been excavated at St Endellion and Treharrock (Trudgian 1987; Johns 1995). Although the St Endellion cemetery was close to the medieval parish church there, the cemetery, which appears to be much more extensive than the parish graveyard, is divided in two by the parish boundary. This suggests it originated before the parish boundary was established, and before the foundation of the church, whose own burial ground may perpetuate a small part of the cist-cemetery. Like Treharrock and Mawgan Porth, a burial ground at Treath on the Lizard was not associated with a medieval chapel; Henderson observed at least four stone-built graves being disturbed in the garden of a house here (Henderson 1958: 328).

These sites illustrate that burial places, like settlements, were dispersed across the early medieval landscape until at least the later pre-Conquest period in Cornwall (see further below, 3.9). Petts has argued that they were not commonly enclosed until the later eighth century, and many may have remained unbounded until considerably later (Petts 2001).

Inscribed Stones

'Inscribed stones' are found all over western Britain and Ireland. Those of south-west Britain occur mainly in Cornwall, where there are around 35 surviving examples, with others in Devon and west Somerset (Thomas 1994; see Okasha 1993 for catalogue, illustrations and the known history of each monument). Although Thomas has argued against significant continental European input (Thomas 1994: 278), the monuments of the South West seem to show an absorption and fusion of two streams of influence, from both Irish-influenced south Wales and from continental Europe (Knight 1996). It has recently been argued that some of the

compositions demonstrate considerable literary sophistication (e.g. Howlett 1998; Thomas 1998), and in the inscribed stones of the post-Roman centuries are the work of an elite consciously identifying themselves as such (and in some cases also as Christians; Knight 1992);

The dating of these monuments is a contentious topic (Okasha 1993; Thomas 1994: 69; *cf.* Thomas 1998). Whilst Okasha and Thomas concur that the inscriptions show the majority of them were probably produced between the fifth and seventh centuries, some monuments continued to be erected after this. The Lanteglos-by-Camelford stone bears a vertical inscription (in the manner of the earlier Latin- or ogam-inscribed stones) written in old English, proving that similar monuments continued to be commissioned well into the early middle ages (Okasha 1993: 141-145). The use of inscribed stones in Cornwall probably overlaps both early medieval settlement phases 1 and 2 (above, 2.3 & 3.7), and the transition from settlement predominately in rounds to settlement in unenclosed farmsteads.

Although relatively few of them bear obviously Christian iconography or formulae, about half of the thirty-five or so monuments in Cornwall come from churchyards. It has been argued that the presence of an inscribed stone and a **lann* place-name or enclosure strongly suggest an early Christian site (e.g. Thomas 1994: 312; Preston-Jones 1992: 112). However, excavation has yet to show that any inscribed stone is contemporary with a south-western **lann*-type enclosure (above, Chapter 1). It is likely that stones now in churchyards probably have one of three origins. Firstly, they may have originated at unenclosed burial-sites which were not elaborated with churches until the ninth or tenth centuries. Carnsew is the possible example to have been excavated in Cornwall (Okasha 1993, No.16; Thomas 1994: 183-196), although in Wales inscribed stones are known from the unenclosed field cemeteries at Arfyn (Angelsey) and Pentrefoelas (Denbighshire) (Knight 1999: 140; Petts 2002a). Secondly, they may have been set up at the sites of early monasteries. Likely examples include the stones from St Kew and Phillack, and possibly the Lundy stones (Okasha

1993 Nos. 52, 39, 25, 26, 27 & 28; Thomas 1994: 163-182). Finally, many have probably been transported to churches from other places. The known history of many inscribed stones proves that they can easily be moved about for a variety of purposes. Like later pre-Conquest sculpture they may have been recognised in the middle ages as 'Christian' monuments and transported to churches for incorporation in the fabric of the church or churchyard (see below, and 4.10). Inscribed stones at churches are perhaps less likely to be in their original positions than those from elsewhere in the landscape.

Around half the inscribed stones in Cornwall are from locations away from churches, chapels or former religious sites. While some of these stones were also funerary monuments, they may also have acted as boundary markers. Handley has suggested that the meanings of inscribed stones changed over time, and has argued that stones associated with land ownership tend to be later in date than those whose role was solely memorial (Handley 1998: 353-4). The use of inscribed stones in Cornwall may be relatively late compared to Wales and Ireland, where the tradition probably developed earlier (Thomas 1994). Handley's interpretation would suggest that many stones in Cornwall could have been erected at a time when the early medieval landscape was being re-organised in the sixth or seventh centuries. There are a number of relevant examples. The stone at Boslow in West Penwith is located on the parish boundary between the medieval parishes of St Just and Sancreed, and close to the boundary between rough grazing land and ancient enclosed land depicted by modern and early Ordnance Survey maps. It stands on a low hump which may be a small barrow (Thomas 1994: 293). The nearby stone at Madron occupies a similar position between the parishes of Morvah and Madron (Okasha 1993, Nos.3 & 31). In the Tintagel study areas, the Worthyvale stone stands on the parish boundary between Minster and Lanteglos-by-Camelford, and was first seen in this position by Carew around 1602 (Okasha 1993, No.72). There are three further stones in the St Neot study area. One is now at Cardinham parish church. The medieval and later history of this monument is uncertain: it was first

recorded by Iago in 1877 leaning against the outside wall of the church (Okasha 1993: 88), and was subsequently modified to act as a cross-shaft, a function it still performs today. It is possible that it was extracted from the chancel wall during restoration work in 1872 along with the Cardinham Cross (see below; Okasha 1993: 85-90). Nevertheless, the churchyard should not necessarily be regarded as its original site. The other two stones, now at Welltown, were both recorded in the general vicinity of their present position in the earlier part of the twentieth century in use as gate-posts (Okasha 1993). In view of the plentiful supply of suitable stone in the area it seems unlikely they would have been moved far from their original locations for this purpose. Although the exact original positions of these monuments are unknown, it is possible to discuss their locations in general terms. All three are within the area of the later Cardinham parish, a part of the study area with a relatively dense distribution of rounds, but which exhibits little evidence of early medieval settlement (Fig. 3.21; and see above, 3.7). In addition, the Lancarffe stone is located just across the western boundary of Cardinham parish, also an early medieval boundary zone between the hundreds of Trigg, Pydar and West (Thorn & Thorn 1979a, *Appendix*). The earliest known locations of all these monuments are adjacent to tracks which provide access from the south and south-west up towards the higher ground of Bodmin Moor. The concentration of English place-names in the Welltown area suggest that it may have been rough grazing in the early medieval period rather than 'core' medieval farmland (as suggested by Rose 1994: 79-80). All the stones are today close to areas of moorland and trackways, and they may originally have acted as markers for both travellers and people who lived in the area.

Petts has recently argued that early medieval inscribed stones were not used as boundary markers in this way. This conclusion is based on a comparison of the altitude at which prehistoric standing stones and inscribed stones occur (Petts 2002b: 204-5). Some standing stones are believed to mark the boundary between prehistoric arable and rough grazing (Peters 1990), and Petts has argued that larger standing stones were not normally re-used for

inscribed stones in the early middle ages (Petts 2002b). However, this does not necessarily mean that inscribed stones were not used to mark the edge of *medieval* rather than prehistoric farmland. As shown above, areas of rough ground existing in the early middle ages at all altitudes, not just on hilltops (3.7). *Pace* Petts, some prehistoric monuments were incorporated as markers into boundaries later in the pre-Conquest period. Examples include the stone rows at Trerice (the *stanraewe* of the charter boundary clause (S1019)), and Culbone in Somerset, which was Christianised with the addition of an incised cross to one of the stones; a nearby standing stone, the Culbone Stone, also had a cross added at some time in the early medieval period (Riley & Wilson-North 2001: 89). In Cornwall stones appear as markers in the charter boundary clauses of St Buryan (S450), Tywarnhayle (S684), Lamorran (S770; *men ber*, the 'short stone'), Traboe and Trevallack (S832), Landrake (S951), and Illand (S1005; *mæggean stane*, the 'great stone'; Hooke 1994a). In the Lizard peninsula the parishes of St Keverne, St Mawgan-in-Meneage, St Martin-in-Meneage, Graderuan and Cury meet at a group of barrows on Goonhilly Downs which are probably referred to by the name *cruc drænoc* in AD 977 (S832; Hooke 1994a). A standing stone was found and re-erected here in the twentieth century, though it presumably stood in the early eighteenth century when it was mentioned by its modern name of 'Dry Tree' in the bounds of the manor of Traboe (*Henderson Calendar 5:* 208). In Wales, there are also numerous references to boundary-stones in the charter boundaries of the *Book of Llandaff* (Handley 1998: 341).

Knight has argued that inscribed stones in Wales may have been associated more with showing personal power than with Christian ideology (Knight 1999: 140). This may also have been the case in Cornwall, but if so this power was being exercised in a landscape that was fast becoming a 'Christian' one. Those buried next to inscribed stones could have been pagans or Christians, although the evidence from the inscriptions suggests that increasingly they were the latter (Thomas 1998). Whichever was the case, burials and/or inscribed stones like the Welltown and Worthyvale

examples in the St Neot and Tintagel study areas were located in boundary zones close to the edges of areas of rough grazing, and as such may have been intended to emphasise the power of the elite over the settled land (see also below, 4.2). However, these zones were themselves increasingly defined by a Christian ideology: the relationship between the ecclesiastical centres, the settlements clustering around them, and the rough ground at the margins was fundamental. Although the dates and original contexts of the inscribed stones are often very hard to establish, it seems plausible that many of them could have played a part in defining the boundaries of the developing early Christian landscape.

Crosses

Medieval crosses are a defining characteristic of the Cornish landscape. Around 700 examples survive, of which perhaps as many as 50 bear distinctive early medieval decoration (Preston-Jones 1999). The exact number of pre-Conquest monuments is uncertain because a number of crosses and fragments carry decoration that is hard to date exactly and may have been produced after the Norman Conquest. The problem is compounded by complex patterns of influence in Cornwall's early sculpture, which comes from both England and the Irish Sea region (current research is addressing these questions: Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997: 3-4). The earliest sculpture appears to belong to the ninth century, and crosses and other monuments were produced in increasing numbers up to the end of the eleventh century. After this time, there is an explosion of much more simple medieval crosses resulting in the large numbers visible in the Cornish landscape today.

Even though 50 or so examples is a small proportion of the medieval total, it is a very large number of *pre-Conquest* monuments for such a small county. By way of comparison it is worth noting that less than 10 pieces of pre-Conquest sculpture are known from the whole of neighbouring Devon, even

though it is nearly twice the size of Cornwall. There are probably two main reasons for Cornwall's richness in this respect. Firstly, the county had only recently been incorporated into the kingdom of Wessex when the crosses were being set up. Although much of east Cornwall may have been under English influence from the middle of ninth century, the west was probably not subject to the kings of Wessex until the tenth. This political take-over, like the Norman conquest a century later, probably involved a certain amount of re-distribution of estates from the Cornish elite to English thegns and other landlords. Although the charters attest to a certain degree of acculturation, with Cornishmen adopting English names (e.g. Wulfnoth Rumuncant: S755; Ælfheah Geraint: S770), there were probably significant opportunities for enterprising thegns to acquire new estates, not least by expanding the settled area into marginal land (3.7, 3.9). In other areas of Britain where similar processes took place in the late Saxon period such as Yorkshire, certain monument types are regarded as expressions of the social aspirations of a new elite (e.g. Carver 1998a: 26). Some of the Cornish sculpture may fall into this category, for example the hog-back tombstones at Lanivet and St Tudy (Langdon 1896; Lang 1984) and the Penzance market cross, on Alfward's manor of Alverton in 1066 (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,1,11; but *cf* Thomas 1999). In addition, new English royal manors were established during this period and some crosses were erected at or close to royal estate centres, such as Roseworthy (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997: 16; see 3.4, above).

However, the majority of the pre-Conquest sculpture in Cornwall is associated with major ecclesiastical sites (see also 4.9, below). As well as crosses and other monuments at church sites like St Buryan, Phillack, St Piran's, Padstow, and St Neot, there were particular clusters in the landscape around churches such as St Neot and Bodmin (see below). One of the main reasons why there was more pre-Conquest sculpture in Cornwall than elsewhere may be because there were more land-holding ecclesiastical communities here that were independent of secular power than in England to the east. They had a strong interest in clearly marking out their territories

(see above, 3.4-3.6). As argued below, in the late pre-Conquest landscape the provision of Christian monuments such as crosses may have provided a way to articulate competing claims by secular and ecclesiastical powers to land and local authority.

It is certain that crosses were used as boundary markers for pre-Conquest estates in Cornwall (see also 4.9, below). Two examples are known from pre-Conquest charter boundary clauses (one of which is mentioned in two separate charters). The first is in the boundary of Tywarnhayle (S684). As Lynette Olson has argued, this charter appears to show the encroachment of secular power onto a formerly ecclesiastical estate (which had nonetheless reverted to ecclesiastical ownership by the time of Domesday Book: Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,7). As Henderson (1958: 397-8) and Hooke (1994a: 31) have suggested, the cross (*cristelmael*) of the charter boundary-clause is probably to be identified with the standing monument adjacent to the post-Conquest church of St Piran's (Langdon 1896: 180-2). This building replaced the original St Piran's around 1150 when the latter was inundated with sand. The medieval parish church continued to form part of the boundary of the Tywarnhale estate into the post-medieval period and its chancel is mentioned as a boundary-marker in the 1617 bounds of the manor (Henderson 1958). The rest of the Anglo-Saxon and seventeenth-century bounds go on to show how the eastern border of the estate was formed by the extensive heath of St Agnes Downs, now lost to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agricultural improvement.The other documented pre-Conquest example of a cross marking a boundary is in St Keverne and is discussed below. Crosses on parish boundaries which are not recorded in charters include Three Hole Cross (St Kew) and Carminow Cross (Bodmin).

Within the St Neot study area there are eight stone monuments or fragments of monuments bearing pre-Conquest decoration (Fig. 3.22). This important assemblage amounts to approximately one fifth of the known pre-Norman monuments in Cornwall. Four of these are at medieval parish churches (the cross shaft and cross head fragment at St Neot, the elaborate cross at

Cardinham, and the cross head fragment at St Cleer. One is now by a lake in the grounds of the Glynn estate in Cardinham parish, but was found in the 1920s in use as a fireplace lintel in a cottage at Bofindle, Warleggan parish (Langdon 1996: 24). The remaining three, the Other Half Stone, the King Doniert Stone and the Fourhole Cross stand in open ground close to roads, but some distance from any settlements. The Other Half and King Doniert stones were first recorded in their present positions around 1600 by Camden and Carew (Okasha 1993: 213), and the Fourhole Cross had stood close to its present position on the boundary of St Neot parish since at least the eighteenth century, and has probably never been moved far (Langdon 1996).

Since none of these monuments have been recovered from archaeological excavations, it is impossible to be completely certain about their original locations. Nevertheless, it seems probable that those standing in 'landscape' positions are less likely to have been moved far from their original places during the medieval or post-medieval periods than those found at or built into parish churches. Cramp has argued that early medieval sculpture seldom strays far from its original site, but it seems likely that re-use in parish church fabric might be an exception, perhaps comparable to the re-use of Roman stones as building material (Cramp 1975; Easton 2000). Such re-location could have formed part of a re-ordering of the religious landscape which accompanied the development of parishes in the later middle ages. It is likely that there was an ideological component to re-using earlier monuments in medieval churches (as there was in the post-medieval period: Moreland 1999), and the practice was widespread throughout England (see e.g. Tweddle *et al.* 1995, *passim*). In Cornwall the crosses at Cardinham, St Just-in-Penwith, Gulval, St Erth, Ludgvan and Sancreed were all found incorporated into the medieval fabric of parish churches, and those at Quethiock, St Teath and Phillack were used in churchyard boundaries (Langdon 1896; Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997). Though the Bofindle cross-shaft was also re-used as an architectural component, there is a difference in ideological significance between re-use in the chimney of a post-medieval cottage and re-use in the chancel of a medieval church. While the

monuments later built into churches may have been transported some distance, it seems unlikely that the Bofindle cross-shaft would have been.

Anne Preston-Jones considers the earliest examples in the St Neot area to be the Other Half Stone and King Doniert Stone, which along with the St Neot cross shaft and cross head fragment are probably later ninth century in date (Preston-Jones 1999). The remaining examples are likely to date to the tenth and early eleventh centuries. The four monuments in 'landscape' positions are distributed in a rough ring around the church of St Neot. All four stand close to areas of ancient rough ground identified by the HLC and astride important routeways. One of their functions may have been to act as way-markers, like many of the later medieval crosses. However, considering the charter-boundary clause evidence, it seems likely that they could have had another role. Fourhole Cross still marks the parish boundary of St Neot, and the Bofindle fragment and the King Doniert & Other Half Stones both stand half a kilometre or so beyond it. The Bofindle fragment and the King Doniert/Other Half Stones also mark respectively the western and north-eastern limits of the distribution of settlements with Cornish habitative place-name elements (above, 3.7). In addition, it is worth mentioning that the place-name Holtroad (perhaps 'holy rood') possibly indicates the site of a lost or moved cross (the name is first recorded in 1332: *ICS Index*). It occurs at the far southern extremity of Warleggan parish, also near the border of the HLC's medieval farmland.

It seems likely that these pre-Conquest religious monuments marked a territory associated with St Neot's church. This could be either the early medieval *parochia*, the church's estates, or some other territorial unit, such as a special zone of sanctuary. Analogy with other places suggests this territory was both the core of the church's estate and a zone of protected space (see below).

In the Tintagel case study area there are two pre-Conquest crosses, one from Waterpit Down and one from the vicinity of the farm at Trevillet (now at the

Wharncliffe Arms in Tintagel village; Fig. 3.23). They probably date to the later tenth or eleventh centuries (Okasha 1993, numbers 74 and 64; Preston-Jones 1999). Both have inscriptions which probably incorporate English personal names, showing that they were probably set up after the time when English cultural influence was well-established. The earliest recorded location of the Waterpit Down cross-shaft was on Waterpit Down some 2km south of Minster, and it seems this was the original site since the cross-base was also here (Okasha 1993: 318). The site lies in Minster parish on rough ground close to the southern edge of the Domesday estate of *Talcar,* which was almost certainly the core estate of the church at Minster (the two names being virtually synonymous in the later middle ages, e.g. in the 1291 *Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV*, where the parish church is recorded as *ecclesia de Talkarn, alias Ministre* (Hingeston-Randolph 1889: 471)). It is visible to travellers following any of the long-distance routeways over the Down. Although the original location of the Trevillet cross is less certain, it may originally have marked the southern boundary of the cultivated land of Bossiney, held in 1066 by St Petroc's Bodmin, and the location of Minster's sister church of Tintagel (see above, 3.4).

Preston-Jones & Langdon have recently published a study of the medieval crosses in the parish of St Buryan, a likely pre-Conquest monastery that was probably refounded by a grant of Athelstan (Preston-Jones & Langdon 2001; Olson 1989; S450). They note that although the only pre-Conquest monuments in the parish are located at the church, up to seven medieval crosses may mark a zone of extended sanctuary depicted on a sixteenth-century plan approximately half way between the church and the medieval parish boundary (Preston-Jones & Langdon 2001: 114-5). If so, at least part of the estate granted by Athelstan at seven places in the parish would have been within the sanctuary zone. Three other churches in Cornwall are known to have possessed zones of privileged sanctuary in the later middle ages, and they may all have been physically marked in some way. At Padstow, a fourteenth-century *Life* of St Petroc records that still-visible ditches were dug to show the boundaries of the saint's land (Preston-Jones

1992: 120), and at Probus in 1301 the 'Carvossa Cross' still marked the liberty or sanctuary of Probus (Preston-Jones & Langdon 2001: 114; the cross is now lost (Langdon 1994: 56), but Carvossa is *c.*2km west of the church). The final known sanctuary zone was around St Keverne, and like St Buryan it continued to be recognised into the post-medieval period. John Leland wrote in his 1538 *Itinerary* that:

> 'Within the land of Meneke or Menegland is a paroch chirch of St Keveryn otherwis Piranus; and ther is a Sanctuary with x or xii dwelling howses and thereby was a sel of monks but now goon home to ther hed hows. The ruines of the monastery yet remenith'
>
> (cited in Henderson 1958: 256-6)

The original extent of the sanctuary is unknown, but in the later middle ages Henderson considers it likely to have encompassed the churchtown and the monastic lands of Tregonning and Lanheverne which were the centre of Beaulieu Abbey's estates in the parish. The existence and survival of the sanctuary is an indicator of the superior status of St Keverne's community, and shows its continuing ability to control aspects of social life and legal custom in the landscape around it.

Unlike the St Neot and Tintagel study areas, there are no surviving examples of late pre-Conquest crosses from the Meneage. However, there is evidence that one cross formerly existed in the Anglo-Saxon boundary clauses of the estates of Trevallack and Lesneage: *crousgrua* is a boundary point in both documents (Cornish *crous* 'cross' + *gruah* 'hag, witch'; S832; S755; Hooke 1994a). The cross was located towards the edge of Crousa Common (which has taken its name from the monument), and was about 2km west of St Keverne churchtown (Fig. 3.24). As such, it may have marked the edge of St Keverne's zone of privileged sanctuary. The cross stood close to the place where travellers across Goonzion Downs entered the cultivated land around the monastery, and marks the edge of the area which is distinguished by a dense concentration of *tre* settlements (above, 3.7).

It is unclear why pre-Conquest sculpture is absent in the Lizard. It cannot be argued that the influence of Hiberno-Saxon art and sculpture was less strong in the far west of Cornwall, since monuments with characteristic pre-Conquest decoration are plentiful in the neighbouring region of Penwith (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997). It is possible that the local stone was less suitable than that elsewhere; there are only 3 surviving medieval crosses in the study area which compares poorly with the areas around St Neot (37 surviving crosses and fragments) and Tintagel (11 examples). Since in other parts of the South West stones were transported considerable distances to serve as crosses, it seems unlikely that unsuitable stone can account for the lack of sculpture. Examples taken considerable distances include the Copplestone in Devon, which stood some 13km from its source on Dartmoor, and Roseworthy in Cornwall, around 40km from its source near St Austell (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997: 18-19). An alternative explanation could be that St Keverne itself was not under the same pressure as other churches to mark out the extent of its estates in the pre-Conquest period. As noted above (3.6) it is likely that most of its land was only finally lost in the second half of the eleventh century around the time of the Norman Conquest. This contrasts with the situation around St Neot, where a great deal of sculpture survives; St Neot's community had notably land-hungry neighbours from perhaps the ninth century onwards, not only in the form of a new secular elite from Wessex, but also a new ecclesiastical one at St Petroc's, Bodmin.

Wendy Davies has argued that from the beginning of the tenth century a special type of 'protected space' began to appear in the British Isles, normally (although not exclusively) associated with churches (Davies 1996). Davies argues that this type of 'protected space' emerged in places as a '...response to increasing rather than decreasing ruler power...' and '...as part of a general shift in attitudes to physical space...', when land became a commodity to be delineated and physically dominated (Davies 1996: 9-11). Although similar to 'sanctuary' as defined in some early medieval laws, the

zone of protection offered by 'protected space' could be considerably larger than the few tens of metres of a sanctuary zone – up to several kilometres in some cases. In several examples the zone of 'protected space' was marked by crosses, for example at Ripon, Beverly and Hexham in northern England (Davies 1996: 5). Ó Carragáin has shown how the edges of the *termon* lands of the monastery of *Inis Úasal* on south-west Ireland's Iveragh peninsula were marked with boundary-crosses from as early as the eighth or ninth century (Ó Carragáin 2003: 137-141). Edwards has noted that the pre-Conquest monuments around Penmon and Dyserth in north Wales could have marked ecclesiastical land and perhaps sanctuary (N. Edwards 1999: 14), and Davies suggests that the special powers of the church within its 'protected space' may have developed as '...a defensive reaction against ruler aggression...' (Davies 1996: 11). The varied and plentiful evidence from Cornwall suggests similar developments took place in the south-west of Britain too. It seems likely that the context for this change in Cornwall was the increasing power of the elite to grant land in the late pre-Conquest period, often at the expense of long-established and independent ecclesiastical communities. It is likely that 'protected space' was more widespread than just those sites where it happens to have been recorded in the late- and post-medieval periods like St Buryan, St Keverne and Probus. Davies has argued that ecclesiastical communities increasingly used charters in the ninth and tenth centuries in a defensive way, to assert their rights over land that was increasingly under threat (W. Davies 1998). The erection of prominent crosses on the borders of ecclesiastical land during the later part of the early middle ages can be interpreted as another way churches attempted to counter the power of the encroaching secular elite by marking out their territory.

All those coming into Minster's territory from the south would have seen the Waterpit Down cross, and must have realised they were crossing from the rough ground into the community's cultivated land. Likewise, the crosses around St Neot probably mark the edges of marginal land around the early medieval 'core' of settled land. *Crousgrua*, 'the hag's cross' probably

marked the borders of St Keverne's sanctuary and was subsequently used as the boundary marker of successor estates to the church (3.6, above). These were bold attempts to defend long-established territories, but ultimately they were unsuccessful. Not only were aspects of this new iconography appropriated by the established churches' enemies in the form of churchyard crosses and gravestones, but both their estates and parochial rights were also diminished and encroached upon by the local churches and chapels that were established in ever increasing numbers.

3.9 The rise of local churches

In Chapter 1 (above) it was argued that the way some current historical models discuss the churches of Cornwall tends to marginalise differences between them. However, even from the limited evidence available it is possible to see that churches of various different kinds, both in terms of status and period of origin. The main subject of this chapter has been the way the most important pre-Conquest ecclesiastical communities affected the landscape. This section will look at some less important churches, many of which originated in the later part of the period, but some of which have earlier roots.

The Vatican codex Reginensis Latinus 191 contains a list of 48 Brittonic names dated by palaeographical and linguistic evidence to the tenth century. The text has been plausibly interpreted by Olson & Padel as a list of the names of Cornish saints (Olson & Padel 1986). They consider that the main significance of the list is that is shows

> '...the later pattern of parish church dedications, and thus by implication the spheres of influence of those churches, as being already in existence not long after the year 900.'
>
> (Olson & Padel 1986: 69)

This interpretation has been followed by subsequent authors, for example Hooke (1999: 98). It implies that the parochial organisation of the later middle ages was fixed from an early date. However, this is not exactly what the document shows. Whilst it probably is a list of the names of saints associated with churches and chapels in early tenth-century Cornwall, this does not necessarily mean all the medieval *parishes* were already established. In fact, neither Olson & Padel nor Hooke point out that later medieval documents show dependent relationships between several of the saints' churches in the list. Such relationships show differences of status between sites, and perhaps different periods of origin. For example, both Berion and Salamun appear in the list, patrons of the churches of St Buryan and St Levan respectively. St Buryan is identified by Olson (1989) as an

early monastery, and throughout the middle ages St Levan was one of its chapelries (Orme 1999). Likewise, Phillack (the list's Felec) was the medieval mother church of Gwithian (the list's Guidian) (*Lake* 3: 155-6). Another saint named on the list, Congar, only has a non-parochial dedication in Cornwall, at St Ingugar in Lanivet parish (Olson & Padel 1986: 44). In addition, at least fifteen of the names on the list have not been identified with dedications to any Cornish saints, leaving open the possibility that earlier dedications have disappeared. Dedications to saints were certainly lost in Cornwall over the course of the middle ages, as happened at St Martin in Meneage (see below). The list certainly shows that many local churches had been founded by the early tenth century, and it suggests they had begun to develop patterns of ecclesiastical rights which later became parishes. However, it cannot be accepted as showing a fully developed parochial network which was not subject to further change.

Differences in status are sometimes reflected by relationships between various sites. Perhaps most striking is the community at Launceston with its many dependent chapelries (above, 3.5). But other important churches also had chapelries within their territories that did not become independent parishes until more recent times, for example Probus with chapels at Cornelly and Merther (*Lake* 1: 248-251; *Lake* 3: 323-8).

There are probably two main reasons why these differences (and others described below) have not always been emphasised in studies of the Cornish church. Firstly, as Padel & Olson suggest (1986: 68-9), the establishment of significant numbers of local churches may have begun in Cornwall relatively early, perhaps around the beginning of the ninth century. Although there is little archaeological or historical evidence to support this claim, such a date would fit with the burial evidence from minor sites in Cornwall and from elsewhere in western Britain (Petts 2002a; see below). Any such churches may have begun to share the rights and privileges of pre-existing ecclesiastical communities from an early date, with the result that written evidence for relationships never existed; this might explain why

there is somewhat less material of this sort in Cornwall compared to some other south-western counties, for example Dorset (Hall 2000: 7). The second reason may be that deliberate imitation of existing sites during the early middle ages has obscured the differences. As Harvey & Jones have shown, later developments were often rooted in the practices of the past; they have argued that hagiographies in medieval Cornwall explained and legitimised contemporary developments with reference to existing social structures (Harvey & Jones 1999: 227-9). A kind of deliberate imitation is also identifiable in the ecclesiastical foundations themselves, and the place-names, physical form and rights of newer establishments in the county often seem to have been modelled on pre-existing churches.

In Domesday Book for Cornwall many of the estates of major landholding ecclesiastical communities have names with the generic element **lan* (e.g. *Lanscauetone* (Launceston), *Lannachebran* (St Keverne), *Lanbrebois* (Probus), *Langoroch* (Crantock), and *Lanpiran* (Perranzabuloe); Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4). As discussed in Chapter 1, however, the only **lan* name known to have existed before the tenth century was *Landwithan*. This was believed by Finberg to represent a large estate around Launceston granted by Egbert to Sherborne, and therefore referring to a major church (Finberg 1953a: 112). St Kew, Domesday Book's *Lanehoc* (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 1,4), was just *Docco* in the seventh-century *Vita Prima Sancti Samsonis*. Including these examples, around fifty medieval parish churches had **lan* place-names. However, as Padel has pointed out very few Christian religious sites that did not gain full parochial status in the later middle ages (e.g. chapels or minor burial grounds) had names incorporating the **lann* element (Padel 1985: 144; see also Petts 2002a). This suggests that such names were specific to churches with a certain status at the time the parish system was forming. It seems likely that they could have been given their **lan* names in imitation of the major ecclesiastical communities.

An example from southern Cornwall may illustrate this process and also suggests the kind of people who could be responsible for it. During the reign

of Athelstan, 'Count' Maenchi granted the small estate of *Lanlouern* to St Heldenus (S1207; Hooke 1994a: 18). The grant has been identified by Padel as 'our only true "Cornish charter"' (Padel 1978: 26), and belongs to the distinctively western British charter-tradition described by Wendy Davies (1982). He identifies the estate concerned as Lanlawren (Lanteglos-by-Fowey) and the beneficiary as the church of St Ildierna at Lansallos, *c.*1.5km to the south (Padel 1978). Olson (1989: 84) and Hooke (1994a: 18) tentatively suggest that Lansallos may have been a small monastery. There is no other evidence to suggest that this was the case, and no significant dependent chapelries in the later middle ages. The name 'Lansallos' may be **lan* + a personal name (Padel 1988; Orme 1996a), perhaps even that of a secular founder rather than a saint (Thomas 1988: 24), and in 1066 the manor was held by a thegn (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,3,7). Instead of a monastery, a local lord with a Cornish background (Maenchi) may have been endowing a minor church with land in order to support it, rather like later medieval glebe. Combined with the evidence in the tenth-century list of Cornish saints' names, this document shows that the foundation of local churches cannot be attributed solely to changes associated with the establishment of Anglo-Saxon political control in Cornwall. Members of a Cornish aristocracy were already founding minor churches dedicated to Cornish saints before Wessex became politically dominant in the region.

Local churches could also mimic the physical characteristics of major ecclesiastical communities. Whilst many of the latter appear to have been enclosed from an early date (above 3.2), few if any local churches or burial grounds were enclosed until the later pre-Conquest period (Petts 2002a). Some of these later churches re-used existing prehistoric enclosures (see below). The place name of Cardinham (*ker* 'round' + *dinan* 'fortlet': Padel 1988: 65) suggests that the site's curvilinear graveyard enclosure is a re-used Iron Age or Romano-British settlement. As noted above (3.7), the church lies in an area largely devoid of early medieval habitative place-name elements. The church may have been founded during a phase of settlement expansion that led to the establishment of numerous settlements

with English place-names in the vicinity, and the HLC revealed significant areas of rough ground here in the later middle ages (Fig. 3.15). Cardinham may have been founded in imitation of its more illustrious neighbours at Bodmin and St Neot. According to William Worcester the local saint Meubred lay in the church as at the neighbouring monasteries (although he remained unmentioned in the sources until the fifteenth century; Orme 2000: 190). Furthermore, in 1613 the church glebe was equipped with four marker crosses, at least two of which remain today at Poundstock Cross and Wydeyeat Cross ((Henderson *EC*: 75-83; Langdon 1996: 26-7). These are post-Conquest in date, although the latter could be twelfth-century (see Langdon 1896: 174). This arrangement, with crosses marking the boundaries of the church land, may have been intended to imitate the pre-Conquest crosses around St Neot and Bodmin. Other crosses that were sometimes set up at local churches both before and after the Norman Conquest may also have been intended to imitate earlier examples at major churches such as St Neot and St Buryan (see below; Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997).

Because later pre-Conquest developments were rooted in earlier practice, it is sometimes hard to establish the status of Cornish churches and what the relationships were between them. Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest some of the different categories of church that may have existed in the later pre-Conquest landscape.

Firstly, there were small chapels which provided minor religious *foci* within the territories of important churches. As discussed above, St Levan near St Buryan is mentioned in the tenth-century list of Cornish saints' names (Olson & Padel 1986), and Thomas has suggested that the remains of a chapel in the parish could date to as early as the seventh century (Thomas 1988: 25). Likewise the chapel of St Gothian at Gwithian near Phillack appears in the same list of saints' names. Here a sequence of ecclesiastical buildings and burials lies submerged beneath wind-blown sand that is likely to reach back well into the early medieval period (Thomas 1958). As

discussed by Rose, it is possible that there was a chapel in the pre-Conquest period at St Luke's in the far north of St Neot parish (Rose 1994: 79). The place-name Carneglos (*carn* 'rock-pile, tor' + *eglos* 'church, chapel'), on the other side of the valley in Altarnun parish, suggests that the chapel was present early enough to give rise to a Cornish topographic name. Most of the place-names in this part of the moor are English and probably date from at least the later medieval period. St Luke's chapel was therefore distant from the main areas of early medieval settlement, and from any later medieval manorial centre. Like Fourhole Cross (above 3.8), it was probably built by St Neot's community to mark the edge of their territory and to provide for the spiritual needs of travellers and those working the rough ground of the uplands.

A second class of churches seem similar to the 'sub-minsters' of Wessex (below, 4.9). These are churches that show some signs of superior status, but now lack enough evidence to be confident that they were ever major communities of monks or clerks. Some have dependent chapels that are demonstrably early, suggesting even more ancient origins for the mother church. For example, St Merryn had within its medieval parish the chapels at Constantine. The well-chapel here may be the oldest standing building in Cornwall, perhaps dating to the ninth century, and early twentieth-century investigations revealed an extensive cist-burial cemetery under the larger fifteenth-century chapel a few metres to the north (Henderson 1958; Todd 1987).

Examples like Old Kea and Goran in the Cornwall geld-accounts show that some such churches had once held estates that they lost to secular landholders before 1086, a history typical of higher-status Cornish religious centres (Olson 1989: 90-1; 3.6, above). Domesday Book incidentally records the names of several such churches as the names of estate-centres, for example St Mawgan-in-Meneage (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 1,1). *Maucan*, the saint of St Mawgan, is first referred to in the tenth-century list of saints' names where he occurs (in geographical order) before *achobran* (i.e. St

Keverne) (Olson & Padel 1986). In the later middle ages St Mawgan's parish was the second largest on the Lizard (after St Keverne). This hints that St Mawgan was a foundation of some importance, and Orme suggests it may have been the main cult-centre for Maugan in all the Brittonic lands (Orme 2000: 183).

The history of saints' cults at St Mawgan's chapelry of St Martin-in-Meneage shows that even minor, dependent centres within the territory of such 'sub-minsters' could be old and complex sites. As Orme comments the '..history of saint-cults in St Martin-in-Meneage is a complex matter' (Orme 2000: 184). Up to four different saints were associated with the site in the middle ages. Two estates adjacent to the churchtown were called Nance-with-Mathiana and Barrimaylor. The medieval name-forms show that the former is Cornish *nans* ('valley') with *merther-anowe*, and the latter *merther-meglar* (Henderson 1958: 330; *ICS Index*). They both incorporate the Cornish element *merther*, which Padel explains as 'saint's grave' (Padel 1985), plus a personal name. It is possible that there had been shrines here to saints Anowe (known as Anou in Brittany) and Meglar (perhaps identifiable with one or other of the Breton saints with similar names: Orme 2000: 184). The earliest reference to the place is in AD 977 and connects it with Meglar: in the Anglo-Saxon charter boundary clause of Trethewey the marsh below Barrimaylor is referred to as *pennhal meglar* 'the head of Meylor's marsh' (S 832: Hooke 1994a: 51). In the fourteenth century two further saints were connected with the chapelry. In 1334 it was recorded as *parochia dedynini* (despite the fact it was not yet strictly speaking a parish), although Dedymin had become inferior to Martin by 1385 (Orme 1996a: 101). Like some of the more important churches (3.2), there is clear evidence here for more than one saint's cult. This all reflects the complexity which can be found in Cornwall even in so minor a cult-centre, even one without burial rites in the earlier middle ages. The changing dedications at this minor shrine provide a clear illustration of the difficulty that would be inherent in using saints' names and dedications to write the early history of Cornish churches: it is now impossible to tell which of the three local cults

was the first to be maintained at the site, and or to say when any of them first began. Even after St Martin superceded the others, he only won burial rights from St Mawgan after petitioning the Pope in 1385, until which time the parishioners had to take their dead to the mother church for burial (Henderson 1958: 329).

Where new royal vills were not established adjacent to the sites of existing ecclesiastical communities, new churches were sometimes established to serve their estates. In their physical form these may also have imitated the fittings of existing ecclesiastical centres, as shown by the magnificent cross with crucifixion which probably comes from a chapel on the royal estate at Roseworthy (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997; Okasha 1993: 133-137; Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 1,11). Likewise, notable monuments of probable eleventh-century date exist on the bishop of Exeter's Domesday estates at Gulval and St Erth (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997: 16).

Finally, minor lords with more modest estates were probably also establishing chapels at this time. The example of Lansallos (above) suggests that the Cornish elite were able to endow churches just as the English thegns of Wessex were doing at around the same time (see below, 4.10). Some such churches may have been associated with the establishment of new settlements and manors that were pushing into previously uninhabited land during this period, like St Neot's neighbour Warleggan, where manorial centre and church are apparently located together. Warleggan is a strip-parish, similar to those of the Wessex chalk valleys, which runs from the high moor down to the valley of the Fowey. The dedication of the church to Bartholomew (rather than to a 'Celtic' saint) has also prompted the suggestion that it was a late pre-Conquest or early Norman foundation (Orme 2000: 69).

The archaeological evidence, though presently limited to a few sites, also suggests that even minor Christian religious sites of the late pre-Conquest period were elaborated with sculpture and buildings. The well-chapel of

possible pre-Conquest date at Fenton Ia near Camborne may have elaborated an existing holy well (Thomas 1967). It may have been the source of a carved altar-slab of tenth- or eleventh-century date (Okasha 1993: 82-4), and an eleventh-century cross formerly stood nearby (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997: 17). The chapel of St Dennis was a dependency of St Stephen in Brannel until the very end of the middle ages (*Lake* 1: 294; Orme 1999: 214). Limited excavation here in the 1960s and subsequently has shown that the chapel site re-used a small hillfort around the time of the Norman Conquest; a cross from the site probably dates to the late eleventh or twelfth centuries and the whole complex may have been established by a prominent local landholder (Thomas 1965; Langdon 1896: 293-6; Preston-Jones 1992: 114; Preston-Jones 1999). Thomas has described the use of prehistoric enclosures for Christian burial in this period as simply a good way to make use of land that was unsuitable for agriculture (1988: 21), but it should instead be regarded as part of a significant change in burial practice. As Petts has shown, unenclosed burial was normal in western Britain until around the beginning of the ninth century (Petts 2002a). From this time onwards, burial sites were more and more commonly enclosed. In this respect they were not only imitating the burial grounds of the major ecclesiastical centres, but also expressing the increasing desire of the church to control burial practices (Petts 2002a). At Merther Uny in Wendron Thomas has defined a sequence of burials and a chapel that were established around the end of the first millennium (Thomas 1968b). Perhaps at some point in the eleventh century this site was also elaborated with a cross (Preston-Jones & Okasha 1997). The archaeological evidence from sites like Merther Uny, Fenton Ia and St Dennis show how minor chapels at the end of the early middle ages could be elaborately provided by their founders with small buildings, crosses, and other ecclesiastical sculpture. They also illustrate the fact that churches were not only established on earlier burial grounds, but that sites previously unused for Christian purposes were also selected.

The archaeological and historical evidence shows that by the eve of the Norman Conquest there were numerous churches in Cornwall of different ages and with differing status. In addition to the major landholding collegiate churches, there were also a range of chapels perpetuating ancient cult sites, important cult-centres like St Mawgan that may have supported small communities, and chapels founded by a variety of major and minor secular and ecclesiastical lords. In the area around Tintagel, for example, there were at least four churches in 1066 and maybe more, all with widely varying origins (Fig. 3.25). The late Saxon church with the highest status here was probably at Minster, where Charles Thomas has claimed that a tenth or eleventh century building has been incorporated into the later medieval fabric (1993: 109). Archaeological excavation has revealed part of an ecclesiastical complex in Tintagel churchyard that could perpetuate the site of one of the earliest Christian cemeteries in Cornwall, which in 1066 stood on St Petroc's manor of Bossiney (Nowakowski & Thomas 1992; Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 4,13). St Juliot, across the valley from Minster, was probably a more recent foundation associated with the small manor of the same name recorded in Domesday Book (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,4,6). At St Jullita's on Tintagel Island a chapel with rights of burial and baptism was perhaps established around the end of the eleventh century, built on the remains of a post-Roman structure (Thomas 1993: 110-113;). Finally, medieval records of a chapel dedicated to St Piran at Trethevy suggest that the canons of St Piran's may have founded a chapel here to minister to their estate of Genver, which they held in the pre-Conquest period (Thorn & Thorn 1979a: 5,8,10). The foundation of a number of chapels in the late Saxon period may to reflect the growing power of landowners, both lay and ecclesiastical, to found their own churches on their own estates. If Minster once had ecclesiastical rights over this area as Thomas has claimed (1993: 109), they were severely eroded by these local churches and others founded before the end of the twelfth century at the manorial centres of Trevalga and Lesnewth. Even Forrabury, with its tiny parish at Boscastle, had probably escaped Minster's parochial control by 1291 (see Hingeston-Randolph 1889: 472-3).

3.10 Conclusion

The above discussion raises several important points about the early church in the Cornish landscape. The earliest Christian centres of the late fifth and sixth centuries were closely linked to centres of royal power like Tintagel. However, after the demise of these 'late Antique' centres, when the pattern of the medieval landscape was first established, there seems to have been no close spatial relationship between churches and royal vills. Ecclesiastical communities were endowed with fairly extensive estates by Cornwall's early medieval kings, and they enjoyed freedom from taxation on their lands. These estates normally comprised a contiguous block of land in the environs of the ecclesiastical community's central church (3.6). Along with the distance from royal centres, such endowments imply the major churches of the seventh – ninth centuries were relatively independent of the secular elite.

There was an intimate relationship between these early ecclesiastical communities and the distribution of settlements and agricultural resources (3.7). Churches stood at the heart of the zones of settlement that emerged after the Romano-British landscape was transformed in the sixth and seventh centuries. Churches were mostly established in low-lying positions in valleys or coastal plains, and were only rarely sited on islands or dominating hilltops (3.3). The ecclesiastical centres themselves probably acted as spiritual centres for their communities and for other people living in their territories, although there is little evidence to suggest they were densely nucleated settlements (3.2).

The major ecclesiastical centres were not the only sacred sites in the Cornish landscape (3.8). Others included both those that had been sacred before the conversion, and newly-established minor sites. Amongst pre-existing sites, burial grounds and probably holy wells continued to be used or venerated. In Gaul, the actions of saints during their lives gave a kind of 'sanctity' after their deaths to the whole regions associated with an ecclesiastical centre, not

just the church where their relics eventually came to rest (Pietri 1997). In Cornwall, pre-Christian ritual sites could have been incorporated into the Christian landscape by a similar power of ecclesiastical centres and their saints to reach out and 'convert' the territories. Minor *foci* created in the Christian period included sites that were like these pre-existing ones, and other new kinds of sacred places like crosses and chapels. Rather than being established all at once, these sites appeared at different times over a long period. The 'Christianisation' of the wider landscape was not a short-term project completed in an early 'Age of Saints', but one that developed over several centuries. Sites like inscribed stones and crosses played crucial roles in different phases of this development, but all contributed to defining the landscape as a Christian one.

From probably the ninth century onwards, the estates and religious rights of the major centres were severely eroded by secular landowners and minor churches. These minor churches were founded by various groups including secular lords and other ecclesiastical communities. Nevertheless, many of them were modelled on the earlier centres and took on a similar range of religious responsibilities, depriving existing centres of both temporal and spiritual rights. This trend for church and chapel foundation continued into the tenth century, when direct political control over the whole of Cornwall was established by Anglo-Saxon Wessex. The new elite commonly built manorial centres close to or at the sites of several of the important early churches, whose estates they often appropriated or granted away (3.4).

In conclusion, the early medieval landscape of Cornwall was profoundly affected by the establishment of Christian institutions which acted as central places for successive emerging medieval landscapes of settlements, agriculture, and holy sites. In Chapter 5 the Cornish developments will be compared with Anglo-Saxon Wessex to the east (discussed in Chapter 4). Some suggestions will be made there about the reasons why the introduction of a new Christian ideology had such similar and profound effects on both areas.

Chapter 4

The church in the landscape of western Wessex

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to characterise the landscape context of important early medieval churches in western Wessex. It will investigate the relationships between churches and various other types of sites, monuments and administrative structures in order to try to appreciate the place of churches in the early medieval landscape and their influence upon it. In Chapter 5, the evidence from western Wessex will be compared to that from Cornwall discussed in Chapter 3.

The study area comprises the pre-1974 extent of the four western counties of Wessex 'proper', Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire. In many ways this is an artificial choice of region. Its political history as part of the same unit only begins with the conquests of the Gewissan royal house from around the beginning of the seventh century and the formation of the kingdom of Wessex (Yorke 1995: 6-7). There are many differences in topography, geology, and cultural history across the area. The region did not all come under Anglo-Saxon control at the same time. At the beginning of the period under consideration here (from the later fifth century onwards) only a small part of eastern Wiltshire and perhaps a little of Dorset were subject to significant Anglo-Saxon cultural influence. Western Devon may not have been incorporated into the kingdom of Wessex until the eighth century (Finberg 1953a). Nevertheless, certain trends can be identified across western Wessex in relation to ecclesiastical landscapes (e.g. topographical position of important churches; see 4.5 below). It is argued below that many of the distinctive characteristics of the middle Saxon landscape were not (fully) formed until the seventh century and later, and as such they were profoundly influenced by ecclesiastical culture. It will therefore be instructive to characterise the religious landscape in western

Wessex and then to compare 'Anglo-Saxon' practice with its close more 'Celtic' neighbour in Cornwall.

The identifications of important churches in the following sections follow those made by various recent authorities who have worked largely on individual counties. The purpose of this chapter is not to make 'new' identifications of ecclesiastical centres in Wessex, but to investigate the ways these churches related to their contexts in the landscape. The identifications are based on those by John Blair (forthcoming) and Nicholas Orme (1996a) for Devon (Fig. 4.3), Teresa Hall (2000) for Dorset (Fig. 4.2), Mick Aston (1986) and Michael Costen (1992b) for Somerset, and Jonathon Pitt (1999) for Wiltshire (Fig. 4.1).

The sites have been included in this project's database according to the method established for sites in Cornwall and noted in Chapter 2. Different degrees of certainty are indicated in Table 4.1 and these refer to the probability that a church was indeed of superior status in the early middle ages. Church sites included as 'certain' examples are mostly those with reliable evidence in the form of pre-Conquest documentary references describing them as ecclesiastical centres, or with archaeological or architectural evidence suggesting substantial establishments. Others have been labelled 'probable' or 'possible' in the database; this is based on a reading of the relevant authority's opinion of their status and the relevant evidence. It should be noted that status could change over time, so an important early foundation could be less prominent in later times (e.g. Tisbury, Wiltshire; see below). However, identification for the purposes of this chapter follows fairly 'strict' criteria; all sites included should have at least two of the normally accepted attributes required to identify a minster church (for which see Hall 2000: 4-8; Pitt 1999: 14-18). No identifications have been accepted based only on weak evidence such as a suggestive place-name, churchyard size and shape, or topographical position. If dependent chapels in the later middle ages are one of the criteria for identification as a high-status site, these have normally only been accepted

if there are at least two of them. Nevertheless, any resulting distinctions have not been emphasised in the following analysis since the differences between churches are normally very hard to appreciate from the surviving evidence.

There has been some recent debate over the most appropriate terminology to describe pre-Conquest high-status ecclesiastical centres (see Blair 1995c). In what follows no attempt is made to differentiate between establishments using varying terminology (the only exception is reformed Benedictine houses of the tenth century and later, which are conventionally referred to as 'monasteries') (Pitt 1999: 18). Important early churches will therefore be referred to at different times as 'ecclesiastical centres', 'ecclesiastical settlements', 'minsters', 'monasteries' and '*monasteria*'; no distinctions are implied.

The locations of the churches discussed below are based on their position on modern OS maps, supplemented where necessary by reference to relevant early maps, and published or unpublished work. In all but a few cases, it has been assumed that the Anglo-Saxon church was on the same site as its later medieval successor; standing remains and excavations have shown or suggested that this is commonly the case (e.g. Glastonbury (Somerset: Rahtz 1993); Wells (Somerset: Rodwell 1982); Exeter (Devon: Henderson & Bidwell 1982); Sherborne (Dorset: Gibb 1975); Wareham (Dorset: Taylor & Taylor 1965; Buckfastleigh (Devon: Reynolds & Turner, forthcoming)). However, a note of caution is appropriate, since in a few cases excavation and survey have shown that earlier churches were succeeded by later ones on different sites. At Shapwick (Somerset), the original church site some 650m east of the present village does not seem to have been abandoned until perhaps the fourteenth century (Aston & Gerrard 1999). At Keynsham (Somerset), a substantial amount of Anglo-Saxon sculpture came from the area of the later medieval abbey, suggesting that the early medieval church was here rather than on the site of the present

parish church (Lowe 1987). These examples suggest there may be a small element of error in the identification of church sites in the following text.

4.2 The changing ritual landscape of the conversion period

In both Anglo-Saxon east and British west, the period from the fifth to eighth centuries witnessed the change from traditional 'pagan' to Christian religious observance. Evidence of cult-sites in both areas before Christianity is slim. In the west, it is possible that some Roman temples continued to be used for 'pagan' worship up to the seventh century, although Brean Down and Lamyatt Beacon had burials and buildings which may have been Christian (Rahtz 1991: 7-8; Yorke 1995: 166). Place-name evidence suggests there could have been sacred groves and other similar sites which existed in a dispersed landscape of cult-sites (e.g. the *nemet* ('sacred grove') place-names of Devon: see below). In the east, there is little evidence for pagan temple-building. Blair has argued that in parts of Anglo-Saxon England constructed cult-sites emerged just before the conversion under the influence of Christian practice (Blair 1995b), but this interpretation is uncertain; place-name evidence suggests that in southern England pagan Anglo-Saxon cult sites were without substantial structures and were sited at places like clearings in the woods and on hilltops until the conversion period (e.g. Meaney 1999; Yorke 1995: 167-9). Blair has discussed the way sites like trees and wells could themselves have perpetuated ancient cult sites, or else the modes of traditional belief that had formerly been attached to other places (Blair, forthcoming). Examples in western Wessex include the ash tree 'which the ignorant call sacred' in the charter-bounds of Taunton (Somerset; S311), and the ash-trees of St Nectan's grove in Devon (reported in the twelfth-century *Life of St Nectan:* Doble 1970: 74-5). Holy wells were part of medieval Christian and probably pre-Christian religious practice throughout the south-west, occurring widely in all five south-western counties. Like the burial sites discussed below, wells occur both at places that later became major Christian foci (e.g. Wells, Somerset), and also dispersed through the landscape (e.g. the *halgan well* ('holy well') in the charter bounds of Ruishton, Somerset (S310; S352; S1819) and *halgan wyl* at Portisham, Dorset (S961); Rattue (1995: 63-4) cites other examples, including

Fontmell Magna, Dorset; however, this appears to be *holebroke* or 'hollow brook' rather than 'holy well'; although the same charter boundary includes *halgan weies lake* or 'holy way stream' (S419)). Blair has suggested that cult sites like these represent a kind of vernacular religion which co-existed with 'official' (normally high-status) Christian sites. Like the cemeteries discussed below these appear to have existed throughout the early middle ages and may perpetuate minor pre-Christian cult foci within the Christian landscape; examples may include those documented cases whose boundary-clause names refer to non-Christian supernatural creatures (e.g. the *pucan wylle,* 'puck's well' at Weston, Somerset (S508); Semple 2002; Blair, forthcoming). Although there were times when worship at wells and other traditional sites was attacked by the Anglo-Saxon church hierarchy (e.g. by Aelfric and Wulfstan: see Blair, forthcoming for discussion), they were ubiquitous in the later middle ages and sometimes elaborately constructed (Rattue 1995: 89-100). Nevertheless, like local churches (see below, 4.10), it is possible that their number multiplied in the later Saxon and post-Conquest periods. Rattue lists eight late medieval or modern holy wells which may be first recorded in pre-Conquest charters as springs without religious associations, including four examples in Devon and Somerset (Rattue 1995: 64-5). These suggest that not all wells are 'ancient' cult places. The relatively ephemeral nature of sites such as wells and holy trees means that activity is normally hard to date by archaeological methods, and also that there are commonly few references to them in historical sources. For this reason the following discussion will focus on other categories of minor religious or ritual sites, in particular burials and crosses.

Field cemeteries in western Wessex

For burial sites as well as settlements, the ending of Roman Britain did not necessarily mean the abandonment of established locations in the South West. Although few sites which date to this period are presently known in

Devon (e.g. the cemetery at Kenn; Horner 1996), there are numerous examples of early medieval burial sites in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire.

Excavations have shown that some burial sites in Somerset and Dorset have periods of use spanning the late Roman, post-Roman and middle Saxon periods, as recently discussed by Petts (2001). One of the most important examples is Cannington (Somerset), where a cemetery which may originally have accommodated as many as 2000 individuals was in use between the fourth to the late seventh or eighth century (Rahtz *et al.* 2000), but Camerton (Somerset) is another case (Wedlake 1958) and there are possible smaller examples from Portland (Dorset) and Wells (Somerset) (Petts 2001).

Other cases such as Ilchester/Northover and Bradley Hill (Somerset) show that some Roman-period cemeteries continued in use into the post-Roman centuries, but were disused before the period of West Saxon cultural dominance (Leach 1994; Leech 1981). Burials and cemeteries at former Roman temples illustrate that although certain places may have remained focal sites for ritual practice in the very late and post-Roman periods, the nature of that use could change. Roman temples were not normally used as funerary sites during the Roman period, but between the fifth and seventh centuries burials occurred at a number of them including Henley Wood, Brean Down, Lamyatt Beacon (Somerset), probably Nettleton (Wiltshire), and perhaps Maiden Castle (Dorset) (Watts & Leach 1996; Leech 1986; Wedlake 1982; Wheeler 1943; Petts 2001). The Henley Wood example is particularly important as it demonstrates a very close spatial relationship between the cemetery and the contemporary high-status settlement at Cadbury Congresbury, only *c.*130m to the south. Such a relationship may also be reflected at Cannington (Somerset) and possibly at Raddon (Devon; Gent & Quinnell 1999a).

These centuries witnessed the conversion of the greater part of the region to Christianity under British and subsequently Saxon leaders. However, there

does not appear to have been a clear break in burial tradition at any point between the fourth or fifth and eighth centuries which might have been associated with the conversion. Present evidence tends to suggest that in most of Somerset and Dorset, and in a large part of western Wiltshire, burial practice changed relatively little during this period. Some early burial sites remained active in the eighth century and later, whereas others went out of use in the sixth or seventh centuries. Some sites which appear to have been used specifically as Christian cemeteries in the early post-Roman period failed to remain active into later times, including examples like Lamyatt Beacon and Brean Down where there may have been small churches on site (Leech 1986; Wedlake 1982).

Some cemeteries that did persist from post-Roman times into the middle Saxon period were associated with sites that became important elite centres later in the early middle ages, whether predominantly ecclesiastical or secular. Examples include Carhampton and probably Wells in Somerset, and Wareham in Dorset (Hollinrake & Hollinrake 1997; Rodwell 1982; Hinton 1992; Petts 2001)). However, other cemeteries seem to have remained active or come into use in the seventh century that were not located at the sites of important churches. Instead, field cemeteries like Cannington could continue to provide important venues for burial well into the Christian period.

In Dorset, examples from the Isle of Purbeck show how cemeteries could exist in the early middle ages separate from churches. At Ulwell in the parish of Swanage, a cemetery of around 60 dug graves and cist burials has been shown by radiocarbon dating to have been used throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, and perhaps later (Cox 1988). There are a number of other burial sites in the same area that could belong to the early middle ages, although they have not been scientifically dated. At Ballard Down and at Durlston Cliff small cemeteries with both dug graves and cist burials were uncovered, and a further cist burial was found nearby at Langton Matravers (RCHM 1970; Petts 2001). None of these four sites has

any obvious relationship to a church or chapel, and it seems likely that they functioned as Christian field cemeteries in the early middle ages.

A limited number of references in Anglo-Saxon charter bounds probably refer to such field cemeteries, for example at Stanton St Bernard (S368) and East Overton (S449) in Wiltshire (Reynolds 2002), and early antiquarian references hint that such sites have been disturbed in the past (e.g. at the Sanctuary, near Avebury in Wiltshire; Pollard & Reynolds 2002: 233-4). John Blair has shown that burial grounds of this sort existed in late Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire, and notes that it was possible for them (and the burial rites conducted at them) to be under the control of ecclesiastical centres some distance away (e.g. Chimney, controlled by the minster at Bampton; Blair 1994: 73). Until at least the ninth or tenth centuries rural burial sites away from churches probably continued to function in Wessex and more widely in Anglo-Saxon England; the stimulus for change and more centralised control of burial appears to have been the development of increasing numbers of local churches and the resulting loss of income for longer-established ecclesiastical centres (see below; Lucy & Reynolds 2002: 20-1; Gittos 2002: 202-4). This also suggests that even those burials that took place some distance from important churches had by this time come under their control. Although burials continued in long-established cemeteries based perhaps on family or other social groups, by the ninth and tenth centuries these burial sites had clearly been incorporated into a broadly 'Christian' landscape.

'Anglo-Saxon' burials in central Wessex

Anglo-Saxon cultural influence in central Wessex from the fifth century onwards has been inferred from the presence of distinctively 'Anglo-Saxon' material culture, mainly in the form of grave-goods, but also as some settlement-related finds (Eagles 2001). There is a particularly marked concentration of burial evidence from the Avon valley and its tributaries

around Salisbury in Wiltshire. For example, fifth-century cemeteries have been identified at Petersfinger, Winterbourne Gunner, Harnham and Charlton, and burial continued at all these sites into the sixth century (Meaney 1964; Eagles 2001: 206). Finds such as pottery and building remains have been recovered close to several of these cemeteries, as at Collingbourne Ducis in the Bourne valley (Eagles 2001; Pine 2001). It seems most likely that settlements and their cemeteries in this part of Wessex were sited very close to one another during the fifth and early sixth centuries, and burial sites, like settlements, occur in a wide range of topographical positions (e.g. Overton Hill and Bassett Down: Semple, forthcoming a). Semple has also discussed the possibility that early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries may have acted as foci for a wider range of ritual activities than just burial (Semple forthcoming b). Several of the sites she discusses are made up of multi-centred ritual landscapes dispersed over fairly extensive areas. In some ways this decentralised 'late pagan' landscape in England is analagous to pre-conversion landscapes in Scandinavia, where ritual sites (including settlements and burials) were scattered across areas of the landscape rather than being focussed on a single elite site (Welinder 2003: 510-12); Fabech, discussing southern Sweden, notes the contrast between the 'decentral and horizontal cosmos' of pre-Christian Nordic ideology and the 'centrality and verticality' of Christian ideology (Fabech 1999a: 469).

In the late sixth- and seventh-century Wessex, however, a different pattern emerges. Cemeteries and burial sites appear to become increasingly distant from settlement sites, with a growing tendency for them to occupy locations on hilltops or plateaux (Semple, forthcoming a). There is also a corresponding increase in 'isolated' burials of one or two individuals, typically in barrows. In the sixth and earlier seventh centuries these are normally the burials of male individuals, but by the later seventh century, when they dominate the (presently known) burial record of the area, females are in the majority (Eagles 2001). Both Eagles and Semple note the distinctive topographical positions of the majority of these burials, which

tend to be on downland away from the main areas of settlement. However, whilst some are on escarpment edges with wide views across territory (e.g. the primary barrow-burial of a male on Roundway Down (Semple, forthcoming a) and the Swallowcliffe Down female (Speake 1989)), others are in less topographically prominent locations (e.g. Yatesbury 1 (Semple, forthcoming a); the secondary barrow-burial of a female on Roundway Down (Semple & Williams 2001)). Eagles and Semple also note that these burials tend to occur close to routes of communication, in some cases by a Roman road, in others by a routeway identified in later Anglo-Saxon charters as a *herepath.* They suggest that the prime motivation behind the location of these monuments was the desire for prominence in the landscape of communications, with the implication that these 'conspicuous' burials were marking territories of some kind. Semple has recently argued that in north Wiltshire they should be seen as boundary markers relating to the fluctuation in frontiers between the developing kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex (Semple, forthcoming a), and Eagles has suggested that those in south-west Wiltshire could be associated with a hypothetical Wessex frontier against the 'British' (Eagles 2001: 212-3; 219). However, it does not seem easy to explain examples such as those around Salisbury in this way, which were located squarely in what had become the West Saxon heartlands (e.g. Ford Down and Salisbury Racecourse; Musty 1969; Eagles 2001: 225; Yorke 1995: 59-60). If these monuments are to be seen as territorial markers, it might be suggested that instead of marking the boundaries of kingdoms, such burials stood upon the edges of more localised territorial units which were centred on newly established elite centres (royal vills and churches; see below, 4.6). Since such units would have formed the geographical 'building blocks' of kingdoms, it is possible that at times their boundaries would also have been the boundaries of larger political units. This interpretation does not conflict with the observation that these 'conspicuous' burials were commonly adjacent to major routes: to have fulflilled a role as boundary markers the monuments would need to have been visible to people moving through the landscape no matter what size the geographical unit they marked.

Some of these seventh-century burials (though by no means all) stand on or close to modern or post-medieval administrative boundaries, and a few can be shown to have stood on boundaries in the late Saxon period. These examples hint at the kind of boundary such burials may have been used to mark. A barrow at Swallowcliffe Down (Wiltshire), which contained a richly-furnished intrusive female burial, may be mentioned in a tenth-century charter boundary-clause (Speake 1989). The barrow stands close to the point where the parishes of Ansty, Swallowcliffe and Alvediston meet, and therefore close to the hundred boundary between Dunworth and Chalke. In addition, this boundary probably represents the boundary between two areas dependent on different ecclesiastical centres. To the north, a land-owning church at Tisbury is known to have existed by the early eighth century (see below, 4.8), and it may have controlled a *parochia* including Swallowcliffe and Ansty (Pitt 1999: 54). To the south, Alvediston was later a chapelry of Broad Chalke, where a fragment of ninth-century sculpture probably indicates the presence of an early ecclesiastical centre (Pitt 1999: 45). A primary seventh-century barrow burial nearby in Alvediston may also mark the same boundary (Eagles 2001: 219).

The intrusive barrow-burial at Ford Down lies near the Roman road leading from Old Sarum to Winchester, and close to the parish boundaries between Clarendon Park and Laverstock to the south and the Winterbournes to the north (Musty 1969). Although this is not a hundred boundary, Pitt has suggested that two ecclesiastical *parochiae* may have bordered here, focused on Alderbury to the south and Idmiston to the north (Pitt 1999: 28-29).

In north Wiltshire, the female burial at Roundway Down stands close to the meeting point of the parishes of Roundway, Bromham and Rowde, and therefore close to the hundred boundaries of Cannings, Calne and Rowborough (see Semple & Williams 2001). It is likely that different royal and ecclesiastical centres controlled the antecedents of these units, and the

woman at Roundway may have been buried in her barrow when these regions were beginning to crystallize. However, for this argument to be upheld, the middle-Saxon idea of a boundary must have related to a boundary 'zone' rather than a narrow or imaginary line such as that current in later medieval and modern times. This is because several other burials of approximately the same date exist on and around Roundway Down, but are all further away from the modern parish boundaries (Semple, forthcoming a). These burials probably represent an extensive burial 'zone' as suggested by Semple (forthcoming a), but could also suggest that a boundary zone was considered as an area rather than in linear terms.

In early medieval Ireland boundary zones of wilderness acted as 'buffers' between neighbouring polities (Ó Carragáin 2003), and there is other evidence to suggest that boundaries may have been more fuzzy in the middle Saxon period than in later times. Some of the earliest Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries record only a few landmarks which are often not clearly defined, particularly when crossing rough upland or marshy areas. Glastonbury's *Pouholt* charter, mentioned above, is an example: here, the northern boundary of the estate is simply defined as 'half of the marsh' (S253; Abrams 1994; Fig. 4.9). An eighth-century Mercian charter granting eight hides at Evenlode in Gloucestershire notes only six boundary points, including an area of marshland (*cenepes moor*) and a possible burial mound (*mules hlæwe*; S109; Hooke 1998: 87). Another eighth-century Mercian charter grants ten hides for the construction of a *cænubium* in the territory of the *Husmerae* (S89). Two of the three landmarks given in its boundary are tracts of woodland: in the northern zone or region (*plaga*) the wood named *cynibre*, and to the west Morfe forest. Not all early charter boundary clauses are this vague, and some have fairly detailed descriptions (e.g. S264, Little Bedwyn, Wiltshire). However, it seems likely that boundaries in areas of rough ground could have remained relatively ill-defined in the middle Saxon period and in many cases later. It may only have been the expansion of settlement into marginal areas which began in earnest in the tenth century that necessitated clearer definitions of many boundaries (see

below, 4.10). Hooke has discussed how areas of rough ground could be subject to ownership disputes as a result of poorly-defined boundaries throughout the middle ages and into the early modern period (Hooke 1998: 78-80).

Many of the 'conspicuous' burials of western Wessex were taking place within the 'Christian' period; burial furnished with grave-goods in both field cemeteries and barrows in Hampshire and Wiltshire continued after burial at nearby churches had begun (Geake 2002). While the religious agenda of the inhabitants of middle-Saxon barrow burials is of a topic of enduring interest, some recent discussions have not emphasised religious factors, preferring to concentrate on social and political explanations for barrow burial. For example, Semple has argued that religious identity is relatively unimportant, because the significant confrontation reflected by barrow burial is not between pagans and Christians, but between different polities (Semple, forthcoming a). Williams has pointed out that monument reuse (including barrow burial) continued from the fifth to the seventh centuries and overlapped the conversion period, suggesting that it cannot be interpreted as either pagan or Christian. He too prefers an interpretation which stresses the power of burial monuments to emphasise claims over territory (Williams 1997: 25). If the argument put forward in the present thesis can be accepted, a geographical relationship between the new Christian centres and the location of many 'conspicuous' burials can be suggested: the monumental burials would be on the margins of areas of settlement whose centres were marked by churches and royal vills (see below, 4.6-4.8). Their locations may have been linked to a 'Christianised' way of ordering the landscape which put the royal vill and/or church at the centre of an area of settled fields, surrounded by a boundary zone of wilder uncultivated land (below, 4.3, 4.7-4.9). These burials were placed at visible points in this margin.

4.3 Changing settlement patterns from the conversion period onwards

The development of settlement patterns in central and western Wessex during the early middle ages is not everywhere clearly understood, and so it can be hard to relate ecclesiastical sites to local developments. This section first discusses examples which provide an outline framework for the relatively sparse evidence, and then goes on to note some recent research which has begun to cast light on the subject at the more detailed scale of individual medieval parishes.

In general, the relationship between Roman and early medieval settlements is unclear because of the lack of evidence about the latter. Although the Roman-period settlement pattern is fairly well understood in many areas of Wessex, the settlements of the sixth to ninth centuries have proved rather more difficult to locate. The chronology of English place-name development in the South West is uncertain and settlement patterns are hard to reconstruct based on the distribution of particular elements (but see Padel 1999). However, some recent archaeological work has begun to address problems such as a lack of distinctive artefacts on sites of this period, for example by making use of radiocarbon dating techniques.

In central and east Devon, for example, three sites have come to light in recent years which may show some similarities between the settlement pattern of the period conventionally known as post-Roman in Devon and that of Cornwall at the same time (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, above). At Hayes Farm, Clyst Honiton, part of a large cropmark enclosure was shown to post-date a Roman settlement, and produced a radiocarbon date indicating that the feature was probably filled between the fifth and seventh centuries (Simpson *et al.* 1989: 12-13). At Raddon, Stockleigh Pomeroy (*c.*6.5km north-east of Crediton), recent excavations have shown that a Neolithic and Iron-Age hilltop enclosure was re-used in the post-Roman centuries (Gent & Quinnell 1999a). Finds of charred grain suggest settlement activity at the site, where a late-prehistoric ditch was also re-cut

and where there may have been episodes of burial in the post-Roman period. At Haldon Belvedere, Dunchideock, a Neolithic settlement site *c.*7.5km south-west of Exeter, the nature of the post-Roman activity is uncertain since only one pit was scientifically dated to the period. However, this feature also contained cereal grains (Gent & Quinnell 1999b). Somewhat better understood is the site at High Peak, 5km west of Sidmouth, where excavations in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries produced finds of imported Mediterranean pottery (Pollard 1966). Although this is a small sample of sites, it is notable that all re-use prehistoric settlement sites and that three of the four are located on prominent hilltops. It has been suggested that prehistoric sites in Devon were not re-used in the fifth and sixth centuries as they were in neighbouring areas such as Somerset (Grant 1995). However, this interpretation is based on mainly small-scale excavations which largely took place before the development of radiocarbon dating in the mid-twentieth century. The most recent work suggests that the application of modern dating techniques may reveal that activity did indeed take place at former prehistoric settlement sites in the post-Roman period without leaving large or distinctive artefactual assemblages, and that the situation in Devon may not have been dissimilar to neighbouring areas. It is also notable that these four post-Roman sites mostly occupy locations that are quite different to most later medieval settlements. The latter tend not to be on hilltops, but rather are located away from exposed ridges in or on the edges of more sheltered valleys, as in Cornwall. This hints that at some point between the late- or post-Roman period and the time when the medieval settlement pattern was established, there was a significant change in ideas about what sites were most suitable for settlements. This is suggested, for example, by Fig. 4.4 which shows the distribution of probable late-prehistoric, Romano-British and post-Roman settlement enclosures in part of mid-Devon (based largely on air photographic evidence), plotted against known medieval settlement sites (based mainly on earliest recorded place-names). Although no early medieval settlements have been excavated in this area, the ecclesiastical community at Crediton was almost certainly established by the eighth

century at the latest (S 255). Furthermore, one of the medieval farmsteads in southern Crediton parish has one of the few habitative British place-names to have survived in Devon from before the Anglo-Saxon period (Treable, a *tre* place-name; Finberg 1953b: 20-31). This may suggest a degree of antiquity in at least some of the medieval settlement sites. It is likely that the early medieval period would have been the time when any re-orientation in settlement pattern would have been achieved. As discussed below (4.5), important early churches tend to be in prominent sites close to valley bottoms, rather than prominent sites on exposed hilltops (Crediton itself is no exception), and this may have been an important element in the changing structure of the landscape: the sites which acted as 'central places' (in the seventh and eighth centuries these were churches and royal vills) were no longer located in hilltop positions as those of the post-Roman period had been (typically re-used hillforts and other prehistoric enclosures).

A similar shift in 'central place' location probably occurred in Somerset between the late- and post-Roman period and the early middle ages. Here, the hillforts of South Cadbury and Cadbury-Congresbury are well known and have produced considerable evidence for fifth and sixth century activity (Alcock 1995; Rahtz *et al.* 1992). Many other Somerset hillforts have also produced Roman material, which may hint at similar activity on a broader scale (Burrow 1981: 172-184). Cadbury-Congresbury is a particularly interesting example. Here, a hillfort with late-Roman occupation continued in use and was partly re-fortified in the post-Roman period. On the slopes of the hill on which it stands, a late-Roman temple was used at the same time for burials, and an extensive cemetery developed around the site (Watts & Leach 1996). However, at some time in the early middle ages, the ecclesiastical centre of Congresbury was founded *c.*1km south of the hillfort on the banks of the River Yeo, close to the point where it flows out into the levels (this occurred at least by the later ninth century, since Congresbury was granted by Alfred to Asser along with Banwell, *c.*6km to the south west; as Asser's *Life of King Alfred* describes them, '...two

monasteries so well provided with goods of all sorts...'; Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 97). The focal point of the area had moved, and settlement in the medieval parish developed predominately in the lower ground between the levels and the upland grazing of the Mendip Hills (see Aston 1994: 224).

Leech has disputed arguments of this kind on the grounds that they are based around high-status sites which are not typical of settlement in general (Leech 1982: 236). Instead, he argued that analysis should focus on patterns of ordinary settlements rather than high-status centres. He mapped all possible Romano-British settlements and known late medieval settlements, arguing that their relative distribution (in particular west of the River Parret in Somerset) indicated that the Roman settlement pattern was perpetuated in the medieval pattern, and that there was therefore a high degree of continuity between the two. However, Leech assumed continuity between possible early- and known late-medieval settlement sites without expressing any of the caveats noted above, and without citing any relevant examples of continuity. Secondly, he argues that there is no evidence for substantial environmental change (such as the re-growth of forest) in Somerset after the end of the Roman period; subsequent work, for example at Shapwick, has shown that Roman pottery scatters do occur in areas that were woodland in the medieval period (Aston & Gerrard 1999: 27). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, his argument is based on analysis of very few Roman-period settlements. Although Leech identified 46 medieval settlements in an area of c.80km^2 west of the Parrett, only 1 certain and 7 possible Romano-British settlements are discussed. At only one of 53 settlements west of the Parrett (Leech 1982: Fig.11, p.240) had both Roman and medieval settlement been identified.

An alternative explanation for the changes in settlement pattern observed by Leech can be suggested based on some of the other areas he investigates (Leech 1982, Figs.12 & 13, pp.242-245). His maps show that deserted Roman settlements tend to occur in clusters (e.g. north east and north west of Somerton, Fig.12; north of Sherborne, Fig.13). These settlements are on

higher ground which, as suggested above, may have become marginal to the extent of arable land and the location of settlements in the early medieval period. These Roman settlements and the areas they occupied may have been deserted in the post-Roman period as a result of a general shift in settlement patterns towards the lower valley sides.

Similar developments seem to have occurred in Wiltshire. Several late Roman settlements here have produced material suggesting that occupation probably continued into the fifth and sixth centuries, including Coombe Down on Salisbury Plain (Entwistle *et al.* 1994), Overton Down (Fowler 2000: 228-9), Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn (Hostetter & Howe 1997: 374), Cleveland Farm in Ashton Keynes, and perhaps Market Lavington (Eagles 2001). Some scholars choose to see the occupation of such settlement sites on the downs as the tail-end of a Romano-British agricultural boom (Faulkner 2000: 137-149), whereas others regard it as evidence for a thriving but modified 'late-antique' economy in central southern Britain (Dark 2000: 113-7). It seems clear that whatever the nature of these sites in the post-Roman period, occupation continued on many of them into at least the sixth century.

Some such sites are in areas that continued to support fairly concentrated populations from the Roman period through to the late medieval period (see e.g. Reynolds *et al.* forthcoming). It is axiomatic for landscape archaeology that earlier patterns of land-use and settlement will influence later ones; however, it is important to distinguish between real and apparent continuities. Fowler argues (Fowler 2000: 257-260) that the medieval landscape of settlement is essentially a 'British' one, established years before the Romans ever arrived. In some ways this is true: similar areas were almost certainly cultivated in the parishes of West Overton and Fyfield (the focus of Fowler's study) during the Iron Age and in the late medieval period. However, this argument ignores some of the shorter-scale fluctuations in land-use patterns which could be crucial to understanding the relationships between different periods (see also Fowler 2000: Tables 4

and 5, pp.245-6, which deal with the appearance of material in individual locations in (apparently arbitrary) 500-year time-slots, so marginalising the effects of shorter-scale fluctuations). Fowler's plan of the extent of 'permanent' arable in his study area during prehistoric and Roman times as opposed to the later middle ages clearly illustrates that a much greater area was under the plough in the earlier periods (Fig. 4.5; Fowler 2000: 233, Fig.16.1; see also McOmish *et al.* 2002: 100-115). Since the early medieval landscape probably witnessed significant expansion in the farmed area from the later ninth century onwards (see below, 4.10), it could be suggested that the contrast between the late Roman and middle Saxon patterns would have been even more marked than that shown in this diagram. The apparent abandonment of downland sites like 'Crawford's Complex' on Overton Hill (which Fowler claims is a post-Roman settlement) also suggest there were changes in settlement pattern between the points in time brought out by Fowler's analysis (Fowler 2000, Ch.16 (pp.232-260)).

Information of this sort suggests that there may have been an overall re-focussing of the landscape of settlement some time after the beginning of the early medieval period. It may be possible to develop a model suggesting that whilst much of the Roman-period agricultural landscape probably remained under cultivation, certain areas may have been given over to rough pasture as the settlement pattern increasingly concentrated on sites in the lower valley sides. This would have been in imitation of high-status sites such as royal vills and ecclesiastical centres, and would have occurred from the time they were systematically established in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Unfortunately, there are relatively few excavated settlement sites in central or western Wessex which illustrate the nature of rural settlement and its relationship to church sites during this crucial period. Examples such as Collingbourne Ducis (Pine 2001), Trowbridge (Graham & Davies 1993) and Abbot's Worthy (Fasham & Whinney 1991), together with likely examples like Tidworth (Godden *et al.* 2002), Bathampton and Salisbury

(Nenk *et al.* 1995), suggest that settlements of middle Saxon date are to be found mainly on the lower slopes of valleys close to river floodplains. However, since the number of excavated sites is limited, it is hard to establish their relationship to major ecclesiastical sites. Extensive fieldwalking surveys, which can provide good evidence for the distribution of rural Roman and later medieval settlements, have also proved rather ineffective at identifying early medieval settlements, even in areas of eastern Wessex. The East Hampshire Survey, the East Berkshire Survey and the Kennet Valley Survey (also Berkshire) all failed to locate significant quanitites of pre-Conquest pottery, probably because it is fragile and decays quickly when subjected to ploughing (Oake & Shennan 1985; Ford 1987; Lobb & Rose 1996). However, some of these surveys hint once again at a re-orientation in the landscape in the early medieval period (as can be seen by comparing e.g. Lobb & Rose 1996 Fig.17 (Romano- British settlement in the Kennet valley) with Fig.18 (Saxon sites and finds).

One fieldwalking survey in the central Wessex area has identified a small but significant amount of early/middle Anglo-Saxon pottery. The Middle Avon Valley Survey, undertaken between 1979 and 1986, surveyed fields several kilometres to either side of the River Avon in Hampshire just south of the Wiltshire border, a stretch of river with two probable late Saxon minster churches at Breamore and Fordingbridge (Light *et al.* 1994). The fields walked were predominantly on the lower valley sides and did not generally extend to the higher slopes, so that it is hard to see any possible contrasts in settlement patterns between higher and lower ground (see. e.g. Light *et al.* 1994, Fig. 23; however, in the far north of the study area where a few fields above *c.*50m AOD were surveyed, Romano-British finds were more densely distributed than medieval ones; compare Figs.23, 24 and 29). Furthermore, although 27 sherds of so-called chaff-tempered pottery were recovered, Hinton and others have indicated that the dating of this material remains uncertain, perhaps ranging from the fifth to the ninth or tenth centuries (Hinton 1994: 35; Timby 2001). Without other artefactual or scientific dating evidence, it can be hard to disentangle early Saxon

occupation sites from middle Saxon sites because of the difficulty of understanding the pottery. The Middle Avon Survey does show that settlement persisted in the region from the Roman period through to some point in the early medieval period, and that it probably clustered in certain areas throughout this time, e.g. around Breamore. Unfortunately, the survey was not able to show clearly what changes there were in the settlement pattern of the wider area, largely because it focussed on the lower ground at the expense of the upper valley sides.

At Shapwick (Somerset), a ten-year research project has applied a battery of techniques including intensive fieldwalking, place-name analysis and regressive map analysis to a single parish, and has begun to show the value of an interdisciplinary approach (Aston & Gerrard 1999). The aim of the project was to investigate the establishment of the present nucleated village and its fields. This has resulted in the identification of the sites of around ten Roman settlements and the probable locations of at least four of their early medieval successors, before the establishment of the nucleated village in the tenth century (C. Gerrard 2000). These patterns can be related to the probable location of the early medieval church, which had probably been in existence since the eighth century, when the estate of *Pouelt* (including Shapwick) was apparently granted to Glastonbury (Abrams 1994; Gerrard 1995: 108). The distribution map of early medieval settlement shows that the likely early medieval settlements in the parish tend to cluster in the agricultural land below the ridge of the Poldens and above the marshland in the area that later became medieval open field; they also tend to focus around the site of the former church, which could have been established as early as the eighth century (Aston & Gerrard 1999, Fig.11). This contrasts with the Roman period when settlement sites appear to have been rather more evenly spread across the parish, with concentrations of Roman material found in areas that were probably marsh and woodland in the early medieval period. This indicates that in comparison to the Roman period, the cultivated area almost certainly contracted in the first part of the early middle ages (Aston & Gerrard 1999: 20). In the tenth century, Aston &

Gerrard argue that the settlement pattern of the area was re-arranged once again with the creation of a nucleated village and the abandonment of the dispersed settlements (Aston & Gerrard 1999).

In general terms, it seems highly likely that there was a re-focussing of the settled landscape of Wessex around the beginning of the middle Saxon period, and that the process was intimately related to the establishment of new kinds of high-status sites, in particular ecclesiastical centres. This seems to have occurred both in central Wessex, where Anglo-Saxon culture appears to have been dominant from as early as the fifth century, and in areas like Devon which may not have come under Anglo-Saxon political control until the later seventh or eighth century (Eagles 2001). The evidence from Shapwick and elsewhere suggests that like ecclesiastical centres (see below), the majority of settlement sites from this time onwards were set within arable land on the lower hillsides and valley bottoms.

4.4 The form of ecclesiastical centres in Anglo-Saxon Wessex

This section will outline briefly some of the evidence for the layout of major ecclesiastical centres in early medieval western Wessex. Relatively few sites have been subject to recent investigation in the region, and none has been completely excavated, so the evidence is partial; a few examples from other regions suggest what Wessex sites could have been like.

At the heart of each ecclesiastical centre was a church or group of churches (see Blair 1992: 246-251). The plans of a number of churches in western Wessex are at least partially known. Examples where excavation in modern times has taken place include Sherborne (Dorset; Gibb 1975), Exeter (Devon; Henderson & Bidwell 1982), and Wells (Somerset; Rodwell 1982). Others are known from post-medieval records or from early or still unpublished excavations; these cases are inevitably less well understood (e.g. St Mary's, Wareham (Dorset): Taylor & Taylor 1965; Muchelney (Somerset): Reynolds 1950; Glastonbury (Somerset): Rahtz 1993). Most of the buildings that have been excavated in the four western counties of Wessex date to the later part of the Saxon period, although parts of the complex at Wells may date to middle Saxon times.

In a number of cases there was more than one church on the site. Excavated examples include Wells and Glastonbury, and perhaps Sherborne. Topographical evidence suggests that there may have been similar arrangements on other sites as at Exeter and Buckfastleigh (Devon; Blair & Orme 1995; Reynolds & Turner, forthcoming). Blair has suggested that groups of churches were common throughout Christian Europe and the Mediterranean, and has pointed to other cases in Britain including Canterbury, Northampton, Repton, Lindisfarne and Jarrow (Blair 1992).

Churches were at the heart of ecclesiastical complexes, but also within their precincts were other buildings and areas which fulfilled various functions; some of these are discussed briefly below. In addition there were commonly

boundaries surrounding those elements of the site that made up the most densely occupied nucleus. Some cases studies of post-medieval town plans have suggested areas that could have been defined by a boundary (e.g. Sherborne: Barker 1980), but elsewhere archaeological and topographical studies indicate that ecclesiastical sites were commonly marked off from the rest of the landscape. Perhaps the most obvious examples are those sites that re-used Roman walled places for churches (Blair 1992: 236). Examples in the area under consideration include Exeter and Bath, both of which may have been in continuous occupation from the post-Roman period onwards as Christian foci (Allan *et al.* 1984; Bell 1996). In some cases substantial boundary ditches have been excavated which could have surrounded sites and may date to the middle Saxon period (e.g. Glastonbury: Leach & Ellis 1993; Bath: Bell 1996). Elsewhere, the topographical position of sites could have set them apart from other places, particularly in the case of monasteries such as those on low islands in the marshes like Muchelney and Athelney (Somerset). Gittos has recently questioned the significance of boundaries around ecclesiastical sites as signifiers of sacred space on the grounds that consecrated areas for burial do not seem to have developed until the late Saxon period in England (Gittos 2002: 207). However, her argument does not preclude the likelihood that ecclesiastical space was given special status through means other than reserving space for burials. In some ecclesiastical foundations, internal boundaries may have divided up different parts of the site (e.g. Wimborne (Dorset); Blair 1983). The existence of crosses within precincts from at least the ninth century onwards in southern England (and earlier in the north of the country) is suggestive of religious space marked out physically. The great majority of Anglo-Saxon crosses in western Wessex come from ecclesiastical centres such as Glastonbury, Bath and Keynsham (Somerset; Foster 1987; Lowe 1987). The sacred ground within the ecclesiastical settlement in Wessex was differentiated from the rest of the countryside though the device of constructed or marked boundaries as it was in Ireland and elsewhere (Mytum 1992; Ó Carragáin 2003; Turner, forthcoming).

From an early date, there was more to many ecclesiastical centres than just a church. Waste products and manufactured items of middle Saxon date have been recovered from a number of sites indicating industrial activity. At Glastonbury, excavated evidence suggests ninth-century glass making within the ecclesiastical precinct and activity of various periods including iron-working in the tenth century at the Mound site, just to the west (Rahtz 1993; Carr 1985). Iron-working of middle-Saxon date has been identified at Gillingham (Dorset; Heaton 1992), Carhampton (Somerset: Hollinrake & Hollinrake 1997), Romsey (Hampshire; Scott 1999) and Ramsbury (Wiltshire), where other finds included quantities of animal bone, pottery and quern stones imported from overseas (Haslam 1980). The fact that industrial activities took place near church sites shows that they were places with more than one function. Whilst it is possible that the items produced were only for 'internal' consumption, ecclesiastical sites would still have acted as focal points for craftsmen and those who supplied raw materials.

Ecclesiastical centres were also settlement sites, and John Blair has suggested that the combination of central-place functions they maintained may have promoted the development of towns around them in the later Saxon period (Blair 1988a: 47-50). At Avebury (Wiltshire), domestic structures and boundary ditches dating to the middle Saxon period have been excavated close to the site of the church which itself contains late Saxon fabric (Pollard & Reynolds 2002: 197-202). At Carhampton (Somerset), imported sixth- and seventh-century pottery (B- and E-ware) and occupation- and metal-working levels dated by radiocarbon to the middle Saxon period are suggestive of a settlement complex which may have focussed on a church there (Hollinrake & Hollinrake 1997). Ceramic material suggesting settlement has also been recovered close to the church at Romsey in Hampshire (Scott 1999). Such evidence hints that ecclesiastical centres in much of western Wessex may have been similar to those identified elsewhere in England where relatively dense settlement, a range of craft activities, and long-term, stable settlement distinguished ecclesiastical sites from ordinary settlements (e.g. Brandon (Suffolk: Carr *et*

al. 1988); Flixborough (Lincolnshire: Loveluck 1998); Hartlepool (Co. Durham; Daniels 1988); Blair 1992: 264-6).

It is clear that important early churches were significantly different from most contemporary settlements. Not only were they intended to be permanent, but they were surrounded by boundaries which meant that access could have been controlled by the ecclesiastical elite. They were foci for settlement and had industrial areas, both of which may have been more intensively used than their equivalent sites elsewhere in the landscape (Blair 1992: 258). As estate centres, important church sites seem to have been the focus of industrial and agricultural production and places where goods were consumed; this would have made them central places in economic terms. This centrality was also apparent in their administrative functions and relationships to royal centres, not to mention their roles in spiritual life. These aspects are discussed in the following sections.

4.5 Physical locations

The locations of important religious centres probably result from a number of factors, but they are likely to have been quite carefully chosen. This is true not only in terms of their associations with other aspects of the 'cultural landscape' – e.g. settlements or routeways – but probably also their position in relation to the local physical geography (hills, valleys, rivers, etc). The main contributions relating to the physical location of Wessex minster churches in recent years have come from Blair and Hase. Blair has argued that early religious communities in many parts of western Europe shared similar locations:

> 'The summits or shoulders of low hills and promontories, islands in marshy floodplains and headlands in the bends of rivers or on the sea-coast...'
>
> (Blair 1992: 227)

He does not offer any specific explanation for the choice of these locations, but notes they had a '...specifically monastic dimension...' (Blair 1996b: 10).

Hase has discussed the siting of minsters specifically in Wessex, and has modified some of Blair's statements about preference for 'prominent' positions (Hase 1994). He argues that a kingdom-by-kingdom approach is necessary before conclusions about the significance of minster sites can be drawn (1994: 54). Hase prefers an ecological explanation, noting that the majority of Wessex minsters were sited close to watercourses:

> 'The reason for this overwhelming preference for sites close to water is that these are, in a chalk country, the optimum sites for modern agriculture and settlement. The siting of mother-churches solely in zones which most recent settlement has favoured, and avoiding almost completely the High Chalk, makes it clear that the modern settlement patterns of Wessex were established well before the Christianization of the area...'
>
> (Hase 1994: 58)

The implication of this passage is that early religious communities in Wessex were located within the best agricultural land, rather than in positions which gave them a physical prominence as suggested by Blair. In view of the evidence for changing patterns of settlements and burials discussed above, it should not be assumed that the churches were simply following an anciently-established pattern for high-status sites.

In a recent paper Corcos has discussed the location of two Somerset churches from a phenomenological perspective (Corcos 2001). He considers in particular the location of St Mary's, Moorlinch, and argues that it was chosen deliberately to:

> '...manipulate the psychological perspective of the viewer, and to provoke a very specific emotional and cognitive response.'
>
> (Corcos 2001)

Corcos suggests that response was a sense of awe induced by the way the monumental qualities of the church were enhanced by its position (on a steep spur), allowing it to dominate other elements in the landscape. Corcos' discussion is particularly concerned to promote the phenomenological approach developed in prehistoric archaeology by Tilley and others. This is based on a theory of a dialectical, historically situated relationship between land and society (Tilley 1994: 23), the idea that:

> '...locales in a landscape may be natural features, such as bays or inlets on a coastline, or high points, or humanly created places such as monuments or settlements. Humanly created locales...draw on *qualities* [Tilley's emphasis] of landscape to create part of their significance for those who use them, and the perception of landscape itself may be fundamentally affected by the very situatedness of these locales.'
>
> (Tilley 1994: 25-6)

Some of the main difficulties inherent in this approach are methodological. For example, problems can arise if researchers ascribe modern or personal significance to sites which are not the same as ancient perceptions (with further problems concerning how to decide what any ancient significance

might have been). Secondly, there are issues regarding how representative any sites chosen for study may be. Some of these problems are exemplified in the second half of Corcos' paper, in particular the part dealing with the church of Moorlinch. Although he may be right to suggest that the location of this monument is designed to dominate the surrounding landscape in some way, Corcos does not address the issues either of how early medieval churches were perceived or how they were intended to be perceived. His reference to Altenberg's study of Dartmoor and Bodmin may be relevant to the late medieval perception of churches in the South West, but Altenberg's work refers to a specific time period (several hundred years later than that discussed by Corcos) and cannot necessarily be considered relevant to the pre-Conquest situation (Altenberg 1999; Corcos 2001). Furthermore, Corcos' sample of sites is very small – discussing only three Somerset churches in any detail (Moorlinch, Shapwick and Glastonbury) – and examination of a larger number of churches suggests that these are not typical of Wessex minsters in general (see below).

The important early medieval churches of Wessex were generally located close to the bottoms of valleys, as Hase suggested (1994). In the five counties considered in this thesis, 59% of certain and likely superior pre-Conquest chuches occupy such a position, including the vast majority of sites with evidence for early foundations (Table 4.2). Numerous sites in Wessex are both very close to water and occupy low islands or hillocks, even though they are surrounded by higher and steeper hills on either side of the river floodplain making them clearly visible from points in the surrounding landscape (e.g. Britford (Wilts); Chippenham (Wilts); Wareham (Dorset); Puddletown (Dorset); Sturminster Newton (Dorset); Crewkerne (Somerset); Cullompton (Devon); Exminster (Devon); for numerous further examples from the Thames valley see Blair 1996b).

Analysis of the sites by county (Table 4.3) shows that valley-bottom sites are most common in Wiltshire and central Wessex, and that they become increasingly less common further west. In the Wessex heartlands,

ecclesiastical centres are characteristically on the banks of rivers, or on the edges of their floodplains. In very many cases, the valley sides rise up above the churches, making their valley-bottom locations quite marked (see Figs. 4.6, 4.7). Even at sites in this region where churches stand on the valley sides, they are not often far from the valley floor and are usually not more than a short way up the hillside (e.g. Buckland Newton (Dorset); Sydling St Nicholas (Dorset); Axminster (east Devon)). Corcos' (2001) discussion of Moorlinch and Glastonbury do not provide case-studies of typical Wessex minsters, but are instead fairly unusual examples. Physical domination of the surrounding landscape by using the device of an elevated position cannot have been the general rule in western Wessex since a small minority of churches in the region occupy such sites. Instead, churches occupied central positions in valleys, commonly raised just above the level of the floodplain, and visible to people travelling along routeways such as rivers or ridge-lines.

Locations on hilltops or ridges are rather more common in the far south-west than in the Wessex heartlands. As noted in Chapter 3, however, the physical topography of the far South West is different to that of central Wessex: the steep, narrow valley-floors common in Cornwall and western Devon contrast with the more open landscapes of much of Wessex. Nevertheless, there are more early ecclesiastical centres in valley-bottoms and other low-lying places like sand dunes than in any other kind of location, even in Cornwall.

Various factors could have affected the location of churches and need to be considered along with phenomenological observations. Bradley has recently drawn attention to the 'unproductive' distinction in archaeological studies between 'mental' and 'material' landscapes in prehistory. The division results in studies of archaeological remains in the landscape such as settlement and land-use being isolated from studies of meaning and value, to the detriment of both branches of study (Bradley 2000: 2).

Like the new settlements of the conversion period considered above (4.3), churches in Wessex were commonly located low down on the valley sides and in the valley bottoms. In this sense, they were different from the high-status centres of the preceding post-Roman period, for example in Somerset where Iron Age hill-forts had been re-occupied. The foundation of churches in the valleys suggests they were part of a new pattern of landscape organisation which is also typified by many of the middle Saxon settlement sites; other evidence, considered below, suggests the churches and their ideology were at the very heart of this re-structuring of the landscape.

4.6 Ecclesiastical centres and royal vills

In the middle and later Saxon period the landscape of Wessex was divided into estates which were held by a variety of owners. These estates were administered from places which commonly took their names from areas or topographical features with which they were associated (Aston 1986; thus Cannington in Somerset is the 'Quantocks *tun*' (*tun* = 'farmstead, estate' (Padel 1999: 91)) ; Bruton (Somerset) is the '*tun* on the River Brue'; Wilton (Wiltshire) is the '*tun* on the River Wylye'; and Colyton (Devon) is the '*tun* on the River Coly'). Such places were commonly held by kings and their families, and these are known as *regiae villae* or 'royal vills'.

Identifying royal vills: documentary sources

Royal vills can be identified from various documentary and archaeological sources. Sawyer (1983) has discussed their identification using pre-Conquest documents, and compiled a list of sites in England based on this evidence. Literary sources such as Bede and annals like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle contain explicit references to a few sites, and charters indicate the locations of nineteen more (although five of these remain unidentified). Other royal vills are suggested by records of events whch took place at or close to them such as the deaths or burials of kings and battles. The wills of Alfred (S1507) and Eadred (S1515) each record land which these kings left to their relatives, and the estates in question are mainly referred to using the name of the royal vill which acted as the estate centre. However, even these documents are not believed to be complete catalogues of all the land held by either king. Sawyer argues that royal land fell into two categories: firstly, core estates which were essentially inalienable from the crown, and secondly personal property which could be left to people other than the next king (although changes in status of estates, particularly from personal property to 'core' land, did take place: see Sawyer 1983: 279; and Wormald

2001). Whilst the wills refer to land in the second category, it is uncertain how many estates fell into the first.

Domesday Book provides one possible way to fill in the gaps in our knowledge. Sawyer has argued that the royal estates of Domesday probably reflect ancient arrangements, so that most of the eleventh-century royal estates would also have been royal three or four hundred years before (and especially those which were not assessed for tax, or which paid by an archaic method such as the *feorm* or food-render; Sawyer 1983: 285). This theory is supported by the evidence from western Wessex, as shown by Table 4.4. Of the 43 sites listed where reliable evidence indicates royal vills before AD 1000, Domesday Book records that 20 were in the hands of King Edward in 1066 and a further 2 were royal boroughs. Furthermore, 8 were held by members of the family of Earl Godwin of Wessex, (including King Edward's wife Eadgyth/Edith and her brother Earl (and briefly King) Harold). 8 had passed into the hands of monasteries or bishops, but only 4 were held by thegns. This clearly suggests that royal land tended to remain with the crown or in the immediate circle of the royal family.

Identifying royal vills: archaeological evidence

In the majority of cases it is a guess that the royal centre was close to the surviving parish church (Blair 1988a); relatively few early medieval royal estate centres have been excavated in England. Those that have suggest such sites comprised a common range of buildings, in particular large timber halls such as those found at Yeavering and Cheddar (Hope-Taylor 1977; Rahtz 1979; see Rahtz 1999 for a recent distribution map of sites). In central and western Wessex, only Cheddar has been excavated on a large scale. The archaeological sequence from the site appears to have begun in the late ninth or early tenth century, and occupation continued into the later middle ages. Occupation may not have been continuous, and only a royal reeve is likely to have been at the site for extended periods. Royal visits

would have been occasional, such as those attested in itineraries and in charters, one of which records that a grant was made whilst the king was at Cheddar *in palatio regis* (Sawyer 1983: 292; Hill 1981: 88-90). Indeed, this may have been one of the most significant difference between royal centres and contemporary monasteries or minsters: whilst the former were sporadically used by an itinerant royal family and staffed by a few officials, the latter were bases for permanent communities.

The difficulties involved in distinguishing royal vills from minsters or monasteries have led to much recent debate. Sites such as Northampton and Brandon in Suffolk have been interpreted as either monastic or royal centres (e.g. Williams *et al.* 1988; Blair 1995a; Carr *et al.* 1988). Flixborough in Lincolnshire epitomises some of the problems; differences over time in assemblages that could have been associated with one class of site or the other (e.g. certain types of animal bones or *styli* for writing) have led the excavator there to suggest that the site itself fluctuated between royal and ecclesiastical function (Loveluck 1998).

Blair has called for the re-interpretation of a number of sites as minsters based on a combination of certain excavated characteristics and associated historical or literary evidence (Blair 1995a; 1997). His case is most persuasive for Northampton, where buildings which lay in a roughly axial alignment between two later churches had initially been interpreted as royal palaces, but are perhaps more plausibly seen as components of an ecclesiastical complex. However, he also argues that Cheddar and Steyning in Sussex should be regarded firstly as minsters and as royal residences only in a secondary phase. The evidence supporting his argument is circumstantial, and at neither site have early ecclesiastical buildings or precincts yet been excavated which would support it. As Blair states, the fact that King Alfred's father Aethelwulf was buried at Steyning in 858 suggests the royal link with the site was already strong in the ninth century (Blair 1997: 183). In seeking to emphasise the importance of the ecclesiastical presence at both these sites, which was without doubt

significant, Blair to some extent marginalises the importance of the royal element.

There is a risk that this could impoverish our interpretation of early medieval society and in particular religious organisation and politics. The relationship between 'secular' and 'sacred' was a crucial dynamic in early medieval culture, and neither can be understood properly without reference to the other (Markus 1997: 85-7; Fletcher 1997: 160-192). In non-Christian northern Europe, the aristocratic hall acted not only as a central settlement, but also as a sacred centre in the early middle ages (Herschend 1993; Fabech 1999b). Aspects of this sort of link may have been maintained through the conversion period in Wessex. Ecclesiastical and royal centres of the middle Saxon period certainly appear to have shared very similar settlement forms, and this probably reflects the deliberate expression of a common Christian ideology.

In the period before the emergence of Christian Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, most settlements in England were typified by a kind impermanence. Buildings seem to have been demolished after short periods of use, and entire settlements seem to 'shift' across the fifth- and sixth-century landscape (e.g. Mucking (Essex); West Stow (Suffolk): Hamerow 1991). However, around the end of the sixth century there were significant changes in elite settlement sites which led to increased internal division within settlements and more regular layouts, combined with less movement across the landscape (e.g. Cowdery's Down (Hampshire), Chalton (Hampshire), Wicken Bonhunt (Essex) (Millett & James 1983; Champion 1977; Wade 1980)). These enclosed sites seem to be associated with the social elite, a conclusion which is supported by the documentary sources: the early eighth-century law-code of King Ine of Wessex implies that only the settlements of the nobility were fortified (Hamerow 1991: 7; Ine Cap. 45: Attenborough 1922: 51).

Of various important social and political changes that occurred around this time (e.g. Carver 1989), it seems likely that the conversion to Christianity was one of the most significant. One reason for the relatively rapid adoption of Christianity across Anglo-Saxon England may have been that the sophisticated, literate culture of the Christian church was able to offer any royal family that converted opportunities to enhance its own authority. For example, the church probably introduced new kinds of property rights and new concepts of land-ownership (Kelly 1990: 40-45). The 'closure' of elite settlements may have been a way of expressing this re-ordered ideology in relation to property (Turner, forthcoming). The morphological similarity between permanent, bounded ecclesiastical centres (see above, 4.4) and the new high-status secular sites is striking. With secular elite sites which were similar in form to ecclesiastical settlements, the elite could justify its expanding powers over property and land with reference to the church and the new 'Christian' form of settlement. The church in turn benefited from royal patronage and protection for its ecclesiastical settlements. 'Secular' and 'sacred' elite settlements of the conversion period reflected a shared ideology: a new kind of permanence, a certain centrality, and the power to control land (Turner, forthcoming). The close relationship between secular and religious elements of the elite continued and developed into the later Saxon period. This may account for some of the problems archaeologists have faced in telling them apart. Both are forms of elite settlement, and their shared ideology is reflected in their close physical similarities. Within the study area the only example of a possible early royal centre that has seen recent evaluation is the seventh- or eight-century site at Foxley near Malmesbury in Wiltshire. Here the main focus of the settlement was a group of timber halls within an enclosure. Outside this lay a small church in a separate precinct; the layout of the site, which is known through air photography and geophysical survey, suggests this church was a secondary element rather than the original focus (Hinchcliffe 1986).

Royal Vills and Churches: Spatial Relationships

The spatial relationships between royal centres and churches could provide clues to other links between them. For example, close proximity could suggest a high level of dependence or inter-dependence. The Anglo-Saxon kings were instrumental in the conversion and adaptation of their kingdom to Christianity (Yorke 1999; 2003; Higham 1997), and Hase has argued that ecclesiastical centres in Wessex were nearly always directly dependent on royal vills (Hase 1994: 53). On the other hand, a significant degree of spatial separation could hint that churches enjoyed a greater degree of independence from secular and/or religious elites after their initial foundation, as suggested above for the early Cornish monasteries (Chapter 3). Blair has argued that minsters often began life as relatively autonomous institutions which were gradually 'secularised' (Blair 1988a; 1995a; 1997).

Some of the major monasteries of Wessex such as Malmesbury, Muchelney, and Glastonbury have no known close link to a royal estate centre, and themselves controlled large estates; these tend to be some distance from the nearest known royal vill (see Table 4.5). Other smaller monasteries also existed which had often come into the possession of more important houses by the later Saxon period. For example, Tisbury (Wiltshire), whose existence is first attested in the eighth century, had become a possession of Shaftesbury Abbey by the time of Domesday Book (S1256; Darlington 1955); Bradford on Avon (Wiltshire), perhaps founded by Aldhelm, was also held by Shaftesbury in 1066 (for the grant of AD 1001 see S899); and Beaminster (Dorset) seems to have been the possession of St Peter's, Gloucester and subsequently Sherborne (S1782; Hall 2000; for discussion of these church estates, see further section 4.8, below).

On the other hand, other prominent landholding monasteries of the later Saxon period were located immediately next to royal vills which were

themselves the centres of extensive estates. Examples include Amesbury (Wiltshire), Wilton (Wiltshire) and Bath (Somerset).

Blair (1988a: 37-8) and Hase (1994: 61) have suggested that the earliest churches were founded as part of a deliberate policy by the west Saxon kings to ensure a network of churches, and there are close connections between many royal centres and 'minsters'. Of the royal vills known to have existed before AD 1000, a clear majority (c.70%) were probably within 1km of the nearest certain or likely monastery or minster church (Table 4.6). Only thirteen of the vills listed are further than this from a church, though of these four sites were themselves in ecclesiastical ownership in 1066 (although there is no indication that they were ever major minsters: Branscombe (Devon); Chisledon; Edington; Wardour (Wiltshire)). Of the remainder, Hartland (Devon), was associated with an important land-holding ecclesiastical community 2.5km away at Stoke St Nectan. Four of the rest are estates known to have royal associations from King Alfred's will, and may therefore not always have been 'core' estates of the crown holdings (Kilton, Burnham, Axmouth and Lifton). Otherwise, the consistent coincidence between early royal vills and minster churches supports the idea that minsters and royal vills were often deliberately sited close together.

Of these early royal vills, a large majority (nearly 80%) are on sites with valley-bottom locations similar to those most common for ecclesiastical centres (4.5, above). This suggests that ecclesiastical centres and royal vills were topographically located according to similar principles. Six of the ten sites which are in other positions (on hill slopes or valley sides) are first noted as royal centres in Alfred's will, suggesting once again that the places mentioned in the will were rather different from the sites which formed the core of the ancient royal estates (Sawyer 1983: 279).

Early ecclesiastical centres and royal vills in Wessex were commonly located in close proximity to one another and normally shared similar

valley-bottom locations. Although some of the churches at royal estate centres held extensive estates, many others only held a small amount of land at Domesday suggesting they were not very wealthy and were perhaps more dependent on the royal vills. As suggested by Hase (1994) and Blair (1988a), this suggests a high degree of royal involvement in ecclesiastical affairs. There were also some early church sites which are not close to royal vills, but which were on ecclesiastical land that was either their own endowment or part of a major ecclesiastical landholder's estate (see Table 4.5). Many of these sites share similar types of locations to royal vills, and the form of the few excavated sites is very similar to contemporary secular elite centres. These could represent the first foundations by the secular elite of quasi-autonomous monastic colleges. As suggested above, ecclesiastical and royal centres were part of a common tradition of settlement. Both were a kind of elite centre, commonly founded and staffed by members of royal and comital families. Royal and ecclesiastical centres had a similar role in the landscape, and were probably perceived as very similar kinds of sites by the majority of West Saxons.

4.7 Ecclesiastical centres and early medieval administrative structures

Hase's observations about the close relationships between minster churches and royal vills are based in part on the apparent regularity of ecclesiastical provision in each Anglo-Saxon administrative area: '...in Wessex it looks as if there was a conscious policy to ensure that every *regio* had a church, a royal church' (Hase 1994: 53). This has to be argued from the distribution of churches in Domesday hundreds, since these are the earliest units whose boundaries can be reconstructed on a wide scale which could have developed from a system of early administrative *regiones*. Some scholars have objected to the idea that hundreds have early roots on the grounds that they are not referred to in historical texts before the tenth century. The first specific reference to a 'hundred' in Anglo-Saxon England occurs in the Hundred Ordinance, a document that was probably composed some time in the reign of King Edgar (AD 939-961; Whitelock 1979: 429). Indeed, in the earlier twentieth century Reichel argued in response to Page, who had suggested a connection between churches and hundredal organisation (Page 1915), that a 'hundred' was not a geographical unit at all, but rather that it referred to a group of landowners who held estates around a royal manor (Reichel 1939: 336-7). He therefore believed that the early territorial organisation of the Christian church could not have been related to the hundreds.

Other evidence suggests that the origins of the hundred should be sought in an earlier period. One of the most important functions of the hundred was to act as a unit of local government, and to this end monthly assemblies known as hundred courts were held at locally well-known meeting-places. The earliest reference to public assemblies of this sort is in a charter of Coenwulf of Mercia from well over one hundred years before the Hundred Ordinance (Stenton 1971: 298-9; ES1186a (endorsement to S106)). The Hundred Ordinance itself does not deal with how a hundred should be laid out, but rather refers to a system that was clearly already in place and well-established (Reynolds 1999: 75-6).

Place-name evidence provides a usfeul source of information on the hundreds. The names of many of the medieval hundreds derive from the names of their pre-Conquest meeting places. Some hundreds are named after royal vills where the hundred courts met from the tenth or eleventh centuries, and it is possible that some of these represent territories that were newly organised at this time (Loyn 1984: 142). However, many other hundreds are named after meeting-places which were some distance from royal centres. There is some evidence to suggest that those meeting-places at royal vills or other estate centres replaced others elsewhere in the land-unit whose names were subsequently lost. This process is shown by some exceptions to the rule from Devon, where two different hundred-names occur for the same hundred in documents associated with the Domesday survey which were bound into the Exeter Book. Thus *Aleriga* hundred in the second Exeter Domesday list of hundreds (*Exon* list II) is *Hernintona* (Ermington) in *Exon* list I; *Rueberga* (Roborough) in *Exon* list II is *Walchentona* (Walkhampton) in *Exon* list I and the Devonshire Tax Returns; and *Tainebruga* (Teignbridge) in *Exon* list II is *Taintona* (Kingsteignton) in *Exon* list I and the Devonshire Tax Returns (Thorn & Thorn 1985 *Appendix*; Anderson 1939a: 92-3)). In some regions it has been argued that these earlier meeting-places may represent the assembly sites of early social groups, as suggested by names such as Armingford (the *ford* of the *Earningas* (Cambridgeshire)) and Hurstingstone (the stone (*-stan*) of the people of (*-ingas-*) the wooded hill (*hyrst-*) (Huntingdonshire); Meaney 1993: 70; 1997: 236). Occasionally, hundred names appear to represent simply the name of the social group itself, such as Braughing (the people of *Breahha* (Hertfordshire)) and Hitchen (the *Hicce* (Hertfordshire); Meaney 1993: 80). The occurrence of meeting-place names that may relate to sites of pagan English religious activity could also suggest that meeting-places were established in early Anglo-Saxon England (e.g. Meaney 1993: 90; 1997: 211). In the Danelaw, the occurrence of large numbers of Anglo-Saxon hundred- and wapentake-names (as opposed to Scandinavian names) referring to sites away from manorial centres suggest that administrative

units in the mould of hundreds were in existence before the Scandinavian settlements and that they (or at least their meeting-places) endured through it (Turner 2000).

Charters are another source of evidence for early Anglo-Saxon *regiones* or folk-groups and their territories. Some early charters granting land to the church mention names believed to be those of early folk-groups in whose territory a church had been founded. Lands administered by the church often seem to have maintained the same territorial extent for long periods of time, and to have reflected earlier secular land divisions (as for example by the correspondence in the extents of early bishoprics and kingdoms (Costen 1994: 97)). There are a number of examples where the names of folk-regions may be recorded, including S94 (the *Stoppingas*) and S89 (the *Husmerae*; Hooke 1986; 1998: 46-51). Although the land granted in such a charter should not be assumed to be co-extensive with the early folk *regio* (since the church is not likely to have been granted an entire *regio* as a new estate), these grants show that such territorial divisions did exist.

This evidence strongly suggests that units fulfilling a similar range of functions to the later hundreds existed in England before the tenth century. It seems that the system of administrative units developed throughout the early medieval period and may have had its roots in the earliest social groupings of Anglo-Saxons. The hundreds that were regularised by the tenth-century kings and re-organised through the exchange of land at various times were probably based on administrative units of considerable antiquity (Stenton 1971: 299-301; Yorke 1995: 125-6; Reynolds 1999: 76).

Minsters and hundreds

Just as evidence for social groups below the level of the kingdom is important, so are records of their association with church foundation. Proponents of the 'minster hypothesis' for the territorial organisation of the

early church have argued that ecclesiastical centres were founded within such regions in order to minister to their inhabitants. There is some evidence from topography and administrative history which supports an early origin for *parochiae* based on putative *regiones* (e.g. at Gloucester and Worcester; Bassett 1992). In the case of central Wessex, Hase has argued that churches were established regularly at royal administrative centres to serve 'archaic' hundreds such as those suggested for Hampshire by Klingelhofer (Hase 1994; Klingelhofer 1992).

The evidence from Wessex provides some support for these theories. A comparison of the location of certain and likely high-status churches with late Saxon hundred boundaries shows that there was only one major church in the majority of central Wessex hundreds (based on the locations of known or suspected minsters and the hundred-boundaries as reconstructed from Domesday Book (Table 4.7)).

Recent studies by Pitt (1999) and Hall (2000) have recognised this regularity, although they attribute it to different causes. Pitt argues that the high number of Wiltshire hundreds with one church must result from the foundation of new 'hundred' minsters in the late Saxon period. He considers the hundreds to have been re-organised and re-structured to such an extent in the late pre-Conquest period that this regularity would not have been evident if an earlier pattern of ecclesiastical provision had simply been maintained (Pitt 1999: 180-2; see also Blair 1985: 118). On the other hand, Hall suggests that the relative *lack* of correspondence between Dorset hundreds and minsters should be seen as the result of changes in estate organisation and hundredal membership in the late pre-Conquest period (Hall 2000: 41-5; Hinton 1987).

Both Pitt and Hall reach these conclusions whilst attempting to investigate the same problem: whether early medieval ecclesiastical *parochiae* can be reconstructed from hundred boundaries. In this respect they are following the work of Hase (1988) and Blair (1991) who have detected, in Hampshire

and Surrey respectively, a correspondence between probable *parochiae* and hundred boundaries. Pitt and Hall are disappointed by the complexity revealed in their studies; both recognise that the boundaries of hundreds could have changed fairly often in the pre-Conquest period as a result of estates changing ownership, and that high-status churches were not all founded at the same time or in the same ways. They acknowledge that it is frequently difficult to date such developments, and conclude that no simple correlation can be made between the extent of hundreds and early minster *parochiae*. Neither hundreds nor the churches in them were necessarily very ancient at the time of Domesday Book. It is certain that in many cases the boundaries of middle-Saxon administrative units would not have been the same as late-Saxon hundred-boundaries. Case-studies such as Yorke's discussion of the Worthy estates in Hampshire reveal the processes which could lead to change (Yorke 1995: 126-30). Crediton in Devon provides another likely example: the Domesday hundred (most of which was in ecclesiastical ownership in 1086) appears to encompass a smaller area than an earlier grant to the church of Crediton (although the boundary clause is a later addition to the eighth-century charter; S255; Hooke 1994b: 84).

Irregularities in any possible 'system' of regular church provision by hundreds are shown both by instances where there are no superior churches within a hundred, and cases where there are more than one. In-depth studies such as those by Pitt (1999) and Hall (2000) have not been able to 'discover' new high-status churches for many of the late Saxon hundreds where they had not previously been identified, and it seems likely that this reflects to some extent genuine irregularities in ecclesiastical provision. As Pitt points out (1999: 182), late Saxon churches of superior status had diverse origins, and it is hard to demonstrate that a 'system' of minsters was planned at any given time. The many irregularities suggest that the network of churches grew in rather a piecemeal fashion even if a general model existed whereby each hundred would have a minster church.

However, the discussions by Pitt (1999) and Hall (2000) illustrate a very important point. In some cases, churches known to have been founded early in the period are associated with adminstrative units which are suspected to have maintained a certain degree of stability through to the later part of the period (e.g. Bradford-on-Avon & Malmesbury (Wiltshire): Pitt 1999: 110-157; Sherborne (Dorset): Hall 2000: 41). Early churches were therefore probably associated with early administrative units. It has often been suggested that the *regiones* out of which hundreds may have developed were administered from central royal vills (Yorke 1995: 125-7; Hase 1994); the close relationship between many superior churches and royal vills was discussed above (see Table 4.6). In other cases, where the hundredal system was rearranged, it seems possible that new churches could have been established or existing *parochiae* rearranged to maintain a regular system (Pitt 1999: 180). Both examples of early churches established in putative early *regiones* (Hall 2000; Blair 1991; Hase 1994) and later re-organisations of ecclesiastical and hundredal systems (Pitt 1999) show that the relationship between churches and administrative units was one of central importance throughout the early Christian period in southern England.

This association between Christian ideology and late Saxon administrative geography has also recently been emphasised by Reynolds (1997; 2002). He has demonstrated that criminals subject to judicial killings were buried with increasing regularity in execution cemeteries on territorial boundaries during the middle and later Saxon period. The custom appears to have begun developing from the seventh or eighth century and to have become virtually universal in central southern England by the tenth century (including central Wessex; see Reynolds 2002: figs 1-3). Reynolds argues that the exclusion of executed criminals from communal burial grounds would have been regarded as a further form of punishment – instead of burial in consecrated ground at the heart of the Christian community, they were banished to the unproductive boundaries of the land where assorted malevolent beings were believed to lurk (Reynolds 2002; Semple 1998).

This shows not only that the boundaries of hundreds became increasingly formalised and closely identifiable in the late Saxon period, but also that Christian ideology played an important role in their definition (see also below, 4.9).

Hundreds and parochiae

In Dorset, the hundred of Sherborne matches the *parochia* of that church as reconstructed by Hall from later documentary evidence with only one parish extra in the hundred which cannot be attributed to the *parochia* (Hall 2000: 41). As Hall comments, in this case it seems quite likely that this is the result of the loss of evidence for a connection, rather than the result of there never having been a relationship between the two churches (Hall 2000: 44). Other close correlations occur between the boundaries of hundred and reconstructed *parochia* in the cases of Whitchurch Canonicorum, Gillingham, Cranborne and Puddletown. In both Dorset and Wiltshire, likely or probable minsters rarely had dependencies outside the hundred in which they stood, and the reconstructed *parochiae* are almost always smaller than the hundred (Hall 2000: 42; Pitt 1999: 97). The same is true of Somerset (based on the relationships between churches identified by Aston (1986) and the hundreds as defined by Thorn & Thorn (1980)).

Further examples are evident in Devon. Pearce has shown that Hartland Abbey held chapelries at Cheristow, Welcombe and Harton in the later middle ages, along with several others in the parish of Stoke St Nectan (Pearce 1985: 265-269); these all lie within Hartland hundred and it is possible that they formed part of a *parochia* originally focussed on the church of Stoke St Nectan itself. Reichel (1939: 338) notes that West Alvington had chapelries at South Milton, Malborough, Salcombe and South Huish, which all lie in the southern part of Stanborough hundred in south Devon. Plympton church had chapelries in the later middle ages at Brixton, Wembury, Plymstock and Shaugh, all within Plympton hundred,

although Sampford Spiney, a moorland edge estate with a dependant chapel, lay in Roborough (Reichel 1939: 337; see Bearman 1994: 64).

These examples help confirm the close link between religious organisation and pre-Conquest administrative structures. Major churches had clearly come to play an integral role in the system through which the landscape was organised.

The geographical location of major ecclesiastical sites within hundreds

The idea that important churches were central to hundreds is also supported to a large extent by their geographical locations within hundreds. Many Wessex minsters are geographically close to the centre of their hundreds, as shown by maps comparing hundred boundaries with the locations of the superior churches (Fig. 4.1 (Wiltshire), Fig. 4.2 (Dorset) & Fig. 4.3 (Devon)).

Specific cases show that within the hundred, the church was often also central in terms of agricultural resources. For example, Faith (1997: 18-22; S895) has discussed how Sherborne (Dorset) was sited amid arable fields at the heart of its hundred. Topographically, the probable site of the mid-Saxon cathedral stands a few metres above the River Yeo, whose valley sides rise up to over 100m above the valley floor within a few kilometres on either side.

The ecclesiastical estate of Ottery St Mary in east Devon formed a single hundred at the time of Domesday. The form of the medieval and post-medieval landscape, and the boundary clauses of two late Saxon charters relating to the estate (S721; S1033) all suggest that the early medieval landscape here was also arranged with the meadow in the valley bottom, the arable land on the gentle slopes of the valley sides, and the pasture on the steeper upper slopes of the valley and the ridges along which the boundaries

ran. The boundary clause of AD 1061 (S1033) names various points such as *bromdune* ('broom hill'), *leofan dune* (Leofa's hill), and *heth feld mere* (perhaps 'the heathfield boundary') which show the boundaries using these ridges and running across heathland (Hooke 1994a: 207-212). The location of the church of Ottery is directly comparable to its much earlier exemplar at Sherborne. In both cases, the churches are at the centre of the rich agricultural landscape, far from the heaths which lie at the margins of the land-unit.

The distribution maps in Fig.s 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3 show that there are some churches that are close to the boundaries of hundreds. In many cases, however, a certain kind of 'centrality' can still be suggested. The south-east Wiltshire churches of Britford (Cawdon hundred) and Alderbury (Alderbury hundred) provide good examples. The two churches are barely 2.5km apart, and yet they appear to have been the most important churches in their respective hundreds (Pitt 1999: 26-9; 40-3). The hundreds of Cawdon and Alderbury lie immediately to the west and east (respectively) of the River Avon. Although the small River Ebble also flows through the heart of Cawdon and the Bourne through Alderbury hundred, the Avon is by far the most important river in the area; a major route of communication and transport, the Avon's course was punctuated by late Saxon times with a regular distribution of important churches and royal estate centres: the probable minsters of Britford, Alderbury, Downton (Wiltshire), Breamore and Fordingbridge (Hampshire) all lie on one 15km stretch of the river south of Salisbury. Hooke has shown how agricultural resources in this part of Wiltshire were structured in the landscape using the evidence of Anglo-Saxon charter bounds (Hooke 1988; 1998). In the valley-bottoms, the most valuable and productive land was probably the zone of watermeadows lying next to the rivers. Adjacent to the watermeadows on the hillsides lay the arable land, typically indicated in charter-bounds by reference to 'furlongs' and 'acres'; beyond this zone was the grazing and woodland of the hilltops and ridges, characterised by references to features such as woodland clearings and heathy fields (Hooke 1998: 125-7). At the heart of this system

lay the riverside meadowland, and the minster churches were generally sited such that they lay within or on the edge of this meadow. In cases such as Alderbury, Britford and many other examples in Wiltshire and Dorset, the apparent liminality of the church in relation to the hundred boundaries belies a centrality in terms of the landscapes of agriculture and communications.

In summary, it seems likely that there were close relationships between administrative units and major churches throughout the Christian Saxon period. Changes in administrative and estate structures seem to have been reflected by changes in ecclesiastical structure, as shown for example by churches which were founded within new *burhs* like Shaftesbury and Bridport (Hall 2000: 35), and in cases where new churches were founded after hundred boundaries were re-organised (Pitt 1999: 181). Within administrative units, churches were often geographically central; if they were not, this was commonly because the focus of other elements of the landscape such as agricultural resources and communications were also not located at the geographical centre of the hundred. In addition, these relationships show that churches were at the *ideological* centre of hundreds: they were central to ideas about how the landscape ought to be organised and administered. Similar relationships can be observed between churches and their estates, as will be shown in the next section.

4.8 Early ecclesiastical estates in Wessex

Various different models have been developed to explain the ways churches were established and maintained in early medieval Britain. Central to them all is the nature of the relationship between churches and land, either their own estates or those of secular authorities. Carver has recently argued that in the conversion phase different models of Christianity can be identified in part through the ways ecclesiastical institutions were supported (Carver 1998a; 2001; 2003). He has proposed three models for economic infrastructure which he argues can imply different forms of wider political organisation. These models of ecclesiastical organisation are firstly 'episcopal', a system dependent on the collection of tithes, and therefore associated with a 'Roman'-style, tax-extracting system and closely allied to royal power; secondly, 'monastic', whose land was endowed and were self-supporting, and could be excluded form the tax system; or finally 'secular', which were dependent on the direct patronage of local secular elite families for their survival, and were therefore much more in the control of local elites than the churches of the other two 'options'. Carver has argued that these three different types of Christianity were adopted preferentially in accordance with what a community would tolerate and in alignment with its political thinking; a community might change from one option to another as its political systen changed (Carver 1998a: 20-6; 2001: 12-20).

In early medieval southern Britain, a number of scholars have identified systems of ecclesiastical organisation similar to those discussed by Carver. For example, Bassett has suggested than the earliest tier of churches in what became southern Mercia were founded according to a monastic model; these churches stood at the heart of districts within which they held sizeable estates (Bassett 1998: 1-4). On the other hand, Hase suggests that in early central Wessex, minster chuches staffed by communities of clerics were established by kings at royal vills with only very small endowments of land: 'These small churches thus formed part of the network of royal social, economic and political control apparatus' (Hase 1994: 61-2). However,

these models do not appear to explain adequately the situation in early Wessex.

In the late pre-Conquest period, a number of Benedictine monasteries and nunneries existed in central and western Wessex controlling their own estates, which were often very large. These included Tavistock and Buckfast (Devon), Athelney, Muchelney, Bath and Glastonbury (Somerset), Abbotsbury, Cranborne, Cerne, Horton, Sherborne, Milton and Shaftesbury (Dorset), and Wilton, Amesbury and Malmesbury (Wiltshire) (Blair 1985: 105-12). All these houses had been 'reformed' during the Benedictine revival in the period after *c.*940 (Yorke 1995: 210-25). However, the often extensive and dispersed estates which these houses held at the time of Domesday had not always been associated with them in the period before the Reform, and they were often the result of this new phase of monastic re-foundation. Michael Costen has discussed the case of Glastonbury, the most famous and best endowed of these monasteries, and shown how its estate developed largely in the tenth century (Costen 1992a). Other reformed houses probably had similar histories, and even those which held extensive estates before the mid-tenth century had not necessarily held them since the seventh century. For example, Asser records that Shaftesbury was granted a great deal of land when Alfred founded it for his daughter Aethelgifu, even though it seems possible that no church at all existed at Shaftesbury before this event (Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 105; Hall 2000: 100). These examples show that the extent of ecclesiastical estates could fluctuate over time, and that this could be related to changes in the nature of the establishments themselves.

Despite the changes brought about by the Benedictine reforms, it is certain that some seventh- and eighth-century churches in Wessex had held large estates. Glastonbury itself is one example (e.g. S253; Costen 1992a: 26); others, with examples of charters which granted them estates, include Crediton (S255), Bath (S51), Malmesbury (S231, S243), Muchelney (S249, S261) and Wells (S262). Although some of these grants refer to areas

immediately around the churches in question (e.g. S255), others give control over land that was some distance from the owners' establishments. There were other early monasteries in Wessex which are not easily recognisable as such in their later Saxon forms, either because records from earlier times have been lost or because the nature of the establishments themselves had changed. At Tisbury (Wiltshire) no church is recorded in the late Saxon period when the estate was held by Shaftesbury Abbey, and yet earlier evidence suggests an important monastery existed in the eighth century (Pitt 1999: 55; S1256 (AD 759); Kelly 1996: 3-10). At Bradford-on-Avon (Wiltshire) a monastery here may have been founded by Aldhelm (as reported by William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century). A charter of AD 1001 records the grant of a *cenobium* at Bradford to Shaftesbury Abbey (S899; Pitt 1999: 145-57), which probably included the 38 hides were held here by the Abbey at Domesday (Thorn & Thorn 1979b: 12,4; Pitt 1999: 150-7). The loss of ecclesiastical land to royal and lay hands, particularly in the ninth century, has been discussed by Fleming (1985), and it seems likely that other small monasteries suffered a similar fate but were less well recorded than Tisbury or Bradford. Iwerne Minster (Dorset) is another example associated with Shaftesbury. The Abbey held an estate of 18 hides here at Domesday, and later medieval parochial rights suggest that an extensive *parochia* had been focussed on Iwerne Minster in the pre-Conquest period (Hall 2000: 17).

The evidence therefore suggests that some of the early ecclesiastical centres in Wessex were monasteries in Carver's sense: religious communities supported by their own land (Carver 2001: 13-14). This means Hase's model needs modification, since it envisaged only churches with small estates which were dependent upon royal vills (Hase 1994: 61-2). However, as Blair has argued (1985: 115), it would be a mistake to assume that the evidence for the existence and diminution of monastic centres and their estates shows that all the earliest churches of Wessex were significant landholders. Bassett's suggestion (in a southern Mercian context) that each minster had a substantial amount of land which provided the majority of its

income cannot be applicable to Wessex (Bassett 1998: 1); if this had been the case there would have been little space for *royal* estates around the royal vills which were so often located immediately next to superior churches (Hall 2000: 41). Other evidence, summarised by Blair (1985: 114-25), suggests that a great number of early ecclesiastical settlements were communities of clerks with little land of their own.

Perhaps the most well-known source of the early Christian period in England which is likely to relate to such clerical communities is Bede's famous letter to Bishop Egbert of York. It denounces both aristocratic and royal foundations which did not follow a monastic rule as exacting as the one which was presumably in force at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow (Farmer 1990: 345-6). Early clerical communities in Wessex are hard to detect, although Ine's law on the payment of church-scot suggests that churches dependent to some extent on ecclesiastical taxation (rather than large estates) were widespread by the early eighth century (Attenborough 1922: 36-7; Wormald 1999: 368-9). Many of the Wessex churches recorded in Domesday Book with small endowments of a few hides may well reflect clerical communities which held land that was geographically within the land of a royal or secular elite estate (Blair 1985: 114-6; Hase 1994; Hall 2000: 41). Notable examples include the churches of Wiltshire listed in Domesday Book at the end of the King's holdings, but held in 1066 or 1086 by various priests or monastic houses (Thorn & Thorn 1979b: 1,23a-j). Not many of these churches are recorded prior to Domesday, which also hints that they were considered part of the royal estate: few of the royal vills on the 'core' of royal land are mentioned in early medieval sources (see 4.6, above; Sawyer 1983: 285). Wessex churches appearing in Domesday Book with around 4 hides or less in 1066 seem to have been mentioned only incidentally before the elventh century in sources like King Alfred's will (S1507), which was dealing with the transfer of the royal estates where they were situated (e.g. Damerham; Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 178). Some such estates were granted by kings to bishops or monasteries, but any churches on them were not mentioned separately in the relevant charter; examples

include Downton (Wiltshire; S891), Great Bedwyn (Wiltshire; S756) and Pewsey (Wiltshire; S740). It seems likely that where the estates of the church in question were small and linked closely to those of the main estate centre, the church was not counted separately for the purposes of the grant.

There are 40 examples of probable and likely superior churches in the counties of Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire where some record survives of the size of their estate in pre-Conquest sources or Domesday Book, but which were never recorded as holding more than 4 hides. Only 3 of these were sited further than 1km from the nearest royal vill or *burh* (Northover, Stogumber (Somerset) and Brixton Deverell (Wiltshire)). This strongly suggests that these churches had a close relationship with royal authority, and may suggest a high level of dependence on royal resources.

Where important churches only held a small amount of land it seems likely that it would have been intermixed within the lands of the royal vill or aristocratic estate where they were located. In Domesday Book small ecclesiastical estates often occur in Wiltshire and Devon in the form 'the church of this manor has *n* hides of the land' of the main estate. In these entries, the land of the royal estate in question has just been noted in the preceding Domesday entry (e.g. Wootton Rivers, Westbury, Winterbourne Stoke, Netheravon and Collingbourne Ducis (Thorne & Thorne 1979b: 1,15-19)). In this sense minor church estates may originally have been like the other specialised elements of the royal estate which were designated to produce various components of the royal *feorm* (see Faith 1997: 38-53).

The surviving sources do not allow clear interpretations or distinctions to be made between the vast majority of individual early medieval churches. This is particularly the case because the communal Rules followed, the make-up of the communities within particular churches, and the size of ecclesiastical estates are known to have changed in various cases at various times (Blair 1985). Spatial relationship between churches and royal centres and evidence for the size of estates may provide some useful clues, though the

example of Tisbury shows that the latter cannot necessarily be projected back or forward in time.

Early ecclesiastical estates in the landscape

Despite these uncertainties, the evidence suggests that both royal estates with dependent churches and more independent monastic estates followed the same 'grammar' in terms of their organisation in the landscape; the church was central to both in physical and ideological terms. Major land-holding churches most commonly lay at the heart of a 'core' area of their estates. This core appears to have been analogous to the area dependent on a royal vill. It was commonly tax-exempt, and has been labelled 'inland' by Faith (1997: 16-28; 48-53). The case of Sherborne was mentioned briefly above. Here the bishop of Salisbury and the monks of Sherborne held a substantial area of tax-exempt land at the time of Domesday Book (Thorn & Thorn 1983: 2,6; 3,1). As Faith argues, this area probably formed the core 'inland' of the early ecclesiastical community. It may have been identical with the *praedium* which was apparently enclosed by Bishop Wulfsige in the late tenth century when he refounded the monastery under the Benedictine rule (S895). Faith has argued that this area could even be reflected by a long sinuous boundary, now made up of roadways and field boundaries, which roughly surrounds the site of the monastery at a distance of *c.*2.5km (Faith 1997: 20-2; Barker 1984; Fig. 4.8). It may be significant that this boundary appears to run roughly parallel to the parish boundary, but a few hundred metres within it (especially in its northern portion). Wulfsige's charter appears to indicate that the hedges and ditches of the boundary were made around the *praedium* in response to increasing pressure of disputes and encroachments onto the ecclesiastical estate (Faith 1997: 21). The boundary noted by Faith and others may therefore reflect the limits of the community's agricultural land, at the heart of which was the church itself; outside the boundary probably lay unenclosed heath used as pasture.

Few of the core estates of churches with the largest and most ancient endowments have charters with detailed boundary clauses. Nevertheless, this arrangement of church, agricultural land and peripheral rough ground is detectable in the bounds of charters granting land units which may either already have had churches within them, or where churches belonging to a subsequent phase of ecclesiastical foundations (effectively acting as 'sub-minsters') were established following the grant. An example is provided by Shapwick in Somerset. Here, the 20 hide estate of *Pouholt* was granted to Glastonbury Abbey in the first half of the eighth century by King Ine (S248; S253). Attached to one of these grants is a simple boundary clause in Latin which mentions features and areas bordering the estate in the cardinal directions; to the east lies Chalkbrook; to the south, the river Cary from the point where the Carswell stream flows into it as far as Chedzoy; to the west is the territory of Cossington; and to the north is 'half of the marsh' (S253; Abrams 1994; Fig. 4.9). The majority of these boundaries lie in the marshland, which until its drainage in the post-medieval period formed a wet hinterland to the dry fields of the Polden ridge. It was here, in the heart of the arable land, that Glastonbury's estate church (or 'sub-minster') was situated (Gerrard 1995; Aston & Gerrard 1999; Corcos 2001).

Boundary clauses may have become more complicated with the passage of time and perhaps increasing pressure from secular landholders, but there is some evidence to suggest that in western Wessex this way of ordering ecclesiastical estates – with a church at the core of intensively farmed land with rough pasture and wasteland beyond – persisted into the later part of the period, and indeed that it was understood as the way the landscape ought to be organised. S255 is a charter granting land for the foundation of a monastery at Crediton in Devon, issued in 739 by King Aethelheard to Bishop Forthere. Although the charter itself is believed to be authentic, the boundary clause appears to be a later addition, probably composed in the late tenth or early eleventh century by the community at Crediton (Finberg

1969b: 44-69; Hooke 1999: 98). As such, they may represent a rather idealised version of the bounds of an early medieval ecclesiastical estate. The boundary clause describes a large area centred on the ecclesiastical community and the fertile fields of the Creedy and Yeo valleys. The boundary of the estate was rather more dangerous territory as suggested by some of the boundary markers: a precipitous drop, a wolf-pit and a wolf's valley, and probably a number of prehistoric barrows (Hooke 1994a: 86-99; Finberg 1969b); the latter, as Sarah Semple has argued, seem to have been associated with monsters and evil spirits in the late Saxon period (Semple 1998). Perhaps indicative of the learned context of the boundary clause's composition are two further boundary markers from the charter, *grendeles pyt* ('Grendel's pit') and *caines aecer* ('Cain's acre'), both of which reinforce the idea that this was a dangerous margin. The Grendel of the boundary clause probably relates to the fearful monster slain by the hero of the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*; as Semple has discussed, the Grendel of the epic was considered to be a creature that lurked on the boundaries of the land (Semple 1998: 113-4). As his brother's murderer, Cain was blighted in the Christian tradition, and it seems likely that the land described as his 'acre' was rough heathland when the boundary clause was composed (Hooke 1994a: 95). The occurrence of both Grendel and Cain in the same boundary clause seems more likely to be a literary construct than a mere coincidence, since in *Beowulf* Grendel himself is described as a descendant of Cain (lines 99-114; Klaeber 1950). The land itself was probably heath or moor like the nearby 'heathfield' mentioned in the boundary clause of the neighbouring estate of Down St Mary (S795). The 'dragon's lair' (*wurmstealle*) of Sandford's woodland boundary is also evocative of the supernatural dangers lurking in the woods and heaths at the margins of the Crediton estates (S890; Hooke 1994a: 184).

4.9 A developing Christian landscape

Important churches with rights of various kinds over extensive territories were not the only churches in the early medieval period. Estate chapels, which were associated with minor estate centres and were increasingly common from the tenth century on, are discussed below (4.10). But Hall has also suggested that there was a secondary tier of 'minster foundation' in Wessex, belonging to the time after the major monasteries and minster churches adjacent to royal centres had been established (Hall 2000: 28-9)

Some such churches, which must have acted as religious foci for surrounding areas, would have been dependent on major foundations even if some distance from them. Estates like Brent (Somerset) might have been provided with a 'sub-minster' from a relatively early date (S238). The area had been the property of Glastonbury since perhaps the seventh century and archaeological evidence suggests occupation here dating from as early as the seventh or eighth centuries onwards (Gaimster & Bradley 2001: 314). At Shapwick on Glastonbury's *Pouholt* estate there could have been a church as early as the eighth century (Gerrard 1995; Aston & Gerrard 1999). These 'sub-minsters' may have been relatively common in the later Saxon landscape, particularly on the land of major ecclesiastical institutions. In Devon possible Anglo-Saxon fabric has been noted in the churches of Branscombe (Devon SMR) and South Brent (Gerrard 1997), which were part of the estates of Exeter cathedral and Buckfast Abbey respectively in 1066. The church at Sidbury, east Devon, was also held by the bishop of Exeter at Domesday, and here a fragment of Anglo-Saxon sculpture and part of a possible pre-Conquest church may represent the remains of a late Saxon 'sub-minster' (Thorn & Thorn 1985; Taylor & Taylor 1965). A probable example has been excavated at Potterne (Wiltshire), which was on the estate of the Bishop of Ramsbury in 1066, showing that such churches were sometimes built in wood before later replacement in stone churches (Davey 1964; 1990).

Other kinds of churches or chapels may also have co-existed with major establishments from an early date. Minor Christian foci existed within the territory of Glastonbury, and their geographical proximity suggests they must have been dependent on the monastery. The site at Beckery lies at the western edge of the same island in the marshes as the Abbey. In the middle Saxon period a chapel appears to have been constructed on the site of an earlier burial ground (Rahtz & Hirst 1974; Petts 2001). It is possible that this site represents a 'traditional' burial ground that was brought into the Christian landscape by the addition of a chapel after acquisition by the abbey; a charter of spurious authenticity claims this happened in AD 725 (S250).

The same document mentions a number of the abbey's other properties in the Somerset marshes, and Aston has suggested that a several of them could have supported hermitages in the early medieval period (e.g. Nyland, Marchey, and Godney: Aston 2000a: 58; 2000b: 100-1). These examples all comprise small islands in the Somerset Levels, which could have been attractive as places for an eremitic lifestyle. The eighth-century *Life of St Guthlac* (Colgrave 1956) describes how the eponymous saint choose a similar site to build his hermitage; his island in the Lincolnshire fens was home to a fearful burial mound and its wicked supernatural inhabitants (Semple 1998: 112).

Perhaps the most likely site to have been a hermitage in the area around Glastonbury is the Tor. Here, Rahtz excavated both Anglo-Saxon and earlier, post-Roman occupation (Rahtz 1971; 1991). Monastic settlement is suggested by the discovery of fragments from a late-Saxon stone cross close to rock-cut buildings. Whilst exposed and relatively isolated, the site is only just over a kilometre from the abbey church. In this sense it is reminiscent of the earlier hermitage of St Cuthbert at Farne: suitable for relatively ascetic contemplation, but not too distant from the monastery's centre when urgent business beckoned. Very few likely hermitage sites have been excavated in southern England, although occasional

documentary references suggest their existence, as at Badgworthy on Exmoor. This site, now a deserted settlement with substantial earthwork remains, is first mentioned in a twelfth-century charter as *terram heremitarum*, hinting that it may have been a hermitage in the pre-Conquest period (Weaver 1909: 121 (I am grateful to Martin Gillard for this reference); Riley & Wilson-North 2001: 100-2).

A final type of small church that occurred within ecclesiastical territories may have been examples that marked points on estate or territorial boundaries. These could have marked the point where travellers came into the agricultural land associated with their mother church. Beckery is one possible example, at the western edge of the Glastonbury's island. An ecclesiastical estate at Dawlish in Devon had a church of St Michael as one of its boundary markers in the 1040s (S1003; Hooke 1994a: 204-207; Thorn & Thorn 1985: 2,4). At Sherborne, chapels of St Cuthbert and St Peter stood close to the manorial boundary of the later middle ages, which did not always coincide with the parish boundary, but was separated from it by an area of rough ground (Barker 1984: 9; Faith 1997: 20). This may support the idea that the boundaries of estates were sometimes considered to be the edges of their cultivated land (4.2); it may have been this that was marked by chapels or crosses (see below).

The late Saxon period witnessed the increasing fragmentation of large estates and a growth in the number of minor landowners (see 4.10). At the same time there was a large increase in estate churches, which formed the basis for the later medieval network of parochial churches. It is possible that the models for these local churches were middle- and late-Saxon chapels like Beckery and 'sub-minsters' like Shapwick, Sidbury or Tisbury.

Crosses

The early medieval sculpture of south-west England is not particularly well known although research for the relevant volumes in the British Academy's *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* is in progress (by Elizabeth Okasha and Ann Preston-Jones (Cornwall), and Rosemary Cramp (the South West)). Most of the examples of early medieval sculpture from the region are associated with the sites of monasteries or other important churches. For example, of 42 pieces which Foster considered to be of Anglo-Saxon date in Somerset, 33 are from the sites of major churches (Foster 1987). These include examples from excavations, as at Glastonbury and Keynsham, as well as those which had been incorporated into later medieval walling as building stone. Documentary evidence suggests further additions to the tally of Somerset examples; writing in the twelfth century, William of Malmesbury described several monuments at Glastonbury which could have been Anglo-Saxon sculpture, but which have not survived. He also wrote that after Aldhelm died in 709, memorial stones were erected in each place his body rested on its return to Malmesbury, perhaps including Doulting, Frome and Bath (Foster 1987; 4.5, above).

However, there are crosses from other places. This section will attempt to establish the context of some of these monuments. The varied evidence from Wessex includes documentary evidence, place-names and surviving sculpture and suggests that the function of many (though not all) of the crosses that were not at churches was to mark the boundaries of ecclesiastical estates.

Although they are not particularly common, references to crosses in Anglo-Saxon charter boundary clauses provide a valuable source of evidence. Numerous boundary points called *rood* occur, such as the *rodestan* of the Ashton charter in Wiltshire (S727), delimiting land that was held with the neighbouring estate of Edington by Romsey Abbey in 1066. A *rood,* however, is not necessarily a stone cross: besides the potential for confusion

with other name elements, Reynolds has made it clear that *wearg rood* refers to a set of gallows (Reynolds 1997). There are also various ambiguous references in the charters to boundary markers called *stan, stapol* or *cros*, some of which could refer to crosses (for translations and discussions of charter bounds, see Grundy *passim* on the following counties; Wiltshire: Grundy 1919; 1920; Somerset: Grundy 1935a; Dorset: Grundy 1933; 1934, 1935b; 1936; 1937; 1938; 1939; and for Devon, Hooke 1994a). The meaning of the term *cristelmael* is rather less ambiguous (literally 'Christ-image', meaning 'crucifix'). There are four charters containing references to a c*ristelmael* from the South West, and ten others from elsewhere in England (these are: Newnham Murren in Oxfordshire (S738), Nackington in Kent (S877), grants to the churches of Abingdon at Hawkridge (Berkshire; S607), to Worcester at Stoke Prior in Worcestershire (S60) and Eynsham Abbey at Shipton-on-Cherwell in Oxfordshire (S911), and grants to Bishops Aelfric at Blewbury in Berkshire (S496), Aethelwold at Washington in Sussex (S714), and a grant by Bishop Oswald to his brother at Grimley in Worcestershire (S1370). Finally, there are sets of 'loose' bounds (loose from the charters they once accompanied) describing estates at Shellingbridge (Berkshire; S1546) and Tardebigge (Worcestershire; S1598). I am grateful to John Blair for references to the last 7 examples).

Of the four south-western examples, the boundary clause of Christian Malford (S466) and the 'loose' boundary clause of Bremhill (S1575) both appear to refer to the same marker, at the *Cristel mael ford* (from which the parish of Christian Malford in Wiltshire is named). This boundary mark appears to be at the south-west corner of Christian Malford, at the meeting point of the medieval parish with those of Bremhill and Sutton Benger (S 305), and also the boundary of the hundreds of Chippenham and Startley (Fig. 4.10). The cross probably stood at the boundary of Malmesbury's estate, which held both Bremhill and Sutton Benger in at least the ninth and tenth centuries. Christian Malford itself was granted to Glastonbury in the mid-tenth century, although the *cristel mael* in question must have been

erected some time before the boundary clause of the charter was composed (S466).

The charter of Buckland Newton in Dorset is a grant of 15 hides by King Edmund to Aelflaed, whom the grant describes as a nun. The boundary includes a marker at *cristemaeleighe,* 'the clearing of the cross'. Although this is unlocated, it clearly represents a cross on the boundary of an ecclesiastical estate, and one which may have been in Glastonbury's hands earlier in the pre-Conquest period (S303) and certainly was in the mid-eleventh century (Thorn & Thorn 1983: 8,3).

Two important boundary clauses probably referring to crosses which are still in their original locations come from Devon and Cornwall. The first is the final c*ristelmael,* mentioned in the charter of Tywarnhael and discussed in Chapter 3 (above). It is worth restating here that the charter appears to show the encroachment of secular rights over a formerly ecclesiastical estate (which later reverted to ecclesiastical ownership), and that the cross is probably still *in situ*. The rest of the boundary clause also shows clearly how the estate was surrounded by the heath of St Agnes Downs.

The second example is the *copelstan* of the *Nymed* charter in Devon (S795). There is little doubt that this refers to the Copplestone from which the medieval and post-medieval settlement takes its name (Hooke 1994a), a large and elaborately decorated granite cross-shaft probably of the earlier tenth century. The Copplestone stands at the border of the estates of *Nymed* and Crediton, which had been a major landholding monastery since at least the early eighth century (S255) and seat of a bishop since AD 909. The place-name *Nymed* suggests an area of marginal country on the borders of Crediton's estates: though taken from the old name for the River Yeo, the name ultimately derives from the British *nemeton,* meaning a sacred wood. It perhaps refers to the same forest as the name of Morchard Bishop (i.e. 'great wood'), which is a few miles to the north-east. Down St Mary, just to

the north, appears in Domesday as two estates both named *done*, meaning 'hill' or 'downland' (Thorn & Thorn 1985: 1,72; 6,4).

In addition to the charter material, there is evidence from surviving monuments. As in Cornwall (see Chapter 3), there are a few examples of crosses which may have stood near estate boundaries and have remained *in situ*. The Copplestone is one example, and another may be the cross which now stands in the grounds of Plymstock telephone exchange (Devon; Okasha 1993). The monastery of Plympton in Devon is first mentioned in a charter of the early tenth century (S380), although unfortunately it lacks a boundary clause. The charter details the exchange by Edward the Elder with Bishop Asser of land in Dorset and Somerset for the monastery. An ecclesiastical community still existed at Plympton at Domesday, when the canons of the manor were in possession of two hides (compared to the king's two and a half hides; Thorn & Thorn 1985: 1,17) It seems likely that the Plymstock cross may once have marked the southern boundary of the Plympton estate.

It remains to consider crosses which are now at churches not believed to have been of any special status during the early medieval period. Many such monuments have been discovered re-used as building stone during restoration works in the relatively recent past. Moreland has discussed an example from Bradbourne in Derbyshire where an early medieval cross appears to have been destroyed during the Reformation (Moreland 1999). However, it seems likely that many crosses were incorporated into buildings earlier in their history during the later medieval period. For example, the cross-shaft from Codford St Peter in Wiltshire was found in 1864 when the church's Norman chancel-arch was removed (Forbes 1967). At Sidbury in Devon a cross-fragment is built into the apparently C13th south transept of the church (Devon SMR), and in Somerset, crosses and fragments have been recovered from medieval fabric at Kelston, Maperton and West Camel (Foster 1987). Although Cramp has argued that early medieval sculpture seldom strays far from its original site (Cramp 1975), it

would seem likely that re-use in parish church fabric might be an exception – comparable perhaps to the re-use of Roman stones as building material (Eaton 2000) – and may have formed part of a re-ordering of the religious landscape accompanying the foundation of estate churches and subsequently the development of parishes in the later middle ages. There are a number of examples of pre-Conquest sculpture from ordinary parish churches in the South West which stand close to the borders of major early ecclesiastical estates, and it is possible either that pre-existing sculpture was taken from its original location and brought to newly founded churches or that new churches were deliberately built near existing monuments in the tenth or eleventh centuries, a time when small estates were increasingly developing within and around the edges of older established units (see below, section 4.10).

Examples include a possibly tenth-century cross fragment from the parish church of Cattistock in Dorset, which stands immediately next to the parish boundary on the banks of the River Frome (Pearce 1978: 109). Cattistock appears to have been granted to Milton Abbey along with its mother church, Sydling St Nicholas and several other dependent estates, and was part of the Abbey's later medieval estate (S391; Hall 2000: 100). The tenth-century shaft from East Stour (also Dorset) comes from a church that was a chapelry of the minster of Gillingham, itself the source of two ninth-century cross-fragments; Stour probably formed part of the Gillingham estates, and both were held by Shaftesbury in the eleventh century (S1868, Hall 2000: 15). In Wiltshire, the cross-shaft fragments now built into Teffont Magna church are close to the borders of the large Shaftesbury estates that formed a contiguous block around Tisbury to the west (S850; Jackson 1985). Likewise, the fragment at Broad Chalke church stands at the eastern end of the huge estate of Chalke, held in the tenth and eleventh centuries by the nuns of Wilton (S582; DB Wilts 13.9; although Broad Chalke was itself probably the head church of this area: Pitt 1999). The neighbouring estate of Bishopstone was also ecclesiastical, having been held by the bishop of Winchester since perhaps the later eighth century (e.g. S229). Examples of

this sort suggest that many of the crosses now at ordinary medieval parish churches or chapels could once have marked estate boundaries.

Blair has considered these crosses and in contrast to the above discussion, he minimizes the significance of their boundary location (Blair, forthcoming). This is because relatively few *cristelmael* boundary-markers are recorded in the charters, which suggests to him that relatively few crosses were on boundaries (although Blair does not discuss the possibility that other name-elements (*rood, stan, stapol* or *cros*) refer to crosses, nor does he discuss the surviving monuments in detail). However, it can also be suggested that the nature of the boundaries which might have been marked by crosses is uncertain. Parish boundaries were not formalised until after the Norman conquest, and as mentioned above boundaries in areas of rough ground were often not firmly established until the late- or post-medieval periods. It is possible that some crosses were used to mark a boundary zone rather than what would later become the parish boundary. Although certain charter references to crosses only date to after *c.*940, the earliest surviving monuments from western Wessex date to the very late eighth or ninth centuries. These include a number of examples which are likely to be at least a hundred years earlier than the first foundation of the churches where they were later found (e.g. Codford St Peter, Wiltshire (Cramp 1975; Forbes 1967); Rowberrow, Somerset and West Camel, Somerset (Foster 1987; Tweddle 1983); and Dolton, Devon (Cramp 1975)). If these were boundary markers, the landscape they stood in may have been less precisely defined than in the later Saxon period, when the descriptions appended to charters generally become more and more precise (see above; Reynolds 1999: 83). If so, it seems likely that a monument such as Rowberrow (Somerset), now immediately below Dolebury Warren and the Mendips, might originally have stood near to where the cultivated fields met the marginal zone of rough ground at the point where the traveller would have crossed from one to the other.

On the other hand, the later ninth and tenth centuries were a time when many small new estates were established with great numbers of grants to minor landholders. It seems possible that some crosses could have been set up by ecclesiastical landholders in the face of persistent encroachments by kings who sought land on their established estates for the increasingly fragmented body of minor landholders (see Fleming 1985). The major churches could then have been seeking to clarify their position as dominant landholders through monumental display. It is noticeable that many of the central Wessex crosses are in river valleys which were well-trodden routes (e.g. the valleys around Wilton in Wiltshire). In these areas, the boundaries between estates may have become blurred earliest as a result of more and more intensive exploitation and sub-division (Costen 1994).

In his discussion of the crosses, Blair suggests that the significant question is '...whether they were vehicles for new conceptions of articulating the landscape, or perpetuated old ones' (Blair, forthcoming). He argues that the location of crosses should be seen in relation to their location on routeways and regards them as marking significant points such as crossroads and fords, arguing that this seems similar to the pattern of pre-Christian sacred sites. As Blair says, it is possible that some crosses perpetuated 'traditional' religious sites such as wells and holy trees, although there is little evidence to suggest that this was so. It is also very likely that a location on a routeway was significant: a cross was a monument whose impact would have been maximised when viewed by as many passers-by as possible. Like the burial mounds discussed above, it seems likely that a number of factors determined the location of crosses in the landscape, often including the need for a roadside and boundary location. Blair may be correct to argue that crosses used the same 'vocabulary' as prehistoric, pre-Christian and 'traditional' ritual sites, but if so they were using it to describe a new kind of landscape; this was not the old pagan landscape, but instead the new Christian landscape of estates with central sanctuaries and alien margins.

It could be suggested that there are certain parallels between some of the 'landscape' crosses and the mid-Saxon 'conspicuous' burials. Both are commonly located by routeways (Semple, forthcoming a; Blair, forthcoming), and it has been suggested above that both were commonly markers at the edges of marginal zones (4.2). They may therefore represent successive ways to mark out the borders of the settled land. As time progressed, the monuments employed to do this became less ambiguous in their meaning, and more thoroughly 'Christian' in their iconography (crosses as opposed to barrows). The 'conversion' of the landscape was an ongoing process that took several centuries to spread convincingly through the countryside.

Execution cemeteries and dangerous margins

This process is exemplified by the late Saxon execution cemeteries discussed by Reynolds (1997; 1998; 2002). In the early Saxon period, 'deviant burials' (individuals who had suffered violent deaths or unusual burial rites, e.g. beheadings, prone burials or hands tied behind the back) were normally buried in the same cemeteries as the rest of the community (Reynolds 1997: 35). However, from perhaps as early as the seventh century, such burials began to be separated from communal burial-places so that by the tenth century executed criminals were buried exclusively in separate cemeteries (Reynolds 1997: 35-9; 2002: 187). This practice seems to have been universal in the counties of central southern England, including Dorset and Wiltshire. Execution cemeteries are almost all located on hundred boundaries (Reynolds 1999: 105-110), suggesting that criminals were banished in death to the margins of the administrative land-unit. This would most commonly have meant a location in the 'waste' beyond the cultivated land.

The establishment of separate execution cemeteries is clearly related to the developing administrative system, but was also strongly imbued with a

Christian ideology (Reynolds 1997: 38-9). By their actions, criminals had put themselves outside the community of Christian people; in death, that separation was maintained. As burial of the Christian community was increasingly controlled by the church in the late Saxon period (Gittos 2002: 201), the appropriate place for those outside the community was outside Christian burial grounds, and indeed beyond the community's settled land altogether. In the marginal pasture grounds and wastes, execution cemeteries were commonly associated with barrows and other prehistoric monuments, in particular linear earthworks (Reynolds 1999: 108). It is likely that the association of the burials of criminals with barrows is far from accidental. Semple has demonstrated that barrows were strongly associated with malevolent spirits in the minds of the late Anglo-Saxons, and that execution cemeteries are located on them so that the souls of the departed were not only separated from the Christian dead, but actively tormented by already resident occupants of the barrow (Semple 1998).

In some cases, perhaps most notably Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, the same barrows used to commemorate people of the highest rank were later used as the focus of execution cemeteries (Carver 1998b: 137-143). This, and the general late-Saxon association of barrows with evil creatures, suggests that the meaning of barrows had changed significantly between the seventh and the tenth centuries. Whilst the middle Saxon barrow's ideological position was somewhat ambiguous – perhaps expressing elements of pre-Christian ritual practice in a new Christian landscape – the late Saxon attitude to barrows was quite different: they were considered fearful places (Semple 1998). Human evil-doers consigned to execution cemeteries had been banished into the marginal land in the same way as their supernatural counterparts. The process of 'converting' the countryside from a pagan to a Christian landscape was one that appears to have proceeded in stages throughout the Christian Saxon period, but by the tenth and eleventh centuries, a form of landscape organisation deeply indebted to a Christian ideology had reached throughout the settled land and into the marginal ground beyond.

4.10 The rise of small estates and local estate churches

The late Saxon period was a time of many changes. Not only was ecclesiastical provision expanded, but in some places settlement patterns changed almost beyond recognition; in general the character of estates altered in important ways, most commonly through the process of fragmentation. Whilst these changes were without doubt important, their significance should not be exaggerated: changes both in society and its spatial structure must be regarded as strongly rooted in middle-Saxon forms of organisation.

Minor estates below the level of kings and ealdormen had probably always been a feature of the Anglo-Saxon landscape of Wessex. For example, Ine's laws refer to estates of between 3 and 20 hides held by a class of minor nobles, the *gesithcund* (*gesith*-born) men, whose *wergeld* was notably higher than their contemporaries (Ine Cap.63-6: Attenborough 1922: 56-9; Faith 1997: 156). From the ninth century onwards, their place in the social hierarchy was taken by the class called thegns (first recorded in sources such as the *Laws of Alfred & Guthrum*: Attenborough 1922: 98-9). These were men who received land in return for service in the royal household and in war (Faith 1997: 155). The temporal attributes of the thegn are reported, perhaps in rather idealised form, in the early elventh-century text known as *Geþincðo* (Whitelock 1979; for regional variations from the standard of *Geþincðo*, see Faith 1997: 156-7). It describes how a *ceorl* who acquired five hides of land, a bell, and a *burh-geat* (probably a manorial enclosure: see below) and who owed certain types of service at the king's hall, had been entitled to thegnly rank. A later version also added a church and kitchen to this list of requirements (Reynolds 1999: 60). The attainment of rank was therefore related to the possession of a certain kind of property.

In the later Saxon period, increasing numbers of small estates came into existence, and they are probably linked to the growth of the thegnly class.

The land given to thegns acted as a kind of permanent salary, and ensured their continued service in either a military or some other capacity (Faith 1997: 156-7). In Norfolk by the time of Domesday many hundreds of estates are in the hands of small landowners (Williamson 1993: 114-126). In Yorkshire the numerous pieces of tenth- and eleventh-century sculpture have been interpreted as the work of a new class of local landlords eager to express their identity (Carver 1998a: 26). These changes in eastern England have sometimes been interpreted as the result of the Scandinavian settlements and the distribution of land by the elite amongst their followers (Morris 1984: 5; Richards 1991: 30). However, it is not clear that settlement structure in the Danelaw was based on contemporary practice in Denmark (see e.g. Lund 1976: 479-80; Brink 1998: 34-37). The economic and social changes of the ninth century affected the whole of England, and if the Vikings had a responsibility for the increasing number of small estates it was probably as a result of creating an environment where a thegnly class with greater power over its own land was both desirable and necessary (Williamson 1993: 124-5).

The increase in small estates in Wessex is partly recorded in the Anglo-Saxon charters. In the tenth century there was not only a vast increase in the number of estates being granted, but also a tendency for them to be smaller and have much more detailed boundary clauses (Hill 1981: 26; Hooke 1998: 86-7). Unlike the relatively vague descriptions appended to seventh- and eighth-century charters, the documents of the later Saxon period often describe estates in considerable detail (see e.g. Hooke 1994a *passim*). The reason for this increasing definition may have been that landscape was being more and more intensely exploited by immediately neighbouring estates (e.g. those of the Wiltshire chalklands; Hooke 1988: Costen 1994: 100-102).

The need for the kings of Wessex to endow thegns with estates led to significant alterations in the structure of the countryside (Faith 1997: 157). These are reflected both in the fragmentation of large estates and the

expansion of the settled area into formerly marginal land. Estate fragmentation affected both royal and ecclesiastical land in the ninth and tenth centuries. Large ecclesiastical estates were acquired by kings in the ninth century both to reward thegns and to add to the royal holdings, sometimes perhaps for defensive purposes (see the discussion by Fleming (1985), who cites examples from Somerset, Wiltshire and Devon, pp.250-255). Costen has suggested that minor estates created by fragmentation around the edges of major royal or ecclesiastical landholdings may be reflected by *-ington* place-names in Somerset, citing concentrations of them around Frome and Ilminster as possible examples (Costen 1992b: 115-7). Even major churches like Winchester sometimes appear to have resorted to pleading in an attempt to protect their territory from land-hungry Anglo-Saxon kings like Edward the Elder:

> 'Furthermore, the bishop and the community at Winchester beg that in charity for the love of God and for the holy church you desire no more of the community's land, for it seems to them an uncalled for demand, so that God need blame neither you nor us for the diminution (of the endowment) in our day; for there was a very great injunction of God about that when those estates were given to the holy place'
>
> (S1444; cited & trans. Rumble 2001: 236-7)

Williamson has argued that another way new estates were created in the later Saxon period was by extension of the settled area into former marginal land (Williamson 1993: 126). In Wessex, the result of this process was expansion into areas that were formerly rough grazing or marshland, as in the Somerset Levels (Rippon 1994). At estates like Puxton in Somerset, archaeological evidence suggests a growing amount of marshland was brought into cultivation from the tenth century onwards (Rippon *et al.* 2001). Puxton lies in the Levels *c.*4km north of Banwell and *c.*3km west of Congresbury, both high-status churches whose estates bordered the marshes. Although they were in ecclesiastical hands by at least the ninth century, in the tenth and eleventh centuries they appear to have been in royal ownership (until they were granted to Duduc, the future bishop of Wells, perhaps in the reign of Cnut: S373; S806; S1042; Keynes & Lapdige

1983: 264). It seems likely that Puxton was a minor estate established on the edge of a former ecclesiastical one in the tenth century, perhaps on royal initiative. Coston and Rippon have argued that such economic expansion is detectable in the Domesday record for Somerset through a comparison of the hidage and ploughlands (Coston 1992b: 123; Rippon 1994: 242). Late Saxon reclamation may be implied by a comparison of the hidage assessment of an estate, perhaps not altered since the earlier tenth century, and the number of ploughlands, which may have been assessed just prior to 1086. It is possible that areas with a significantly higher number of ploughlands than hides represent areas where there was expansion of the farmed area in the late Saxon period; Rippon notes a particular increase in the area around Brent Knoll (Rippon 1994: 242), and Costen argues that estates bordering the uplands in west Somerset like Carhampton and others in neighbourng regions of Devon witnessed dramatic increases in the settled area (Costen 1992b: 124-5). In east Devon it is possible that different patterns of fields visible in the modern landscape owe their ultimate origins to the late Saxon period. For example, in Axminster hundred (Devon) there are strong differences in the patterns of fields around the minster church and royal vill of Axminster (founded by the early eighth century) and the outlying parishes of the Blackdown Hills. Around Axminster the patterns of strip-fields recorded by post-medieval maps (and medieval documents; Fox 1972) are regularly organised across the valley-floor, whereas in outlying parishes the steep-sided valleys are generally covered with much more irregular fields. These may have been created by the holders of the numerous small estates which Domesday Book records owed dues at the royal vill (e.g. Smallridge, Membury, Weycroft, Undercleave and Deneworthy; Thorn & Thorn 1985: 1,11) It is possible that the recently recognised settlement-sites belonging to this period at Cleave Hill and Gaffers in Membury parish are related to an expansion of agriculture into the marginal land at around this time (Exeter Archaeology, forthcoming a; forthcoming b).

As *Geþincðo* suggests, at the heart of the landed estates belonging to the thegns were the bell (and presumably its bell-tower) and the *burh-geat*. As defining attributes for thengly status these estate centres were of great importance (Faith 1997: 163; Williams 1992). The *burh-geat* may refer to a kind of settlement-enclosure within which the bell, the kitchen, and other elements of the lordly residence such as a hall would have been located. Settlements of this kind are referred to in 'Burgate' place-names which are scattered across southern England, and a probable example at Yatesbury (Wiltshire) has been partly excavated (Reynolds 1999: 63). Despite extensive archaeological investigation in the modern village, no evidence of middle-Saxon settlement has been recovered from this site, which lies towards the western edge of the Marlborough Downs (Reynolds *et al.* forthcoming), suggesting the settlement may have been newly established on marginal land in the late Saxon period. Trowbridge is another excavated example of a probable thegnly settlement in Wiltshire, although here a middle-Saxon settlement existed earlier on the site which lies close to the banks of the River Biss (Graham & Davies 1993). In Hampshire, the enclosed sites at Faccombe Netherton and Portchester, which re-used an ancient Roman fort, have been interpreted as the estate centres of late Saxon thegns (Fairbrother 1990; Cunliffe 1975). Documentary evidence suggests that though Portchester was probably held at the time of the Norman conquest by a thegn, it had once been in the hands of the church of Winchester (S372; Munby 1982: 35,4; Cunliffe 1975: 1-3).

Thegns could be dependent on other thegns, or owe the allegiance to insitutions other than the king. Major ecclesiastical landowners often tried to take advantage of this to limit damage to their estates. Leases provided a way for military service to be provided by thegns on church land. The lease was designed to ensure that the estate returned to the church after a specified period (Faith 1997: 161-3). However, it often proved hard even for major churches to reclaim the land and as a result large amounts of territory could be permanently alienated into the hands of minor landowners (Faith 1997).

The establishment of thegnly estates led to various re-organisations of the landscape. Domesday Book shows that Glastonbury's Polden estate centred on Shapwick had been divided by the eleventh century into the units perpetuated in the later medieval parishes. Before 1066 these units had been held by dependent thegns (who 'could not be separated from the church'; Thorn & Thorn 1980: 8,5). It seems likely that here administrative re-planning of the estate was accompanied by the establishment of nucleated villages with open fields in each unit, and archaeological evidence suggests this probably occurred some time in the tenth century (Corcos 1984; Aston & Gerrard 1999: 28-9). Aston & Gerrard suggest that this settlement nucleation may have been instigated by the church in order to increase revenues after the Benedictine reform of the mid-tenth century, though Costen has pointed out that nucleated villages also developed on non-ecclesiastical estates (Costen 1992a). One possibility is that the thegns who held the newly-fragmented estates from the church were responsible for nucleation and the establishment of regular fields. Nevertheless, thegnly estates also existed in areas dominated by dispersed settlement patterns, for example around Crediton and Axminster in Devon; although the rise of nucleated settlements and thengly estates may be contemporary in some places, social change cannot necessarily be expected to have resulted in settlement pattern re-organisation everywhere (Lewis *et al.* 1997; Yorke 1995: 269-274).

Estate churches

This discussion has shown that the ninth and tenth centuries were a time when a growing class of minor nobles gained increasing power over their estates. The twelfth-century version of *Geþincðo* adds ownership of a church to the attributes required for thegnly status (Yorke 1995: 251), and Blair has suggested that:

> 'The urge to have private churches was deep-rooted in early medieval aristocratic culture, so there was a natural tendency for units of landlordship, of whatever size, to acquire them.'
>
> (Blair 1994: 136)

The late Saxon period appears to have been a time of considerable expansion in ecclesiastical provision in Wessex and all over England (Morris 1989: 140-164; Yorke 1995). Evidence for this change comes principally from archaeological and documentary sources. Unfortunately, the date of most churches' foundations are unclear, since relatively few have been excavated and documents do not often mention them before the twelfth century (Blair 1994: 137). Rushton's study of Sussex suggests that the majority of churches in that part of southern England existed by the end of the eleventh century and that the process of parochialisation was well underway. This may suggest that many churches had been established for some time by then (Rushton 1997). Where archaeological excavation has taken place, the results often suggest estate churches were founded in the tenth century, as at Trowbridge (Wiltshire; Graham & Davies 1993) and Portchester (Hampshire: Cunliffe 1975). Architectural sculpture and standing fabric suggest further examples at Knook, Alton Barnes and Limpley Stoke (Wiltshire: Taylor 1968; Taylor & Taylor 1965; Darlington 1955), Winterbourne Steepleton (Dorset: Hinton 1998: 67), East Coker, and perhaps Wilton (Somerset: Gittos & Gittos 1991; Foster 1987: 66). Such minor churches took a variety of different forms. The base of a tower surrounded by burials which was excavated at Portchester (Hampshire) may be the remains of a turriform nave of the kind known from Earl's Barton (Northamptonshire) and Jevington (Sussex). These seem to have been multi-purpose structures with a chapel on the ground floor and living accommodation above (Auduy *et al* 1995). Small churches of more familiar form with either a one- or two-cell plan include the examples at Alton Barnes and Trowbridge (Wiltshire).

Morris and Faith have both suggested that the estate church was generally planned as part of the lordly residence from the outset, and medieval manor

houses and churches are very commonly found side-by-side (Morris 1989: 249; Faith 1997: 165). There are hints of late Saxon occupation adjacent to present-day churches from archaeological evaluations at Bawdrip and East Stoke (Somerset), Yatesbury (Wiltshire), and Shapwick (Dorset) (Gaimster & Bradley 2001: 314; Nenk *et al.* 1995: 239, 260; Cox 1999). However, Reynolds argues that such churches are normally secondary elements in thegnly complexes, as shown by excavated examples like Trowbridge, Portchester Castle, and Raunds (Northamptonshire; Boddington 1996); topographical evidence commonly supports the idea that the church was an addition to the site, as at Faccombe Netherton (Hampshire; Reynolds 1999: 130-4; Lucy & Reynolds 2002: 20-1). It seems likely that churches may have been established by thegns as part of a process by which they secured increasing power over their estates.

Blair has noted that initially there may have been no contention between the old established churches and new estate churches, since the latter would not necessarily have infringed the established rights of the former (Blair 1987: 269). From around the beginning of the tenth century onwards, however, local churches began to acquire rights at the expense of older foundations that would ultimately lead to them becoming the majority of parish churches in the later middle ages. For example, King Edgar's second lawcode states that if a thegn has a church with a graveyard on his bookland, one-third of his tithes could go to it (Morris 1989: 128-9; Whitelock *et al.* 1981: 97-99).

By initiating burial at their churches, local lords may have been actively seeking to elevate their own status. In the early eleventh century, one of King Aethelred's law codes divided churches into four types: *heafodmynstres* (head minsters), *medemran mynstres* (middle-rank minsters), *laessan* (lesser [ones]), and *feldcircan* (field-churches) (8 Aethelred 5; Whitelock *et al.* 1981: 389-90). This appears to have perpetuated and developed the tenth-century ranking in Edgar's law code of the 960s, which had a three-fold division of old minsters (*eald mynstru*),

churches with graveyards on thegns' bookland, and churches without graveyards, clearly suggesting higher status was assigned to sites with burial rights (2 Edgar 1-3; Whitelock *et al.* 1981: 97-99).

The commencement of burial could have brought estate churches into conflict with older ecclesiastical institutions if it meant burial taxes were diverted from them. Such well-established churches had probably been the beneficiaries of these taxes since at least the ninth century, even if the burials they controlled had taken place on other sites (e.g. Chimney, Oxfordshire: Blair 1994: 73; Gittos 2002: 201). Ecclesiastical taxes are first recorded in Ine's laws (Ine Cap.4: Attenborough 1922: 36-7), which makes it seem likely that jurisdictions of some sort had been established in Wessex by the beginning of the eighth century. Athelstan's laws suggest that at the beginning of the tenth century burial payments were customarily made to ecclesiastical centres that provided pastoral care, and the most likely explanation is that these were the superior minsters of the later laws (1 Athelstan 4; Whitelock *et al.* 1981: 46; Pitt 1999: 6). Gittos has recently linked an increasing concern to delimit the sanctified area where burial could take place to the ability to derive revenue from it. Thus consecrated enclosed cemeteries around Saxon churches may only have developed from the tenth century onwards as a result of an increasing need to define the burial area; those churches without burial rights may never have been enclosed (Gittos 2002). Some old minsters maintained their rights over revenues such as burial fees and tithes during the late Saxon period and well into the middle ages, even when numerous estate churches had been founded within the areas under their control (e.g. Taunton: Costen 1992b: 154). However, the majority seem to have lost power in the face of encroachment by new churches on manorial estates, a process which accelerated after the Norman conquest (Blair 1985: 137). Faith has argued that these processes reflect the increasing ability of secular lords to exercise social control over the population of their new estates (Faith 1997: 167).

One further type of church are those occupying what Lucy & Reynolds term 'adaptive' cemeteries (2002: 20). These are churches that appear to have been founded on earlier cemeteries and to have perpetuated their sites into the later middle ages (see 4.9, above for burial sites without churches). As a class of site these are ill-defined in Wessex, but examples elsewhere in England probably include Cherry Hinton (Cambridgeshire) and Barton-on-Humber (Lincolnshire) (O'Brien 2002; Rodwell & Rodwell 1982). Blair has suggested that churches perpetuating burial grounds of this sort may be more common in western England than elsewhere (Blair 1996a: 12). It is possible that in areas dominated by dispersed settlement patterns, the location of a church may have been more easily influenced by the position of pre-existing ritual sites than in areas where well-defined nucleated settlements were forming, although this remains to be demonstrated archaeologically. As noted above, some such churches were established as secondary foci within the *parochiae* of existing high status churches, as at Beckery (Rahtz & Hirst 1974). Nevertheless, these may have provided the model for others established by the new thegnly class to serve their own estates.

In some ways, the thegnly estate churches of the later Saxon period represent a major change, one that led to the disintegration of earlier patterns of ecclesiastical organisation (Blair 1988b). Gittos' recent discussion deals with innovations in churchyard consecration for burial that seem to have little in common with earlier arrangements (Gittos 2002). In other ways, however, estate churches seem to have been modelled on earlier churches and to have re-used the old symbolic language in the newly-emerging late Saxon landscape. Perhaps most obviously, the association between estate churches and thegnly settlement strongly echoes the earlier association between royal vills and high-status churches which was clearly maintained into the later Saxon period (4.6, above). The presence of chapels on royal sites like Cheddar in the tenth century may also have provided a model for the intimate association between religious buildings and elite living accommodation that could be represented by the

turriform naves of Portchester and Earls Barton (Rahtz 1979; Cunliffe 1975; Auduy *et al.* 1995). The analogy between high-status churches and estate chapels goes further, however; both provided foci for a range of activities by the inhabitants of dependent areas, who by the tenth and eleventh centuries may have been coming to define their identity in relation to their local church as well as to their local lord (Blair, forthcoming). The position of most local churches at the heart of local settlement patterns and communications networks also echoes the location of earlier ecclesiastical centres. Even in relation to the provision of pastoral functions the new churches were acting in a similar way to the old ones; for example, the control of burial-rights seems to have been a concern of the older churches by the tenth century; new estate churches were just acting like their better-established counterparts when they sought to provide cemeteries, even if this led to competition and ultimately to innovative ritual practices (see Gittos 2002).

With this in mind, it is tempting to think of the ranking of churches in Aethelred's law code as representing a continuum rather than four distinct and well-defined classes. At the top of the scale were probably the cathedrals and old, well-established ecclesiastical communities like Glastonbury; at the bottom were lowly field-churches without burial grounds. Between them lay the mass of minsters, 'sub-minsters' and estate churches. All had their place within the system and may have owed various dues to other establishments, just as in the secular world thegns could owe service to other thegns who in turn served kings or other nobles. The 'lesser' minsters of 8 Aethelred 5 are widely interpreted as representing the majority of estate churches (e.g. Morris 1989: 129). It may be that contemporaries did not draw a well-defined line to distinguish them from the older established churches. Instead, as the terminology suggests, they may have regarded 'lesser' churches as just another type of minster, but one with fewer rights, less land, and less individual power. Nevertheless, they do reflect a new development: the growing power of local lords to control aspects of life at a local level.

4.11 Conclusions: the church in the landscape of Wessex

This chapter has highlighted some of the ways in which the establishment and development of early medieval churches in Wessex related to the wider landscape. It seems likely that in the later sixth and seventh centuries, there was a significant re-structuring of the settlement pattern in western Wessex which involved the abandonment of some settlements (commonly those set amidst land that was not easily exploited) in favour of the lower slopes of the river valleys (4.3). From the seventh century, churches too were established in the lower valleys. The new church buildings and the level of permanent activity probably made them clearly distinguishable from earlier types of settlement (4.4). The most common location for these churches in western Wessex was close to the bottoms of broad valleys, just above the level of the river floodplain (4.5). As such, the majority of churches stood in prominent locations at the heart of zones of settlement.

Some churches were founded as semi-independent monasteries and endowed with substantial grants of land, but the elite probably established the majority of churches adjacent to royal administrative centres (4.6). The morphological similarities between the two types of sites may have reflected the expression of a shared ideology (4.6). Important churches were commonly central to the estates and administrative units that were becoming increasingly formalised from the conversion period onwards (4.7), and even if churches were not physically in the middle of such units they were often central to patterns of agricultural resources within estates (4.8). They therefore acted both ideologically and economically as central places.

Although some churches were founded by the kings of Wessex in the eighth and ninth centuries, ecclesiastical and major secular landowners also established churches on the own estates (4.9). These included 'sub-minsters' of the kind that may have acted as religious foci for smaller areas

than the earliest ecclesiastical centres. Such churches may have provided the model for the estate churches which began to proliferate in Wessex from the tenth century onwards (4.10). These re-used the existing symbolic vocabulary of the minsters, but nevertheless demonstrate the increasing power exercised by local lords in the late-Saxon landscape. For example, this growing class of thegns mimicked the earlier arrangements of minster church and royal vill through the close juxtaposition of their new manorial centres and estate churches (4.10). In this way local churches at the heart of small agricultural estates reproduced model Christian landscapes countless times across the South West.

In the wider landscape, patterns of minor ritual foci were also changed by the development of the Christian landscape. New patterns of burial during the seventh and early eighth centuries may result in part from the creation of a new administrative geography, and many burials in barrows could have marked the edges of territories centred on the newly-founded churches (4.2). From the ninth century onwards, crosses marked out the boundaries of the Christian landscape using a less ambiguous symbolic language than the barrows before them, and 'defended' ecclesiastical land from the encroachments of the secular elite. By the late pre-Conquest period, all minor ritual sites were set within a landscape where the influence of Christian ideology reached up to the edges of the cultivated land and into the rough ground beyond (4.9).

Churches and a Christian religious ideology became central to the development of the landscape of Wessex over the course of the early middle ages. In Chapter 5, developments in Wessex will be compared with Cornwall, and some explanations will be suggested for the differences and similarities that emerge.

Chapter 5

Discussion and conclusions: Christianity and the early medieval landscape of south-west England

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will compare the developments discussed in Chapters 3 & 4. Firstly, it will consider the similarities and differences between Cornwall and western Wessex (5.2). It will then discuss some explanations for these developments (5.3) and outline a general model for understanding how changes in the landscape resulted from adaptations to the adoption of Christianity as the universal religion in early medieval south-west Britain (5.4).

Before that, the following paragraphs will provide outline models for the development of ecclesiastical structures in Cornwall and western Wessex. The aim of this is to provide a much abbreviated reiteration of some of the conclusions in Chapters 3 & 4. It must be remembered that these schemes do not describe certainties, but rather (owing to the nature of the evidence) are hypotheses waiting to be tested and strengthened by the results of future archaeological research. For example, the identification of major early monasteries in Chapter 3 rests largely on Olson's discussion of the tenth-century charter material and Domesday Book (Olson 1989). The fourteen collegiate houses recorded in Domesday Book and the *Inquisitio Geldi* were distinctively different from other churches in Cornwall in the late eleventh century and form a highly unusual group in Domesday Book. Their privileges (geld-free estates) and continuing collegiate status suggest that they were distinctively different from the old minster churches of England and that they had maintained their status for much longer, even though they may have acquired some minster-like attributes (Padel 2002: 328). Like St Kew, mentioned in the *Vita Prima Sancti Samsonis* (Fawtier 1912; Flobert 1997; Olson 1989), some of the churches must certainly have their origins

around the seventh century as monastic communities. Nevertheless, it is not certain that all did and there is little historical or archaeological evidence from any of these sites dating to before the ninth century. Likewise, it is very probable that there had been other similar churches that lost their superior status before the compilation of Domesday Book and that the list of early monasteries in Cornwall remains incomplete. The case studies of Chapter 3 included discussion of probable cases at Tintagel and Minster in north Cornwall and at St Mawgan-in-Meneage in the south-west; other likely cases include Phillack, Looe Island/Lammana, and perhaps Paul. How many further similar sites there may have been is presently unclear. The existence of minor Christian centres such as chapels or hermitages is also hard to recognise from the early medieval evidence. The material discussed in Chapter 3 suggests minor chapels and churches could have begun to proliferate around the ninth century (perhaps comparable with Wales: Davies 2002: 393-94), but some evidence, like the large body of dedications to Celtic saints, hints that there could have been minor cult-sites in earlier times. Padel cites the example of *Entenyn*, with cult-centres at St Anthony-in-Meneage, St Anthony-in-Roseland and possibly Ventontinny (Probus) (Padel 2002: 332-35). He suggests on linguistic grounds that the personal name-form 'Entenin' must have been coined before the ninth century in Cornwall (Padel 2002: 334-35), but whether the figure commemorated at these sites lived before or after this date and when the cult centres were first established cannot be known from the evidence presently available. The discussions in Chapter 3 and 4 are therefore inevitably based on the balance of probabilities and our presently incomplete understanding of some difficult data. Bearing these caveats in mind, it might be useful to suggest a (rather simplified) scheme for the development of Christian institutions in the region before going on to assess what the significance of these models might be.

In Cornwall the earliest Christian activity is intimately linked to major elite centres, best understood through the excavations of fifth- and sixth-century Tintagel (Phase 1 in 2.3, above). From the later sixth and seventh centuries,

however, the elite founded a new group monasteries that did not have such close physical links with royal sites and that were endowed with substantial estates of their own. It was from the same time that the Romano-British settlement pattern in rounds was transformed into the early medieval settlement pattern of unenclosed farmsteads, typified by those with *tre* place names (Phase 2). From the ninth century at the latest, new churches began to be founded by a wider range of groups including existing monasteries and local lords. The numbers of local churches continued to increase during the tenth century and the same period witnessed an expansion of the settled area into marginal land (Phase 3). This pattern continued after political control of Cornwall was established by Wessex in the tenth century. All but a few of the oldest tier of churches finally lost their independent estates to the kings of Wessex who established many of their new centres close to these ancient churches (Chapter 3).

In Wessex, the conversion period was characterised by similar changes to the earlier settlement pattern and the structure of the landscape. Here in the seventh and eighth centuries most churches were linked closely to royal centres, as the fifth- and sixth-century ecclesiastical centres of Cornwall had been. Even so, the kings of Wessex also established a smaller number of monasteries on independent estates at this time. From the eighth and ninth centuries new churches began to be founded by non-royal agencies such as the existing quasi-autonomous monasteries; these served, for example, as religious foci for their outlying estates and were therefore not adjacent to royal centres as many earlier churches had been. Such churches may have provided a model for the small churches that proliferated on the estates of minor thegns from the tenth century onwards (Chapter 4).

5.2 Similarities and differences in the developing ecclesiastical landscapes of Cornwall and western Wessex

Similarities

In both Cornwall and Wessex changes in the structure of both the early medieval church and the wider landscape can be observed; these of changes proceeded along broadly analogous 'trajectories' in both areas, even though the initial introduction of Christianity happened at different times (see Carver 2003: 11). In the following paragraphs they will be outlined based on the discussions in Chapters 3 & 4. Some possible explanations for the similarities between the developing early Christian landscapes of the two areas will then be put forward. In particular, it will be suggested that this development may have been guided by a Christian 'ideology of settlement' which consciously led to churches being placed at the heart of everyday life.

Settlements may be mundane parts of life, but their location and form is commonly affected or even directed by ideological factors (Carver 1993). Changes in ideology may therefore have meant changes in settlement patterns in the past. In Cornwall, a settlement pattern based on enclosed settlements known as 'rounds' persisted from the later Iron Age throughout the Romano-British centuries and on into the fifth and sixth centuries. This pattern appears to have been affected little by the ending of Roman power in Britain, perhaps because cultural life remained relatively stable in the region throughout this period (Quinnell 1993). However, settlement studies reveal that major changes occurred in subsequent centuries (2.3; 3.7). The archaeological evidence shows that rounds generally ceased to be occupied during the sixth century, and were replaced by the 'unenclosed' farmsteads which formed the basis of the medieval settlement pattern. These are generally recognised through their distinctive place-names (2.2, 2.3; Padel 1985). Comparison of the distribution of rounds and early medieval settlements shows that the settlement pattern went through major changes, with significant areas of abandonment in the sixth and seventh centuries (as

shown by the detailed case studies of St Neot and Tintagel, above 3.7). New 'core' areas of settlement were created with relatively dense distributions of dispersed settlements. At the heart of many of these 'core' settlement areas stood important early medieval churches.

Patterns of agricultural resources changed along with the settlement pattern. Romano-British period rounds were commonly surrounded by their field systems, as shown by air photography and field survey (Rose & Preston-Jones 1995: 58). However, the Historic Landscape Characterisations (HLC) undertaken in Chapter 3 (above) clearly showed that in the later middle ages many rounds stood in areas of rough grazing ground that was not normally used for the cultivation of arable (3.7). Since the later medieval cultivated area is likely to have been considerably greater than that of the early middle ages (3.9), many more of the rounds close to the edges of medieval field systems may have been in rough ground in the earlier part of the period. This suggests that a considerable area of fields was abandoned at the end of the Roman period when the settlement pattern was restructured. The early medieval fields lay close to their associated settlements in the new 'core' settlement areas (3.7). The HLC also showed that although small patches of rough ground and woodland could be scattered between the settlements and fields, the largest continuous expanses of these resources generally lay on the margins of areas of settlements and fields. These had important economic roles as areas for pasture, fuel production, and mineral extraction, but were not zones where permanent settlements occurred. Their economic roles may have been partly inherited from the landscape organisation of previous periods, but the absence of settlements was probably an early medieval development.

Developments similar to those in Cornwall also took place in Wessex in the late sixth and seventh centuries (4.3). In Devon a number of prehistoric settlements were reoccupied in the post-Roman period but abandoned shortly afterwards. In Somerset some high-status post-Roman sites like South Cadbury and Cadbury Congresbury were apparently occupied in the

late Roman period but deserted in the sixth century. In Wiltshire occupation at several Romano-British downland sites continued into the post-Roman period, but ceased between the fifth and seventh centuries. Evidence from excavations suggests that from the sixth or seventh centuries onwards the most densely occupied areas were in or close to the valley bottoms (4.3). This is also suggested by finds from fieldwalking surveys in the middle Avon valley (Wiltshire/Hampshire border: Light *et al.* 1994) and on the Polden Hills (Somerset: Aston & Gerrard 1999). Finds of the Roman-British period were generally found over a more extensive areas than those of the early and central middle ages. Field survey suggests that considerable areas of former arable land were put down to rough grazing in Wessex in the early part of the middle ages, as they were in Cornwall (e.g. Fowler 2000: 233; McOmish *et al.* 2002). This evidence and the information from Anglo-Saxon charter boundary clauses suggests that zones of rough grazing, woodland and marshland were distributed in large, fairly coherent blocks that were peripheral to the newly-refocused areas of settlement and cultivation in Wessex (4.3; 4.8).

As noted above, most major Cornish churches of the seventh-eleventh centuries seem to have held their own estates separate from royal land. Although some of the most important Wessex churches held large estates of their own, the majority had small holdings where the land was probably intermixed with that of the adjacent royal vill (3.6; 4.8). In both Cornwall and Wessex, however, early churches were generally sited centrally within the agricultural land. This commonly meant a position overlooking the most valuable resources, the watermeadow and the arable of the lower valley sides. In Wessex, royal estates were physically organised in broadly the same way, with the royal vill and church at the centre surrounded by fields and meadows, and the largest areas of rough grazing and woodland in peripheral zones (4.8). Although Cornwall and Wessex had their own distinctive forms of charters for granting land in the later pre-Conquest period, the traditions of both areas probably originated in late Roman practice (Davies 1982; Kelly 1990). It is likely that the establishment of

Christian religious institutions led to the introduction of new forms of landholding in both areas which contributed significantly to the political structure of the fast-developing states.

The centrality of the primary churches of both Cornwall and Wessex was also emphasised by their topographical locations. The most important early medieval churches of Cornwall are not located on remote islands or spectacular hilltops, but instead the majority are in low-lying positions, often close to rivers and areas of valley-bottom watermeadow (3.3). Even in cases where they occupy hilltops or the shoulders of hills (e.g. St Keverne; 3.3) it can be argued that these positions emphasise the centrality of the church to the surrounding countryside, since valley-bottom positions would have been hidden from view owing to the steep topography. None of the major early churches of Cornwall stand on particularly high or spectacular hilltops, which suggests that visual domination or physical remoteness was not a prime consideration in their locations. Although there was an increasing trend moving westwards from Wiltshire to Cornwall for important churches to be located on valley sides and hillslopes rather than on valley bottoms, this may mirror changes in the physical topography as much as anything else (Table 4.3). In central Wessex broad river-valleys with wide floodplains are much more common than in the Cornubian peninsula. Here the valley-sides are often steep and their bottoms narrow, allowing little room for church buildings and any associated precincts. Until the post-medieval period, few settlements (apart from mills) were sited in the valley bottoms of Cornwall and west Devon. It therefore seems likely that the locations of churches were guided by similar concerns in both Wessex and Cornwall. Most early Cornish churches are in similar positions to the majority of high-status churches in central Wessex (3.3; 4.5), where ecclesiastical centres are characteristically sited on the banks of rivers or on the edges of their floodplains. In many cases, the hillsides rise up above these churches, making their valley-bottom locations quite marked (e.g. Ramsbury (Wiltshire), Beaminster (Dorset) and Axminster (Devon)). In particular, the vast majority of early church sites whose presence is

indicated by reliable evidence of the ninth century or earlier are sited in valley bottom locations (Table 4.2).

Finally, the centrality of the primary ecclesiastical sites was also emphasised by their monumentality and the range of activities undertaken around them. Although few church buildings have been excavated, known examples suggest that they would have been more larger, more elaborate, and more permanent structures than almost any others in the contemporary landscape throughout the early medieval period (3.2; 4.4). In both Cornwall and Wessex, each ecclesiastical centre probably had more than one church within its precincts, which could have been physically delimited by banks and ditches or other means. As well as ritual activities, major ecclesiastical sites were centres for industrial activities such as metal working and for the processing and consumption of agricultural products. Finally, churches were probably used all year round, which differentiated them from royal vills; at these sites occupation was generally low-level except during the irregular visits of itinerant rulers and their entourages.

In the wider landscape away from the major ecclesiastical centres there were a range of minor ritual and religious foci, including burial sites, holy wells, and (in the later part of the period) monumental stone crosses. It seems very likely that some such sites perpetuated the locations of pre-Christian ritual places. Holy wells and springs occur in both Cornwall and Wessex; although the veneration of many of these probably started in the early or even later medieval periods, it is probable that some have their origins as sacred sites in the Iron Age or Romano-British past (3.8; 4.2). Likewise, in both Cornwall and Wessex there are burial grounds that are not adjacent to churches but have produced archaeological evidence for use spanning the Roman period and early middle ages. New cemeteries were also founded in both areas away from churches after the conversion to Christianity, and it appears that the church authorities did not interfere with ordinary community burial grounds until stricter customs governing burial (and the collection of burial taxes) were introduced in the later pre-Conquest period.

In both Cornwall and Wessex there were forms of elite burial that continued into the conversion period but had their origins in the pre-Christian past. Religious identity and elite ideology have commonly been studied through burial practice, and the religious agendas of many of these 'conspicuous' burials has been extensively questioned (Williams 1997; Carver 2002b; Semple, forthcoming a). However, in the seventh and eighth centuries even those with ambiguous symbolic content seem to have been intimately linked by their geographical positions to the construction of a new Christian landscape. In the late sixth and seventh centuries cemeteries and burial sites in central Wessex with distinctively 'Anglo-Saxon' gravegoods became increasingly distant from contemporary settlement sites (4.2). At the same time there was an increase in the number of 'isolated' burials, where one or two individuals are buried on their own, typically in barrows, accompanied by a rich array of gravegoods. These burials were normally sited in distinctive topographical positions, for example on high downland hilltops and plateaux (Semple, forthcoming a; Eagles 2001). Whether they are the burials of 'pagans' or Christians, the location of many such barrows close to routes of communication suggests that the monuments were intended to act as prominent markers (Semple, forthcoming a). It was argued above that such burials probably stood in the rough grazing land at the edges of territorial units that were centred on newly established elite centres, particularly churches (4.2). The kinds of boundaries they marked are hinted at by their relationships with later land divisions. For example, in north Wiltshire, an Anglo-Saxon burial in a barrow at Roundway Down stands close to the point where the three hundreds of Cannings, Calne and Rowborough meet; another barrow at Swallowcliffe Down (Wiltshire) with a seventh-century burial is probably mentioned in a tenth-century charter boundary clause (Speake 1989); it stood on the boundary between two medieval hundreds and probably also marked the edges of two early medieval minster *parochiae*.

In Cornwall the use of inscribed stones may have extended from the late Antique period (when conversion to Christianity first began) through to the time Anglo-Saxon political control was established (3.8). Mark Handley has suggested that the way these monuments were used changed over time, and has argued convincingly that whilst earlier inscribed stones were often burial markers, the later examples were associated with land ownership, or both land and burial (Handley 1998). The most intensive period of use of stones associated with land ownership was probably the time when the early medieval settlement pattern was being established in the sixth century (2.3; 3.7). Examples from the study areas discussed in Chapter 3 and from elsewhere in Cornwall show that inscribed stones were commonly located in marginal zones on the borders of early medieval farmland (3.8). For example, the three stones from Cardinham parish and another nearby stone from Lancarffe (close to the medieval boundary of three hundreds) are all adjacent to tracks which provide access from the south and south-west up towards the higher ground of Bodmin Moor. The whole area seems to have been rough downland in the early medieval period, and the stones may originally have acted as markers for both travellers and people who lived in the area. Another example at Boslow near St Just in Penwith lies on the parish boundary close to the place where ancient farmland gave way to rough grazing ground; the low mound on which it stands could be a small barrow (Thomas 1994).

It has been argued that both inscribed stones and barrow burials may have had more to do with displaying personal or political power than with religious or ideological changes (Knight 1999; Semple, forthcoming a). Even if this were the case, this power was being exercised in a landscape that was increasingly being defined in relation to settled areas that were focussed on Christian ecclesiastical and/or royal centres. Whether the people commemorated by them were pagans or Christians remains unclear; within the conversion period century landscape they 'defended' newly formalised territories (for Irish comparisons see Charles-Edwards 1976; Ó Carragáin 2003). Their locations were probably linked to a 'Christianised' way of

ordering the landscape that put the church at the centre of an area of settled fields, surrounded by a boundary zone of uncultivated land. 'Conspicuous' burials in both Cornwall (sixth-seventh centuries) and Wessex (seventh-eighth centuries) were placed at visible points in this margin.

The symbolic vocabulary of the seventh-century barrows and even of some inscribed stones may have been ambiguous, but this was not the case with another monument type used to mark certain boundaries later in the early medieval period. Stone crosses bearing distinctive decoration of the later Saxon period are found in both Wessex and Cornwall (3.8; 4.9). In Wessex the vast majority are associated with the sites of major churches, as are many in Cornwall. However, there is a significant subset that are not located at or near churches, but stand in isolated sites in the wider landscape. A consideration of the Anglo-Saxon charter references to these monuments suggests that many of them may have acted as boundary markers for important ecclesiastical estates (4.9). This interpretation is supported by the earliest known locations of many of the crosses (particularly in Cornwall and western Wessex) which are commonly close to the borders of the medieval settled land and the rough grazing ground. Examples based on the detailed case-studies in Chapter 3 include the possible ring of crosses around St Neot in Cornwall, where four or five monuments appear to have stood on important routeways across the rough ground close to the point where they re-entered the settled landscape (3.7; 3.8). There is a relatively large number of crosses in Cornwall compared to Wessex, and it is possible that this relates to the greater density of major land-holding churches: many of the crosses in both areas may have been set up to mark out ecclesiastical land that was in danger of being appropriated by increasingly voracious secular landholders from the ninth century onwards.

The use of crosses also suggests that the 'conversion' of the wider landscape to a Christian scheme was becoming increasingly complex in the later Saxon period. Although this process began in the sixth and seventh centuries with the establishment of churches and royal centres and the re-

focussing of the pattern of secular settlements, it continued to develop into late Saxon times and beyond. Unlike barrows, stone crosses were resoundingly Christian monuments, and their establishment as permanent features of the landscape showed that it was claimed as part of a Christian world. It is significant that by the later Saxon period, the everyday meaning of the barrows had also changed from places of burial for the social elite to places that were viewed with fear and suspicion (Semple 1998). The conversion of the landscape may have been a process that took several centuries, but by the eleventh century there can be little doubt that Christianity had an institutional grip on the structure of the south-western countryside.

An important part of this process was the establishment of increasing numbers of minor churches in both Cornwall and Wessex. In both areas the foundation of minor churches and chapels probably began when major ecclesiastical communities established chapels on distant parts of their estates in the eighth or ninth centuries (3.9; 4.9), but by the tenth and eleventh centuries it was most commonly secular lords who were establishing small churches on their own land (3.9; 4.10). These new churches acted as ecclesiastical centres for smaller territories than the earlier foundations, but in many ways they fulfilled similar functions and they were probably founded according a model provided by the existing early ecclesiastical centres. In Wessex, for example, this may be suggested by the close juxtaposition of many estate churches and manorial centres. These minor churches and chapels fragmented the existing networks of ecclesiastical organisation, but in so doing they transformed and reproduced them at a smaller scale in local landscapes all over south-west England.

Differences

Oliver Davies has argued that there were significant differences in Christian religious practice between the 'Celtic' and 'Anglo-Saxon' regions of Britain

(O. Davies 1996). The later medieval church dedications of the South West are one sphere where differences are immediately apparent (Padel 2002). In Cornwall, as in Wales, most churches are dedicated to 'Celtic' saints, many of them local Cornish figures. In Wessex, by contrast, the majority of church dedications are to universal saints, even though in the later Saxon period some 'Celtic' saints were imported to provide church dedications in England from Cornwall and the Brittonic world in general (Pearce 1973; Orme 1996a).

Nevertheless, the use of local saints in Cornwall need not be regarded as a simple expression of 'Celtic' identity in opposition to the rest of Britain or Europe. Oliver Padel has argued that the cults of Celtic saints in the west were an intensely *local* phenomenon, and that the saints were strongly linked to their localities (Padel 2002: 351-53). An important element of this was the way that over the course of the early middle ages saints had become closely intertwined with the formation of Brittonic place-names, so that the saints to whom churches were dedicated were used in place-names like the owners or inhabitants of secular settlements which often included their personal names (Padel 2002).

The veneration of local saints could be part of local political processes as well as local social life. Such processes took place not only in the 'Celtic' lands, but in Wessex too, as Barbara Yorke has suggested. In middle-Saxon Wessex, saints favoured by certain political factions may have replaced others favoured by their rivals who had suffered political and military defeats (Yorke 2002). Even so, in Wessex there were local saints whose cults were limited to specific locations, such as Humbert of Stokenham and Ermund of Stoke Fleming in the South Hams of Devon (Orme 1995; Orme 1996a: 24). Blair has recently suggested that English local saints were once relatively widespread, particularly in the pre-Viking period, and that very many minster churches would have housed the cults of local saints. He argues that the lack of local saints in England may be partly a reflection of the differences in the ways place-names were formed in the English and

Brittonic languages (see also Padel 2002: 312-14), and partly due to the desire of minster churches in England to centralise cult practice (Blair 2002: 468-9; this might also relate to the differences in secular elite control over religious sites in the two regions discussed below, this section). Nevertheless, Blair maintains that in both Brittonic and English areas

> '...saints were the object of popular, strongly localised devotion which involved their incorporation into myth-making, and were used to identify and explain landmarks scattered through the landscapes where their cults were based.'
>
> (Blair 2002: 486)

The apparent differences may have been more the result of linguistic, political and institutional arrangements after the first centuries of Christianity in Britain than of a fundamental gulf in the nature of Christianity between the two regions; as Blair argues, there was probably a 'basic continuum in the local cult practices of Brittonic and English societies' (Blair 2002: 486). The value of ethnicity as an explanatory mechanism for some of the subtle differences outlined here is considered further below.

There were other differences between aspects of the major ecclesiastical sites of the two areas. In Wessex, early churches may have acted as the nuclei of relatively dense settlements from an early date, as perhaps at Avebury (Wiltshire), Romsey (Hampshire) and Bath (Somerset) (4.4). In Cornwall, there is little or no evidence for the nucleation of settlement at early churches (3.2). Whilst this may be just a reflection of the lack of excavations, the historical evidence from saints' lives, charters and Domesday Book suggests that individual clerics could have held individual farms dispersed within the churches' immediate estates rather than living together next to the church (3.2; 3.7). In other ways, though, early church sites in the two areas were similar; they often had more than one church or altar, they were probably bounded or enclosed in some way, and they were intended to be permanent centres used continuously throughout the year. By contrast, many secular settlements seem to have been rather less stable, in

particular those of lower status (4.3). In addition, royal centres in both regions and ordinary settlements which were part of transhumance farming systems such that those that existed in Cornwall (Herring 1996) probably witnessed significant variations in the number of inhabitants and the intensity of use at different times of the year, in contrast to the important church sites.

In the wider landscape, there were variations in burial practice across the South West during the early middle ages. However, there is no need to link these differing practices to any possibly differing forms of Christianity, and there were continuities from pre-Christian practice in both areas. In Cornwall, for example, burials in both cists and simple dug graves occur from the Romano-British period through to the later middle ages (3.8). Such burial practices are paralleled from eighth-century burial grounds in Wessex, as in the Isle of Purbeck sites in Dorset like Ulwell (Cox 1988). Also in Wessex, burials with grave-goods overlap the conversion period in parts of Wiltshire, Dorset, and Somerset. The Christian church may not have laid down strict codes relating to burial practice until the later pre-Conquest period: the secondary barrow-burial in the graveyard of Ogbourne St Andrew church (Wiltshire) shows that burial rites involving monumental display could be employed in the later ninth century (Semple 2002). The range of late Anglo-Saxon burials found at many church sites, including simple dug graves with or without coffins, slab- or plaster-lined graves, and charcoal burials shows that a range of burial customs was allowed within communities (Reynolds & Turner, forthcoming). As suggested above, rather than being defined by significant ethnic or religious differences, some of the new elite burial practices developed in the conversion period such as isolated barrow burial probably represent responses to common stimuli (most notably the establishment and construction of a 'Christian' landscape) in the specific contexts of developing regional political structures.

Some of the more significant differences between the churches of Wessex and Cornwall lie in the relationships to secular elite settlements and

administrative structures between the seventh and tenth centuries. The earliest churches of Wessex were most commonly located very close to royal vills, and in many cases royal estate centres and churches probably formed different parts of the same complexes from the seventh to the eleventh centuries (around 70% of royal vills in Wessex were probably less than 1km from the nearest important ecclesiastical centre: Table 4.6, above). In Cornwall, however, the picture is more complicated. The example of Tintagel shows that post-Roman royal centres and religious sites could form part of the same complex (settlement Phase 1, *c.* AD 300-600; above, 2.3; 3.4). However, in the subsequent early medieval period (Phase 2, *c.* AD 600-900) the available evidence suggests a significant change so that churches in Cornwall were established on sites that were distant from royal secular centres. This distance may suggest a greater degree of independence from royal control for the churches of Cornwall in comparison to most of those in contemporary Wessex. In the later pre-Conquest period (*c.* AD 900-1050), however, the freedoms which Cornish ecclesiastical communities had acquired began to be eroded by the establishment of new royal centres at or close to important church sites, and also by the increasing numbers of local churches.

The relative independence of major early medieval Cornish churches may also be reflected by the kinds of estates they held (3.6). Domesday Book records a very unusual concentration of ecclesiastical communities in Cornwall whose land was free from the payment of geld. The produce of the estate went only to the benefit of the church's saint, and was not diverted in the form of tax to the secular elite. Nevertheless, Domesday Book and various charters also show how the estates of Cornish churches were increasingly being encroached upon in the late Saxon period. It seems likely that the structure of ecclesiastical estates was deliberately being altered in Cornwall at this time by new political masters from Wessex so that it was more like the structure there (4.8).

The relationships between ecclesiastical centres and the secular administrative structures of the later Saxon period also suggests closer links between royal power and ecclesiastical structures in Wessex than in Cornwall. In Wessex, important churches were often central to the early medieval hundreds administered for secular purposes from adjacent royal vills (4.7). As recent research on Dorset and Wiltshire has argued, early units of pastoral responsibility (minster *parochiae*) and hundreds commonly shared the same boundaries (Hall 2000; Pitt 1999). Changes in the patterns of hundredal administration may have led to changes in ecclesiastical structures, once again emphasising the importance of the links between royal and religious administration. In Cornwall, however, it is much less easy to see a close correlation between secular and ecclesiastical administrative units during the early middle ages (3.5). The available evidence does not suggest that even in the tenth or eleventh centuries there was much coincidence between hypothetical areas of ecclesiastical pastoral responsibility and the Domesday hundreds. It seems likely that this reflects the relative independence of important Cornish religious communities from the secular power structures of the pre-Saxon period.

5.3 Explaining the development of ecclesiastical structures in the South West

Attempts to explain the differences between Christian practice in western Britain and Anglo-Saxon England have sometimes appealed to ethnicity as the guiding force. For example, Thomas has recently explained the inscribed stones of Cornwall as '...a manifestation of something called *Britishness*...the planned exploitation...of an exclusive intellectual heritage' (Thomas 1998: 198-9). Olson has observed that the 'Insular Celtic' lands remained free of the regularising influence of the Benedictine Rule for an unusually long time, but that 'monasticism was a dynamic force in early medieval Christianity and nowhere more so, it would seem, than in the Celtic regions of Atlantic Europe' (Olson 1989: 1-3). Oliver Davies asserts

the existence of '...a particular type of spirituality...among the Christians of early medieval Wales' (O. Davies 1996: 5). The case for the early Cornish church as part of a wider 'Celtic Church' was expounded by Taylor (1916: 50-8) and has been current in popular publications and parish histories ever since (e.g. Canner 1982: 5-6). Hughes and Davies have discussed this preoccupation with the 'Celtic Church' and have shown clearly that it has little basis in the evidence (Hughes 1981; Davies 1992; *cf.* Duncan 1992). Not only is there no evidence for a 'Celtic Church' with any institutional structure, but there were significant differences between different regions within the Celtic-speaking lands which Davies attributes to local political differences. In addition, she demonstrates that aspects of 'Celtic Christian' life such as monastic bishops and monastic federations were not specific to 'Celtic' areas, but had clear parallels elsewhere in the Europe, including Anglo-Saxon England (Davies 1992: 13-18).

Although the idea of an ethnically-based 'Celtic Church' has been discarded by many scholars, the notion of a 'Celtic' Christianity is more persistent. This idea suggests a form of Christianity existed which was special because it reflected certain traits characteristic of 'Celtic' people as a whole, even if it was not organised on a formal basis across the Celtic-speaking lands. Its exponents, such as Oliver Davies, suggest a range of characteristics that distinguish 'Celtic' Christianity from other forms, including

> '...the central role of the Christian poet, a special emphasis upon the doctrine of the Triune God, an unusually positive attitude towards the natural world and a deeply felt sense of community.'
>
> (O. Davies 1996: 5)

Davies suggests that these special elements had their origins in the dialogue between the earliest Christianity of the Celtic world and the 'primal elements' of 'tribal Celtic religion' (O. Davies 1996: 5-6; 143-4). Current work continues to emphasise these characteristics; for example, Low argues that early Irish Christianity was particularly oriented towards the natural world (Low 2002), and Atherton has suggested that 'Celtic' influences – often fantastical and Otherworldly – can be identified in Old English poetry

in opposition to the 'practical and down to earth' Anglo-Saxon elements (Atherton 2002: 80-1).

The use of these supposed characteristics of 'Celtic' peoples to explain certain historical structures has been criticised on the grounds they are over-generalisations and pre- (or mis-) conceptions. James has stated the case for 'Celtic' identity as an essentially modern construction, and it is clear that there was no overarching ethnic self-awareness in antiquity across the regions now regarded as 'Celtic' (James 1999). Sims-Williams has evaluated the reliability of some of the model's elements (such as the supposed Celtic love of nature) and has suggested that post-medieval and modern political motivations are largely behind the maintenance of this pan-Celtic identity (Sims-Williams 1986; 1998a).

Whilst this work has shown that some of the supposed 'Celtic' traits may rest more on modern imagination than in early medieval culture, it is also clear that the use of categories of ethnicity to explain historical developments is fraught with problems. Sims-Williams has shown how genetic, linguistic and cultural connections have been confused and often deliberately equated where no true equivalence exists (Sims-Williams 1998b). As Jones has argued, there is no one-to-one relationship between ethnicity and culture (including material culture; Jones 1997: 88), let alone between genetics, language and ethnicity (see also Cole 1997). Ethnicity may be expressed in different ways by the same ethnic groups at different times and in different places depending on historical circumstances (Jones 1997: 122-3). This means that a contextual approach is necessary which provides 'thick descriptions' and detailed historical analysis of particular situations (above, 2.2.6); it is hard to use 'ethnicity' as part of an explanatory framework without a clear understanding of its manifestations in specific contexts. As Hines has observed, culture, identity and politics are intimately related spheres, '...like boxers in a three-cornered fight. Each responds to the other...' (Hines 2000: 84). His paper uses ethnic identity (which he locates particularly in the use of different languages; see also

Ward-Perkins 2000b: 524) to explain the emergence of British Wales and Anglo-Saxon England in opposition to one another in the early middle ages. However, it does not discuss in detail the ways ethnicity related to politics in the context of the early middle ages, and dismisses the contribution of politics on the grounds that '...the polities and kingships of the relevant time were too weak and unstable to have caused the changes...' (Hines 2000: 102). This entails a rather limited conception of 'politics', and ignores the fact that it is an active force at local geographical scales and in societies not organised on the basis of 'states'. As a result, 'ethnicity' is largely conflated with 'culture' and 'identity', which makes it too general to be used as an explanatory mechanism on its own.

'Ethnicity' needs to be used cautiously in relation to the early middle ages, and it must be rooted in detailed discussions of individual contexts. This is not to deny that Christianity in some or all of the Celtic-speaking lands may have had elements that distinguished it in some ways from its insular or continental neighbours. It seems likely that Christianity in Cornwall and Wales would have been influenced by pre-Christian religion (which can contribute to the construction of ethnicity), but the nature of that influence is hard to perceive, particularly when previous belief systems are so poorly understood (3.8). Complicated processes were at work, for example the creation of local and regional political identities at a scale below that of the whole 'Celtic' or 'Brittonic' world. Burial practices both at the sites of churches and in the wider landscape varied considerably across the south-west peninsula, with similarities and differences both within and between Cornwall and Wessex. There are few changes in burial customs that could be explained in terms of the construction of new ethnic identities alone; some, such as the emergence of enclosed burial grounds, may have had more to do with the cultural influence of one area on the other than ethnically-based confrontation between them (Gittos 2002: 205-7). Rather than broad ethnic divisions, the variability of evidence relating to mortuary practice suggests that burials were used to construct identities for both the living and dead on more local scales (Lucy 1998). A better explanation for

the differences between ecclesiastical structures in Cornwall and Wessex may be that different social and political groups in different areas were using and adapting a new religious ideology in slightly different ways at different times (Davies 1992). As one of the 'boxers' in Hines' three-cornered fight, politics (and ideology) would have contributed to the construction of 'ethnicity' (Hines 2000: 84); explaining the differences between Cornwall and Wessex in terms of local and regional identities and political developments is more convincing than using a straightforward 'pan-Celtic' ethnicity.

The early medieval church was largely the province of the social elite in both western Britain and Anglo-Saxon England, and churches were endowed by and probably staffed by members of the social elite in both Cornwall and Wessex (3.4; 4.8). As Carver has argued, different forms of religious institutions can relate to the different political structures under which they develop, and religious ideology can be actively used by royal authorities to enhance their own power (Carver 1998a; Higham 1997). The differences between Cornish churches and those of Wessex (and elsewhere, e.g. parts of Wales: Jenkins 1988; Charles-Edwards 1970-2) suggest that the political contexts for the development of churches developed differently, and at different rates, in Cornwall and Wessex. After an initial period in Cornwall when churches and secular elite centres were located side-by-side (Phase 1, fifth-sixth centuries (2.3, above)), there followed a long period when major ecclesiastical centres appear to have existed relatively independent of direct royal control (Phase 2, sixth-tenth centuries). In Wessex, most churches were also initially established adjacent to royal centres (probably in the seventh and eighth centuries), and many of them seem to have been considered part of the royal estate; here, in contrast to Cornwall, direct royal control seems to have been maintained over a core group of early ecclesiastical establishments throughout the early medieval period. In both regions, however, developments in local lordship brought about changes in church organisation in later phases. Firstly, the independent monasteries that had been founded by the Wessex elite began

to set up secondary churches on the estates that had been granted to them (4.8), and a similar process may have taken place in Cornwall (e.g. Tintagel and Minster; 3.9). Secondly, and most importantly, minor lords began to establish small estate churches in great numbers from the ninth century in Cornwall (Phase 3) and the tenth in Wessex, further boosting their growing political power and diminishing the influence of the earlier churches (3.9; 4.10). The apparent differences between the two areas can therefore partly be considered the result of similar trajectories of ecclesiastical development running their courses over slightly different timescales: in both areas ecclesiastical systems were initially (the fifth century in Cornwall, and the seventh in Wessex) very closely linked to royal power, but changed as increasingly localised units of lordship assumed greater political importance.

5.4 The church in the landscape of early medieval south-west England: the development of a model

The subtle differences in the relationships between churches and secular elites in Cornwall and Wessex during the early middle ages are probably attributable to the adaptation of Christian ideology to different political contexts by secular leaders. Thus local lords advanced their positions through founding local churches, and the Wessex elite of the tenth century took land and power from the primary Cornish monasteries for themselves. Whilst the differences are important, there were also great similarities between Cornwall and Wessex that make it possible to develop a tentative general model to help explain the organisation of early medieval landscapes across south-west England. This model suggests that the ideology of ecclesiastical centres played a central role in the development of the landscape. As discussed below, it places south-west England squarely in the wider European tradition.

The development of the early medieval landscape is often discussed in terms of the so-called 'multiple estate' model developed by Jones (1976; 1985). This model envisaged royal centres that drew support from a range of smaller estates. The 'multiple estate' would have had access to basic necessities such as arable land and grazing for flocks, with specialised units responsible for the production of particular items, such as dairy products or wool (Hooke 1998: 52). The system of multiple estates is thought to have been formalised in the middle Saxon period, the time when Christianity was becoming established in Britain. The early medieval ecclesiastical estates discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 would fit into the category of 'multiple estates'.

The changes that accompanied the development of 'multiple estates' were fundamental, and included the re-focussing of the settled area (3.7; 4.3) and the drawing of more formal boundaries around territorial units (4.8). Nevertheless, elements of earlier patterns of landscape organisation are virtually always incorporated into later ones, and early medieval Britain was no exception in this respect. As discussed above (4.7), the earliest stratum of landscape organisation recognisable in the English landscape (and probably the Cornish landscape too; 3.5) is the so-called 'folk-region' or early *regio*. The evidence of charters, hundreds, and hundred meeting-place names suggest that these *regiones* formed the geographical basis for many later hundreds and therefore kingdoms (Hooke 1986; Bassett 1989; Klingelhofer 1992; Meaney 1993).

The nature of the landscapes within the early *regiones* was rather different to those of the middle Saxon period. This is suggested not only by the settlement pattern changes discussed above (3.7; 4.3), but also by the surviving evidence from the pre-Christian period relating to the nature of early sites with central-place functions like sacred foci and meeting-places. In Anglo-Saxon England, burial complexes and assembly areas of the pre-Christian period may have been extensive and dispersed across the landscape, often encompassing numerous foci scattered across relatively

large tracts of land (Semple 2002; forthcoming b). Other interpretations based mainly on place-names also suggest sites like meeting-places and shrines were scattered throughout the landscape rather than being focussed in a single central location (Meaney 1993; 1995; Wilson 1985). In Cornwall possible pre-Christian sacred sites like fogous and standing stones are also dispersed throughout the landscape (3.8). As in pagan Anglo-Saxon England, evidence is lacking for clearly-defined religious centres in the pre-Christian period. The change from the *regiones* of the post-Roman period to the multiple estates of the middle Saxon era was a change that encompassed settlements, ritual sites, and the distribution of resources in the wider landscape.

Many landscape historians and archaeologists recognise that these changes in the way the landscape was organised reflect social developments and changes in power structures. Even Williamson's recent discussion, which stresses the contribution of environmental factors to the local distinctiveness of different medieval landscapes, reflects that:

> 'The steady development of a more hierarchical society in the course of the Saxon period, with the development of 'multiple estates' and their subsequent fragmentation into a mosaic of local lordships, was perhaps the driving force in landscape change'
>
> (Williamson 2003: 182)

The contention of the present discussion is that to a large extent it was the influence of a specifically *Christian* ideology that shaped many of the fundamental changes in landscape organisation between the folk-*regiones* of the earliest middle ages and the multiple estates that existed in the first medieval states. A close parallel is suggested by recent work in Scandinavia. Here, as in Britain, late Iron Age landscapes were based around areas of settlement with networks of scattered sacred sites, meeting-places and farms (including elite residences) (Brink 1999: 434-5). After the conversion to Christianity, the orientation of the landscape changed so that churches became the new foci. The earlier scattering of elite residences and meeting-

places was replaced with a new hierarchically-ordered landscape in which churches acted as the chief central places (Fabech 1999a: 469-471).

Some scholars have questioned the power of ideologies, including Christianity, to influence the physical landscape. For example, Gauthier has argued that a specifically Christian ideology was not the guiding factor behind the location of churches in late Antique Gaul. Instead, she regards their placement as solely controlled by practical considerations such as the availability of suitable plots of land (Gauthier 1999: 199). Similarly, Halsall considers economic and social necessity to have been behind the wide-scale abandonment of Metz in the fifth century, rather than the kind of ideological conflict about living in towns envisaged by Carver (Halsall 1996: 245-6; Carver 1993). Although economic factors can have a great influence on the form of the landscape, the examples cited in Chapter 1 showed clearly that belief systems and religious ideologies have also influenced the form of the landscape (1.1). Since new ideologies are normally in recursive relationships with their contexts (e.g. D. Edwards 1999), earlier forms of landscape organisation influence later forms and total change should not be expected. In early Christian Europe and the Mediterranean, old pagan sacred landscapes were adapted to accommodate the new Christian ideology rather than being completely refigured (Orselli 1999: 186). A re-invented Christian ideology of settlement emerged from the new contexts that were created.

Blair and Gem have recently called the ecclesiastical centres which stood at the heart of such landscapes 'Holy Cities', a term that recognises their ultimate origins in the urban civilisation of the Roman empire (Blair 1996a; Gem 1996). Their model regards such ecclesiastical centres as central to the ideological self-understanding of contemporary societies:

> 'The buildings [of the churches] were a microcosm of society as a whole, an actualization of society understanding itself as a single community bound together in its religious beliefs: in short a holy city'.
>
> (Gem 1996: 1)

Furthermore, the influence of the 'Holy Cities' reached out beyond the bounds of their individual precincts, leading to the establishment of Christian sites throughout the wider landscape (Blair 1996a: 10-12). As a way of structuring the landscape this model can be traced from its origins in the fourth-century Mediterranean world, and other landscapes influenced by the same Christian ideology can be recognised across Britain and Europe in the early middle ages and beyond (Howe 2002). Roymans has explained the form of the later medieval landscape in parts of the southern Netherlands and northern Belgium according to a similar model, where various sources suggest that the landscape was mentally and physically divided into two main zones. The first, inner, zone comprised the fields and settlements, and had the church at its heart. It was '...Christian, civilised and cultural' (Roymans 1995: 18). The outer zone on the other hand contained the heaths, marshes and forests, and was the realm of malevolent supernatural creatures: '...dangerous, uncivilised, rough and...dominated by evil beings' (Roymans 1995: 13). There are clearly strong resonances between Roymans' model and the landscape of early medieval south-west Britain discussed in preceding sections. In the following paragraphs, an attempt is made to trace the development of Christian landscapes in terms of these models, and to suggest how such ideas about the organisation of the landscape might have come to Britain as an integral part of Christian ideology. The final section will also outline the ways the idea of the 'Holy City' was used and adapted in the new social and political contexts of Cornwall and Wessex.

There is some debate about when Christianity first developed a 'topographical sense'. Some scholars argue that it had always existed, reproduced in stories about the location of the tomb of Christ and other traditions linked to biblical events (Howe 1997: 65-67). Others consider the idea of Christian sacred space to have been developed primarily during the fourth century, when the growth of the cult of martyrs meant that the histories, tombs and relics of particular saints became linked to particular places (Markus 1994: 269-271). It is clear that the sacredness of certain

places became increasingly well-established in the Christian tradition over the course of the fourth and fifth centuries. In particular, Christian buildings and other foci were established in Mediterranean towns and cities. In the later fourth and early fifth centuries, the sacred topographies of cities like Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem were transformed by a succession of new churches (Liebeschuetz 2001: 29-43; Ward-Perkins 2000a).

Both great centres and provincial towns were provided with churches in this way, and new sacred topographies were created throughout the cities of the Mediterranean world. In the eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere Christian churches replaced the earlier pagan cults and sometimes appropriated their buildings or locations, as for examples in the cities of Asia Minor (Harl 2001; Bayliss 1999). These changes in late antique urban settlement structure were a central part of the broader social and ideological readjustments that accompanied the coming together of *Romanitas* and Christianity (D. Turner 1998: 3; Brogiolo 1999: 120-5). The idea of the 'Holy City' was present in Biblical texts (e.g. in the Revelation of St John's 21:2: 'And I John saw the holy city [την πόλιν αγίαν], the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven' (Authorised Version; Lachmann 1831: 457), although the Christian idea of the *civitas dei* probably represented a spiritual community rather than physically urban places, at least until the later fourth century (e.g. Augustine's *City of God*; Markus 1992: 139-155; 1994; *cf.* Gem 1996: 1). The Roman city on the other hand had always been a solid entity, and a keystone of the Roman conception of the world (Alcock 1993: 129-130). When the nature of cities changed between the fourth and eighth centuries, maintaining fewer administrative functions and significantly lower population densities, it was their episcopal and ecclesiastical function that remained (Bouras 1981; Haldon 1999: 13). Late Antique 'Holy Cities' were just as much a characteristic of the western Roman empire as of the east. In Italy, Gaul and Spain cities developed in similar ways, with contraction of the occupied area accompanied by the development of groups of ecclesiastical buildings (Liebeschuetz 2001;

Brogiolo 1999; Harries 1992). By the coming together of two ideologies – Christianity and the Roman city – a new idea was forged from the later fourth century onwards: the 'Holy City'.

Christianised 'Holy Cities' did not only develop around the rim of the Mediterranean, but also in more distant parts of the Roman world. Ward-Perkins has argued that the form of great Christian centres such as Constantinople provided a direct model for Christian towns in both east and west, not only in the fifth and sixth centuries but also in later times (Ward-Perkins 2000a). He suggests this influence may have extended to even the greatest complexes of early medieval Europe. For example, he regards the juxtaposition of palace and palace chapel in Charlemagne's Aachen as a direct echo of the imperial palace and Hagia Sofia in Constantinople (Ward-Perkins 2000a: 335-8). In northern Gaul the spatial and social development of countless towns like Tours, Nantes, and Langres was clearly related to the establishment and development of ecclesiastical complexes from the later fourth century onwards (Galinié 1999; Guigon 1997; Knight 1999). Whilst Christianity was practised in late Roman Britain too (Thomas 1981b), there is a relatively small body of evidence suggesting the continuity of Christian institutions from the Roman period into the early middle ages (Bell 1998). Jeremy Knight has contrasted the situation in Gaul with that of Britain, which he characterises as being 'like a geological fault, between the late Roman world and the early medieval world' (Knight 1992: 49; in Wales and western England a few examples such as St Mary-de-Lode in Gloucester suggest there could have been occasional examples of institutional continuity; Bassett 1992).

When the kingdoms of Britain were converted to Christianity between the fifth and seventh centuries, the ideology of the 'Holy City' was also introduced to the insular world. It might be objected that there were very few places in Britain between the fifth and eighth centuries - perhaps even none - that could be described as 'urban' in the modern sense; how could the 'Holy City' have functioned without an urban centre as its base? Some

recent discussions of the so-called 'monastic towns' of Ireland have highlighted the fact that these settlements were not urban by modern or later medieval standards, and have questioned how appropriate this terminology is (Valante 1998; Graham 1998; but *cf* Bradley 1999). The idea of 'monastic towns' in Britain and Ireland is partly based on documentary sources that describe the sites of churches using vocabulary like *civitas,* which in continental Europe would normally refers to the seats of bishops (Bradley 1999: 136; Campbell 1979; Diaz 2000). The idea that early medieval *civitates* were focused on towns has been questioned not only for Ireland or Britain, but also in Europe where scholars have pointed to the mismatch between the expectations aroused by the documents and the reality revealed by archaeology (Brogiolo 1999: 251; Gauthier 1999: 203-5). Others have shown how places that may have been described as 'urban' fell short of that mark because the range of activities they accommodated were not compliant with the models developed by historical geographers and archaeologists for detecting 'urban' status (e.g. Halsall 1996; Graham 1998; Hodges 1982: 20-8). Such objections risk taking the documentary evidence and the excavated material out of context, and interpreting them according to the standards of later (or earlier) periods. Carver has pointed out that the early middle ages are 'not a good period in which to employ the old-fashioned notion of "type-sites" to argue historical process from archaeological data' (Carver 2000). There was considerable adaptation of existing models at this time. As a result, it may have been possible for the *idea* of the town to be incorporated into a society's ideology and political system, even in the absence of places that were 'urban' in the strict sense. As noted above, ideologies are in recursive relationships with pre-existing structures, including their political, social, and monumental or physical contexts. Newly introduced religious ideologies combine with pre-existing elements to create new contexts, as happened in the cities of the Mediterranean during the fourth century. Sharpe has observed that the absence of urban settings was irrelevant to whether or not an episcopal structure could be established in early medieval Ireland (1983: 243-4). Likewise, pre-existing towns were not necessarily required for the idea of the Christian 'Holy City' to become established in

Cornwall or Wessex: where ruined Roman towns or forts could be re-inhabited and adapted to suit new ideas they sometimes were, but this was not a pre-condition for the establishment of churches. It was the new church complexes, rather than the old Roman towns, that were acting as central places in the landscape of south-west Britain.

This, then, is the first element in the model: the major ecclesiastical centre, an important focus for spiritual, political and economic life. In both Cornwall and Wessex churches were established by the social elite shortly after they had been converted to Christianity. Unlike the majority of contemporary secular settlements, these churches were founded as permanent centres and were venues for a large range of activities. These included not only rituals associated with their religious function such as the provision of burial and baptism, but also trade and exchange associated with craftworking, the consumption of raw materials, and the collection and disposal of revenues from their associated estates. Even if they were not 'urban' in the Roman or modern sense, they would have stood apart from all other sites in the landscape in the imaginations of contemporary people.

The second element in the model is the territory surrounding the ecclesiastical centre. Recent economically- and environmentally-minded discussions have highlighted the importance of considering 'central places' like towns and monasteries in the context of surrounding territories or 'microregions' with which they normally had close relationships (e.g. Horden & Purcell 2000: 89-122; Halsall 1996). In the same way that Roman towns had functioned as central places for many economic and social activities, the monasteries and other churches which were in many cases their successors maintained similar relationships, sometimes through the direct control of temporal resources such as rural estates (e.g. Balzaretti 1996). Almost all high-status churches in the South West lay at the heart of major agricultural estates which were either held directly by the ecclesiastical community itself or were associated with royal estate centres located nearby (3.6; 4.8). The churches were normally close to the

geographical centres of such estates and as such were surrounded by agricultural land. Churches were normally sited within the richest agricultural land in positions that were prominent and visible, though not normally spectacular. Within the settled land lay numerous farms and settlements, some of which were held directly by members of the ecclesiastical communities, some by tenants of the ecclesiastical or royal estate, and some as small independent estates (3.7; 4.3).

In parallel with these economic relationships were ideological links, which were just as crucial to the establishment and maintenance of the medieval Christian countryside. In both the eastern and western parts of the former Roman empire, major towns became the seats of bishops, who administered pastoral care to the surrounding regions from cathedral churches that were normally located within the old city walls (Haldon 1999; Wataghin 2000: 211; Loseby 1992; Diaz 2000: 7-8). As Diaz has written:

> 'The church, an eminently urban phenomenon and imitator of the monarchic forms of civil power and their organisational schemes, assimilated the *civitas* into the bishop's see and its *territorium* to the diocese, to the point that, over time, *civitas* would become a synonym of *urbs episcopalis*.'
>
> (Diaz 2000: 8)

The major churches of the late Antique west were therefore located at the centre of their territories, as the Roman cities of the empire had been before them. The episcopal model of the Roman world was adapted in early medieval Britain so that each kingdom had its bishop. As a result bishops were less plentiful here than in Italy or Gaul. Nevertheless, ecclesiastical centres still developed territorial responsibilities, their rights enforced over *parochiae* that were served by the religious communities (3.5; 4.7). In some areas, perhaps where royal power was strongest like Wessex, such territories were normally coterminous with units of secular administration in the early middle ages.

At various points in the settled and farmed landscapes surrounding major churches, there were scattered minor religious foci. Whilst some of these were newly created (3.8; 4.3; 4.9), others were incorporated into the Christian religious landscape from earlier sacred landscapes. In Gaul, the acts of saints during their lives gave a kind of 'sanctity' after their deaths to the whole region associated with an ecclesiastical centre, not just the central church where their relics eventually came to rest (Pietri 1997). In south-west Wales, the territory of St David's incorporated various burial grounds and ritual centres, not only by appropriating them physically through the construction of chapels, but also mentally by working them into stories and traditions associated with the saint (James 1993). Over the course of the early middle ages, pre-existing ritual sites in south-west Britain may have been incorporated into the Christian landscape by a similar power of ecclesiastical centres to reach out and 'convert' their territories.

Beyond the core areas of ecclesiastical and royal estates in both Cornwall and Wessex there were other secular settlements. Whilst these may have been located in areas with long histories of settlement, they were often in poorer agricultural land away from the principal river valleys (4.3). Many of these formed the nuclei of minor estates that became increasingly important in the later part of the early middle ages, a process that occurred not only in the Britain but also elsewhere in Europe at around the same time (Wickham 1990: 487). As more and more land was reclaimed from the rough ground or woodland and granted to thegns between the ninth and eleventh centuries, the number and size of these estates increased, placing increasing pressure on the core areas of settlement. The holders of these estates also increased their power over their land by founding their own estate churches, creating new multi-function centres in imitation of the older royal and/or ecclesiastical centres (3.9; 4.10).

At the margins of these territories were areas of different resources, such as rough grazing ground, woodland, and marsh. Although small patches of these resources often occurred within the core settlement zones, the largest

coherent blocks were commonly distributed around their edges. Though the form of such areas looks 'natural' to the modern eye, they have been created as a result of continuous use by people over thousands of years (Rackham 1986: 286; Caseldine 1999). In a similar way, the ideological value of the 'waste' was different in the middle ages to the present day. The medieval conception of the rough ground as a perilous zone was part of a Christian way of seeing the landscape. Early medieval hagiographers made the spiritual achievements of early saints and monastic founders throughout Europe seem all the more impressive by setting them in fearful areas of woodland, marsh or heath (Howe 2002). This remained the case even when the reality was rather more comfortable. As Wickham has noted, the *horrendum desertum* where the monastery of Fulda was established and the *silva densissima* of San Vincezo al Volturno are 'pious topoi': in reality both were located on the sites of Roman villas amidst cultivated land (Wickham 1990: 481-484). Such literary uses do not weaken the idea of the marginal rough ground as a dangerous zone in the early middle ages, but rather served to reinforce it. Heaths and margins inhabited by fearful beings are found not only in Anglo-Saxon literature (Semple 1998) but also in documents like charters (4.8). The banishment of dead criminals to this zone was another way these ideas were further strengthened in late Anglo-Saxon England (Reynolds 1997). The tradition continued to be developed in Christian spiritual life into the twelfth century and beyond by monastic communities (Menuge 2000). Gallows, where criminals were executed, were still located in marginal positions in northern Europe during later middle ages, where the rough ground continued to be feared as a dangerous place inhabited by evil supernatural beings (Roymans 1995).

The final element in the model of a Christian landscape is therefore the dangerous margins of the woodland, water, heath, moor and marsh. This zone was not normally the location of permanent settlements in early medieval south-west Britain, and between the fifth and seventh centuries in Cornwall and the sixth and eighth centuries in Wessex, there was a distinct re-focusing of the core settled area away from this marginal land (3.7; 4.3).

Permanent re-settlement from the ninth century onwards was accompanied by the establishment of new settlements and fields and the construction of new thegnly residences with minor churches, which drew the ancient margins into the 'Christian' landscape.

Different types of Christian institutions were established at different times in Cornwall and in Wessex over the course of the early middle ages. Even so, the general patterns of development or 'trajectories' observable in both areas are very similar: the earliest churches were major royal foundations in both areas, but by the tenth century there was a great proliferation of local churches controlled by local lords. The subtle differences are probably attributable to the different political circumstances in each area, and the times when certain groups were able to use and maintain different sorts of church foundations to their own political advantage. The main difference between the influence exerted in the landscape by the earliest monasteries and the latest estate chapels was probably one of scale, itself largely proportional to the power of the churches' founders. Despite this, the relationships between these different churches and the surrounding landscapes were repeated across the landscape of the south-western peninsula, suggesting an existing 'grammar' was re-used by land-holders and the founders of churches in both Cornwall and Wessex. From the conversion period onwards, the 'ideology of settlement' that helped shape the early medieval landscape encompassed a Christian view of the world: the countless churches were pivotal points for countless model Christian landscapes of holy places, settlements, fields, and wilder boundary zones.