Alignment and Axiality in Anglo-Saxon Architecture: 6th-11th Centuries

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Abstract

Axial alignment is an intriguing aspect of Anglo-Saxon architecture, which has occupied scholars for some time but has not been researched thoroughly and systematically. This thesis offers an assessment of Anglo-Saxon sites – secular and ecclesiastical – featuring alignment, analyses their recurring features and addresses functional and cultic aspects of these sites. One of the resulting conclusions is that alignment is a fairly uniform phenomenon across both secular and ecclesiastical sites, and in fact secular and ecclesiastical contexts should not be treated as separate. It has also been possible to demonstrate that alignment is an Insular phenomenon and not a result of Continental influence, which challenges the existing research on this subject. Instead, it has been proposed that Anglo-Saxon alignment has its origins in the British Isles and was inspired by a multitude of existing prehistoric linear compositions in the landscape.

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List of images, graphs and tables

Rochester, Winchester and Kirknewton near Yeavering. These places, although not all my case-studies, were still important in giving me a taste of the Anglo-Saxon world. Thanks to the Local History Society at Heddon on the Wall and in particular to Andy Curtis for sharing their knowledge with me.

Thanks also to Mum and Dad and to my colleagues and friends at St Peter Mancroft and in the Diocese of Norwich for their support and understanding. I am most grateful to Caroline Rawlings for always being there for me. Finally, thanks to Helen Lunnon, who, apart from being on my upgrade panel, helped to make the PhD happen in the first place when she patiently sat with me in her office editing and re-writing my funding application.

I hope those of you who get a chance to read this won't be disappointed with what follows on the next page…

Introduction

Man-made landscape is one of the most revealing forms of evidence of human thought and beliefs and an undeniable witness to social structure. Whereas W.G. Hoskins' claim that landscape is 'the richest historical record we possess' might overstate the case, it is nonetheless arguable that it is very significant evidence.[1] The ways in which we humans shape and manage the space around us are closely descriptive of the ways we live and function as both social and spiritual creatures. The inherent connection between the structure of the spaces we live in and the structure of our lives is acutely analysed in Bourdieu's seminal essay on the ways the Berber house mirrors social order and fundamental existential concepts.[2] In the same way, any form of geometry we intentionally choose to impose on our dwellings and natural environment can be read as a form of identification or a signifier of our relationships with the surrounding world and with each other, beyond one house, but within and across different social and cultural circles. One such form of geometry – linearity or alignment – assumes such prominence in the Anglo-Saxon built environment, that it invites a variety of questions about its significance and meaning for people living in a landscape defined and punctuated by lines. Linearity is something that appears across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and across the centuries, starting around 600AD and continuing through the Anglo-Saxon period and even possibly after the Norman Conquest. There are of course variations in the character and clarity of expression of linearity and a variety of geographical and subtly different cultural contexts, but the presence of linear arrangements, once noticed, is impossible to ignore. Therefore, the question must be asked: what does it mean?

This thesis poses this question and explores a range of instances of linear arrangement, going into the detail of the archaeological record at each of the

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[1] Hoskins 1955, p. 14.
[2] Bourdieu 1970.

many sites at which the linear alignment of constructed features can be identified.

The title of this thesis, which embraces all of England and southern Scotland between the 6th and the 11th century, may sound terrifyingly broad in terms of chronology and geography. However, it tackles one specific phenomenon – that of alignment in architecture and features associated with architecture – occurring over a period of time and across a broad geographic area and attempts to explore it in a structured and systematic way. To date, this phenomenon has been acknowledged but addressed only sporadically, often with reference to a small number of well-known case-studies. This thesis aims to review the arguments and assumptions about alignment in the Anglo-Saxon built environment to date and assess all known examples as a group rather than as individual isolated cases. It will involve statistical analysis, discuss the place of alignment in Anglo-Saxon political, social and religious contexts, and consider its implications for our understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture, identity and social organisation.

My key objectives are to test existing views of what architectural alignment in Anglo-Saxon England is about, to challenge some of the current broad assumptions about alignment, and to propose alternative arguments and explanatory theses. Our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon world is essentially a patchwork of various pieces of data, and any systematic assessment of the available evidence has the potential to revise our understanding of connections between prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods and of the key components of the emerging post-Roman culture adopted from the past in the process of its establishment. In doing this, I aim to engage with current scholarship on Anglo-Saxon settlements and to open up some new lines of enquiry.

A substantial part of this thesis depends on a careful definition of alignment. It is important to point out that in archaeology the notion of alignment is often used to describe a co-linear arrangement of structures or features with

other features or landmarks or, alternatively, an astronomical orientation of features or structures. This thesis does not engage with the distinct concept of astronomical alignment, rather, it aims to explain why buildings and other cultural features appear to be arranged on a single axis, whatever the orientation and indexicality of the axis.[3]

In this context, ***alignment, or axial alignment, refers to the arrangement of two or more structures and/or features in one line.*** In some instances, where there is evidence, this line is anchored on a distant significant feature, but in the majority of cases it is impossible to tell whether this was the case. A few case-studies show the inclusion of minor features in a linear arrangement of structures – the significance of such compositions is explored below. The degree of accuracy in alignment also varies, from apparently precise and clearly determined alignment, to cases of alignment which, although rough and approximate, still seem to be deliberate and invite investigation. The important objective here is to establish how systematic the use of axial alignment is and what it may have signified in the eyes of contemporaries.

Before proceeding further, I feel it is important to situate ourselves in a particular historical reality and introduce 'Anglo-Saxon England' – the key player in the narrative that follows. Anticipating the fact that a large number of the case studies to be considered date to the earlier phases of the Anglo-Saxon period, the focus here is on the beginnings of this period.

The study of the origins of Anglo-Saxon England tends to be defined by two narratives: conversion and migration. The former is touched on in chapters 3 and 4, while the latter is briefly introduced here. Historical evidence is extremely limited for the period following the fall of Roman rule in Britain in ca 410 and the much-questioned period of migration of Angles, Saxons and Jutes from the Continent. The only early sources that shed some light on the period immediately

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[3] On astronomy and alignment, see Thom 1974; Hinton 2012; Härke 2012.

following the end of Roman Britain are the writings of St Patrick, in which history is not at the forefront of the narrative, *The Ruin of Britain* by Gildas and above all Bede's *History of the English People*.[4] The reliability of the latter two, although they are both set in a historical context, has been called into question: the chronology of the narrative of *The Ruin of Britain*, as well as the date of its composition, are difficult to establish, whereas Bede's *History* largely relies on Gildas's account and is considered, if not biased, then at least to have been written from a perspective very different from what is now thought appropriate for the writing of history.[5] However, despite the significant limitations of the historical records, archaeological research points to the evolution of new patterns of occupation in the period following the end of Roman rule, which would be consistent with the arrival of distinctively new groups of people. This evidence includes new types of material culture, such as cruciform brooches, which, as Toby Martin has argued, first manifested the arrival of a Continental Anglian culture and subsequently spread widely, by 600 affecting communities beyond those normally considered 'Anglian'.[6] The built environment also changed from the 5th century onwards with the introduction of the earliest type of 'Anglo-Saxon house', as defined by Addyman, and James, Marshall and Millett, and the earliest dispersed settlements, such as Mucking and West Stow.[7] This indicates that changes and the arrival of new cultural influences did occur in the 5th century. These changes seem to have affected wide and diverse areas of modern-day England and are considered to be early signature indicators of what we now call 'Anglo-Saxon England'. However, the exact composition of 'Anglo-Saxon England' and the distribution of both the incoming settlers – Angles, Saxons

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[4] See Winterbottom (ed. and trans.) 1978; Colgrave and Mynors (eds.) 1969.

[5] Wormald 2006, p. 31. For further criticism and limitations of Bede's and Gildas' accounts, see Thacker 2010; Higham 1994, ch. 5, and 1995, pp. 9-24; Woolf 2002; Sims-Williams 1983; Oppenheimer 2006. Oosthuizen 2019, pp. 19-26.

[6] Martin 2015, esp. pp. 186-190.

[7] Addyman 1972; James, Marshall and Millett 1984; on Mucking, see Hamerow 1993; on West Stow, see West 1985, 2001.

and Jutes - and the native peoples are difficult, if not impossible, to define on the evidence currently available. First, the time-frame of migration is a complex issue, although scholarship has now moved on from the idea of a complete interruption in occupation between 410 and ca 550, to an acknowledgement of continuity, at least in some areas.[8] The character of the migration itself is a contested subject, with proposals ranging from a formerly accepted large-scale invasion to a much more peaceful migration of Germanic lords with their retinues, who, in the absence of resistance, settled into positions of power in England.[9] The pattern of settlement is an equally contested subject, with attention shifting from attempts to identify specific areas in which Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Britons and Celts were settled, to a much less conflicted image of assimilation and the early emergence of cultural homogeneity amongst these peoples.[10] None of these hypotheses has won general acceptance, due to the paucity of evidence, and yet, the term 'Anglo-Saxon' has been used extensively to refer to England between the fifth century and the Norman Conquest.

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[8] For arguments on interruption in occupation, see Leeds 1954; Myres 1969, Evison 1965. As noted by David Anthony, since the 1960s, migration, until then assumed as 'the truth' (as a matter of fact), has been both 'demonised' and 'mystified' – demonised as a simplistic explanation of cultural change and mystified as a phenomenon that is difficult to detect archaeologically. – Anthony 1997, p. 21. To challenge the idea of migration as a 'simplistic' explanation of cultural change, the idea of continuity between the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods started to be explored. – see Finberg 1955; Higham 1992, pp. 1-16; James 2009, ch. 5; Härke 2011; Charles-Edwards 2013, pp. 226-238. On archaeological evidence for continuity, see Esmonde Cleary 1989; Yeates 2012, sp. pp. 222-232; Gerrard 2013; Hills 2017. On continuity in political and economic models, see Dark 1994.

[9] For arguments in favour of invasion and large-scale migration, see Stenton 1971, sp. pp. 18, 26-28; Guest 1983, vol.2, sp. pp. 147, 255. On DNA evidence for mass migration, see Weale *et al* 2002. For arguments in favour of small-scale migration of the elites, see Arnold 1984; Hamerow 1997; Oosthuizen 2019, pp. 7-8.

[10] On specific patterns of settlement, see Leeds 1945, Faull 1974 the problematic character of the narrative of migration, distribution of different groups of settlers in specific different regions and the assumption of Germanic dominance were questioned by Sims-Williams and others. – Sims-Williams 1983, p. 1; Collins and Gerrard 2004; Collins 2012 and 2017; Pohl 2013. Recently, DNA analysis has indicated a homogeneity across modern British DNA and showed an absence of evidence for 'pockets' of settlement of different peoples in England. – Capelli *et al* 2003; Hughes, Millard, Lucy *et al* 2014; Leslie *et al* 2015, pp. 310, 313-314.

The term Anglo-Saxon is problematic, not only for the above-mentioned issues but also due to the cultural and political contexts of the research in which it is used. Having been introduced at least in the 16th century, it gained popularity in the 19th century as part of a wide-ranging construction of English identity, with a particular emphasis on its Germanic tenor, and brought with it a rhetoric of conquest and invasion instrumental in the establishment of migrant tribes in the British Isles.[11] While modern scholarship has moved away from this idea, the phenomenon is still couched in terms of a specific, albeit different, cultural context. Thus, John Moreland has proposed a scenario of the assimilation and peaceful coexistence of different peoples across the territory of England in the first millennium very much from the standpoint of modern-day ideas of globalisation and hybridity of cultures.[12] Moreland's idea of a hybrid Anglo-Saxon society, made up from a multitude of influences, echoes the positions of Hamerow, Yorke, Hines and others.[13] Catherine Hills, however, has maintained that there were distinctive regional identities, defining particularly the Britons and the Anglo-Saxons as distinct groups, as well as multiple groupings within the 'Anglo-Saxon' category.[14] My view, which informs discussions below, is similar to Moreland's, in that I am also an advocate of a hybrid culture developing in sub-Roman England under a multitude of influences.[15]

Overall, there is some degree of certainty that migration did happen, and that Angles, Saxons and Jutes mixed with native Britons, most likely in different proportions across the regions of Britain to form 'Anglo-Saxon England'. This

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[11] The interest was initially sparked by Matthew Parker in the 16th century – see Wright 1949-1953; on the 19th-century idea of 'Anglo-Saxonness' see Melman 1991. More recently, Bryan Ward-Perkins has explored the reasons why the Anglo-Saxons indeed maintained their Germanic identity instead of assimilating fully with the native Britons. – see Ward-Perkins 2000.

[12] Moreland 2000a, pp. 26-27. Moreland, however, has acknowledged the key limitation of his argument: his own cultural rootedness while making this suggestion.

[13] Moreland 2000a; Yorke 2000; Hines 1995; see also Carver 2011.

[14] Hills 2011.

[15] However, I feel it is important early on to stress that my view to a large extent is determined by my own present cultural reality.

meant that a variety of traditions, beliefs and customs – both local and imported – probably ended up either fusing, existing side by side or being manipulated to sustain different ideologies and identities. It is in this context that there starts to appear evidence of new types of building and patterns of settlement. It is also at this time that new elites were formed and new kingdoms came into being and grew, leading to an era, starting around 600AD, in which some settlements began to display peculiar planning, involving the axial alignment of buildings.

Significance of research and research aims

Scholars have been 'walking around' the subject of alignment for almost 30 years now. Its significance and special role in the planning of Anglo-Saxon settlements have been acknowledged, but a comprehensive study of the concept of alignment and the ways it manifests itself in Anglo-Saxon sites is long overdue. This research aims to provide this missing element in the study of Anglo-Saxon settlements, to provide a comprehensive assessment of alignment, and to test existing assumptions as to its origins and significance in order to provide a solid framework for any future discussion of the phenomenon.

Many of the sites that are discussed below have been written about in isolation. One of the purposes of this study is to consider them together and to provide a fresh look at the existing material evidence for alignment.

Further to this, two major hypotheses are explored and tested in this thesis:

1. The first is that alignment was not strictly functional. Instead, it was a major instrument easily employed and recognised to convey certain social and cultural ideas across secular and ecclesiastical contexts and across the kingdoms, becoming prominent in the 7th century and surviving for a few centuries, despite changing cultural and political realities. The questions 'what did alignment mean?' and 'how did it all work?' are addressed.

2. The second hypothesis is that alignment was an Insular feature, formed under a variety of influences, predominantly internal, rather than external. As is argued below, a Continental source of influence, advocated by John Blair, seems weaker than has been thought, whereas prehistoric links are more prominent. In examining this hypothesis, the question 'why and when did alignment occur?' is posed.

The 'why' and 'when' kinds of questions invite consideration of the cultural composition of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the role of external, particularly Germanic, influences, but also consider the pre-Anglo-Saxon occupation in England, in addressing the possible origins of alignment.

This will inevitably touch on the subject of cultural continuity in the British Isles, not only for the period immediately following the formal end of Roman control in 410 but also for the links between Anglo-Saxon and pre-Roman England. As has already been noted, the academic consensus now seems to be shifting from a model which involved a clear break between everything up to the end of Roman rule and the beginning of migration, towards an increasing awareness of a greater degree of connection, if not direct continuity, between these periods than was previously thought.[16] Esmonde Cleary, for example, has seen the sub-Roman period as a time of change within a period rather than a gap between two eras.[17] Advocating the idea of connection and continuity with the past, Sarah Semple and Howard Williams have both argued strongly that Anglo-Saxon culture drew significant inspiration from the prehistoric period.[18]

I am hoping that my research contributes to this debate, demonstrating that alignment was a feature deliberately 'subsumed' from the prehistoric period and utilised by the Anglo-Saxons. This brings us back to the first hypothesis – alignment as non-functional – and the question 'what did it all mean?', and leads

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[16] See above, p. 22, ft. 8.
[17] Esmonde Cleary 2001.
[18] See Semple 1998, 2010, 2011 and 2013; Williams 1997 and 1998.

to the proposition that axial alignment itself, as a prominent aspect of archaeological sites across England, has the potential to throw light on Anglo-Saxon attitudes to ancestry and on the longevity of tradition. It is notable that alignment started to appear in the 7th century, did not respect the boundaries of kingdoms and ignored the notions of 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical'. I aim to show that alignment, although occurring in different geographical areas, was quite repetitive in terms of the features used and the contexts with which it was associated. More importantly, it served no evident practical function; in fact, if there was a function, it is likely to have been symbolic and ceremonial.

Looking further at alignment and its cultural significance in early medieval England, our understanding of the ways in which community and lineage were perceived and created in Anglo-Saxon England is also tested and hopefully enhanced. In this I aim to build on existing scholarship on lineage and identity in Anglo-Saxon England, including the seminal volume on migration identity edited by Chapman and Hamerow, a volume on identity in Medieval Britain edited by Frazer and Tyrell, part 1 on identity in *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology,* and works by Yorke, Wood, Foot, Härke and, most recently, by Manco, who has included DNA evidence in her discussion of Anglo-Saxon identity and ethnogenesis.[19] However, it needs to be noted that ethnicity and identity are not the same thing; it is the identity of the 'Anglo-Saxons' – a social construct – that is relevant further on; this thesis is not concerned with ethnicity.

Let me now outline how the structure of the thesis responds to the tasks and ideas outlined above and what methods are used to arrive at conclusions.

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[19] On complexities of Anglo-Saxon identity and perception of lineage and ancestry, see Chapman and Hamerow, ed., 1997; Frazer and Tyrell 2000; Yorke 2008; Wood 1997; Foot 1996; Härke 2011; Yeates 2012; Manco 2018. From *The Oxford Handbook,* see for example, Esmonde Cleary 2011, and Hills 2011.

Evidence and structure

All sites have been selected based on the recorded or visible presence of alignment of buildings, evident in plans and/or already discussed by other scholars. Most of these sites are well known and display at least some aspects of alignment that are worth considering.

As the number of sites and the volume of information are too great to be included in their entirety in the discussion itself, in a clear and coherent way, a summary of the evidence and its interpretation have been dealt with separately – the former in the introductory chapters and the latter in the analytical chapters that follow. This approach to structure, the separation of evidence from analysis, has been advocated by Sible de Blaauw for work on architecture and liturgy. [20]

The range of evidence considered below consists of two groups, almost equal in size: secular (chapter 1) and ecclesiastical (chapter 3) sites with alignment. This division aligns with and highlights existing trends in scholarship on Anglo-Saxon architecture: as will be clear from the historiography of the subject, there has been a tendency in modern scholarship to treat the 'secular' and the 'ecclesiastical' separately.[21] Subsequently, I bring the two groups of evidence together and argue that this accepted distinction is not necessarily helpful. Initially, the two groups of secular and ecclesiastical sites remain fairly well defined, and almost all the sites can be fairly confidently included in either one class or the other. Two of the sites - Flixborough and Brandon – have not been assigned to either group; debates around their status and use are ongoing. Both have been included in a sub-section following chapter 1 as prominent instances of alignment, irrespective of their debated status and affiliation.

Due to differences in the character of the evidence available, the shape of description in the two introductory chapters differs: the information on secular

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[20] De Blaauw 1991, p. 31.

[21] This has been briefly questioned by Blair (Blair 2005, p. 52) and is challenged in this thesis below, but, quite naturally, churches tend to be discussed with other churches, halls with other halls, and monasteries are written about separately from wics.

halls comes mostly from archaeological reports, and occasionally from aerial reconnaissance records, whereas churches are for the most part only partially excavated but are usually better documented. Therefore, the descriptions of churches inevitably contain more narrative and presentation of types and features, whereas accounts of halls tend to be more 'dry' and archaeological, recording topography, dimensions and phases of construction. The majority of secular sites also presents more actual archaeological evidence of individual structures, by comparison with churches, where often only a fraction of the plan is known and recorded.

The key evidence I use consists of remains of architectural structures and landscape features largely recorded in plans and reports and sometimes observed on site. At sites where excavations have not taken place, aerial reconnaissance and other forms of non-intrusive recording of subterranean structures and their interpretation are used as evidence. In a small number of cases, alignment is considered as a hypothetical possibility, proposed by other scholars, on the evidence of combinations of archaeological, topographical and historical data. Winchcombe, where topographical indication of buried structures and the meticulous reconstruction of a sequence of historical events based on written records have suggested the possibility of alignment in the early medieval period, is a case in point.

Two major themes emerge from the evidence presented in chapters 1 and 3: first, the chronological incidence and the development of alignment with a noticeable emphasis on the 7th century, and second, the broad geographical distribution of alignment. Both of these begin to address hypothesis 1 – that alignment had a symbolic rather than a functional role.

Following the presentation of evidence, in chapters 1 and 3, analysis of the data, in chapters 2 and 4, is largely driven by the assessment of sites in each group in their totality, rather than individually. An exercise that itself has been left very

much behind the scenes but is integral to this approach and has informed the structure of the analytical chapters is the creation of spreadsheets (see Appendix 1 for the resulting tables). The spreadsheets include all the sites considered in the thesis and highlight aspects that occur repeatedly to reveal certain patterns and offer lines of enquiry to be followed in the analytical chapters 2 and 4. These lines of enquiry include: zoning, patterns of burial and the functions of individual buildings. This opens up opportunities for a closer analysis of the identified patterns, leading to a number of conclusions about the nature of alignment, including, in particular, the practice of zoning. These are related to John Blair's recognition of grid planning and indicate similar principles of planning in settlements with axial alignment.[22]

Like the introductory chapters 1 and 3, the analytical chapters structurally mirror each other, and are designed to address secular and ecclesiastical alignment in a consistent and coherent way in order to provide ground for further comparison and analysis. The 'why' and 'how' questions, which were noted in the 'aims of research' and characterised the hypotheses to explore, also play a role in the structural composition of analysis. Each of the interpretive chapters is divided into two parts, titled 'how did it all work?' and 'why aligned?'. The first focusses on exploring the possible functional aspects of alignment across all the sites within each group, and the second discusses the possible reasons for alignment, including, most importantly, comparisons between Anglo-Saxon and Continental approaches to planning at comparable sites. In both chapters 2 and 4, it is concluded that Continental influence cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for the emergence of alignment in Anglo-Saxon England.

The discussion, initially conducted in parts, eventually leads to a summary of trends that emerge across the body of evidence, indicating that with alignment

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[22] Blair 2013; Blair 2018, sp. pp. 148-163.

we are dealing with an overarching phenomenon, associated with high status, used at a variety of sites to convey similar meaning and pursue similar goals. This phenomenon becomes established in the 7th century and occurs in a range of geographical areas. The question of possible origins of alignment is also posed here. Having concluded that the Continental role in this is not as dominant as previously thought, I then consider antecedent examples of alignment from Britain instead and explore possible connections between prehistoric alignment, still ubiquitous and visible in the Anglo-Saxon period, and its appearance in Anglo-Saxon settlements from the 7th century onwards. Overall, from a structural point of view, the four earlier chapters unfold as an extended and necessary basis for the critical final chapter which draws on the strands of evidence, analysis and discussion in the earlier chapters.

Methodology

The study of early medieval settlements in England is by no means straightforward: where a prehistorian has no written records and has a very clear line of enquiry relying on archaeology and landscape archaeology, and where a historian of the central and later Middle Ages can rely on abundant written records, anyone attempting to study the period in between essentially has to juggle available sources and try to make the most of them. Even where we do have records of historical events, poetry and liturgical texts, there is very little in the written record to shed light on the actual forms of settlement and the appearance and daily functions of physical buildings. Where the sparse primary sources on the origins of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, including Bede and Gildas, have been criticised for following a particular agenda and critiqued as unreliable, archaeological research provides a potentially more objective picture of life in Anglo-Saxon England. Evidence of material culture can be unearthed exactly as it was left and has the potential to tell its own story, rather than a story told through text, edited and crafted for the reader. However, despite this potential, the

existing archaeological evidence has its limitations: interpretation is often difficult if not impossible, and dating is rarely straightforward. Even taken together, the existing evidence is sporadic and too incomplete to serve as a basis for any conclusive statements about the nature of Anglo-Saxon occupation. As a result, we are left with a strange dilemma: 'Beowulf' tells us what happens in a hall during a feast, Bede uses the famous metaphor of a sparrow flying through a hall, introducing us to its importance, and quite a number of high-status halls have been excavated, but we still have no idea how exactly a hall was used. Given the random nature of the sources, anyone researching Anglo-Saxon settlements is faced with a methodological challenge because defining a general framework for enquiry is not a straightforward task. Historical and archaeological approaches, although ultimately serving the same purpose, have different points of departure, assuming the primacy of either material or documentary evidence. Historical approaches to early medieval archaeology have been heavily criticised by David Austin and Timothy Champion, who have stated very strongly that material evidence should not be subordinated to the primacy of historical context and have argued that common grounds for historical and archaeological enquiries should be sought to replace the somewhat hierarchical model in which historical evidence dictates the context.[23] Webster and Härke have called for a hybrid model, where material and historical evidence complement each other.[24] Rahtz has called for a more theoretically-based approach to the archaeology of the early medieval period, in line with Tilley's research, which could be the uniting element of historical and archaeological disciplines, which otherwise rely on two completely different foundations – the documented and the undocumented evidence.[25] These lines are all relevant to my research, which is founded on the

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[23] Austin 1990; Champion 1990; see also Austin and Thomas 1990 for practical application of their model of research. This model follows Esmonde Cleary's 1989 book *The Ending of Roman Britain,* which also rejected historical sources in favour of archaeological evidence.

[24] Webster 1986, p. 156; Härke 1988.

[25] Rahtz 1983.

analysis of archaeological evidence and yet needs to refer to the existing historical context to demonstrate the relationship between new findings and existing debates on the built environment and its social setting in Anglo-Saxon England.

A key problem is that this thesis is largely concerned with the early Anglo-Saxon period, for which neither the historical nor the archaeological record is sufficient and reliable; researching a period of this kind largely excludes the choice of one or the other at the risk of missing critical aspects each of the disciplines can provide, leaving one to come up with a methodological framework that, in essence, allows to 'pick and mix', using different types of evidence in order to paint as complete a picture as possible. Responding to this challenge, Alexandra Knox in her thesis on the presence of ritual in Anglo-Saxon settlements has proposed an approach to research in archaeology of Anglo-Saxon settlement that she describes as 'holistic'. This approach advocates combining many areas of archaeological record and conducting analysis primarily on the basis of careful interpretation of data, which allows for a closer investigation of phenomena that are normally difficult to detect archaeologically, such as belief systems and worldviews.[26]

With all this in mind, it must be reiterated that the focus in this thesis is the phenomenon of alignment – a physical attribute of settlements visible in archaeological excavations but not recorded in historical sources. Thus, the main body of evidence addressed perforce is material evidence, coming from archaeological excavations. This, with limitations, makes possible more or less accurate dating of the structures in question and allows for a fairly specific description of their physical properties and for an assessment of their mutual spatial relationships. My approach is to assess the evidence 'from scratch', independent from existing arguments about alignment, addressing what I feel is

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[26] Knox 2012, pp. 11, 71-72. Knox also warns of the dangers of this approach, such as overinterpretation of evidence, pp. 73-75.

the key problem that has affected this area of research: namely that any new discussion of alignment relies on earlier assumptions, which have been arrived at hypothetically and often sporadically, and that these earlier statements are now being seen through the prism of recent arguments, which were in turn established on the basis of those same statements in the first place. For example, alignment at the monastic site at Wearmouth was proposed on the basis of its close relationship with Jarrow. Over the years, Wearmouth has become established in the list of sites with alignment, whereas in fact, there is no evidence for alignment there and, in the light of recent research, most notably by Ian Wood, even its close relationship with Jarrow has been called into question.[27] This way of thinking leads to a situation reminiscent of Escher's famous staircase, which is paradoxically supported by itself. With this in mind, I felt it was important to go 'back to basics' and start with evidence limited to the physical descriptions of the sites, their historical context and, where available, their immediate topographical context.

One of the aims of a systematic analysis using spreadsheets (Appendix 1) is to identify common patterns associated with alignment, to assess the evidence in its totality and *to explore the phenomenon of alignment through its expression at individual sites rather than to explore individual sites that happen to feature alignment*. This approach is, in part, a response to Helen Gittos' call for the assessment of a particular feature across multiple sites.[28] Gittos talks specifically about using this approach to identify the functions of churches; I am extending it to include secular sites as well.

Small finds associated with settlements and the aspects of construction of individual buildings (in particular doorways) are also subjected to systematic

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[27] See Wood 2008; this argument is presented in more detail below. Alignment in Wearmouth was first proposed alongside other sites with alignment by Blair. - Blair 1992, p. 252; Blair 2005, p. 199. The idea of alignment at Wearmouth developed on the basis of the presence of multiple churches recorded there and parallels with Jarrow. – Gittos 2013, p.66.

[28] Gittos 2011, p. 834.

analysis and discussed in chapters 2 and 4. Secondary sources are brought in as necessary to establish the relevant historical context for the initial appearance and the subsequent development of alignment. There is also a 'frame' of historical evidence introduced before the assessment of material evidence in order to set the scene and situate analysis.

Limitations

Of evidence

One of the most significant limitations of this research is the paucity of evidence relating to sites with alignment. Often this is confined to aerial photographs or the evidence of 'keyhole archaeology', which only reveals small fractions of structures and leaves the rest to interpretation. Unfortunately, in an age of commercial archaeology, the scarcity of fundamental large-scale archaeological research, which has been largely replaced by short-term projects and very limited areas of excavation, is an inescapable reality. As a result, our understanding of many of the known sites largely relies on interpretation from meagre data, often hypothetical and difficult to back up with hard evidence. In addition to this, even sites excavated on a larger scale are usually published within the context of the excavator's interpretation, constrained by explanatory models that can skew understanding of the evidence. In addition, dating is often approximate and/or based on similar sites and structures, for which dates have already been proposed, potentially creating a chain of evidence whose interpretation depends on a previous not always reliable link. To minimise the effect of previous interpretation of at least the functions of excavated buildings, I have chosen to reassess the plans in detail and from scratch. Dating will be challenged as a result of my assessment in one instance; for the rest, there is usually no alternative framework for dating other than to accept the proposals of the archaeologist in question - but these dates are treated with care.

At the majority of sites, we only know of a portion of the overall settlement, which significantly limits our understanding of the context of the known structures.[29] Changes in approaches to archaeology are also evident over time, as large-scale comprehensive excavations aiming to unveil a significant area of a settlement, like the excavations at Yeavering, have been largely replaced by excavation of smaller areas, often limited to trenches in critical points, combined with analytical reconstruction of the rest of the settlement extrapolated from this tangible evidence, a process common in the context of commercial archaeology. In addition, to my knowledge, the only Anglo-Saxon site uncovered twice (excluding excavations of adjacent or nearby territories, such as the work of Leeds and Hamerow at Sutton Courtenay) is the enigmatic chapel on the Heugh on Lindisfarne, originally discovered by Hope-Taylor but never published and more recently rediscovered by Richard Carter.[30] For every excavated site, where the remains do not remain visible, we have to rely entirely on what was recorded by the archaeologist at the time of excavation. Furthermore, recorded information naturally is limited. For instance, only a few reports record contour lines, a category of data that is not available in sufficient detail on existing maps and is impossible to gather now in the absence of a topographic survey made at the time of excavation. That said, an attempt to assess the relationships between sites and their local topography is made below, although it also is based on extremely limited evidence.

Limitations of chronology

The periodisation of architectural history in post-migration 'Anglo-Saxon England', which still largely adheres to the Taylors' categories of A -'early' (600-

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[29] Hamerow also points out that Anglo-Saxon settlements tend to lack 'focal points' and clear edges. – Hamerow 2012, p. 5, ch. 3.

[30] Richard Carter, pers. comm.

800), B -'middle' (800-950) and C -'late' (950-1100) periods, is problematic.[31] This has long been useful for students of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical archaeology and architecture, but it assumes cut-off points between periods and fails to acknowledge flexibility and contiguity between them. It also proposes a rather abrupt start around 600, based, understandably in this case, on the chronology of particular church buildings, whereas corresponding developments in secular architecture indicate a much more flexible chronological framework. In historical contexts, the commonly used phasing is ca 400-650 for the early, ca 650-850 for the middle and ca 850-1100 for the late Anglo-Saxon periods.[32]

Susan Oosthuizen has recently proposed re-thinking the chronological framework for the Anglo-Saxon period altogether and has suggested that it makes sense to include 'Anglo-Saxon England' within the framework of late antiquity.[33] This might seem a radical step but in fact it gives voice to ideas that have been around for some time; something very similar was already proposed by Collins and Gerrard in 2004.[34] The term 'late antiquity' is not without its problems, as it bears a strong association with Continental culture and can be taken to imply a direct transition from Roman antiquity; a transition that was interrupted in Northern Europe and the British Isles, but not elsewhere. However, I feel the value of Oosthuizen's argument is in providing a fresh look at the very framework of what we consider 'Anglo-Saxon England', at least in chronological terms, shaking up debates that have become stale and have not always resulted in fruitful conclusions. As Taylor's model does not seem to work

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[31] Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, p. xxv; this approach to periodisation adopted from Baldwin Brown 1925. Gem analysed both Taylor and Taylor's and Baldwin Brown's approaches alongside dating frameworks proposed by Clapham and Fernie and highlighted their problematic aspects. The abrupt start of the 'Anglo-Saxon' era at 600AD (see below), however, is something all dating models include and Gem does not challenge. – Gem 1986.

[32] Oosthuizen 2019, p. 3.

[33] Ibid., pp. 3-6.

[34] Collins and Gerrard 2004.

for secular settlements and as Oosthuizen's proposal needs further testing, I shall follow neither but instead use dates and period-spans.

Limitations of terminology and definition

The term 'Anglo-Saxon' is still used as a blanket term to describe a large geographical area inhabited by a great variety of people, but at present, there does not seem to be any reasonable alternative to the term. Here, I continue to use the word 'Anglo-Saxon' to refer to common cultural attributes across England but otherwise refer to particular kingdoms.

Regarding the definition of alignment in sequences of built structures, Warwick Rodwell in his assessment has included the topographical alignment of buildings situated at significant distances from each other. However, alignments of distant buildings that are interrupted by other unrelated structures have not been addressed in this research.[35]

Background to this research

The concept of axial alignment is central to this thesis, and the historiography specific to the subject is discussed below. However, first, in addition to sources directly relating to alignment, I would like to highlight others that have not only informed and influenced this work but also shaped the direction of discourse around Anglo-Saxon settlements, their planning and significance. In addition to the major comprehensive sources on the history and archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England, such as *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon archaeology, The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England, Building Anglo-Saxon England, The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century, Anglo-Saxon England* by Frank Stenton, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England* by Peter Hunter Blair, *The Anglo-Saxon World* by Higham and Ryan, the

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[35] See Rodwell 1984.

recent book by Susan Oosthuizen has opened up new avenues.[36] This book has not only re-stated what we can reliably say about Anglo-Saxon England but also challenged the ways we see it, proposing alternative frameworks of thinking about it.[37] Robin Fleming's *Britain after Rome* is a good example of writing Anglo-Saxon history on the basis of material evidence and has inspired my methodological approach.[38] David Austin and Alex Knox also have been helpful for finding a methodological framework for the analysis of archaeological evidence, both in their publications and in personal communication.[39]

The issues relating to faith, beliefs, worship, Christian liturgy and pastoral care are many and on these I have been guided by Blair, Gittos, Cubitt, Cambridge with Rollason, Pryce, Pickles, Foot, Wilson, Stancliffe, Sanmark, Semple, Pfaff, Thacker, Dunn and others.[40]

My knowledge of the architecture of halls and churches rests on Taylor and Taylor, Fernie, Gittos, Cambridge, James, Marshall and Millett, Hamerow, Blair and the many authors of reports on individual buildings.[41]

The question of the identity and the origins of the Anglo-Saxons is amongst those that had to be considered as part of this inquiry, and the volume on this topic edited by Chapman and Hamerow has proved to be particularly helpful, as has Frazer and Tyrrell's volume on identity, with essays by Cubitt, Moreland, Woolf and Yorke.[42]

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[36] See Crawford, Hinton, Hamerow *et al* 2011; Wilson, ed., 1976; Blair 2018; Hines 1997; Stenton 1971; Hunter Blair 2003; Higham and Ryan 2013; Oosthuizen 2019.

[37] Oosthuizen 2019.

[38] Fleming 2011.

[39] Austin 1990; Austin and Thomas 1990; Knox 2012.

[40] On Christianisation, see Pryce 2009; Gameson 1999; Stancliffe 1999; Yorke 2006; Dunn 2010; on liturgy, see Pfaff 2009; Gittos 2005b, 2013; Cubitt 1996; Billett 2011, 2014; on pagan beliefs and worldview, see Wilson 1992; Sanmark 2010; Semple 2010; 2011; on pastoral care, see Blair 1988, 1992, 1995b; Thacker 1992; Cubitt 1992, 2009; Cambridge and Rollason 1995; Pickles 2009; Foot 1989, 1999.

[41] On churches: Taylor and Taylor 1965; Taylor 1978; Fernie 1983; Gittos 2013; Cambridge 1999. On halls: James, Marshall and Millett 1984; Marshall and Marshall 1991; Hamerow 2011, 2012; Blair 2018.

[42] Chapman and Hamerow, ed., 1997; Frazer and Tyrrell 2000.

An overview of Continental sites has been made possible thanks to Duval's *Les Premiers Monuments Chrétiens de la France*, and Oswald's *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten*.[43] In addition, the discussions of planning of Continental ecclesiastical sites by Lehmann and Hubert have provided a framework for a comparison of the spatial arrangements at Anglo-Saxon and Continental sites.[44]

The earliest comprehensive assessments of building types in Anglo-Saxon England by Rahtz in 1976 and then James, Marshall and Millett in 1984 and Helena Hamerow's books on Anglo-Saxon and Continental settlements have been invaluable for the discussion of secular settlements.[45] Andrew Reynolds's article on boundaries, published in 2003, provides an overview of settlement planning and a discussion of the role of enclosures in settlements, that has significantly informed our understanding of the structure of Anglo-Saxon settlements and has also largely contributed to my interpretation of secular settlements. John Blair's 2018 book, to date, is the most comprehensive source on settlement planning and building practices; critically, the author acknowledges not only chronological development but also regionality in traditions.

Sarah Semple's research on the perception of prehistoric landscapes by the Anglo-Saxons, published in 2013, was a significant step towards understanding how the Anglo-Saxons perceived and related to features in the landscape that pre-dated their arrival and settlement and has been one of the foundations for this thesis. The work of Tilley, Williams and Bradley has helped provide a perspective on prehistoric landscape in Britain and its effect on the Anglo-Saxons.[46]

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[43] Duval 1995a; Oswald *et al* 1990.

[44] Lehmann 1962; Hubert 1963 and 1977.

[45] Rahtz 1976a; James, Marshall and Millett 1984; Hamerow 2002, 2011, 2012.

[46] Tilley 2004; Williams 1997, 1998, 2002; and Bradley 1987; see also Williamson 2019.

Historiography of alignment

The word 'alignment' as a term to describe particular linear arrangements on the built environment is used here as a new term in the context of Anglo-Saxon archaeology. Although the concept of alignment, referred to in different terms, has been around for some forty years, this word has only really begun to make its way into the literature over the past two decades.

Among the sites that feature alignment, two stand out – the royal vill at Yeavering, excavated by Brian Hope-Taylor and published in 1977, and the site of St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, researched from as early as the 1860s.[47] Hope-Taylor's meticulous records at Yeavering of the layout of the settlement and the geometrical relationships between the halls and posts and burials associated with them, have been of the greatest importance to this thesis. Here for the first time Hope-Taylor recorded a largely unexplained but evidently significant phenomenon, that of planning and axiality at an Anglo-Saxon high-status settlement.[48]

The standing structures at Canterbury consist of two aligned churches later united by the construction of Wulfric's Octagon, as well as the church of St Pancras located slightly off axis some 50 m to the east. Further excavations at Canterbury revealed other features to the west, situated on the same line as the churches. Axial alignment at Canterbury was first noticed in print by Taylor and Taylor in 1965, but contextualised by John Blair in 1992, when he associated the linear arrangements of buildings with the sites of minsters, in proposing his 'minster model'.[49] In 1992, Blair, in discussing the layouts of a number of significant ecclesiastical sites, observed that linear arrangement was a feature found in a range of ecclesiastical sites, including Lindisfarne and Jarrow, where

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[47] Hope 1861; subsequently St John Hope 1902 and 1915; Routledge 1902.

[48] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 140-143, 250, 270, 275.

[49] Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, p. 135; Blair 1992, pp. 226, 246. Surprisingly, it went completely unnoticed in Peers and Clapham's account (see Peers and Clapham 1927).

alignment had previously not been noted and analysed.[50] All these sites were known and excavated, but it was Blair who for the first time compared their plans looking for consistency in patterns.[51]

Blair's discussion of alignment here, however, was quite brief. His principal concern was to locate alignment at ecclesiastical sites in Anglo-Saxon England in the context of Continental architecture and instances of alignment found there. For this European connection, he drew heavily on existing studies on alignment in Continental ecclesiastical architecture, including Jean Hubert's 'Les "Cathédrales Doubles" de la Gaule' and his *Arts et Vie Sociale* and Edgar Lehmann's 'Von der Kirchenfamilie zur Kathedrale'.[52] However, Lehmann's research was restricted to cathedrals, and Hubert was concerned with church groups in all configurations, only one of which was alignment. Somewhat problematically, both Hubert's and Blair's assessments relied largely on the plans of sites and on correlations between their geometries, often without regard for their archaeological and historical contexts. As a result, these works included sites such as Bury, Rochester and Exeter, where buildings are in fact situated at an angle to each other and not in one line. It may have been the attention that Blair gave to the concept of alignment that led to the phenomenon continuing to be explored in Anglo-Saxon England, while in Continental scholarship, interest in alignment has not endured to such an extent.

Blair's discussion of the alignment of churches had, to an extent, been anticipated by Warwick Rodwell, who in his 1984 article 'Churches in the Landscape' focuses particularly on associations between churches and landscape features and includes linear arrangements of distant churches – visible on plan

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[50] Cramp, for instance, records alignment in her reports on Jarrow but does not say anything about it. – Cramp 1969, 1976b, 2005.

[51] Blair 1992, pp. 246-258. Subsequently, axial alignment at Anglo-Saxon monastic sites was also mentioned by McClendon. – McClendon 2005, p. 83.

[52] Hubert 1963 and 1977; Lehmann 1962.

but otherwise woven into the fabric of surrounding settlements and not discernible *in situ*.

Blair's interest in alignment was picked up by Helen Gittos in her 2001 thesis, *Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England: Liturgy, Architecture and Place*. In chapter two, she discusses church groups, paying particular attention to possible connections between British and Frankish examples, and drawing attention to the outstanding precision achieved in the alignment of church groups in Britain. The focus here, however, is on the arrangement of church groups *tout court*, rather than principally on precisely aligned ones, their significance and their development. The narrative of alignment was explored further by Gittos, in her 2013 book, *Liturgy, architecture, and sacred places in Anglo-Saxon England*. There, linearity at ecclesiastical sites is discussed alongside linearity in secular contexts, suggesting the possibility of overlap between the two phenomena. The idea of treating axial alignment in secular and ecclesiastical architecture as contiguous ideas had already been raised by Andrew Reynolds in 2002 and John Blair in 1992; however, the most comprehensive overview to date is that of Gittos.[53]

Before the early 2000s the presence of alignment in secular contexts was recorded and discussed only in the context of particular sites. After Hope-Taylor's work at Yeavering, other halls laid out on a line were found. Chalton and Cowdery's Down in particular have been discussed in detail, with linearity recognised as a significant feature.[54] Apart from reports on individual sites, however, there was not a comparative study of case studies involving axiality at secular sites. Perhaps the earliest hint of such a discussion is to be found in John Blair's article 'Hall and Chamber', published in 1993, where he discussed the

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[53] Reynolds 2002, p. 112; Blair 1992, p. 250. Blair observed similarities between alignment at Yeavering and monastic sites at Canterbury and Jarrow. Gittos compared alignment at Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites with a broader range of secular cases, although she concluded that similarities might not be sufficient to seek common origins. - Gittos 2013, ch. 3, sp. pp. 72-73.

[54] Millett and James 1983; Addyman and Leigh 1973.

planning of late Anglo-Saxon elite manors.[55] Here, however, axiality is mentioned very much in passing. The next step came a decade later when Andrew Reynolds, in his 2002 book, *Later Anglo-Saxon England: Life and Landscape*, proposed that axial alignment was an attribute of late Anglo-Saxon settlements, deployed as a signifier of high status.[56] Since then, alignment at earlier secular sites than those noted by Reynolds has been highlighted as a significant feature by Helena Hamerow, in her 2010 work 'Herrenhöfe in Anglo-Saxon England' and again in 2012, in *Rural settlements*. Very recently the phenomenon was readdressed by John Blair in his comprehensive study *Building Anglo-Saxon England*.[57]

The only scholar to have openly viewed the growing attention paid to the phenomenon of alignment with suspicion is Tim Pestell, who, in his *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation*, in response to John Blair's argument that alignment is one of the definitive features of a minster, observed that there are high-status monastic foundations without alignment and that for groups of churches that are orientated east-west it is only natural for buildings to be situated in alignment with each other.[58]

Despite Pestell's reservations, as the concept has become widely known, it has begun to be referred to as an accepted feature of high-status Anglo-Saxon sites. This is problematic as this phenomenon needs further research, but its acceptance discourages questions about its nature and origins. The aim here is to pick up on the debate and take it forward from where Gittos and Blair left it in 2013 and 2018.

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[55] Blair 1993, pp. 7, 16.

[56] Reynolds 2002, p. 112. A similar statement was made in Hamerow *et al* 2007, p. 187.

[57] Blair 2018, pp. 122-123; Hamerow 2010; Hamerow 2012, pp. 102-105.

[58] Pestell 2004, pp. 49-50.

Chapter 1: Introduction to secular case studies

Where does the history of Anglo-Saxon settlements start? When we talk about Anglo-Saxon history in its earliest phases, the sources we tend to turn to are Bede and Gildas. Both, however, have their problems and limitations.[1] Apart from these, historical evidence is very limited, and where in the later periods charters are priceless sources of information, there is no such evidence for the period prior to the 670s.[2] An alternative is to rely on material evidence; the work of, most notably, Helena Hamerow, as well as James, Marshall and Millett has championed an archaeological approach to the history of settlements.[3] However, archaeology is not particularly informative without historical context.

The search for Anglo-Saxon settlements involves looking both to historical sources and archaeological research, often to find that only one of these is available or, even if both are present, having to work hard to marry the historical and archaeological records, as Hope-Taylor attempted to do at Yeavering. In addition, not surprisingly, high-status settlements are always recorded better than ordinary villages. There is an imbalance between available historical and archaeological evidence, depending on the nature of the site in question.

For example, an Anglo-Saxon settlement mentioned in the sources as the earliest royal one is Bamburgh, belonging to Ida of Bernicia (the northern kingdom subsequently incorporated into Northumbria).[4] The settlement was rebuilt and the earliest structure still in existence is the Norman chapel; everything else has disappeared beneath the later castle. This means that we do not have archaeological evidence to either support or test the historical record. By contrast, in a way compensating for the lack of historical records,

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[1] See p. 21, ft. 5.

[2] For charters, see Sawyer 1968; Wormald has argued that charters could have appeared earlier, but there are no preserved texts. – Wormald 1984.

[3] Hamerow 2002, 2004, 2012; James, Marshall and Millett 1984. See also Rahtz 1976a and Cramp 1983.

[4] Swanton 1996, pp. 16-17 (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 547).

archaeological research has contributed significantly to our understanding of lower-status settlements from the same period, such as Mucking and West Stow.[5]

As a result, there is no consistency in the narrative, either historical or archaeological, and it is therefore necessary to put together a more or less convincing picture using a variety of incomplete categories of evidence. Needless to say, in this chapter, which is primarily concerned with alignment, plans of settlements, archaeological research or, in a few cases, aerial reconnaissance, are the primary form of data; historical evidence is addressed, where possible, to contextualise the sites in question. Most (if not all) of the sites are well-known and some have already been discussed in relation to alignment (see, for example, Gittos 2013) but they have never been presented together as a corpus to facilitate an in-depth analysis of alignment as a key aspect of their planning. This chapter is much more descriptive than the following one, as it endeavours to introduce the evidential base and to situate it in its historical context, as well as introduce the key strands for the subsequent detailed analysis and, more importantly, develop a geographical and chronological framework. The narrative unfolds chronologically.

Overview of sites
7th-century group

The story starts with Yeavering – this site has the most pronounced and best researched linear planning, and stands at the forefront of the discourse on the subject of alignment, not only chronologically but also historiographically. The story of Yeavering is tightly connected with the history of Northumbria, where, fortunately, we still have a comparatively abundant quantity of evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation. What is considered 'Anglo-Saxon', however, in the context of Northumbria, is questionable.

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[5] Hamerow 2010, pp. 59-60. For reports on individual sites, see Hamerow 1993; West 1985, 2001; see also Hamerow 1991 for a more systematic assessment of rural settlements.

The 'British' and 'Anglian' nature of Northumbria has been discussed by Dumville, to the conclusion that, although the Anglo-Saxon sources tend to suggest Anglian origins for the Northumbrian kingdom, this narrative has eclipsed the role of the pre-existing British polities.[6] The origins of Northumbria have been debated, most notably by Rollason, who has discussed three possible scenarios for the establishment of the kingdom, including development directly from a Roman kingdom, transition from a British kingdom and establishment in the aftermath of the migration of Germanic peoples from Continental Europe.[7] Colm O'Brien has explored this variety of potential influences further, and Martin Carver has concluded that a broad range of influences combined in early Northumbria, leading to the formation of a complex hybrid culture.[8] Hope-Taylor's take on Yeavering very much promotes a similar idea by characterising this site as a place of contact between different cultures and so, in this sense, seeing it as a truly Northumbrian site.[9]

The kingdom of Northumbria essentially comprised the territories north of the Humber and included territory in modern-day Scotland. It was established in the first half of the 7th century (although Hunter Blair has attempted to trace its origins further back to the Roman period) when the two separate polities of Deira and Bernicia merged and quickly became a major political power.[10] Throughout the early 7th century, the two royal dynasties positioned themselves as genealogically independent, although both claimed descent from Woden, and were in conflict, fighting for supremacy.[11] It is thought that tensions continued

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[6] Dumville 1989b, sp. pp. 219-221.

[7] Rollason 2003, pp. 80-99.

[8] See Carver 2011 and O'Brien 2011.

[9] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 267, 282.

[10] Rollason 2003, pp. 29-30; see also Hunter Blair 2003, p. 45. On the origins of Northumbria, see also Hunter Blair 1947.

[11] Stenton 1971, p. 75; see also Yorke 2008 and John 1992 on origin legends and descent from Woden.

even in a united Northumbria.[12] The tensions in the circles of power were further exacerbated by the lack of a clear system of royal inheritance.[13]

Yeavering itself was a prominent settlement well before the 7th century and before the first reference to 'the Anglo-Saxons'. According to Hope-Taylor, it was already a political centre by the 1st century AD.[14]

Yeavering

Northumbria
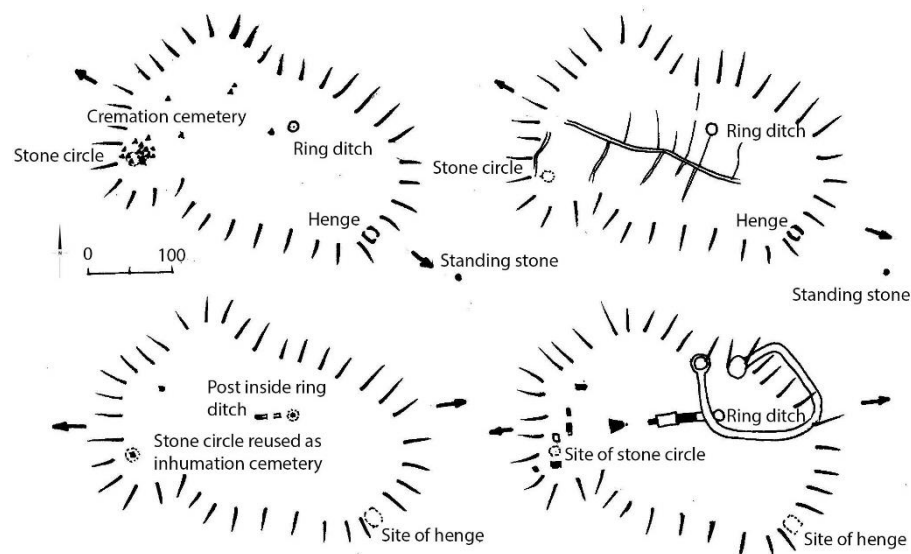
Fig. 1.1. Suggested plans of development of site at Yeavering, from prehistoric to Anglo-Saxon, after Bradley 1987 (fig.1, p. 6).[15]

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[12] Hunter Blair 2003, p. 45; Hunter Blair 1949, pp. 51-52.

[13] Campbell 2010, pp. 26-27.

[14] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 6 and 17.

[15] All figures from here onwards, apart from 6.1, have been redrawn by author.
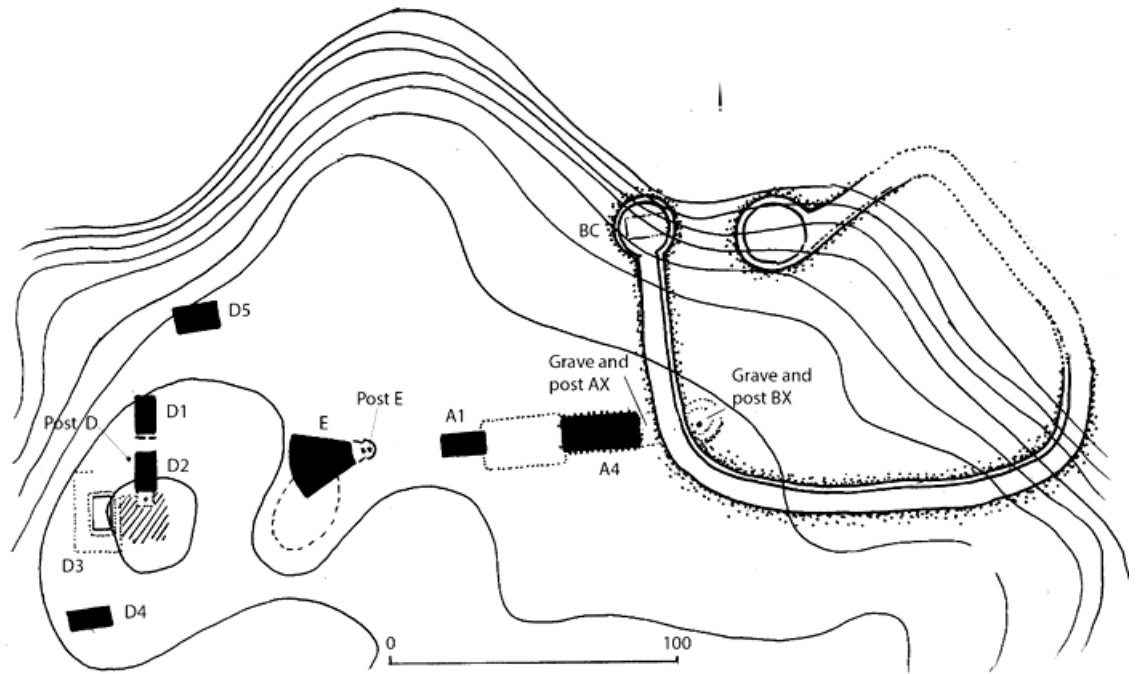
Fig. 1.2. Plan of site at Yeavering, phase IIIc, after Hope-Taylor 1977 (fig. 77, p. 162).
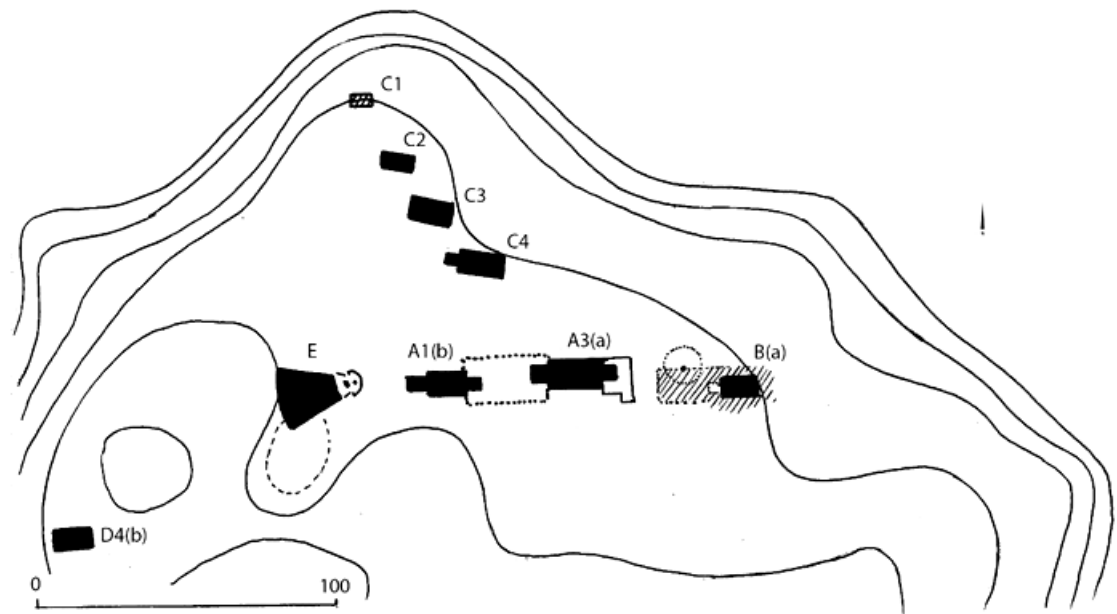
Fig. 1.3. Plan of site at Yeavering, phase IV, after Hope-Taylor 1977 (fig. 78, p. 165).

The site was excavated by Brian Hope-Taylor, meticulously reconstructed and published in 1977. This project gave rise to questions not only about the extremely careful attention given to the geometry of planning, including

alignment, but also about the origins of the Anglo-Saxon hall, the emergence of the kingdom of Northumbria and the establishment of its power, the processes of Christianisation and the continuation of pagan cults. Yeavering is thus at the forefront of a number of critical debates on Anglo-Saxon England.

The site, alternatively known by the Celtic name of Ad Gefrin (identified as such by Ekwall and others), was a prominent political centre in the Anglo-Saxon period, located on the north edge of the Cheviot hills and the south bank of the river Glen, not far from other significant sites of the same period at Milfield (Maelmin), Bamburgh and Lindisfarne.[16] The topographic situation, as observed on site, is somewhat reminiscent of a 'stage' – a flat raised surface with its northern edge falling away towards the river and protected by hills to the north and south.[17]

In a nutshell, the site at the height of its development in the early 7th century consisted of two groups of halls (see fig. 1.2), each of the groups marked by a linear arrangement of rectangular buildings, and a theatre-like structure in-between. Although our focus here is on the Anglo-Saxon history of Yeavering, it must be kept in mind that the site had an earlier history. The first settlement is likely to have been established here at the end of the first millennium BC; the prehistoric sequence at Yeavering includes a henge and a standing stone to the south-east of the site, defined by a ring-ditch and a stone circle, with an associated cremation cemetery (fig. 1.1).

At first glance the location of the prehistoric settlement in the same place as the Anglo-Saxon royal vill could be taken as entirely coincidental. However, Richard Bradley has argued that prehistoric monuments played a significant role in determining the final location of the Anglo-Saxon royal palace and associated

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[16] For the identification, see Plummer 1896, p. 115 and notes; Ekwall 1960, p. 544; confirmed by Kenneth Jackson at the request of Brian Hope-Taylor – Hope-Taylor 1977, p. 15. Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 6 and 17.

[17] See Appendix 2, Photo 7.

buildings.[18] Despite the break in the continuity of use, he observed that the linear arrangement of features, which was a significant attribute of the prehistoric site, could have had a profound effect on its Anglo-Saxon successor. Bradley went on to suggest that Milfield, where the Northumbrian royal residence was relocated later, also shows evidence of spatial alignment in the prehistoric period with links to subsequent Anglo-Saxon planning.

Following a break in occupation, the earliest stage of the post-Roman development saw the construction of the 'Great Enclosure' – a fort-like structure, rounded in plan, to the east of the then emerging settlement (fig. 1.2). Simultaneously, the first rectangular structures, steeply contrasting with circular huts identified by Hope-Taylor as Celtic and thus possibly indicating a Roman architectural heritage, began to appear, and, notably, the standing stones of the Neolithic cemetery to the west of the settlement were replaced by a rectangular wooden structure or enclosure. To the east of the developing settlement, the prehistoric round-barrow was replaced with a palisaded enclosure with a wooden post (post BX) at its centre.[19]

In the beginning of the period of Anglo-Saxon occupation (phase II), which Hope-Taylor associated with the annexation of Deira in 605 and Aethelfrith's reign, the ritual enclosure to the west was replaced with a structure interpreted as a temple (building D2). This became the new centre of the growing western cemetery. Building on the apparently ritualistic context of deposits of skulls inside this building, all subsequent burials seem to have been spatially tied to it, implying its special significance in local religious tradition.[20] Overall, these developments would appear to point to a continuing ritual practice.

In the same period, two more structures went up next to the temple – building D1 to the north, precisely aligned with the temple D2, and D3, to the

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[18] Bradley 1987, p. 5.
[19] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 78-83, 156, 21, 115, 244.
[20] Ibid., pp. 102, 158-159, 244, 276.

south-west of D2. All three structures were rectangular, trench-founded solid-wall halls with opposed doors in their long walls (east and west). Building D1 seems to have been the earliest in the sequence.[21]

These buildings were followed by the construction of a wedge-shaped assembly-structure, that has been likened to a *cuneus/*section of seating of a Roman theatre (building E), to the east of the group.[22] The focal point of this structure is a small stage defined by screens, rather than an arena, with a platform suggesting a seat, and a post (post E) immediately behind it. To the east of this structure, the first of the 'great halls', A2 - a building more sophisticated than its predecessors – went up at the same time. Building A2 marked the beginning of the period of the most elaborate architectural construction in Yeavering. Inside the building, there seems to have been a platform for a seat near the hearth, and the overall internal layout of the building seems to have emphasised its ceremonial and processional role.[23] Notably, as in structure E, there is a post-hole behind the seat.

During the following stage, beginning after 616 and probably lasting into the 630s, building E was extended, with three more tiers added and slanting posts installed to support the back of the stand. These measures increased the capacity of the theatre, underlining its function as a significant place of assembly, perhaps as a setting for royal councils. The Great Enclosure was rebuilt with certain changes but overall respecting the plan of the earlier enclosure on the same site. Hall A2 was used as a reference point for the construction of the great hall A4 and then demolished. A4 was built immediately to the east of A2 with an astonishing precision in both its construction and alignment with A2. This three-aisled hall is the largest of all found on the site. The most unusual features associated with this hall are Burial AX and Post AX, aligned with its east-west axis and evidently

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[21] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 95-96.
[22] The interpretation of Building E as a theatre has been questioned by Ian Wood. – Wood 2005, p. 188.
[23] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 51, 121, 125, 139, 159-160, 242.

spatially associated with its east door. Furthermore, the post and the burial, as well as the axis of the hall, were precisely aligned with Post BX and Grave BX1 located further east. In the same period, Building A1 – a plain aisled hall - was erected to the west of the great hall, axially aligned with it and sharing a palisaded enclosure between the two buildings. [24]

All buildings of this phase were constructed with the use of 'Yeavering units' and are of trench-foundation construction with heavy timber walls and opposed doorways in all four walls. These buildings are also characterised by the introduction and development of external supporting posts. Notably, halls A2 and A4 have two precise squares as the basis of their plans. [25] Of importance to the further narrative is also the fairly sporadic distribution of utilitarian structures. This contrasts very sharply with the ordered layout of the ceremonial buildings of the royal vill. [26]

This stage of development of the site represents the greatest extent of its evolution and was followed by gradual decline. During the last phase, a sequence of diagonally aligned buildings C appeared to the north of the roughly aligned building A1 and the new hall A3 (fig. 1.3). The diagonal axis was tied to the corner of the main chamber of A3. The plans of the buildings themselves, however, are not as regular as their alignment. They share some of the characteristics of A2 and A4 – notably, the wall construction, the opposed doorways in the long walls and the double-square plan – but there is much less regularity in the alignment of doors, their dimensions are less precise and there is a new interest in annexes, exemplified in A3 and C4. To the east of the main nucleus and the line formed by buildings A1, A3 and E, a new hall-like structure B was built. Hope-Taylor confidently identified this structure as a Christian church, although doubts over such an attribution have been expressed. [27] Structure B at this stage seems to have

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[24] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 60, 120, 122, 129, 131, 141, 163, 205, 277-9.

[25] Ibid., pp. 125-131, 150, fig. 71.

[26] Tinniswood and Harding 1991.

[27] Hope-Taylor 1977, p. 58; for an alternative view, see Lucy 2005, p. 139, and Smith 2015.

been deliberately located close to Post BX and its associated burial, perhaps as an ideological statement marking a turning point in religious practices, without, however, any obvious disruption in funerary customs. Hope-Taylor has argued that this could be taken as a sign of Christianity paying respect to long-established local traditions, thereby making its acceptance relatively painless.[28] However, the newly Christianised community did not last long. Its final phases are marked by the steady decline of the site, followed by its abandonment and a probable transference of the royal seat to nearby Maelmin, initially probably in the 650s.[29]

Overall, Yeavering presents an extraordinary sequence of instances of alignment. The types of alignment vary in precision and purposes, but they inevitably occur in all major phases of development, from prehistoric origins to abandonment in 650. The high status of the site in the key phases of its occupation – prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon - and the significance of alignment here, perhaps as a marker of this high status and of power, possibly with spiritual and cultural associations, are also beyond doubt.[30] Moreover, if Hope-Taylor's chronological reconstruction is correct, Yeavering also stood right at the centre of the christianisation of Northumbria.[31]

Finally, the excavator points out that the 'native British' background of Yeavering is important but also remarks that the regard for precision and the systematic approach to construction is not un-Roman, proposing 'a hybrid Anglo-Celtic culture with Roman undertones' at Yeavering.[32] Indeed, one can hardly think of Roman planning as anything else but regular and based on straight lines. In this respect, the Roman phase of occupation in Northumbria cannot be

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[28] Hope-Taylor 1977, p. 271.

[29] Ibid., pp. 73, 143, 168-169, 271, 277.

[30] On status of Yeavering, particularly in the context of other hall complexes, see Blair 2018, pp. 114-125.

[31] Hope-Taylor's chronology has been questioned by O'Brien and Scull. - O'Brien 2011; Scull 1991.

[32] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 267, 270, 275. The British and Roman aspects, discussed by Hope-Taylor, have been debated by Wood, Barnwell and O'Brien (Wood 2005; Barnwell 2005; O'Brien 2011). On the Roman aspects of planning at Yeavering, see Blair 2018, pp. 79, 122. On the interpretation of the object in grave AX as a surveyor's groma, see Lucy 2005, p. 131; Blair 2018, p. 122.

disregarded as a contributing factor. At the same time, Hope-Taylor's statement is very much of its time in compartmentalising different features as British or Roman, without acknowledging the nuanced nature of what can be considered Roman and especially British and not taking into account any preceding occupation. However, he proposed an important and, at that stage, innovative notion of 'hybrid culture', to which we will return below. For the time being, we note that this site has produced extraordinary evidence of alignment and has been accepted as a royal settlement.

7th-century Northumbria has produced rich evidence of royal settlements, including Yeavering and Milfield. Another site with a possible royal connotation in the Anglo-Saxon period – Sprouston – is located surprisingly close to Yeavering, especially considering the wide spread of other high-status sites with alignment across Britain (see map 1.1). However, this proximity can also be explained by the likely relocation of the royal residence from Yeavering to Milfield and then Sprouston. These royal sites, therefore, probably superseded each other rather than coexisted, meaning that at the time of their existence each one of them was an unrivalled centre of power.

Sprouston

Northumbria
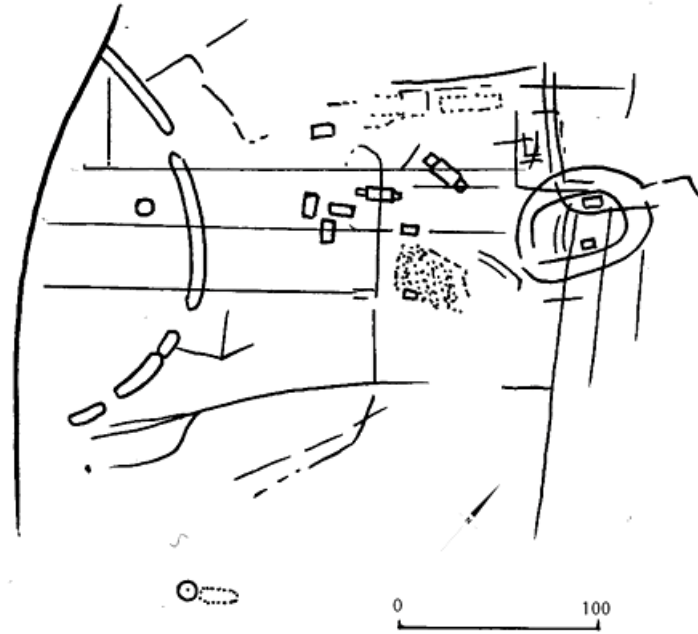
Fig. 1.4. Plan of structures and features at Sprouston, after Smith 1991 (fig. 3, facing p. 266).
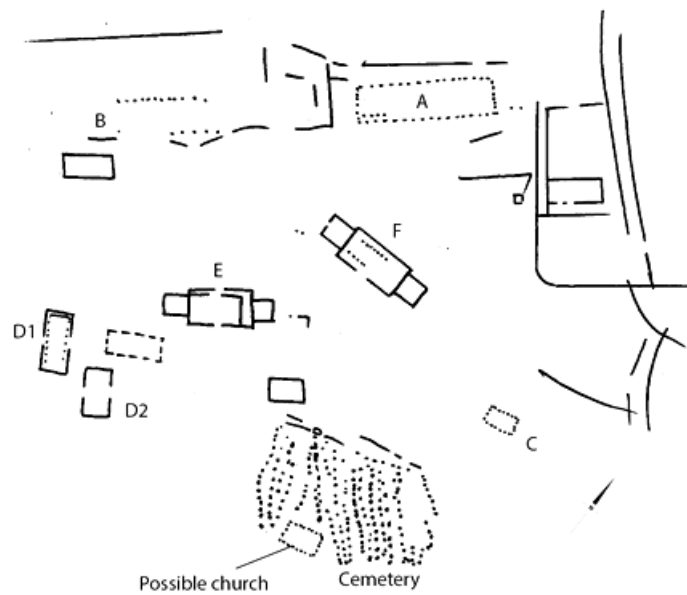
Fig. 1.5. Plan of Anglo-Saxon buildings at Sprouston, after Smith 1991 (fig. 4, facing p. 267).

Sprouston has been known from cropmarks since 1960 and was briefly published in 1980 and 1981 but not assessed properly until 1991, by Ian Smith.[33] The site is located to the east of the Tweed, some 600m north-north-east of modern-day Sprouston, in Roxburghshire in the Scottish borders. Sprouston was recorded as a royal manor in the 12th century, but it has no pre-Norman recorded history; this relates directly to the dilemma of absence of evidence with which this chapter started.[34] As at Yeavering, the settlement has a prehistoric predecessor, which is briefly introduced first.

Phase I at Sprouston is characterised by the presence of a ring ditch and a hall, just north of Whitmuirhaugh Farm (fig. 1.4). The ditch surrounds a possible ploughed-out barrow with a primary interment. There are three more possible ring-barrows in the field to the south-east of the farm. Immediately to the north-east of the first ring-ditch is a substantial - 21.5x7.3m – hall; its construction, as far as it can be deduced from cropmarks, is reminiscent of that of the halls found at Doon Hill, Balbridie and possibly Auchenlaich, Perthshire. Following these analogues, Smith dates phase I to a period embracing the Mesolithic, the Neolithic and the Bronze Age.[35]

The subsequent phase II, possibly Romano-British, is characterised by the presence of a field-system and a palisaded enclosure, some 250m north of the pair of hall and barrow.[36] During the Anglo-Saxon phase of occupation - phase III - a high-status settlement at Sprouston developed some 200m to the north of the pair of hall and ring-ditch (fig. 1.5) and included a number of structures, including major halls with annexes and opposed entrances, E and F, occupying the central

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[33] See Reynolds 1980 and St Joseph 1981; Smith 1991.

[34] Ian Smith suggests that Sprouston could have been a royal residence already in the Anglo-Saxon period, although J.K.S. St Joseph initially proposed a more modest status for this settlement. – St Joseph 1981, p. 198; Smith 1991, pp. 285-288.

[35] Smith 1991, pp. 266-269, figs. 3 and 4; the dating of Doon Hill has been controversial – see Wilson and Hurst 1966, pp. 175-176; Hope-Taylor 1980; Reynolds 1980; Ralston 1982.

[36] Smith 1991, p. 270-272.

area of the settlement, with a pair of possibly aligned halls A and B to the north-west, structures D1 and D2 to the south-west and a cemetery associated with a possible rectangular structure to the south-east, as well as a number of possible sunken-featured buildings (SFBs).[37]

Buildings A and B have been interpreted as halls belonging to the earlier phase in the Anglo-Saxon period. Hall A was post-built and vast in size (28x9m). The size of hall A implies the possible presence of buttresses and central posts, visible as cropmarks. This building has been compared to Yeavering's hall A4, the smaller hall at Cruggleton, to the hall at nearby Milfield and the possible Anglo-Saxon hall at Birdoswald.[38] Some 30m to the south-west of hall A, traces of Hall B are preserved; this also could have been a substantial structure, perhaps slightly earlier than A, and built on the same axis. Post-in-trench structures with opposed entrances D1 and D2 were arranged in echelon, reminiscent of the disposition of halls C at Yeavering during phase IV. These were roughly perpendicular to the axis of halls A and B.

It seems that hall F and the two-phase hall E, both of post-in-trench construction, formed the new focus of the settlement in the period subsequent to the construction of halls A and B. Building E seems to have been rebuilt once and had one annexe at opposed ends in each of its two phases. Building F had two annexes, one at either end, and seems to have been aisled; the cropmarks appear to indicate entrances from the west and the south.

The spatial relationships between the core buildings at Sprouston at this stage were altogether different from the earlier, more linear and grid-like disposition of buildings.[39] While hall E lay roughly parallel to the earlier south-

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[37] Or Grübenhäuser – 'pit houses', rectangular buildings that consist of a pit, which serves as a floor, posts around the perimeter and a roof. - see Hamerow 2012, pp. 7-8, 53-66; Hamerow 2011, pp. 146-152.

[38] Smith 1991, p. 277; for comparison with Yeavering, see St Joseph 1981, p. 197; for Cruggleton, see Ewart 1985, pp. 15-18; For Milfield, see Gates and O'Brien 1988, p. 3, fig. 1; For Birdoswald, see Wilmott 1988, 1989.

[39] On grid arrangements, see Blair 2013 and Blair 2018, ch. 5.

west – north-east axis of buildings A and B, hall F was the only one at Sprouston built precisely on an east-west axis.[40]

To the north-east of the group of buildings was a palisaded enclosure, which Smith has compared to the one at Yeavering.[41] To the south-east of the settlement core was a large cemetery (containing at least 380 graves) with what seems to be a building, which has been interpreted as a possible church, on its southern edge (see fig. 1.5).[42]

There are clear similarities between Sprouston and Yeavering; like Yeavering this site started to develop in the prehistoric period and was then associated with an enclosure in the Romano-British period before becoming an Anglo-Saxon centre. In addition, although alignment at this site involves structures A and B, it is the central structures that are interesting in the context of zoning and are paralleled by Yeavering and other sites. These are discussed alongside the groups with alignment in the following chapter. In the meantime, another Northumbrian site, this time of likely lower status, must be considered here.

Thirlings

Northumbria

The site at Thirlings has been dated very broadly between 410 and 680AD and could in fact pre-date the Anglo-Saxon phases at Yeavering and Sprouston. However, considering how close it is to these sites, it is worth exploring whether Thirlings relates to the 'landscape of royal power' in 7th-century Northumbria.

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[40] On all buildings in the Anglo-Saxon period, see Smith 1991, pp. 276-283.
[41] Ibid., p. 272.
[42] Ibid., p. 281.
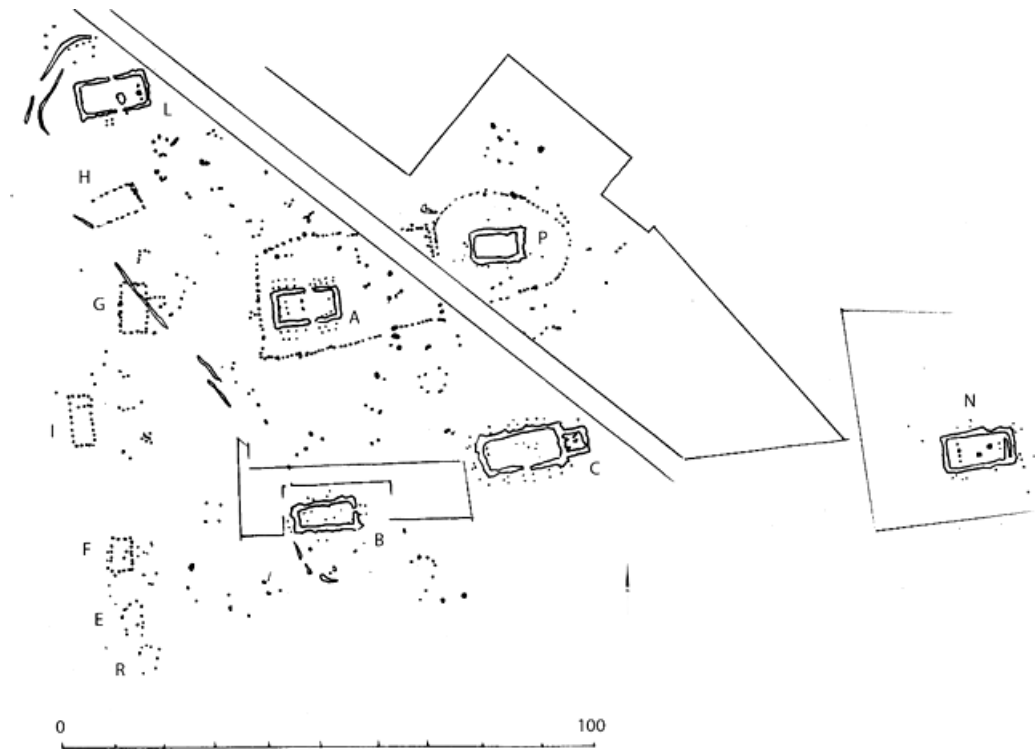
Fig. 1.6. Plan of Thirlings, after O'Brien and Miket 1991 (fig. 2, p. 62).

In addition to being located within just three kilometres of Ad Gefrin and Maelmin (Milfeld), Thirlings is within half a kilometre of Anglo-Saxon burials at Galewood, recorded in the 19th century.[43] The site lies on the terrace-surface of the Milfield basin, 15km from the modern Anglo-Scottish border. The archaeology of the Milfield basin is well documented and rich with Neolithic, Bronze Age and Anglo-British settlements, as we have already seen at Yeavering and Sprouston. Thirlings itself provides a wealth of evidence for Neolithic occupation, the precise character of which, sadly, cannot be established.[44] A number of rectangular buildings were discovered by air reconnaissance and more than thirty small pits, possibly evidence of Grübenhäuser, to the north-east of these buildings.[45] All the buildings on the site are slightly irregular in plan and the

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[43] MacLauchlan 1867.

[44] Miket, Edwards and O'Brien 2008, sp. pp. 1, 98-101.

[45] See above, ft. 37, p. 57.

spacing of their posts is not entirely even.[46] However, the group of rectangular buildings appears to be arranged on a more or less regular grid. The ones constructed in continuous trenches – buildings A, P, B, C, L and N – are orientated roughly east-west and all share the same orientation (fig. 1.6). The pairs of A with P and B with C are close to being arranged on two parallel lines but not precisely aligned. Both A and P are surrounded by enclosures, adjacent to each other. Both buildings are of post-in-trench construction with planking between the posts. Building A shows evidence of entrances in the middle of the long walls. The west end of building A seems to have been screened off; two rows of small pits have been found externally flanking the north and south walls; however, no evidence of timber staining, and therefore posts, have been discovered in the pits. Building P does not seem to have had internal division and could have had an entrance in the long south wall.[47]

Buildings B and C, located to the south of the first pair, are not enclosed and are the only two on this site with doors in the centre of a short wall. Building B has definite entrances in the centre of its east and south walls, a possible entrance from the north and a likely off-centre entrance from the west – a feature which is unique to this site. Further, the four posts to the east of the east wall indicate a possible porch. Building C, notably, is the largest structure at Thirlings and the only one with an eastern annexe, which appears to be a secondary feature. The structure has solid load-bearing walls and there is a curious arrangement of pits surrounding the west wall, both inside and outside. Their function is not clear. There are also rows of pits flanking the north and south walls, a lot like those in building A. The phasing of the three post-holes inside the annexe is uncertain. The doorway in the east wall could have been in use both in the primary and the secondary stages.[48]

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[46] O'Brien and Miket 1991, pp. 57-61.

[47] Ibid., pp. 61-64, 70-72.

[48] Ibid., pp. 65-67, 80, 86.

Buildings G, H and I are post-built and are structurally related to the technique used for the post-in-trench structures described above. Building G seems to share the very rough alignment of A and P although it is orientated perpendicularly to them. It had two entrances, one in each of its long sides.

Buildings F, E and R, located south of this group, are not well preserved but seem to be of a similar post-built construction and are clearly arranged in a sequence.[49]

In general, the excavators suggest, the buildings display a substantial degree of uniformity in approaches to construction, even considering the difference between the post-built and post-in-trench types. The consistency in construction suggests that the buildings could have been made according to pre-existing plans.

Radio-carbon dates from buildings A, B, C, L, N and P situate the settlement within the period between 410 and 680 AD. Five of the six dates overlap within the range of 538-567AD, and building B, dated to 604-681, overlaps with the dates for P. The range of dates points to the fact that the settlement is most likely to have been constructed and used in one phase. This assumption is consistent with the grid-like arrangement, which suggests single-phase planning. The roles and functions of all buildings, unfortunately, are a matter of speculation: the central position of building A with its surrounding enclosure and the size and unique shape and structure of building C both suggest some level of prestige and status. Structural similarities between building P and six-post Grübenhäuser suggest that P could have served as an ancillary building for A. It seems that the pair of A and P could represent the core of the settlement. C could be interpreted as a principal barn.[50]

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[49] O'Brien and Miket 1991, pp. 72-73, 75.
[50] Ibid., pp. 88-89.

In a wider context, structures at Thirlings are consistent with other types of timber buildings, spread geographically as far as Hampshire.[51] Building C appears to be closer to the Yeavering types than other buildings at Thirlings, with its solid walls and more substantial size. A greater variety in arrangements of buildings at Thirlings, compared to Yeavering, results in a less systematic appearance. Overall, Thirlings is likely to be more or less contemporary with the royal vill at Yeavering and is firmly set within the cultural landscape of Bernicia. As Yeavering was part of the hierarchy of Bernician sites, Thirlings is likely to have had a place in it too, be it perhaps lower down in the hierarchy, considering that the buildings here lack the grandeur and the precision of planning of a site like Yeavering. On a par with Sprouston and Milfield, Thirlings could have been, in Rosemary Cramp's words, a 'client settlement' of the Northumbrian kings.[52] The excavators suggest that in its role as a settlement subservient to the kings, Thirlings could have been a royal agricultural base, and the key buildings could have been designed for a figure of authority responsible for food production and delivery.[53] Such an interpretation is of course hypothetical but it should not be dismissed.

Moving on chronologically, the narrative of alignment takes us into the kingdom of Wessex. Archaeologically, Wessex is often associated with prehistoric occupation; the region has produced vast amounts of evidence from the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. A significant number of prehistoric monuments to be introduced in chapter 5 have been found in territory which would come to constitute Wessex. The Anglo-Saxon period is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from the arrival of Cedric, who is thought to have founded Wessex in 495 and, importantly for the foundation legends of all Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, established the Wessex royal dynasty.[54] This account is, however, disputed; Yorke

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[51] James, Marshall and Millett 1984, p. 198.
[52] O'Brien and Miket 1991, pp. 88-90; Cramp 1983, 275-6; Cramp 1988, 76-77.
[53] O'Brien and Miket 1991, p. 90.
[54] Swanton 1996, pp. 14-15.

in particular has drawn attention to the late – 9th-century – date of the sources describing these events and suggested that this narrative follows a common Indo-European model.[55] Instead, Yorke emphasises parallels between the origin story of Wessex and that of Kent, arguing that the Wessex story pretty much reproduced the Kentish one, and pointing to the close connections that already existed between Wessex and Kent as early as the 6th century.[56] As a complete alternative, Myres suggests that Cedric's family had been in existence earlier, had power under the Roman rule, and from 495 was simply establishing an independent authority.[57] Whatever the origins of Wessex, by the 7th century it was a powerful kingdom, although in the first half of the 7th century it was under considerable pressure from Mercia, which led to King Cenwealh's exile in East Anglia, where he converted to Christianity before returning to Wessex, probably in the late 640s or 650s.[58] This is the context in which Chalton – another site with alignment, in modern-day Bedfordshire – was established. It is thought to be broadly contemporary with the sites above and includes a pair of buildings with a curious partition between them, similar to D2 and D3 at Yeavering.

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[55] Yorke 1989, p. 84; on Indo-European origin models, see also Yorke 2008, sp. p. 17.
[56] Yorke 1989, sp. p. 95.
[57] Myres 1989, pp. 147-153.
[58] Kirby 1991, p. 51; Yorke 2002; Venning 2011, p. 46.
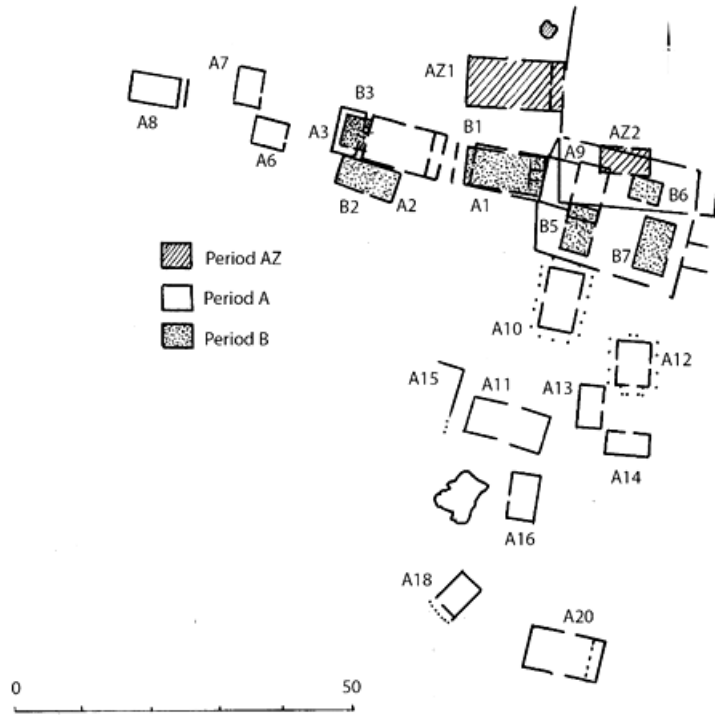
Fig. 1.7. Plan of structures at Chalton, after Addyman *et al* 1973 (fig. 3, p. 5).
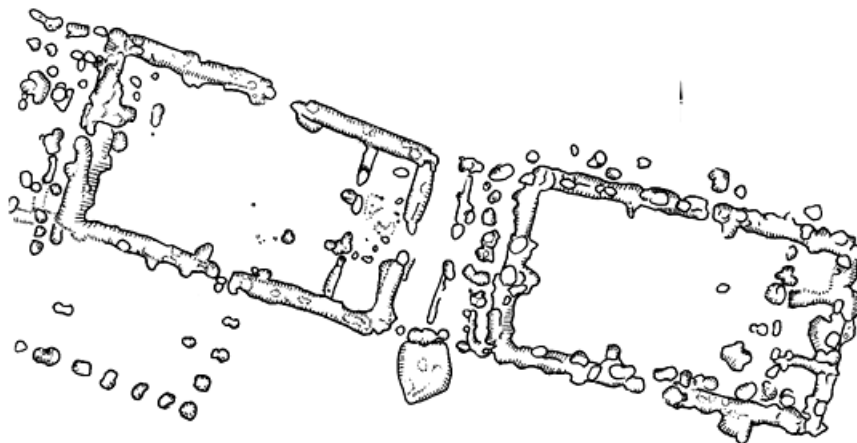
Fig. 1.8. Detail of plan of Chalton showing buildings A1 and A2 with a partition between them, after Addyman *et al* 1973 (fig. 9, facing p. 16).

The settlement is situated in the area called Church Down, south of a large bronze-age barrow cemetery, thus, as in Northumbria, indicating prehistoric predecessors of Anglo-Saxon landscapes. However, Chalton itself shows little evidence for pre-Anglo-Saxon occupation. The excavated area is located at the top of the down, whereas the settlement could have spread further down the slopes. The excavated area includes 28 rectangular buildings which developed in at least four phases (three key phases are shown in fig. 1.7). The dating is not precise but the main period of occupation must have occurred in the 6th-7th centuries (the archaeologists refrained from proposing dates for specific phases).[59] Two phases are characterised by instances of alignment of substantial buildings: the earlier period B includes a large building B1 and a smaller one B3, aligned roughly east-west, although with a considerable distance between them. Building B2 is of a comparable size to B1 but is situated off-axis, although on the same alignment. In the subsequent period A, these buildings were replaced by structures A1 and A3 on the same axis – this alignment is roughly picked up further west by structure A8. The buildings are not precisely geometrically aligned, like those at Yeavering, but their very particular spatial association is evident. Notably, unlike the earlier group, the post-in-trench buildings A1 and A2 have entrances on each side (the eastern doorway in A1 is not certain but likely), two of them evidently facing each other. There is a gap in the partition between the aligned buildings (fig. 1.8), which indicates their mutual accessibility. It is not clear whether the space between the two buildings was roofed. These buildings could have been domestic, and internal partitions suggest possible subdivision into a hall and retiring-room areas. Building A3, with a door in the east wall and associated with the two halls, has been interpreted by the excavators as a bower. A fenced enclosure to the east also seems to have been associated first with B1

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[59] Addyman and Leigh 1973, p. 17.

and then with A1. Further, it has been suggested that smaller post-built structures within the enclosure – A9 and B6 and B7 which could have continued in use in period A – could be a farm-group related to the house A1.[60]

An increased emphasis on communication would appear to be a general feature of phase A. The buildings are clearly arranged on a geometric grid and seem to be united in functional groups, which is especially evident in, for instance, the group of A12, A13 and A14, which form a courtyard. By contrast, phase B buildings seem to be orientated away from each other. Just to the north, building A10 clearly occupies the central place in the settlement, the excavator suggests it could have been made for communal use. This building, like A12, further south-east, also shows evidence of external buttresses or verandah-posts, reminiscent of similar posts at Yeavering, Cowdery's Down and Whithorn.

The settlement has been interpreted by the excavators as a 'village of large houses, for the normal dwelling of the freeman'.[61] The buildings are much smaller than those at Yeavering; their type, however, possibly indicates the prominent status of a freeman. In particular, the post-in-trench construction and plan with doors in the middle of long walls, used in buildings A1 and A2, are comparable with the high-status halls at Yeavering, Whithorn and Flixborough. At Chalton the excavators suggest that buildings A1, A2 and B1 are dwelling-houses, but, considering the limited nature of evidence, how one distinguishes between a dwelling house and an elite hall remains problematic.[62]

As a result, although there are definite similarities in planning between Chalton and other high-status sites, the proposed status of Chalton – a village – differs dramatically from the royal Northumbrian centre at Yeavering. In this respect two questions are worth asking: was alignment, such as that found at Yeavering, an attribute of contemporary centres of varying status, whether a

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[60] Addyman and Leigh 1973, p. 6; Addyman *et al* 1972, pp. 19, 22.
[61] Addyman *et al* 1972, p. 24.
[62] For excavator's interpretation, see Ibid., p. 22.

royal vill or a freeman's dwelling, or was the status of Chalton in fact higher than has been proposed? This in turn opens up the question of correlation between high status and alignment, which has been proposed by Reynolds and Blair.[63] The answer to this question is inevitably complicated, since there are known royal sites without alignment – Rendlesham is perhaps the best example and Sprouston fits the criteria to an extent, because the aligned buildings there appear to be secondary, rather than central halls. On the other hand, there is alignment of halls at Repton, which did become a very prominent site, although the halls here are not recorded as royal.[64] The relationship between status and alignment is intriguing, indeed maybe critical, and is discussed in the following chapter. In the meantime, we shall move to the powerful kingdom of Kent.

Kent was one of the earliest recorded English kingdoms and was directly associated with Roman Britain, not only due to Bede's emphasis on the Romanness of the Kentish architectural heritage, but since Higham, as well as Myres, have suggested that the territory of the kingdom of Kent matched almost exactly that of the preceding Roman political unit.[65] At the same time, as Brooks and Yorke have noted, the origin legend of Kent claims descent from the first migrant Anglo-Saxon leaders.[66] From an archaeological point of view, Kent has produced extensive evidence of Iron Age landscape features, most notably on the Isle of Thanet.[67] All this indicates a complex history and a variety of influences which contributed to the formation of the kingdom. As Brooks concludes, Kent as an administrative unit was in existence for centuries by the time it is mentioned in the Chronicles, and thus could have been through a number of phases of being

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[63] Reynolds 2002, p. 112; Blair 1993, p. 16.

[64] For Repton, see pp. 237-239 below.

[65] See HE i.26 on the Romanness of St Martin's, p. 76; on the Romanness of Christ Church Canterbury, see HE i.33, p. 114; Higham 2013a, p. 137; Myres 1989, pp. 122-123, 126; On transformation of Roman political units into Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, see Yeates 2012, pp. 266-271.

[66] Brooks 1989, p. 74; Yorke 2008, pp. 25-27.

[67] See Rady 2009.

ruled by different powers.[68] In the 6th-7th centuries, Kent rose to cultural prominence under exposure to Frankish influences, evident in trade routes and material culture.[69] To add King Aethelberht's marriage to the Frankish princess Bertha and Augustine's mission to Kent into the equation, this region displays perhaps the most interesting range of inclusions in its cultural composition during the period of its establishment. At the same time, as has already been mentioned above, Kent had connections with neighbouring kingdoms and shared the composition of origin legends with them, suggesting interrelationships in the development of Kent and the other Anglo-Saxon polities.

This is the context in which Lyminge emerged as a prominent site. Brooks has drawn attention to the complexities of territorial and political organisation already existing in Kent in the early period of the kingdom's existence; he noted that 'lates' – regional units – were centred on royall vills, Lyminge being one of them.[70]

Lyminge

Kent

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[68] Brooks 1989, p. 58.

[69] Myres 1989, pp. 126-128; see also Campbell *et al* 1991, p. 44. On Frankish influence on Kentish architecture, see Fernie 1983, pp. 45-46; Cambridge 1999, pp. 222-225; on pottery, see Myres 1989, pp. 66-73; on trade, see Wickham 2000; on Frankish burials in Kent, see Fouracre 2009, p. 130, and Behr 2000.

[70] Brooks 1989, pp. 72-73 and table 4.1.
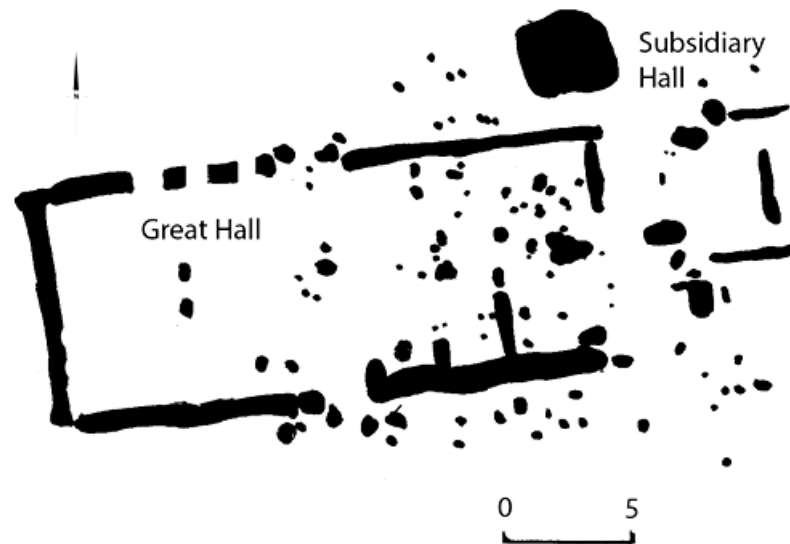
Fig. 1.9. Plan of excavated aligned halls at Lyminge, after Thomas and Knox 2012 (fig. 3, p. 3).
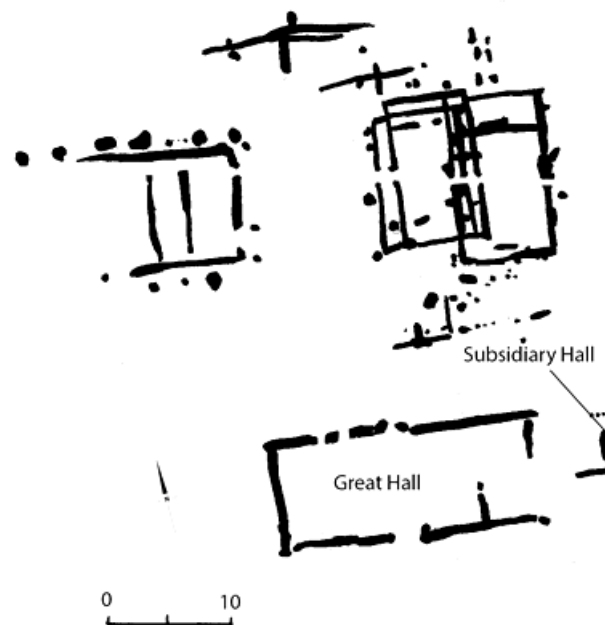
Fig. 1.10. Plan of full excavated area at Lyminge, after Thomas and Knox 2015 (fig. 2, p. 2).

Lyminge, very much like Rendlesham, is the site of a recently discovered royal regional centre.[71] While the royal landscape of Northumbria has been explored and recorded since the 1970s, it is surprising that a centre of the

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[71] On Rendlesham, see Scull, Minter and Plouviez 2016.

extremely powerful Kentish royal dynasty is only just coming to the fore. While the earlier excavations focussed on the monastic past of Lyminge and touched the area of the church of Sts Mary and Ethelburga and the area to the south of the church, the 2010 excavations uncovered a group of possibly 6th-century post-hole halls and SFBs in the southern part of the settlement.[72] A series of excavations in 2008 and 2009 had revealed traces of middle Saxon occupation nearby.[73]

The first documentary reference to Lyminge does not appear until 700AD; however, the monastery is thought to have been in existence in 633AD, an initiative of Queen Æthelburh, widow of King Edwin of Northumbria. Straightaway this suggests a possible connection between Lyminge and the Northumbrian sites discussed above.[74] The settlement at Lyminge discovered in the course of the recent excavations, which existed prior to the foundation of the monastery, has been interpreted as a royal residence, providing a parallel in status between Lyminge and sites like Yeavering and Sprouston.

Of interest for this thesis is the area of the halls, first uncovered in 2012 and situated to the north of the areas excavated earlier. This site is located on the spur of Tayne Field, encircled from the east and the south by the River Nailbourne. The first trench revealed a trench-built east-west-orientated hall measuring 21x8.5m and the western portion of a smaller subsidiary hall located roughly on the same axis to the east of the great hall (fig. 1.9).

The main hall features opposed entrances in its lateral walls and a partition at the east end of the building, which seems to have formed a 3.5m-wide chamber, possibly with an axial entrance. The walls of timber planks with wattle-

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[72] Thomas 2011. A recent discovery, however, has shed more light on the archaeology of this church - 'Lyminge Church Dig Reveals Details of Early Christianity'. In: *BBC News*
[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-49408955], accessed 20th September 2019.
[73] Thomas 2013, pp. 120-125; for the earlier excavations, see Jenkins 1874, 1889. To date, the most recent publication on Lyminge is Gabor Thomas's *Monasteries as places of power* – see Thomas 2017.
[74] Thomas 2013, p. 114; Kelly 2006.

and-daub panels in-between must have burned *in situ*.[75] Subsequent excavations to the north revealed a sequence of three north-south oriented post-in-trench halls and another east-west oriented one, measuring at least 21m long and 8.2m wide (fig. 1.10). One of the north-south halls was almost precisely perpendicular to the structures found in 2012, suggesting a contemporary date. In each of the three phases of the north-south oriented structure, the size of it and the elaboration of construction increased. The doorways in each phase were in the middle of the long walls.[76] The post-in-trench western hall also seems to have had three phases of construction. During the first two phases, it had a partition at the east end, notably, with central axial entrances both in the partition and the external eastern wall, which are precisely aligned with the side entrances into the north-south oriented halls to the east.[77] Evidence of *opus signinum* floor-surfaces, common for Kent and thought to be pointing to Romanising influences, have also been discovered in both the western hall and the eastern north-south aligned group.[78]

The 6th-century SFBs demonstrate ample evidence for special deposits – bone groups and, in one instance, a plough coulter - associated with the phase of abandonment. These and other finds indicate the wealth of the settlement as early as the 6th century. The great south hall, constructed presumably between 600 and 650AD, is also associated with elite status and, unlike most halls elsewhere, has produced a great abundance of finds. The two cemeteries located to the south and north of the settlement also confirm the high position of Lyminge in the early Saxon period.[79]

It seems that a shift in occupation occurred in the second half of the 7th century, when, probably with the foundation of the monastery, the focus of the

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[75] Knox 2012, pp. 10-13.

[76] Thomas and Knox 2013, pp. 6-8.

[77] Thomas and Knox 2015, pp. 12-14.

[78] Thomas and Knox 2013, p. 9; Thomas and Knox 2015, p. 14. See also below, p. 206.

[79] Thomas 2013, pp. 118-128.

settlement moved south-westwards and slightly up the hill, perhaps indicating a desire to establish a degree of detachment of the monastery from its surroundings.[80] It should be noted that the halls were constructed in close proximity to a Bronze Age barrow, which was a focus of a cremation burial and a Beaker-period (2800-1800BC) inhumation, located to the north of the western hall. The barrow was intersected by a sequence of post-hole structures. It is impossible to tell how visible the barrow was at the time of construction of the halls, but it is reasonable to suggest that there was some relationship between the Anglo-Saxon and prehistoric periods of occupation.[81]

The only contemporary site in the kingdom of East Anglia with a hint of axial arrangement is Carlton Colville in Suffolk. East Anglia is very poorly documented by comparison with other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms; the sources are almost silent up until Redwald's reign, when he is famously recorded to have served both Christian and pagan gods.[82] Equally, our knowledge of the archaeological landscape of East Anglia is fairly limited. One royal centre, at Rendlesham, has been discovered fairly recently and features only one hall. Although Rendlesham was clearly prominent and is mentioned by Bede as a *uico regio*, it is possible that the kingdom was divided into administrative units and there was more than one royal vill.[83]

Despite extensive research in landscape archaeology in East Anglia, led most notably by Tom Williamson and Martin Carver, this region does not boast a wealth of early Anglo-Saxon sites with high-status buildings.[84] Instead, the story of impressive archaeological discoveries in East Anglia is very much dominated by Sutton Hoo, which, although posing many questions, nevertheless sheds light on the culture, society and, most importantly, attitudes to kingship, in East Anglia,

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[80] Ibid., p. 128.

[81] Thomas and Knox 2015, pp. 3-5, 15.

[82] Bede, HE ii.15, p. 190; Scull 1992, pp. 3-5.

[83] Scull 1992, p. 6; see also HE iii.22, p. 284.

[84] See, for example, Williamson 2005, 2006, 2008, 2013; Carver 1989, 2005, 2017.

early in the 7th century.[85] Both the origin legend of Anglian kings, which proclaims descent from the Germanic king Wuffa, and the archaeological record demonstrate that East Anglia in this period, like other kingdoms, was heavily influenced in its culture by currents from Continental northern Europe.[86]

In the absence of definitively high-status sites and the absence of alignment at Rendlesham, we now turn to the interesting and very likely elite site at Carlton Colville (Bloodmoor Hill).   Alignment here is not particularly pronounced but it is present and has not been discussed before. This does not appear to have been a royal centre, but it is likely to have been of high status and, like the sites above, is associated with prehistoric landscape.

Bloodmoor Hill

East Anglia

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[85] See Bruce-Mitford 1946, 1947, 1974, 1975, 1978, 1983; Carver 1989; For the wider context of Sutton Hoo, see Carver 2005 and 2017, and Williamson 2008.
[86] Yorke 2002, p. 68; Newton 1993; Scull 1992, pp. 7-8; Carver 1989, p. 152.
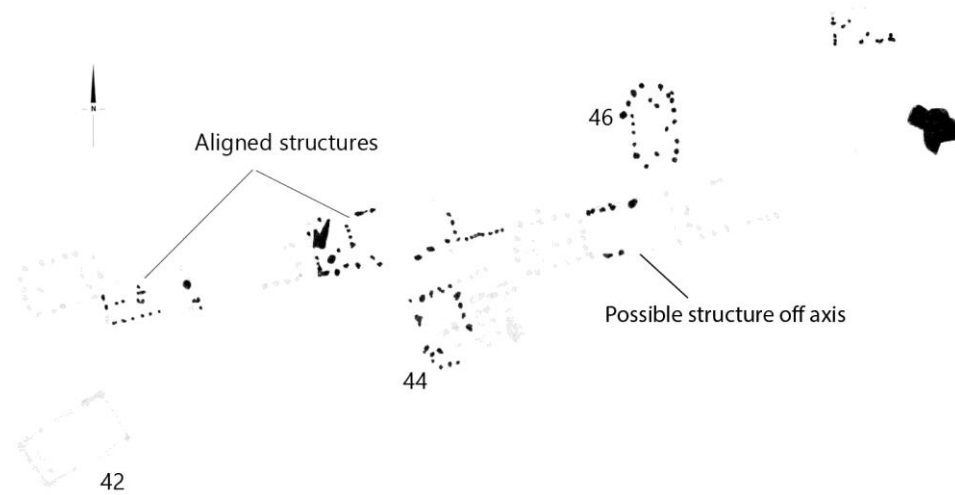
Fig. 1.11. Plan of site at Bloodmoor Hill, phase 1, after Lucy *et al* 2009 (fig. 6.35, p. 363).

Fig. 1.12. Plan of site at Bloodmoor Hill, phase 2a, after Lucy *et al* 2009 (fig. 6.36, p. 364).

The site is located some 2km inland from the North Sea coast, in the northern part of the Sandlings of Suffolk, with the plain of the river Waveney to the north-west of the site.[87] There are two possible ring-barrows to the north of

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[87] Lucy *et al* 2009, p. 1.

the site, which do not seem to be associated with it. Another barrow, opened in the 18th c, apparently was on Bloodmoor Hill itself.[88] Apart from these barrows, evidence of prehistoric activity is very sparse but nevertheless indicates continuous occupation from the late Neolithic to the early Iron Age. Roman activity is documented from the 2nd century AD onwards and is represented by finds mostly associated with later Anglo-Saxon structures.[89] There does not seem to be any continuity between the Roman and the Anglo-Saxon phases, with a 250-year period between the two. The use of Roman materials during the Anglo-Saxon phases of occupation seems entirely pragmatic and the planning of the Saxon settlement is independent from the earlier Roman features.[90]

The Anglo-Saxon phase at Bloodmoor Hill is chiefly represented by thirty-eight sunken-featured buildings (SFBs), nine post-built structures, one post-in-trench building, and a cemetery associated with one of the structures. The SFBs range in size from 2.8x3m to 5x6.7m and are scattered across the settlement. The functions of these buildings are difficult to define.[91]

The post-built structures range from 4.7x3.3m to 10.5x5.75m in size. The construction method of all post-hole structures is consistent: single posts are spaced from 0.5 to 1m apart. Further, there is no indication of internal features and no evidence of external raking timbers, as at Cowdery's Down and Brandon (see below). Only six buildings show an indication of possible doorways; however, the excavators have assumed, by comparison with analogues elsewhere, that the entrances are likely to have been in the middle of long walls. The post-in-trench Building 42 (to the south-west of the group) shows clear evidence of two opposing doorways in the long walls, shifted slightly westwards off the centre (fig. 1.12).[92] The alignment of the structures is predominantly east-north-east to west-

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[88] Ibid. pp. 4, 11.
[89] Ibid., pp. 22-27.
[90] Ibid., p. 28.
[91] Ibid., pp. 38-45.
[92] Lucy *et al* 2009, pp. 102-105.

south-west. The excavators suggest it is likely that orientation was determined by pre-existing features and buildings and by pragmatic factors, such as heating and lighting by the sun.

The post-in-trench Structure 42, the largest on site, seems to post-date the post-built structures, which would be consistent with the general trend of a similar succession across the country.[93] Interestingly, there is no clear relationship between SFBs and post-built structures, perhaps implying independent use.[94] Clusters of pits across the site seem to be associated with SFBs rather than post-built structures.[95]

The structures on the site have been assigned to two main phases – Phase 1 (500-580 AD) and Phase 2, which, where possible, was subdivided into two periods – 2a (580-650) and 2b (650-700 AD).[96]

It seems that the east-north-east – west-south-west axis was established in phase 1 and was marked by the two possibly rectangular buildings arranged in a single line in the central area (fig. 1.11). Another possible structure to the east of them is off the axis but on the same alignment. It is perhaps of significance that the northern wall of this structure (or enclosure) is aligned with the southern walls of structures to the west. Structures 44 and 46, orientated north-north-east – south-south-west, were built to the south and the north of this line respectively. During the subsequent phase 2a, structure 43 appeared exactly on the same alignment and precisely between the two possible earlier aligned buildings, whereas 45 (possibly a two-phase building) and 47 seemed to be flanking the earlier possible eastern structure. It seems that these two parallel and almost in-line axes were retained throughout these two phases and that the structures respected each other's locations. Structure 41 was built to the west of the group

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[93] For the evidence of evolution of building techniques from post-hole to post-in-trench, see Marshall and Marshall 1993.

[94] Lucy *et al* 2009, pp. 106-7.

[95] Ibid., pp. 123-4.

[96] Ibid., p. 336.

slightly off axis and at a different angle to the rest of the buildings. A possible string of buildings to the north of the aforementioned aligned structures seems to have been centred on structure 41 and to follow its orientation.

Phase 2a was marked by the construction of the only post-in-trench building 42 and the subsequent 7th-century burial ground on the site of Structure 44 (fig. 1.12). It is notable that the predominant orientation of the graves follows that of the buildings 43, 45 and 47. [97]

A variety of activities has been detected on the site; however, the areas of production, associated with other structures, seem to exclude the aligned structures, with the possible exception only of the last phase, when metalworking, antler-working and textile-related activities moved closer to the graveyard area.[98] This means that at least in the earlier phases the aligned buildings were non-industrial, perhaps dwellings. The graveyard seems to have a close association with the preceding Structure 44, which thus could have been a mortuary, although at least some burials post-date it. The graves appear very regular and are aligned with each other; ten out of twenty-nine of them contain grave-goods, although the burials postdate the establishment of Christianity in East Anglia. Further, the decision to establish a burial ground in this new location implies a possible ideological realignment within the community sometime around 650. It is possible that it was used for those living in buildings nearby and possibly implies a relatively high status for this population.[99] It is also possible that, as Knox has argued, the shift of spatial focus from the 'halls' to the graveyard was a result of the increasing impact of Christianity.[100] Another possibility, especially considering the predominance of female burials, is that this settlement itself could have been a small religious community.

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[97] Lucy *et al* 2009, figs. 6.35-6.37, pp. 114-115, 366; for burials, see Scull 2009, pp. 385-426.
[98] For activities, see Lucy *et al* 2009, pp. 366-384, fig. 6.50.
[99] Scull 2009, pp. 385, 416, 418-20.
[100] Knox 2012, p. 148.

There is evidence of long-distance trade and extensive local production and also of permanent occupation, suggesting that Bloodmoor Hill could have been one of the centres through which local elites controlled production and trade. Notably, it was abandoned at the time when other such centres, such as Brandon and Burrow Hill, emerged in the region.[101] It seems to fit into the context of the 'central places' network first proposed as an archaeological phenomenon in 1989 and more recently explored in detail by Tim Pestell.[102] This is discussed below but for the time being it is worth noting that 'central places', where production and learning were focussed, were inevitably associated with social control, suggesting another link between axial alignment and high status, this time in a different region.

Already it is becoming apparent that the 7th century has produced evidence of settlements similarly featuring alignment and associated with both high status and prehistoric occupation, yet situated in different kingdoms. There were of course similarities in the ways these kingdoms developed, as has been argued by Yorke, but it is also known that each of them was exposed to different influences and was very much a separate geographical region marked by distinct territories.[103] Before we proceed to the discussion of possible parallels between alignment and geography, let us look at other sites with alignment and, more importantly, another significant region of 7th-century England where alignment is to be found: Mercia.

The boundaries of the 'original Mercia' in the 7th century have been debated but its territory was vast and included at least Staffordshire,

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[101] Lucy *et al* 2009, pp. 430-434; for the proposed model of a regional centre, see Moreland 2000b, p. 94; for Brandon see Carr *et al* 1988; for Burrow Hill, see Fenwick 1984.

[102] Proceedings of the conference have not been published; otherwise see Ulmschneider 2000; Pestell and Ulmschneider 2003; Blackburn 2003.

[103] Yorke 2008, esp. pp. 27-28.

Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, south Derbyshire and northern Warwickshire.[104] A royal genealogy is recorded from the late 6th century onwards and, as in other kingdoms, the kings are said to have been descended from Woden.[105] Mercia's power grew significantly under the pagan king, Penda, the dates of whose reign are debated but recorded as 626-655. The devastation of Yeavering is attributed to him, as well as other incursions into Northumbria and Wessex and a number of strategic killings.[106] In this context, it is interesting that the buildings at Atcham (see below) and Yeavering closely parallel each other.

In anticipation of a discussion of other Mercian sites, it should be noted here that the power of Mercia continued to grow, and its territories and influence continued to expand. Offa, to whose reign (757-796) Hatton Rock has been tentatively attributed, claimed to be 'King of the English' and established a short-lived archbishopric at Lichfield, independent of Canterbury.[107] Offa's rule was also marked by growing investment in the arts, particularly high-quality sculpture.[108] Mercian hegemony, however, only lasted until the 9th century, when Kent and East Anglia broke away from Mercian control and Wessex rose to power, marking the decline of Mercian domination.[109]

Atcham, which we will now consider, is likely to be a product of Mercia flourishing in the early 7th century and, judging by the scale of the buildings, could have been a site of some prestige.

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[104] Brooks 1989, pp. 160-161.

[105] Ibid., p. 163. See also John 1992.

[106] Brooks 1989, p. 167; Venning 2011, pp. 52-54.

[107] Venning 2011, pp. 122-115.

[108] See Mitchell 2010; Mitchell forthcoming.

[109] Dumville 1989a, pp. 128, 130; Higham and Ryan 2013, ch. 4.

Atcham

Mercia
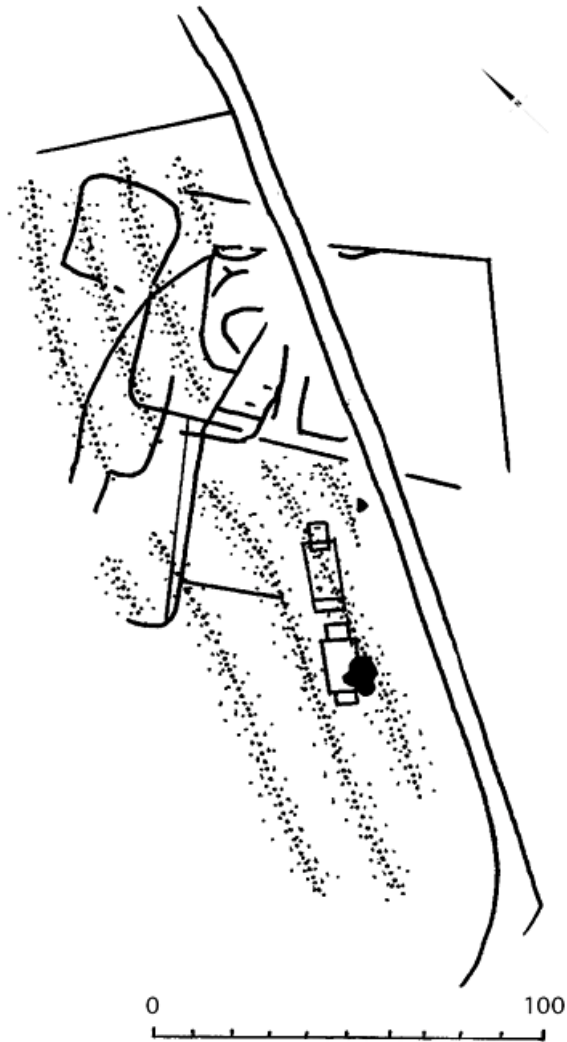
Fig. 1.13. Plan of site at Atcham (drawn from an aerial photograph), after St Joseph 1975 (unnumbered, p. 294).

The evidence here is extremely limited and can be disputed but it nevertheless indicates that in Mercia alignment was becoming a prominent feature of central sites in the same period. By contrast with the excavated sites above, Atcham is only known from aerial photographs, which makes dating very

conjectural. However, based on the size and layout of its buildings, a 7th-century date, broadly contemporary with Yeavering, has been proposed.[110]

The site is located 5km east of Shrewsbury, in modern-day Shropshire, to the west of a canal from which the ground slopes down to the flood-plain of the river Tern, 600m away. The plan recorded by J.K. St Joseph shows two evidently aligned buildings, apparently halls, with annexes at both of their short sides, built almost parallel to the slope and the canal (fig. 1.13). The southernmost building is interrupted by a later pit and there are no other visible features associated directly with the buildings, apart from the sequence of enclosures to the north-west. The dimensions of the buildings, as calculated by St Joseph, compare to those at Yeavering and Cheddar and led him to conclude that like the royal foundations there, this site is not an ordinary settlement. Furthermore, St Joseph notes that cropmark configurations of this kind are not usually found in this part of England, and may indicate external influences in western Mercia.[111] An additional explanation, which is proposed and presented in more detail below in the context of the geography of alignment, is the possibility that there was no real regional distinction between types of high-status settlements. Instead, the ruling class, whether in Northumbria, Wessex, Kent or Mercia, although employing regional features and variations, used similar architectural vocabularies and, more importantly, similar approaches to planning, to express their identity.

Unfortunately, nothing specific can be said about the use of the buildings at Atcham or communication between them, but they may have been functionally similar to the late Yeavering type, judging by the annexes at the short ends and the doors midway along the long sides.

There is a similar problem with dating at the apparently more extensive settlement at Cowage Farm, in modern-day Wiltshire, which brings us back to the

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[110] St Joseph 1975.

[111] Ibid., pp. 294-295.

kingdom of Wessex. Cowage Farm is unexcavated, known only from cropmarks and, as at Atcham, scholars have looked to typological parallels with buildings elsewhere to help with dating.

Cowage Farm

Wessex
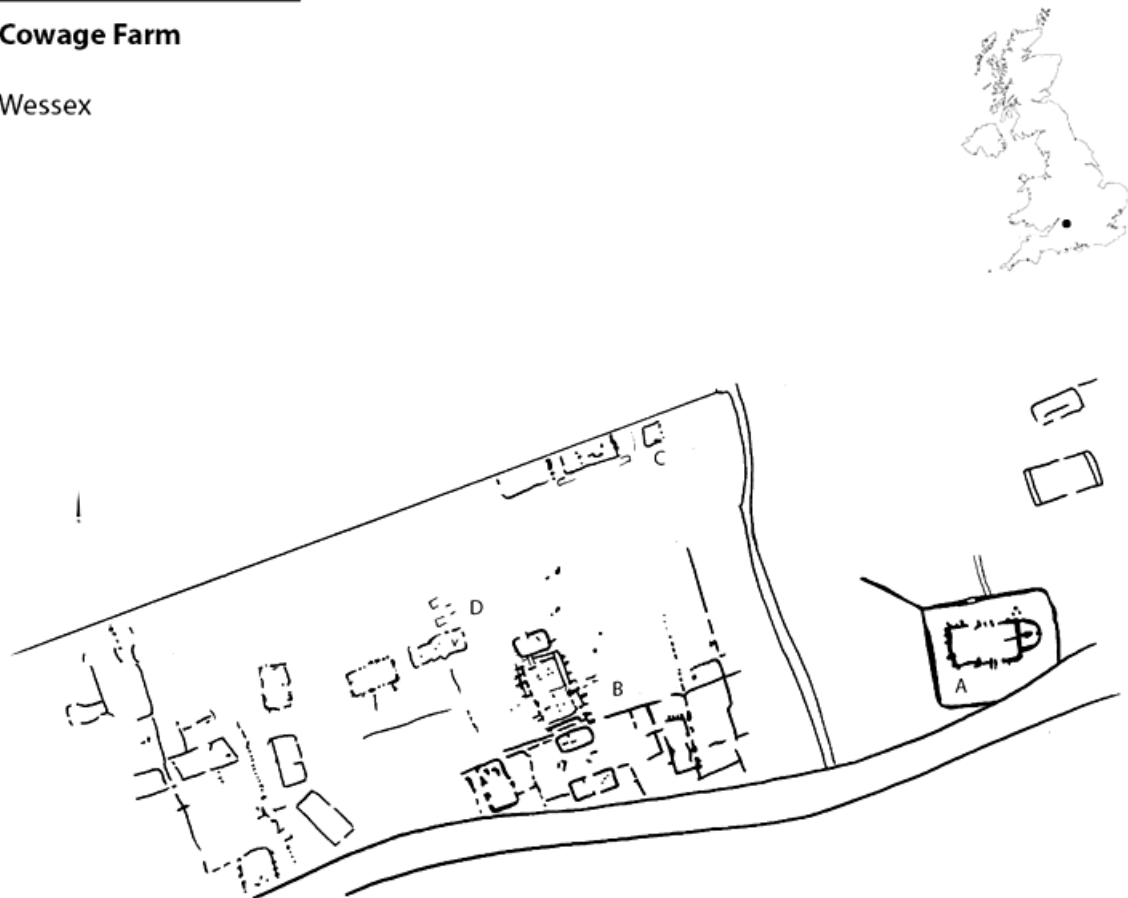
Fig. 1.14. Plan of buildings at Cowage Farm, after Hinchliffe 1986 (fig. 1, p. 241).

Cowage Farm is located on a plateau overlooking the river Avon, 3km south-west of Malmesbury. The earliest remaining charters for nearby Foxley and Easton Grey are after 1086 but this site is located close to Rodbourne and Lorston to the south, known to have been acquired by King Ine in the 8th century.[112] The site is only 2 km away from a substantial Roman settlement at White Walls and is

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[112] Sawyer 1968, p. 243.

located on the Mercian border, in a strategically important geographical location.[113] Overall, this means that Cowage Farm is very likely to have been situated in an area of some strategic significance.

The presence of over twenty buildings was indicated on this site by cropmarks. The most striking of these are building B, aligned with two satellite structures roughly on a north-south axis, and the apsed building A, isolated within an enclosure and orientated roughly east-west (fig. 1.14). Both A and B are surrounded by external post-pits, which implies that their construction was similar to halls at Yeavering and Cowdery's Down. Building A, with its eastern apse, could have been a church, whereas building B occupied a central position and could have been a hall.[114] The size, proportions and building-types of all the main buildings seem consistent with the structures found at Yeavering, Cowdery's Down, Hatton Rock, Sprouston and Milfield and indicate a date for the settlement in the 6th-7th centuries.[115] These parallels also suggest a similar high status.

The site seems to respect the ancient Foxley-Malmesbury road to the south and displays a degree of preoccupation with architectural alignment. Building B is flanked to the north and south by smaller buildings or possibly annexes, which is an unusual arrangement and could only be investigated in more detail if excavated. Further south, this group is also aligned with another building of the same size and proportions as the satellite structures. North-west of the hall B, two buildings D are accurately aligned and seem simultaneously to be a part of a further alignment, continuing west and picked up by two other aligned buildings on the same axis. These also appear to form a courtyard limited by building B to the north-east and another string of buildings on a rough north-south alignment, to the south-west. Group C, located slightly further to the north of the settlement,

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[113] Hinchliffe 1986, p. 254.

[114] Identification of structure A as a church is based only on the presence of an apse and is tentative.

[115] Hinchliffe 1986, p. 251.

also seems to consist of aligned buildings. The settlement appears to be arranged more or less accurately on a grid, in line with John Blair's discovery of grid planning from the 7th century onwards.[116]

Also in Wessex are two other sites: Drayton/Sutton Courtenay and Long Wittenham. Helena Hamerow's research has indicated that both of these belonged to a network of elite residences in 7th-century Wessex.[117] Moreover, a trackway directly connected the great halls at Sutton Courtenay and Long Wittenham, indicating a close connection between these two sites.[118]

Drayton in Oxfordshire also is largely known from cropmarks, but fortunately a series of limited excavations have been undertaken there, first by Leeds in the 1920s and more recently by Helena Hamerow.

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[116] Blair 2018, ch. 5, sp. pp. 156-163.
[117] Hamerow, Ferguson and Naylor 2013, pp. 62-64.
[118] Ibid., p. 64.
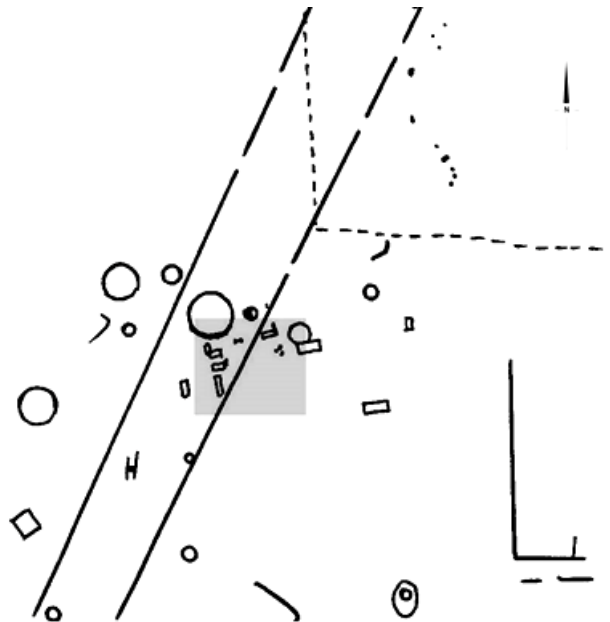
Fig. 1.15. Schematic plan of the site at Drayton/Sutton Courtenay, after Hamerow *et al* 2007 (fig. 3, p. 112).
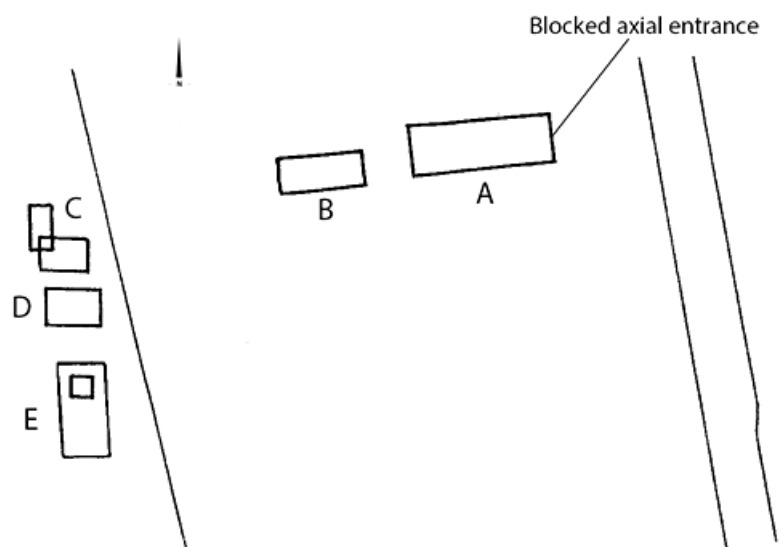
Fig. 1.16. Schematic plan of timber buildings at Drayton/Sutton Courtenay, after Hamerow *et al* 2007 (fig. 51, p. 188).

The site lies on the boundary between the parishes of Drayton and Sutton Courtenay, on a terrace that falls away to the north and north-east, down to the plain of the Thames.[119] A large group of Neolithic monuments - ring-ditches, enclosures and barrows - was constructed on this site between 3700 and 3000BC. Numerous prehistoric pits are scattered among the monuments and possibly contained early Neolithic burials. It appears that occupation lasted until the Early Bronze Age and then stopped.[120] In the Anglo-Saxon phase, the settlement seems to be part of a cluster of high-status sites in the surrounding area, including Long Wittenham, Dorchester-on-Thames, which are also connected to Drayton by roads, and cemeteries at Didcot Power Station and Milton II. There is little doubt that Sutton Courtenay itself was a royal manor.[121] Furthermore, Ipswich ware was found; west of London, this is usually taken as an indicator of wealth.[122]

The Bronze Age ring ditches and numerous small houses in the northern part of the site were excavated by E. Thurlow Leeds.[123] The Neolithic Drayton Cursus also lies within the vicinity of the site and stretches for over 1.5 km on a north-north-east/south-south-west alignment (fig. 1.15).[124]

The group of five circular ditches to the south is probably of Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age date. They were probably still visible in the Anglo-Saxon period and were superseded by a series of rectangular structures.[125] Two of the structures – A and B – are arranged in a line and orientated east-west, whereas the second sequence of three buildings, C, D and E, is perpendicular to the first. The buildings thus form a letter 'L' in plan (fig. 1.16).

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[119] Benson and Miles 1974, p. 223.

[120] Hamerow *et al* 2007, p. 114.

[121] Ibid., pp. 117, 190; Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 328, 347; For Long Wittenham and Milton II, See Hawkes 1986, note 1, pp. 88-89; for Didcot Power Station cemetery, see Boyle *et al* 1995.

[122] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, p. 327; Blinkhorn 2009.

[123] See Leeds 1923, 1927, 1947.

[124] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, p. 328.

[125] Ibid., p. 330; Hamerow *et al* 2007, p. 115.

Building A, presumably a hall (30.9x10.8), is the largest of its kind found to date in Britain and is closely followed in dimensions by Hall A4 at Yeavering (25.3x11.6), C12 at Cowdery's Down (22.1x8.8) and the great hall at Lyminge (21x8.5). The hall was built with posts in foundation trenches and shows evidence of external raking timbers, similar to those found at Cowdery's Down and Yeavering. There is also evidence of a partition at the west end of the building and possibly another one in the north-east corner. There is an axial entrance at the east end of A, which shows clear evidence of a substantial post inserted in the middle of the doorway, on the axis of the building, possibly marking the end of the building's use, as the post had decayed in situ (see fig. 1.16). There could have been entrances in the middle of the long walls, but these parts of the buildings have not been excavated. Building C is larger than an average Anglo-Saxon hall and was built in foundation trenches but with no evidence of external posts.[126] Buildings B, D and E have not been excavated, although E shows evidence of an entrance on the east side.[127]

The overall arrangement of buildings resembles that at Chalton; however, the hall A at Sutton Courtenay is much larger. Hatton Rock is perhaps a closer parallel.[128] The finds are not numerous, and this is consistent with those at high-status sites at Yeavering and Cowdery's Down. However, the ones that have been discovered help to situate the site in the 7th century. There is very little evidence of later occupation.[129]

Although the Anglo-Saxon structures do not seem to have as close a relationship with the prehistoric features at the site as, for instance, Yeavering does, a certain connection can be observed. Brennan and Hamerow point to both

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[126] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 333-339.

[127] See Benson and Miles 1974.

[128] Ibid.; Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 333-335; see below for all sites.

[129] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 339, 343.

the presence of prehistoric features and to the linear arrangement as attributes of Sutton Courtenay's high status. [130]

Drayton is roughly contemporary with Long Wittenham, and both fall within Helena Hamerow's project on the archaeology and landscape of Wessex. [131] Research on Long Wittenham has started much more recently and, although originally informed by cropmarks, now also includes limited excavated evidence. [132]

Long Wittenham

Wessex
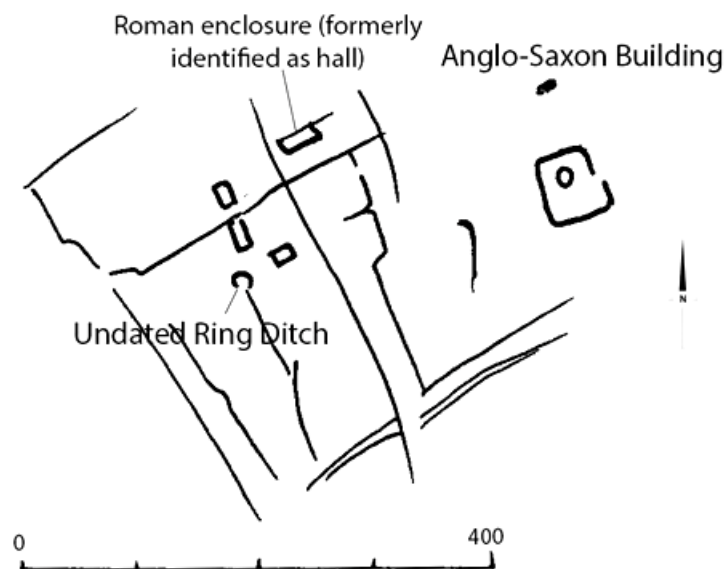
Fig. 1.17. Plan of site at Long Wittenham, after Hamerow, Ferguson and Naylor 2013 (fig. 7, p. 64).

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[130] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 329, 345.

[131] See Hamerow, Ferguson and Naylor 2013.

[132] McBride 2017; I thank Helena Hamerow for drawing my attention to this site and sharing the data.

Long Wittenham is located on a Roman trackway between Sutton Courtenay, 4.5km away, and Dorchester-on-Thames, which is known to have been a seat of the bishop of Wessex and is some 3.2km away. Two cemeteries at Wittenham have been explored but the hall complex has only recently come to the fore (fig. 1.17).[133] A number of structures, which have been recorded from cropmarks, still require further analysis. Sonia Chadwick Hawkes proposed an L-shape configuration of the three main structures visible in the cropmarks, which, although questioned by Helena Hamerow on the basis of aerial photographs and Lidar survey, has recently been confirmed by excavation.[134] To the north of the L-shaped group, what was thought to be a substantial hall turned out to be a Late Roman ditched enclosure.[135] The layout of the settlement, its connection with Sutton Courtenay and Dorchester and the size of its buildings, all indicate centralised planning. It is notable that the southernmost building is axially aligned on a ring ditch and further, that one of the pre-existing field boundaries seems to be perpendicular to and running between the two axially aligned halls. [136]

Another Wessex site, Cowdery's Down, in modern-day Hampshire, has been excavated and is now well known, having already featured in discussions of Anglo-Saxon settlements, including discussions of alignment there.[137] The site is located on the crest and southern side of a chalk ridge immediately east of Basingstoke.

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[133] Helena Hamerow, pers. comm.

[134] Hawkes 1986; Hamerow, Ferguson and Naylor 2013.

[135] For a brief excavation report, see McBride and Harrison 2016.

[136] Hamerow, Ferguson and Naylor 2013, pp. 63-64.

[137] Hamerow 2012, pp. 39-40, 103-107; Blair 2018, pp. 120-125; Reynolds 2003.

Cowdery's Down

Wessex

It was published in 1983 by Millet and James, who, in addition to excavating it, have done a lot of research to provide context for the types of Anglo-Saxon buildings found there. Their interpretation fits into the framework developed by Marshall, Millett and James, which is discussed below. It is also one of the very few sites that have been C14-dated, placing the main phase of occupation in the 6th-7th centuries.
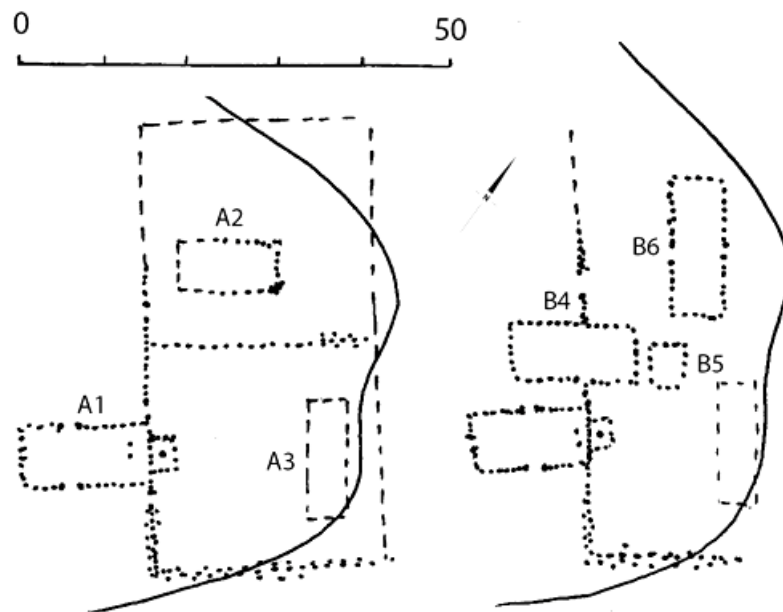
Fig. 1.18. Plan of structures at Cowdery's Down, periods 4A and 4B, after Millett and James 1983 (fig. 27, p. 194).
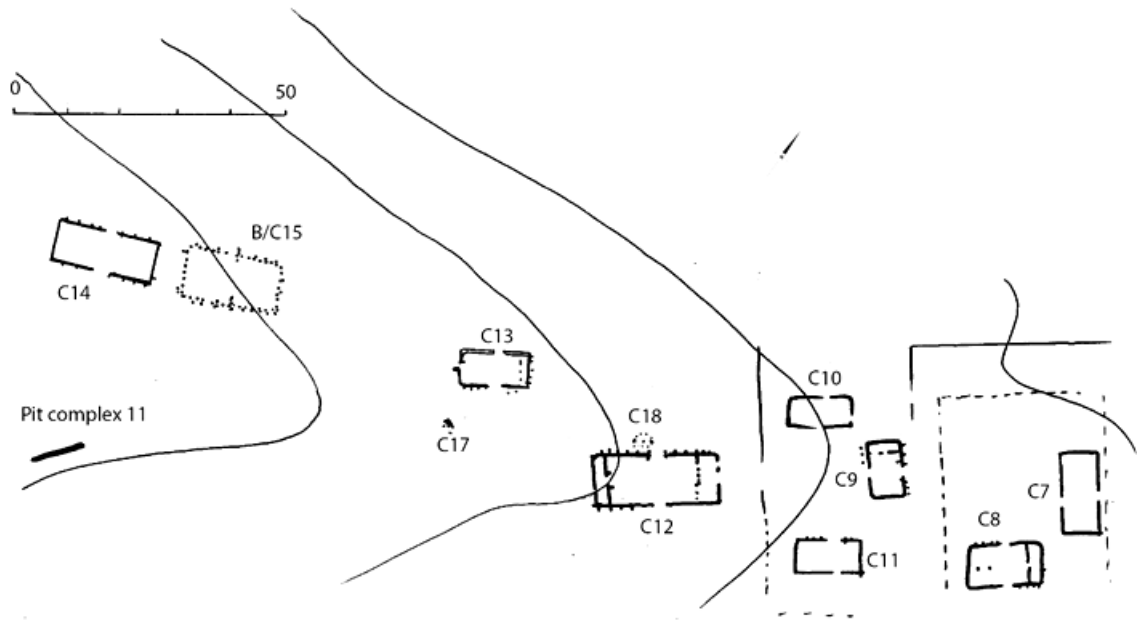
Fig. 1.19. Plan of structures at Cowdery's Down, period 4C, after Millett and James 1983 (fig. 27, p. 194).
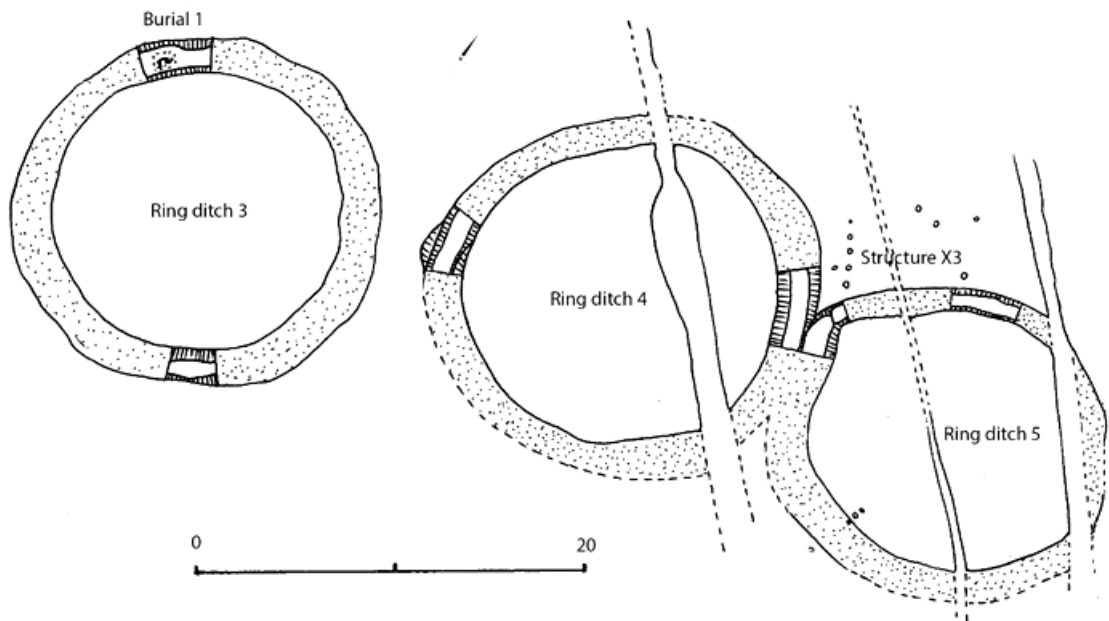
Fig. 1.20. Plan of ring ditches at Cowdery's Down, to the south of the area of excavated timber buildings, after Millett and James 1983 (fig. 11, p. 164).

The earliest notable features on the site are five early Bronze Age ring ditches, which are discussed separately in chapter 5 (fig. 1.20). At this stage, it

should be noted that the association of the Anglo-Saxon settlement with these features is of importance. To the north-west of the ditches is a large Romano-British enclosure and further north-west is the early mediaeval settlement, assigned to period 4, consisting of three phases (A, B and C), and marked by a break in continuity from the earlier Romano-British layout. The limited amount of cultural material from this first medieval phase is quite remarkable, but a small quantity of pottery has been carbon dated. The first Anglo-Saxon phase A sits within a span 580+-67 years and was quickly superseded by phase B (fig. 1.18). During this period, the phase A enclosures continued in use and, amongst other changes, a pair of aligned buildings, B4 and B5, were constructed. Building B/C15 (fig. 1.19), located further west outside the enclosures, may also belong to this period, although this is impossible to say with certainty. Phase C (609+-57) was marked by a surge of building activity and by change in both alignment and structural types: the former type of post-building was replaced with trench-construction (fig. 1.19).[138] The settlement began to expand to the west. A new enclosure containing buildings C9, C10 and C11 was created to the south-west of the original reconstructed enclosure from period A. Notably, the buildings inside both enclosures were laid out according to the same pattern. Buildings C11 and C8 are also roughly axially aligned. Further south-west, the axis of the doors of C9 seems to have been picked up in C12 outside the enclosure. C12 was a prominent building, constructed in continuous trenches, indicating heavy timbering and showing evidence of external buttressing. There are two internal partitions screening off the ends of the building and no central posts, unlike in C8 and C7, which were of similar construction but show evidence of posts along the central axis.

To the west of C12, C13 is of somewhat less regular construction but has a remarkable burial of a cow in a pit (Pit 6) immediately preceding the entrance in

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[138] Millett and James 1983, p. 195.

its short western end. It has been suggested that this burial had a sacred role and protective function, perhaps that of a foundation sacrifice.[139] Unlike the majority of buildings, which had entrances midway along the long walls, C13 and C12 are the only two that had a third entrance on one of the short sides. These entrances, however, face different ways. The eastern entrance into C12 seems to be associated with the gap in the enclosure wall and the cross-axis of C9 to the north-east.

Finally, the alignment of C14 and B/C15 is very pronounced. B/C15 is difficult to date as it shares features of both periods B (post-hole construction) and C (external post-holes adjacent to alternate post-holes in long walls, similar to C14). However, whatever its age, it was definitely spatially associated with C14. C14 was trench-built and had doors set precisely midway in the long walls and a partition 8m in from the east end of the building. The partition also could have served as a roof support. Building B/C15 was very similar to C14, with doors in the middle of the long walls and a partition at the west end. The two buildings were axially aligned, and their internal layouts mirror each other; they also seem to have had lighter roofs than other buildings on the site.[140]

The historic and cultural contexts of the site are speculative, but the sizes of buildings and the distribution of entrances suggest non-agricultural purposes and a possible high status. The pair of C14 and B/C15 is the only possible exception and could have been agricultural, judging by the light construction of the buildings. The focal structures in each period – A1, B4 and C12 – were either communal or associated with the 'chief'. Although the site itself is relatively small, the sizes of the largest buildings at Cowdery's Down are comparable to those at Yeavering and Malmesbury, by analogy hinting at a prominent status for this site.[141]

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[139] Millett and James 1983, p. 221.

[140] Ibid., pp. 221-2, 243.

[141] Ibid., pp. 248-249.

Post-700 sites

Hatton Rock is in modern-day Warwickshire, in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. Our knowledge of this site is very limited but small-scale excavations have been conducted and a Middle Anglo-Saxon date has been tentatively proposed. The arguments are introduced in this section; however, the site will be re-assessed later as it stands outside the context of other sites where alignment features prominently.

Hatton Rock

Mercia
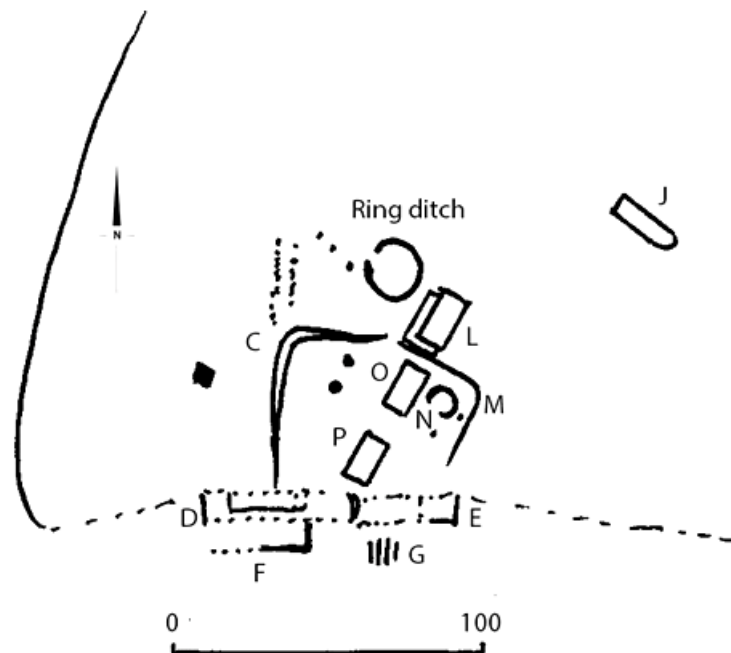
Fig. 1.21. Proposed phases of plan of site at Hatton Rock (drawn from aerial photographs), after Rahtz 1970 (fig. 3, p. 141).

The site is located on a spur overlooking the Avon, 4.5 km north-east of Stratford-upon-Avon. As the information about this site has been gathered from

aerial reconnaissance it is imprecise – the measurements are approximate and the dating is based on the grand scale of the buildings and an assumption that they would have been constructed during the period of Mercian supremacy under Offa (757-796).[142] Their linear arrangement, however, is more certain. Philip Rahtz has proposed two phases of construction. The first includes the axially aligned buildings D – possibly with a later or earlier stage of the same building visible on the footprint inside the walls – and E, with similarly aligned structures F and G to the south (fig. 1.21). The second stage includes buildings L, O and P, all of which are arranged in a line and positioned more or less on a south-west-north-east axis. Whatever the precise dimensions of the buildings, their sizes are comparable with those of the halls at Cheddar and Yeavering and they are likely to have been of a similar status.[143] Furthermore, a possible royal context is indicated by references to Hatton Rock and Hampton Lucy in two charters of 781. The references suggest that this land belonged to a royal estate with a palace nearby, at Wellesbourne.[144] Thus, although this site is likely to have been of significance, its chronology is unclear, with dates ranging from the 7th c, suggested by a proposed parallel with Yeavering, to the 8th c, indicated by the charters, to the 9th c, from a comparison with the earliest halls at Cheddar.[145]

Very small-scale excavations to the west of ditch C in February 1970 revealed some finds, including bones and sherds of Saxon pottery, similar to those occurring in non-Christian Saxon contexts at Sutton Courtenay and Bourton-on-the-Water; from these the likelihood of a Middle Saxon date, compatible with a survival of paganism, has been proposed.[146] However, this is

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[142] Rahtz 1970, pp. 140, 142.

[143] Further discussion of relationships between size of the hall and its status follows in Appendix 3.

[144] Rahtz 1970, p. 139. S120 (Sawyer 1968, [http://www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/120.html], accessed 15 December 2018) and CS 241, Finberg 1972, pp 95-96.

[145] Rahtz 1970, p. 137.

[146] Ibid., p. 142.

problematic, given the extremely limited knowledge of the survival of paganism in Anglo-Saxon England.[147]

As will be clear from the sites discussed below, alignment at earlier settlements is much more pronounced than in post-8th-century contexts. In this respect, Hatton Rock, with its precisely arranged buildings, looks more like a 7th-century site than a later one. This argument is presented more fully in Appendix 3.

The sites below, as we will see, are less numerous and not as consolidated in terms of chronology but seem to continue the trend of correlation between alignment and status, as well as occurrence across a very broad geographical area, encompassing different kingdoms. The earliest site in this group, where alignment can be dated to the second half of the 8th century, is Wicken Bonhunt, published by Wade in 1980 but contextualised and discussed by Reynolds in the early 2000s.[148]

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[147] On the evidence for paganism in Anglo-Saxon England, see Wilson 1992; Hutton 2013; Meaney 1995; Dunn 2010; Blair 1995a; Pluskowski 2011.
[148] Wade 1980; Reynolds 2002, p. 140.
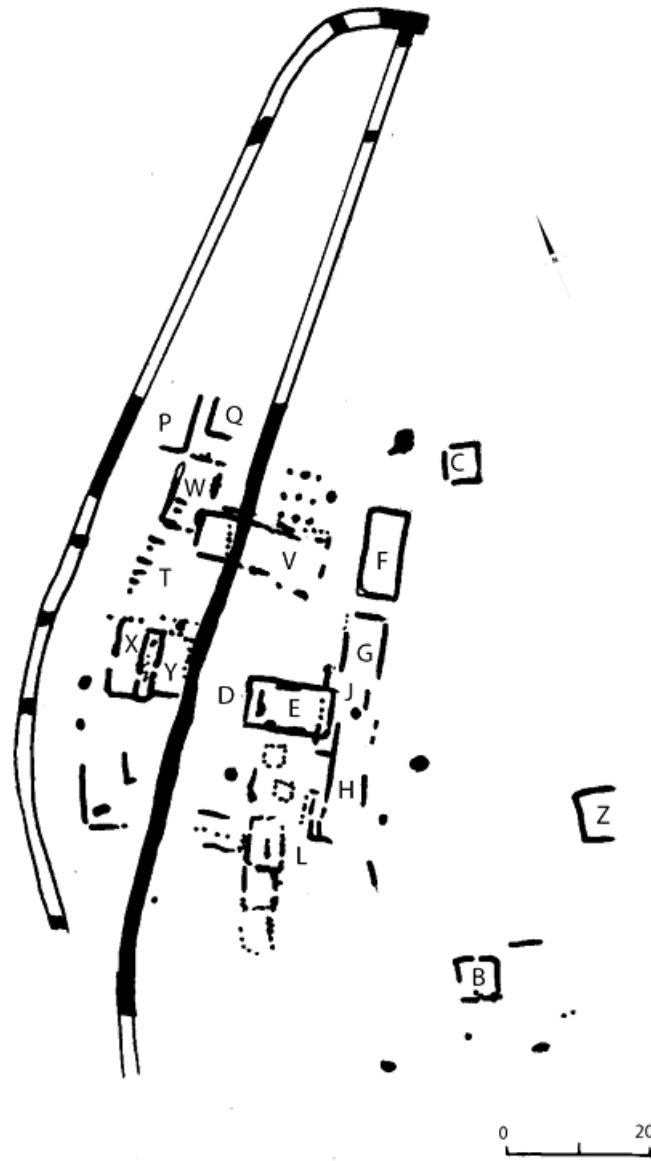
Fig. 1.22. Plan of Wicken Bonhunt, after Wade 1980 (fig. 38, p. 97).

Wicken Bonhunt is located in the north-west corner of Essex, on a south-facing valley slope towards one of the tributaries of the Cam.

The site has been excavated but unfortunately, has not been fully published. It shows evidence of occupation from the Mesolithic period to the 13th century. The earliest evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation dates to the 6th-early 7th centuries, although the earliest surviving structures are of a later date. 28 of the excavated structures have been ascribed dates after the mid-7th century, but within the middle Saxon period.[149] There are three types of structures on the site – post-hole construction, foundation-trench construction and, most unusual of all, construction with post-holes together with short lengths of foundation trench. The latter is only paralleled in Maxey and Catholme.[150] The excavator is hesitant to propose functions for the buildings, although he suggests that some may have been workshops, barns and byres and that at least a part of building V was used for domestic purposes (fig. 1.22). He also points out that the alignment of buildings indicates an organised and deliberate approach to planning and a degree of authority. It seems that the original boundary, running south-west to north-east and dividing the excavated area into two halves, at some stage was pushed further north-west as the settlement expanded. Buildings Q, W and X seem to have been arranged roughly in a line between the two boundary ditches, following their course. On the other side of the old boundary is a similar string of buildings F, G, H and J, arranged on a parallel line almost parallel to the boundary but set further away from it. The plans of buildings G, H and J overlap, suggesting two phases and also pointing towards a certain interest in retaining the alignment.

The great number of finds includes a substantial quantity of animal bones, pottery and Continental imports. The latter suggest a possible high status for this settlement. The evidence, however, still does not make it possible to interpret the function of Wicken Bonhunt with any certainty. Place-name analysis indicates a possible hunting function for Wicken Bonhunt, which could point to royal

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[149] Wade 1980.

[150] For Maxey, see Addyman *et al* 1964; for Catholme, see Webster and Cherry 1976.

patronage. Although speculative, this hypothesis would also point to a privileged status for the settlement.

Following the middle Saxon phase, the settlement was abandoned until the 11th century and then rebuilt with a completely different layout. [151]

In the context of this chapter, both Hatton Rock and Wicken Bonhunt lie in-between the fairly well-defined pre-8th-century group and the late Anglo-Saxon sites with alignment. The dating, of course, is conjectural, but if these two sites do belong to this intermediate period, they may indicate a drop in interest in alignment following the busy 7th century, preceding a renewed interest in the pre-Norman Conquest period.

The following group consists of five sites located in Wessex and Mercia. Although there is evidence at all five for occupation in earlier periods, alignment is present only from the 10th century onwards.

The first and perhaps the earliest of this group is Faccombe Netherton in the kingdom of Wessex, modern-day Hampshire. This site was first excavated in the late 1980s and was revisited by Andrew Reynolds in 2002. Alignment here seems to have been introduced in the early 10th century.

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[151] Wade 1980.

Faccombe Netherton

Wessex
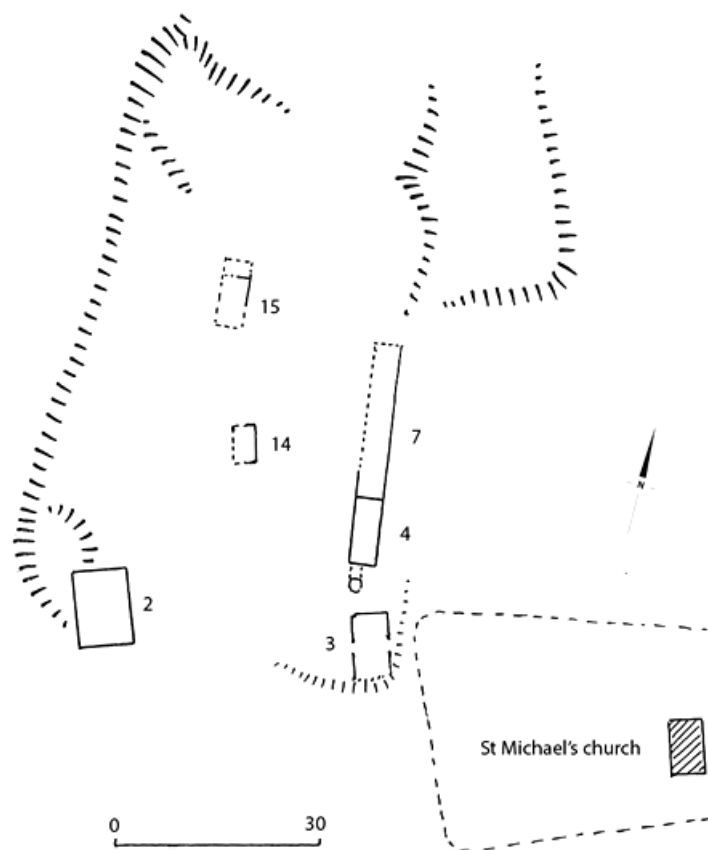
Fig. 1.23. Plan of settlement at Faccombe Netherton in ca 940-980, after Fairbrother 1990 (fig. 3.3., p. 60).
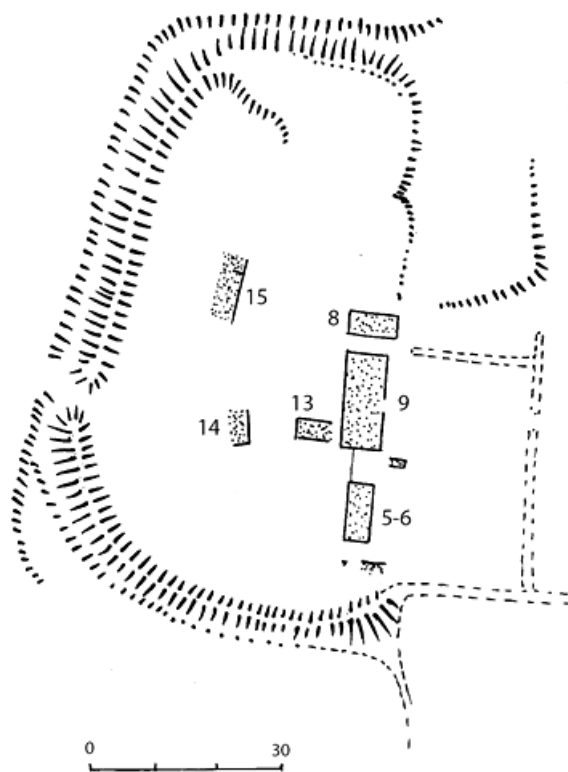
Fig. 1.24. Plan of site at Faccombe Netherton in ca 980-1070, after Reynolds 2002 (Fairbrother 1990, fig. 3.5, p. 64).

The site is situated on the north-east edge of Salisbury plain, north-west of the river Test. Walbury Hill, located to the north, has a fort, and there are a number of round barrows nearby. Although Faccombe is surrounded by places showing prehistoric activity, there is no evidence of this at Faccombe itself. Nor is there any evidence of Roman and early Saxon occupation.

Anglo-Saxon occupation began around 850AD with the construction of an aisled timber hall, followed by a residential building in ca 920. This land was received as a wedding gift by a certain Wynflaed, who could have been King Edgar's grandmother, and was bequeathed to him in her will of ca 950.[152] She would have owned the land during the initial phases of construction. In the subsequent period, from ca 940 to 980, hall 2 was still in use, and building 4 was

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[152] Finberg 1964, pp. 44, 168, 173.

constructed to the north of building 3, followed by either an enclosure, or, more likely, another building 7, lying adjacent to the north, and stretching northwards precisely on the same alignment (fig. 1.23). Thus, the spatial arrangement of the whole site changed dramatically, and the dominant south-north line, which was to be maintained in subsequent periods, appeared for the first time. At this stage, the excavator proposes that the land may have passed on either to Wynflaed's son, Eadmer, or to her grandson, Eadwold.[153]

The following period, 980-1070, displays a particular interest in alignment, with buildings 5-6 replacing 4 and a new hall 9, followed by building 8, constructed to the north (fig. 1.24). The new hall was post-in-trench-built, narrow and aisleless and seems to have been technically less developed than its predecessor 2. This hall is of a similar type to those found in Cheddar and Goltho, although of a later date.[154] It is not well preserved but there could have been an entrance on the south side, facing 5-6. Building 8 was constructed on posts set in pits and its use is unknown. Building 5, replaced by 6 of the same configuration in 925-940, could have been a 'camera' (residential building), with a latrine and a kitchen 6.2 located to the south. There was a large solitary post, possibly a flag staff, to the south of the range. However, it was not aligned with the axis of the buildings.[155] In the Saxo-Norman period, 1070-1180, the linear layout was abandoned and a new hall was erected (not on plan).

There are interesting anachronisms in construction: individual post-hole buildings, like structures 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10, are characteristic of the Iron Age and the early Saxon period. Examples are to be found at Chalton, Bishopstone, Cowdery's Down and Mucking. Exceptional late Saxon instances occur at Cheddar, North Elmham and Portchester. The unusual shallow slot construction

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[153] See Fairbrother 1990.

[154] For Goltho, see Beresford 1982 and 1987.

[155] Fairbrother 1990, fig. 4.12.

of building 3 is only paralleled in North Elmham and nowhere else.[156] The marked linearity of architectural arrangement at the site occurs within a limited time-frame, from 940 to 1070. It does not survive the Conquest and would appear to be associated with noble or possibly royal patronage. The excavator, however, explains the development of the south-north axis as an expression of a desire to give a clear view of the church located to the south-east.[157]

Unfortunately, the foundations are not well preserved. This makes reconstruction of doorways difficult and therefore limits our interpretation of the use of these buildings as a complex.[158]

The second site in the group is a slightly later – late 10th-century – instance of the alignment of two structures and, very curiously, possibly the church nearby, at Sulgrave in Northamptonshire, in the kingdom of Mercia. The site lies within a ringwork in the western part of the village of Sulgrave, which now comprises two manor complexes. The excavations are not complete, which means that the data is rather sporadic.

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[156] Fairbrother 1990, pp. 190-191; for Bishopstone, see Bell 1977; for Mucking – Hamerow 1993; for North Elmham – Wade-Martins 1980. The other sites can be found in this chapter.
[157] Fairbrother 1990, p. 65.
[158] Ibid. p. 198.
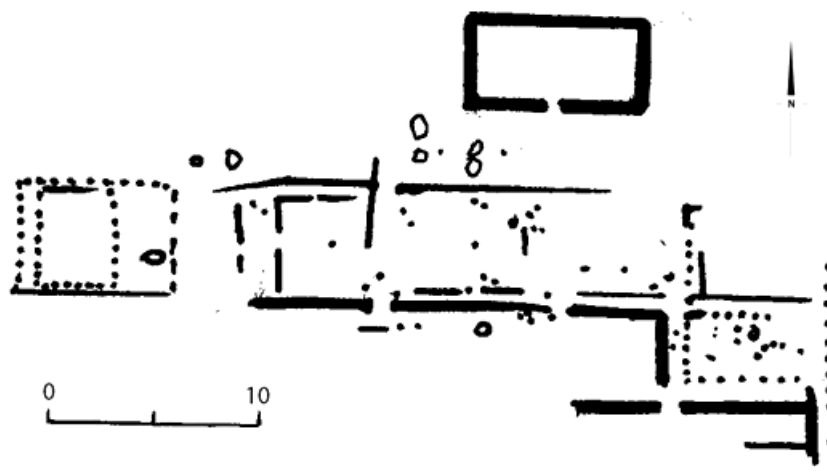
Fig. 1.25. Plan of buildings at Sulgrave, after Davison 1977 (fig. 3, p. 110).

The main features of the site are a large timber hall and a smaller timber building to its west, axially aligned (fig. 1.25). The earliest dateable find from the site is a coin of 970, which situates the construction of the timber buildings in the second half of the 10th century. The hall was rebuilt sometime around 1000 and subsequently superseded by a stone hall, which cannot be dated precisely but is likely to have been erected in the middle of the 11th century. The site was completely abandoned by ca 1140.[159]

The pre-Conquest hall consisted of five bays, with what appears to be a cross-wing at its eastern end. Access seems to have been through an open porch at the west end, which led into a service room, divided from the rest of the hall by a partition. To the west of the hall and axially aligned with it was another timber building, which could have served as a kitchen.[160] At the east end, the

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[159] Davison 1977, pp. 106-109.
[160] Davison 1968, p. 306.

south wall, of timber construction for most of its length, was continued in limestone slabs. This part of the wall does not overlay any previous structures and seems to have been an integral part of the building. This wall then turned south at a right angle and seems to have created the limits of some dwelling quarters at the east end of the hall. Alternatively, the excavator suggests, these could have been discrete buildings. The alterations of the hall and the site that followed in the 11th century indicate defensive purposes.

The next site in the group, the only one that bears a strong association with a Roman foundation, is located at Portchester, Hampshire. Where other sites show strong links with prehistoric settlements and only sporadic evidence of some Roman occupation, this site, a fort, could not be more Roman. The site also differs from the others in being rather densely built up, perhaps resulting from the necessity to fit into a limited area defined by Roman fort. Alignment here therefore needs to be approached with care, as, by contrast with other sites where planning was not restricted, it is likely to be a part of systematised geometric planning rather than a stand-alone feature.

Portchester

Wessex
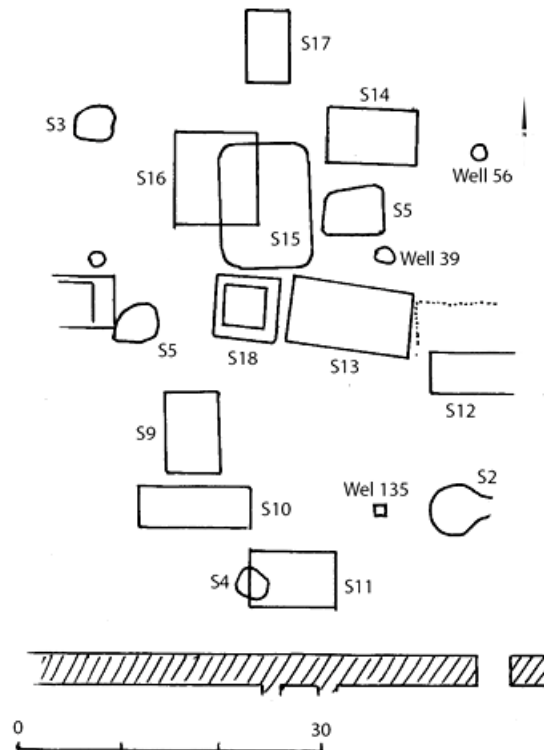
Fig. 1.26. Plan of Saxon structures at Portchester Castle, after Cunliffe 1976 (fig. 9, p. 34).

The site is located at the head of Portsmouth Harbour, 6km north-west of Portsmouth, and is mostly known for being a Roman fort, which was continuously occupied into the 5th century, and at some point became a Saxon settlement.[161]

The evidence of subsequent Saxon occupation at Portchester spans the period between the 5th and the 11th centuries. The earliest stages of Saxon settlement show continuity from the Roman period and are mostly limited to

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[161] Cunliffe 1976, ii, p. 301.

wells, pits and Grübenhäuser.[162] The earliest noticeable alignments occur in the late 8th-mid-9th centuries, in the form of the roughly east-west alignment of building S10 and the rebuilt Roman well 135, and in the 10th century with the construction of buildings S15 and S17 on the same roughly north-south axis (fig. 1.26). Building S17 is of individual post construction type and shows evidence of subsequent rebuildings on the same spot. S15, later succeeded by S16, is not only the only aisled structure on the site but is also of an unusual shape with rounded corners. The excavator suggests that S15 could have been a hall of some status.[163] Building S15 is of post-in-trench construction, which is consistent with hall-construction in south-eastern Britain, at Cheddar, North Elmham, Chalton and Bishopstone, and elsewhere. The dates of these case studies, however, are scattered, ranging from the 3rd-4th century for Bishopstone, 6th-7th for Chalton, 7th-9th for Elmham and 10th-11th for Cheddar.[164]

A more interesting case of alignment is that of building S13 and the first phase of S18. S18 is thought to be a masonry tower, with two phases, and a group of regularly distributed postholes in the interior, which indicate the presence of either internal galleries or temporary scaffoldings. The tower is interpreted as having had religious associations, partly due to its evident connection with the cemetery to the north, which evolved during the first phase of occupation, post-dating hall S15, and partly from a perceived likeness to the church towers at Sulgrave and Earl's Barton.[165] The tower building also coincides with the posthole complex B, which, although impossible to date, suggests the presence of an earlier structure here. Building 13 is the only structure on site showing evidence of external buttressing – a feature which is associated with high-status

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[162] Cunliffe 1976, pp. ii, 121-122, 301-302.
[163] Ibid., ii, p. 126.
[164] Ibid., ii, p. 58.
[165] Ibid., ii, pp. 51, 60, 303.

Northumbrian halls.[166] However, the excavator proposes its relatively mundane use as a kitchen and, on the basis of pottery finds and the building's spatial relationship with the surrounding buildings, a 10th-century date, which is considerably later than other buildings of this type elsewhere.[167] Notably, none of the buildings on this site show any evidence of particular spatial connections: they seem to have generic entrances in the middle of long walls and thus, their alignments do not appear to be as purposefully directed as those, for instance, at Chalton or Cowdery's Down.

The wealth of Portchester in the 9th century is implied by finds of Saxon coins and a glass vessel of Eastern Mediterranean origin, although there is no documentary evidence to support this supposition. At the same time, from 904 onwards, Portchester was owned by King Edward the Elder and could have been used as a point of defence against the Danes, followed by the construction of S15 and subsequent buildings, which could indicate the establishment of a manor. In this context, S18 could have been built as a bell-tower and might be taken as indicating the increasing status of the site.[168]

Another late Anglo-Saxon site excavated some decades ago but not discussed as a site with alignment until Reynolds noticed it and included in his 2002 publication 'Later Anglo-Saxon England', is Raunds Furnells in Northamptonshire.[169] Until then, the focus was largely on the church and the churchyard next to the site of the manor-house and on the relationship between the church and the manor rather than on the planning of the manor itself.[170]

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[166] See James, Marshall and Millett 1984, Rahtz 1976a and Hope-Taylor 1977 (sp. pp. 248, 269, 271 on high status of halls) on types of hall and Northumbrian hall.

[167] Cunliffe 1976, ii, pp. 33-38, 126.

[168] On relationship between tower and status, see Cunliffe 1976, ii, pp. 302-303; on towers in Anglo-Saxon England and their status, see also Shapland 2018, ch. 5.

[169] See Reynolds 2002.

[170] See Cadman 1983; Boddington 1987; Boddington et al 1996.

Following Reynolds' observation, a discussion of the alignment of the secular structures is included here.

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Raunds

Mercia

Structures north of H and J later replaced by the manor-house

Churches

0   20
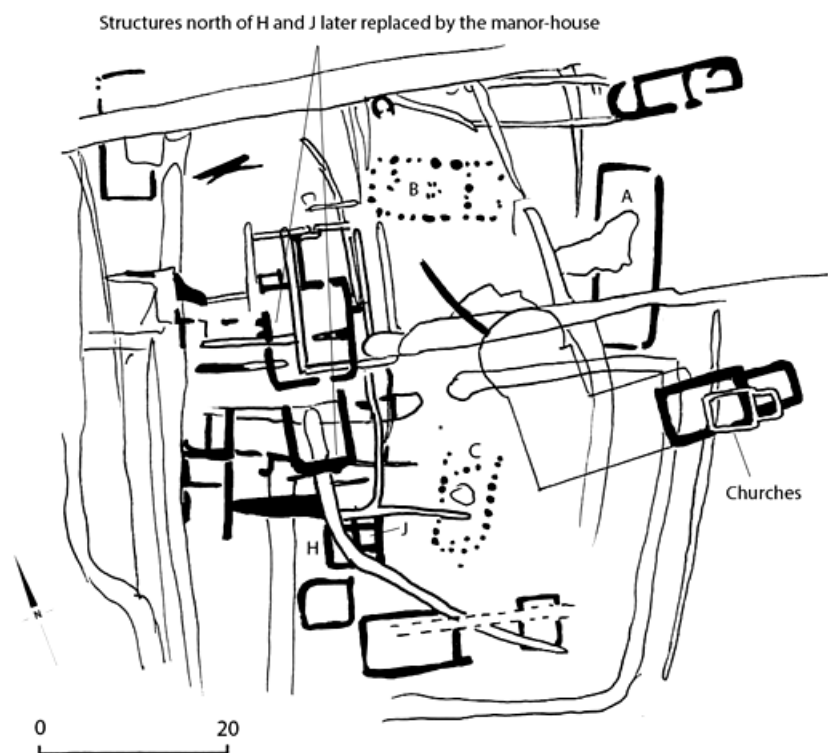
Fig. 1.27. General site plan at Raunds Furnells, after Cadman 1983 (fig. 2, p.110).
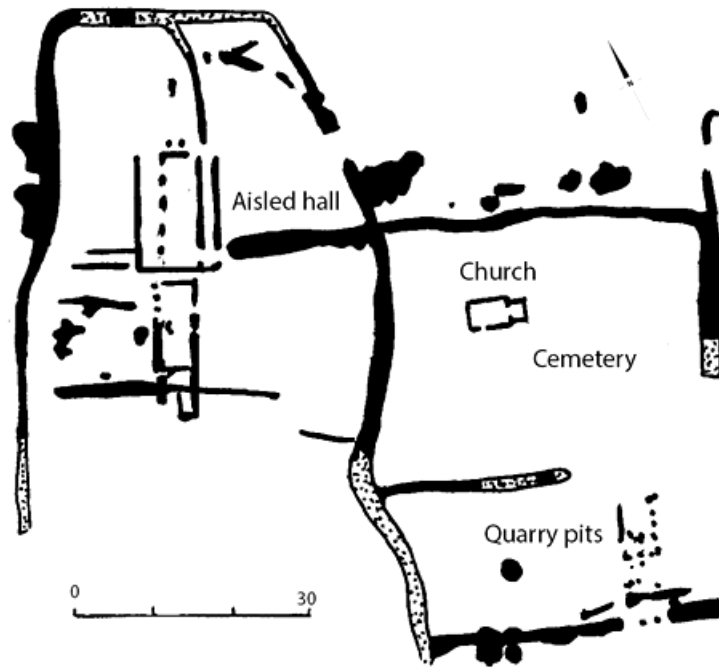
Fig. 1.28. Plan of Raunds Furnells, 11th c, after Reynolds 2002 (fig. 57, p. 133).

The site lies about 32 km from Northampton, close to the head of the valley of Raunds Brook and the valley of a small tributary of the Nene. The site was continuously occupied from the 6th to the late 15th century. A group of buildings within an enclosure was present by the end of the 7th century, while the church, located to the east and outside the enclosure, appeared in the late 9th or early 10th century.[171]

The earliest - 7th-century - period of occupation is characterised by small buildings which were replaced by three larger buildings – a bow-sided hall A and two smaller buildings B and C (fig. 1.27). The hall had a trench foundation and may have had external buttresses. Two of the buildings were orientated roughly south-north and one east-west. No axial alignment has been observed in this phase but the overall arrangement of structures seems very regular and suggests a systematic approach.

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[171] Boddington *et al* 1996, p. 5.

Towards the end of the middle Saxon period this group was replaced with a ditched enclosure containing four buildings. Their layout was very different from the preceding phase but also grid-like. At some point during the 9th and 10th centuries, a new building appeared to the north of building H – one of the enclosure group - and may have incorporated H, eventually resulting in the construction of the remaining structure J (fig. 1.27). Further north and outside the enclosure ditch, which at this stage was filled in, a timber post structure was built. This structure was soon replaced by, or incorporated into, a larger aisled building on the same north-south alignment. At both stages, the structures were in line with the building H. It is not clear whether this was still standing or replaced by J. This aisled structure is thought to be contemporary with the church, with a cemetery built to the east, and may have continued in use until the 11th century (fig. 1.28). During the second half of the 12th century the site was levelled and a manor-house – the residence of the De Furneus family in 12th-13th centuries - was built on the same alignment and roughly on the same site as the aisled hall. There was a cross-passage to the south of the main hall, separating a large room from the main building.[172]

Raunds is a classic example of the simultaneous development of a church and a manor and helps to shed light on the genesis of the Saxon and Medieval manorial system.[173] The character of alignment at Raunds is not as obvious as at other sites discussed in this chapter, but a certain persistence can be observed, namely construction on a north-south line suggested by buildings H, J, the structure to the north and the aisled hall which replaced this structure and then was superseded by the 12th-century hall.

The case of Raunds Furnells takes us into the post-Conquest period, to which the last site – Cheddar in Somerset – belongs.

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[172] For all of the above – see Cadman 1983.
[173] Reynolds 2002, p. 132; Cadman 1983, p. 121.

Cheddar is probably a product of very different cultural and political processes: although the site originated in the late Anglo-Saxon period, the structures we are touching on were reconstructed after the Norman Conquest. The site has two axially aligned halls and it must be questioned whether this alignment is of a kind similar to other sites discussed above and whether they were, in line with Stephen Heywood's thinking, although Norman in terms of chronology, nevertheless Anglo-Saxon in thinking.[174]

Cheddar

Wessex
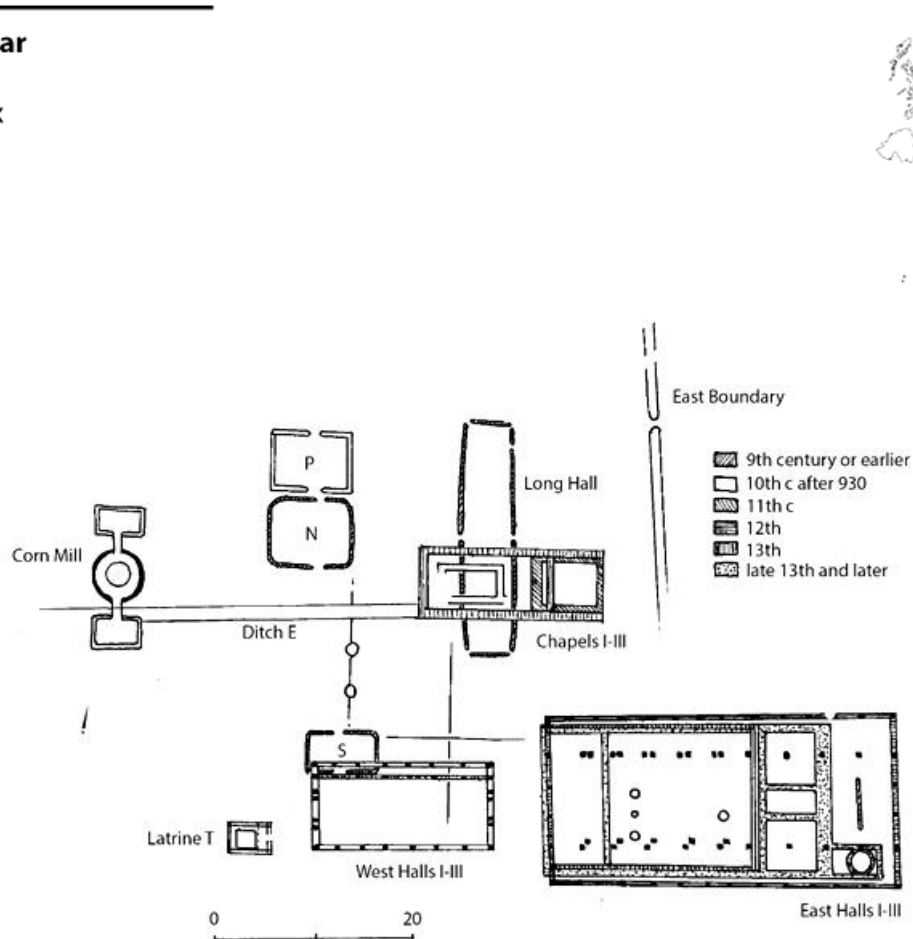
Fig. 1.29. Plan of buildings at Cheddar, after Rahtz 1962 (fig. 18, p. 56).

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[174] See Heywood 2006, p. 2. The debate around the transition between what is considered Anglo-Saxon and Norman, considering it could not have been an overnight change in style, is particularly sensitive in relation to the round towers of East Anglia, often cautiously labelled as 'Saxo-Norman'. At the same time, this debate draws attention to the notion of cultural and stylistic inertia, which means that certain means of construction and modes of planning could have (and are likely to have) continued after a formally announced political and cultural shift.

The site is well researched and located 183m north-west of the church of St Andrew, which marks the possible location of a monastery and also an important Roman site. There is, however, no direct prehistoric or Roman background to the palace complex.[175] The existence of a royal palace at Cheddar is well documented, beginning with the first reference to it in King Alfred's will and continuing after the Norman Conquest. Archaeologically, the history of the Anglo-Saxon site begins in the 9th century and continues into the later Middle Ages. The substantial scale of the buildings found at the site, especially the series of east halls, points towards their high status. The excavator has subdivided the development of Cheddar into 6 phases, of which phase 4, which covers the 12th century, is the most interesting in terms of alignment. The 12th century is marked by the likely coexistence of West Hall III and East Hall I, although it is also possible that West Hall III just preceded East Hall I.[176] These buildings are aligned roughly on an east-west axis and constitute the architectural focus of the site in this period (fig. 1.29). Unfortunately, although 12th-century records confirm there was still a royal residence at Cheddar in this period, none mentions any building activity.[177]

West Hall III, the last incarnation of the West Hall sequence of rebuildings, was of a uniform post-built construction and had entrances at its short ends. East Hall I was a post-hole-built aisled structure with a possible dais or inner gallery at the east end and a western entrance, facing West Hall III.[178] Even if these two structures did coexist, this situation does not seem to have lasted long and at the beginning of the 13th century the East Hall was rebuilt, whereas the West Hall seems to have fallen out of use. Interestingly, both halls and chapels tended to be rebuilt on the same site – a similar trend also occurred at Flixborough.[179]

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[175] Rahtz 1979, pp. 371-2.
[176] Ibid., p. 150.
[177] Colvin 1963, pp. 908-909; Rahtz 1979, p. 18.
[178] Rahtz 1979, pp. 148-151, 170-174.
[179] See below, pp. 124-128.

Similarly, the 9th-century building N was replaced with the 10th-century building P, which had a similar function and was built on the same axis but further north. Again, a similar phenomenon is observed at Flixborough.[180] Up until the 12th century, however, the key elements of the group seem to be parallel rather than aligned.

Cheddar has commonly been considered a secular site and has been presented as such here, but anticipating the concluding section of this chapter, where 'borderline' cases are discussed, it should be pointed out that this definition has been challenged by John Blair, who has argued that Cheddar was a monastic site.[181]

Before touching on the complex issue of what can be considered secular and ecclesiastical in Anglo-Saxon England, based on archaeological evidence, let us summarise the trends that have become evident so far.

Outcomes for further exploration

Despite the fact that we do not have complete settlements excavated, we can be fairly certain that in each case we are looking at the central buildings of the settlement – the largest and the most prominent structures. The buildings are laid out in relation to each other, and their alignment could be a result of a decision made with deliberation and a result of planning, however tentative this proposal may be. At the same time, it is noticeable that all the sites described above, again, however tentatively, have been identified as royal or elite. Importantly, such identification has been proposed in many cases independently by different scholars. This overlap between status and alignment may not be a coincidence. As Helena Hamerow has demonstrated, poorer settlements were characterised by their lack of stability, as they constantly and rather erratically moved following the grazing of pasture. The plans of Mucking and West Stow, for

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[180] Rahtz 1962, pp. 53-61.
[181] See Blair 1996, pp. 108-121.

example, demonstrate a more or less complete lack of planning. By contrast, higher-status settlements, such as the ones presented above, display a much greater degree of planning, which could relate to the fact that planning decisions were made in a centralised manner.[182]

This chapter also seems to indicate that, chronologically, there were at least two key phases in the development of alignment: the first started around 600AD, and the second encompassed the late Anglo-Saxon period, leading up to the Conquest. As has already been proposed, two 8th-century sites appear to hold a transitional position between the much more defined earlier and later groups. Putting numbers to this observation, among the secular sites, the majority (61%) date to the pre-700 period, with a smaller group (28%) belonging to the Late Saxon period and only two sites founded in the 8th century.[183]
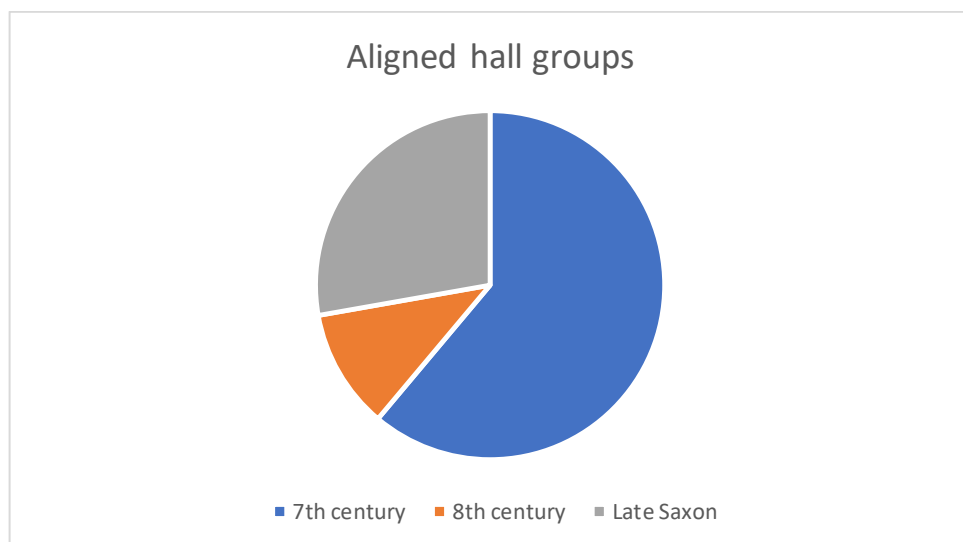
Graph 1.1. Chronological distribution of aligned hall groups in Anglo-Saxon England.

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[182] Hamerow 2010, pp. 59-60. On high-status settlements and regularity of their planning, see Blair 2018, ch. 4, sp. pp. 114-125.
[183] Of these 8th-century sites, one – at Hatton Rock – could be earlier, which would thus expand the pre-700 group. See Appendix 3.

The prominence of the 7th-century sites in the whole group is undeniable, and although it is difficult to be specific about dating, it is possible to say that the earliest sites in the pre-700 group appear ca 600.

The reason for the appearance of alignment at this time is difficult to determine. It could be said that this is merely due to the overarching lack of evidence for settlements from the earlier period.[184] On the other hand, this period was a time of big changes, and it is equally reasonable to propose that alignment was introduced in this period, following the migration (however it was conducted), the establishment of kingdoms, changes in types of buildings and settlements and even Christianisation. In short, the appearance of alignment in this period is unlikely to have been a random occurrence.

It has already been noted that the sites are distributed widely across modern-day England and southern Scotland, encompassing a number of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The map below shows the distribution of the sites across the territories of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The best way to assess the impact of geography on the sites in question is by GIS analysis.

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[184] See Hamerow 2012, pp. 70-72.

Map. 1.1. Schematic map of distribution of secular sites with alignment.

As this map immediately demonstrates, secular sites with alignment seem widely spread out across England and southern Scotland, with most in the south and an outlying group in the north-east. The majority of the sites is located on the former territories of Wessex (8), Mercia (6) and Northumbria (4) and overall are not confined to the territory of any particular kingdom. It should also be noted that the sites which have been identified as royal settlements are located in Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria and Kent, and are associated with a number of powerful royal families, rather than with any specific geographic region. This

raises the question as to whether there may be any direct correlation between alignment and royal patronage. This question is addressed again below, although the answer is nuanced by the recent identification of Rendlesham, as the East Anglian royal seat, where to date only one hall has been identified and there is no sign of alignment.

Both geographically and temporally, the appearance of sites with alignment seems to be consistent with the peaks of wealth and power of the ruling dynasties in these polities. So the royal vills in Northumbria and Kent have been given a *terminus ante quem* of ca 650, which is consistent with the dominant positions of these kingdoms in the changing theatre of Anglo-Saxon politics. The possible royal estate at Hatton Rock in Mercia has been tentatively dated to the period between 700 and 800 AD, which is the time of the growing influence of Mercia, especially during the reign of Offa, and coincides with the weakened state of both Kent and Northumbria.[185] The partially excavated site at Drayton/Sutton Courtenay offers a broad date-range spanning 550-700. Analogies proposed between the halls here and those at Yeavering, Lyminge and Cowdery's Down, all dated to ca 600-660, could suggest a similar chronology for structures A and B at Drayton, consistent with the prominent position held by Wessex at this time.

The dispersal of the sites across the country is confusing. On the one hand, the lack of concentration of alignment in any one area suggests that it is likely to have been a fairly uniform attribute of significant sites. On the other hand, the fact that these sites are so spread out raises the possibility of their independent development and may make it problematic to draw direct typological and archaeological comparisons between them. Either way, it opens up an intriguing discussion around the uniformity of this phenomenon in different regions.[186]

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[185] A similar observation has been made by Philip Rahtz. – Rahtz 1976, p. 68; See, however, Appendix 3 on Hatton Rock, as its dating could be challenged.

[186] This is also paralleled by the marked uniformity of grave goods in the 7th- early 8th centuries across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, observed by Leeds, Evison and Geake. – Leeds 1936, p. 98; Evison 1956, p.

Such a unity across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms may seem surprising but can be explained. Susan Oosthuizen has recently argued for a considerable degree of cultural and institutional unity between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, reflected particularly clearly in the context of property rights and legislation, which was unified across the kingdoms as early as the 7th century.[187] Yorke has also argued that, despite the possible variations in the identities of the key figures in the foundation myths, the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms developed along very similar lines from an early period.[188] It cannot be ignored that the elites of the kingdoms were closely interconnected, and this has led Martin Carver to propose a concept of 'intellectual community' which bypassed the administrative boundaries and resulted in continuous cultural exchange between the representatives of the elites who, of course, largely dictated architectural fashion.[189] Carver maintains that division into kingdoms in the 7th century was 'theoretical' and in fact common cultural aspects manifested themselves across the territory of later England.[190] This is echoed in Yorke's argument that the overlords of the British Isles interacted closely with one another, sharing and promoting common cultural ideas.[191] This paints a picture of, if not a homogenous culture, at least a considerable degree of overlap between the patterns of governance and the cultural practice of individual kingdoms very early on, making the appearance of alignment across these different regions not surprising. Further to this, Alex Woolf has suggested that social networks, such as the Anglo-Saxon elite, relied on 'common familiarity' and 'shared rituals'.[192] With regard to the elite, these

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108; Geake 1999. Geake has suggested that the process of unification of grave goods coincided with the process of creation of kingdoms and possibly legitimisation of power. – Geake 1999, pp. 212, 214.

[187] Oosthuizen 2019, pp. 101-110, 114-115.

[188] Yorke 2008, see esp. p. 27.

[189] Carver 2011, sp. pp. 186-187. Ian Wood's discussion of Ceolfrid's very close involvement at Jarrow is a brilliant example of the degree of control a figure of power could exert over a Christian foundation. – See Wood 2008.

[190] Carver 2011, p. 941.

[191] Yorke 2009, p. 79.

[192] Woolf 2000, p. 107.

notions would have extended across the boundaries of the kingdoms and could have manifested themselves in the use of alignment, amongst other things. Bede actively explored and promoted the idea of *gens Anglorum* as he was writing in the 8th century, as has been argued in particular by McKinney, but it is possible that the origins of a common culture lie in an earlier period.[193]

However, it is the archaeological details of these sites that must be examined more closely to see what conclusions can be arrived at. In particular, the presence or absence of prehistoric and Roman features in the vicinity of aligned structures and the presence of minor features and burials accompanying the buildings have been recurrent elements at the sites discussed above. It is already apparent that there is a fairly consistent correlation between Anglo-Saxon settlements featuring alignment and prehistoric features associated with the same sites or located in the immediate vicinity. By contrasts there is only one site – Portchester – that is clearly associated with antecedent Roman occupation. These aspects, along with a spatial analysis of structures involved in alignment, are considered in more detail to assess their significance and possible meaning.

1.2. Borderline sites

There is considerable fluidity between settlements identified as secular and those that could have been monastic. Rosemary Cramp has addressed the difficulty of identification of monastic settlements.[194] Sarah Foot in her comprehensive study of Anglo-Saxon monasticism, has argued that wealth and monastic endowment were closely linked and that the foundation of a minster was impossible without pre-existing secular power. Foot suggests that monasticism and aristocratic society were fused in Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and that the secular domination of monastic foundations was ubiquitous, to the point

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[193] Wormald 2006, pp. 106-134; see also McKinney 2011, pp. 229-240, sp. p. 230.
[194] Cramp 1976a, p. 249.

of being problematic, up until the monastic reform.[195] Tim Pestell has convincingly argued that secular and ecclesiastical sites were equally expressions of power sponsored by the secular aristocracy and rulers. Christianity itself was a source of power for the emerging aristocracy, very much alongside other - pagan and non-religious – expressions of power and influence.[196] It is also possible for the base functions of sites which have been commonly identified as one type to be reconsidered, as is the case with Cheddar, which, as John Blair has argued, could have been monastic and not secular.[197]

The two groups tend to be treated separately in scholarly discussions, and questions about alignment are asked of secular and ecclesiastical sites separately, with rare exceptions. However, the fluidity of definitions of 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical' has to be addressed. The way alignment relates to and challenges the dichotomy between the two are discussed in detail in chapter 5. At this stage, I only introduce a group of sites where no consensus has been reached as to their function - they do not seem to fit either the 'secular' or the 'ecclesiastical' category with certainty and therefore do not fully belong to either this chapter or to chapter 3, where ecclesiastical sites are discussed. These add to the breadth of distribution of sites across the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms.

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[195] Foot 2006, pp. 92, 96-97, 132-135, 285.
[196] Pestell 2004, pp. 59, 62; see also Wormald 2006, p. 68.
[197] See Blair 1996, pp. 108-121.
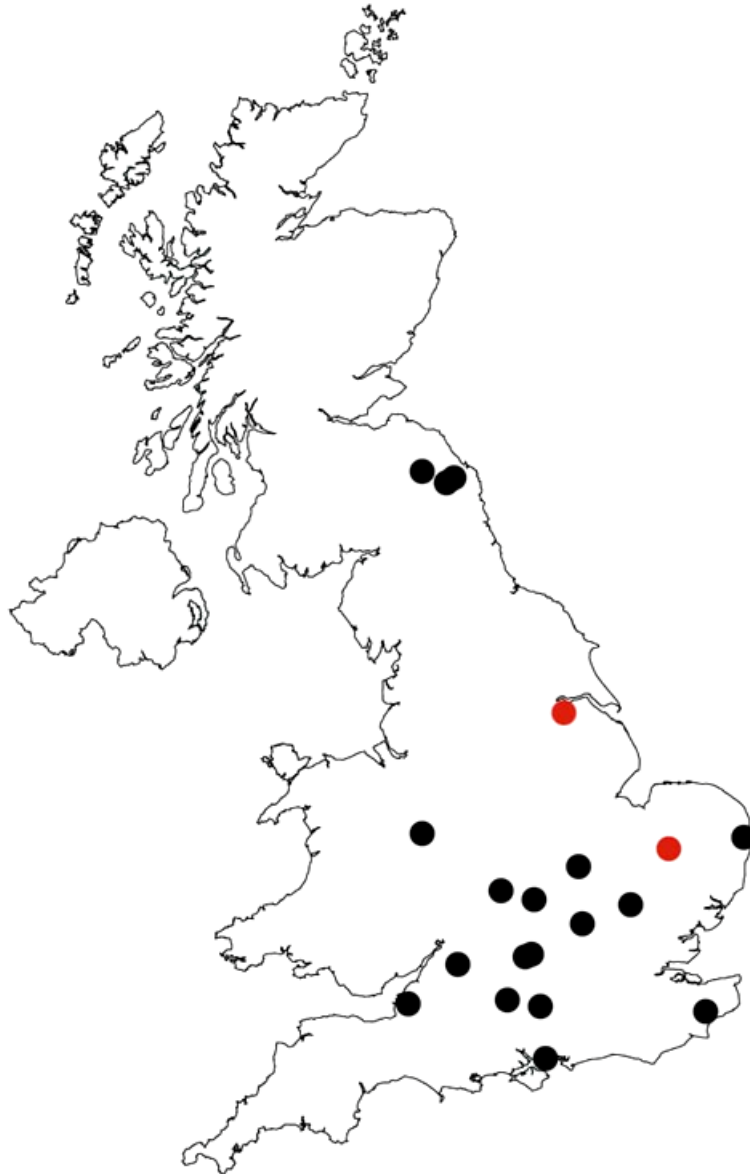
Map 1.2. Schematic map of distribution of secular and 'borderline' (in red) sites with alignment.

Heated ongoing debates surround the status of Flixborough, a very complex site, unusual for a number of reasons. These debates have been led largely by the excavator Chris Loveluck, with contributions from Tim Pestell. [198]

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[198] Pestell 2004, pp. 59-63.

Flixborough

Mercia
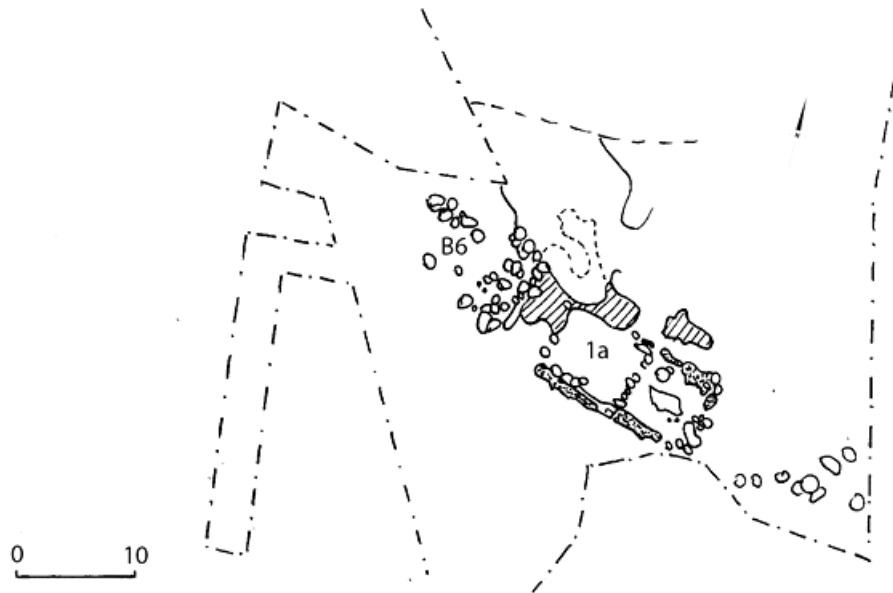
Fig. 1.30. Plan of excavated area at Flixborough, phase 3a, after Loveluck and Atkinson 2007 (fig. 2.6, p. 13).
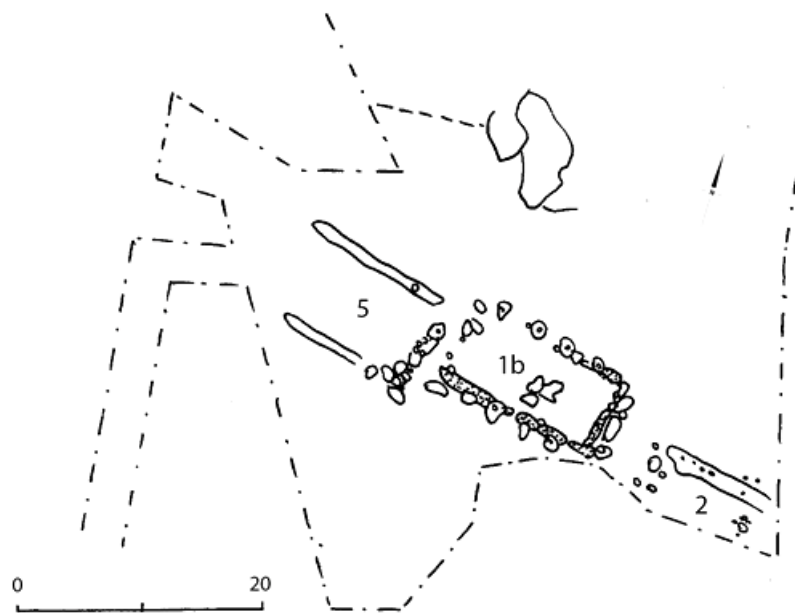
Fig. 1.31. Plan of excavated area at Flixborough, phase 3biv, after Loveluck and Atkinson 2007 (fig. 2.10, p. 16).
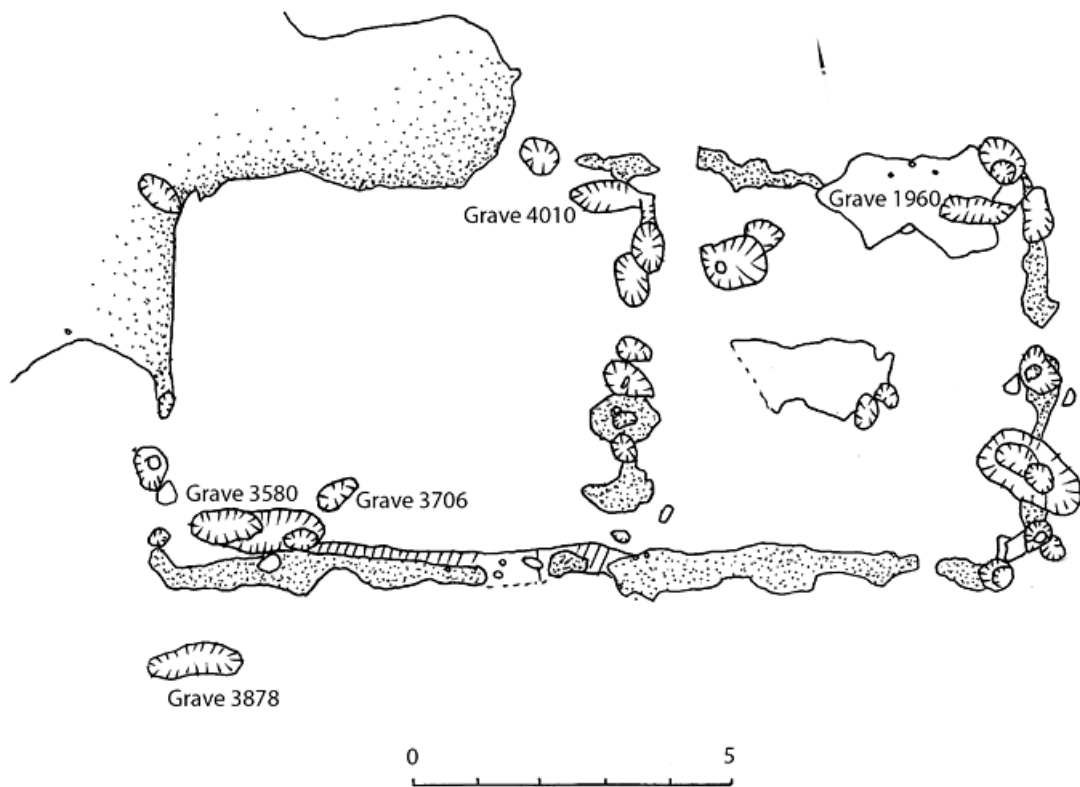
Fig. 1.32. Plan of building 1a at Flixborough, after Loveluck 2007 (fig. 3.3, p. 34).

Flixborough is situated 8 km south of the Humber estuary and overlooks the floodplain of the Trent to the west. The ground slopes gently towards the Trent. There is evidence of Iron Age settlement to the north-west of the excavated area and the possibility of a Romano-British settlement somewhere in the immediate vicinity of the site.[199] In the Anglo-Saxon period, the site displays evidence of unprecedented continuity, with nine main phases of development, separated by the demolition of buildings and the levelling of dumps. There are in total the remains of 40 structures.

The earliest period of occupation, in the 7th century, is characterised by the remains of four superimposed post-hole buildings on two plots, ranging from 9

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[199] Loveluck and Atkinson 2007, pp. 5, 17.

to 11m in length and 5 to 6.5m in width. During the second half of the 7th century, designated by the excavator as phase 1b, the east-west alignment of buildings started to become prominent and persistent. In the course of the early and the mid-8th century, building 20 was replaced with an unusual building 1a, which contained four burials along its walls on the east-west alignment, and two burials outside the walls to the south and south-east (fig. 1.32). All of these graves are of children, except for one of a woman of between 20 and 30 with a perinatal infant. The building itself was unique in comparison with other buildings found at Flixborough: it had a gravel foundation underneath the whole building, was post-in-trench built, had external posts along the east wall, was internally divided into two halves by a partition and had a large hearth in its eastern half. Building B6, which was constructed at the same time and aligned with 1a, seems to have had a door in its east end, facing 1a (fig. 1.30). The area between the two buildings was laid with the same gravel spread, extending from the area underneath 1a. In the subsequent phase, building 1a was superseded by structure 1b, which had opposed entrances in its long walls, had a different internal organisation and did not seem to be related to the earlier burials. The post-in-trench buildings 2 and 5 were built on either side of 1b and on the same alignment (fig. 1.31).[200]

In the period from the middle of the 8th century to the middle of the 9th century, building activity increased to the north-west of the aligned group, on the site of B21, although the alignment of the main group was still retained and the new buildings B3 and B10, both with trench foundations and ranging from 9 to 13.5m in length and 5.5 to 7.5m in width, were superimposed on the older plots. In the second half of the 9th century, however, the previous building plots were abandoned, the buildings became smaller (10x6m) and the layout changed dramatically. In the first half of the 10th century, another dramatic shift saw the construction of the largest buildings in the sequence, with trench-built

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[200] Loveluck and Atkinson 2007, pp. 49-50, 53-4.

foundations. Their location, however, shifted northwards from the former aligned group, while the rest of the settlement had shifted eastwards by this date.

Archaeological finds include evidence of craft-working in the late 7th-early 8th centuries, and imported commodities, suggesting trade with the Rhineland, the Low Countries and possibly the territories of modern northern France and western Denmark. Archaeological contexts corresponding to the period between 800 and 850 also show evidence of styli and window glass. Finally, livestock provision shows high-status patterns of consumption.[201] Although there is no evidence of feasting at Flixborough, the amount of meat consumed and the patterns of consumption suggest provision of food for a large number of people. The evidence for the consumption of wild animals and also cetaceans further points towards the high status of the settlement.[202]

The pattern of settlement that existed between ca 750 and ca 850 changed dramatically in the second half of the 9th century, possibly suggesting a change of use. New trading patterns and craft-working practices are consistent with the transformation in layout of the settlement and in the size of structures that occurred in this period.

The excavator suggests that the character of occupation resembles closely that of known monastic sites and proposes that in the period between the late 7th century and mid-9th century Flixborough could have been a monastic site. This proposition is largely based on the character of finds, including styli, commonly thought to be monastic markers.[203] The persistent superimposition and linear arrangement of the buildings also seems to be characteristic of high-status settlements, whether monastic or secular.[204] Loveluck has suggested that for

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[201] All of the above – Loveluck 2001.

[202] Dobney *et al* 2007, pp. 237, 240.

[203] Loveluck 2001, p. 104; Whitwell 1991, p. 247; Yorke 1993, p. 146; Blair 1996, p. 9; for further discussion of features of monasteries as opposed to secular settlements, see Loveluck 2001, pp. 106-109.

[204] Loveluck 2001, p. 109.

most of its life Flixborough could have been a royal vill, with a short monastic phase. Interestingly, despite evidence of outstanding wealth, Flixborough does not seem to have been involved in trade.[205] Tim Pestell, however, has problematised its status further by placing it in the context of 'productive' sites, associated with high status of occupation, where the distinction monastic or non-monastic is insignificant. He suggests that Flixborough should be categorised as a productive site and does not necessarily have to have been monastic.[206] Moreover, Pestell challenges the identification of styli as markers of monastic communities, suggesting instead that they can be understood as symbols of 'ownership' of knowledge in secular contexts too.[207]

Despite this, there still is an open possibility that 1a should be identified as a chapel, due to its association with graves. Similar buildings internally divided into two parts and associated with graves have been found at Cowage Farm and Brandon (which, as we will see, is just as problematic) and interpreted as possible churches. Building 1a, however, is different and has a hearth, which makes it more like D2 and B5 at Yeavering. This mystery has still to be solved.[208]

The following site, at Brandon, falls very much into the same problematic category as Flixborough, although alignment there dates to a later period and occurs in the middle of the 9th century.

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[205] Loveluck 2001, pp. 104-106, 115-117, 120-121.

[206] On 'productive' sites, see Pestell and Ulmschneider 2003,

[207] Pestell 2004, pp. 33-47.

[208] Morris 1989, p. 133; Loveluck and Atkinson 2007, pp. 115-16; for Cowage Farm see Hinchliffe 1986; on Brandon - Carr *et al* 1988, also above and below.

Brandon/Staunch Meadow

East Anglia
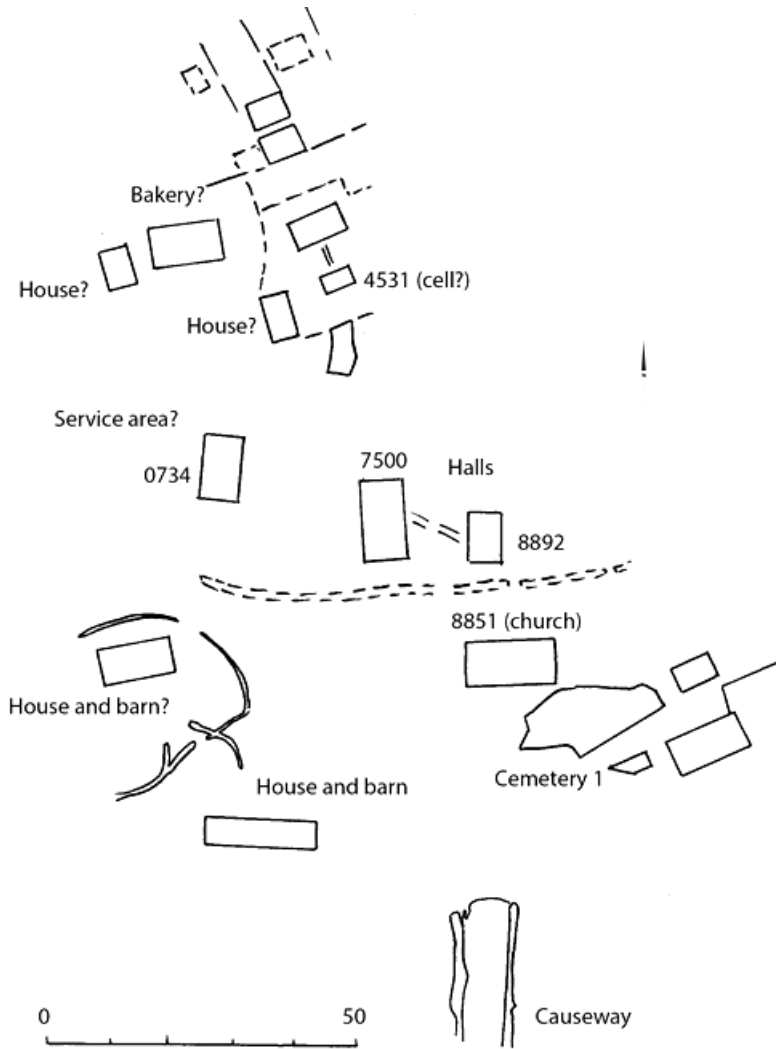
Fig. 1.33. Plan of buildings at Staunch Meadow, phase 2.2, after Tester *et al* 2014 (fig. 4.23, p. 64).
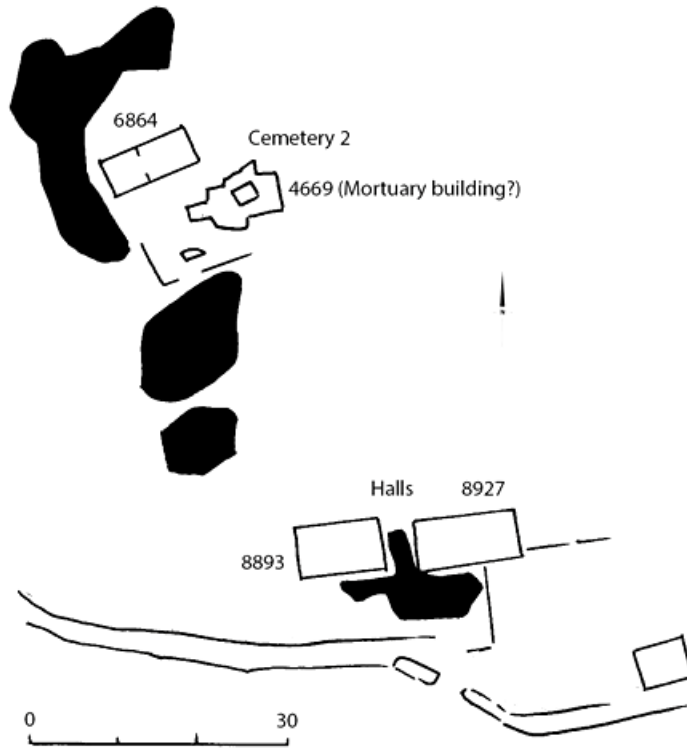
Fig. 1.34. Plan of buildings at Staunch Meadow, phase 2.3, after Tester *et al* 2014 (fig. 4.50, p. 101).
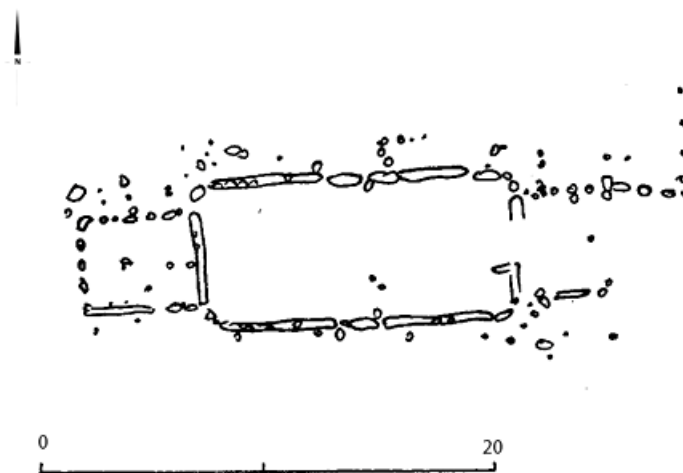
Fig. 1.35. Plan of church 7098 at Staunch Meadow in phase 2.1, after Tester *et al* 2014 (fig. 4.14, p. 50).

The site lies to the west of Brandon, Suffolk, some 50m south of the Little Ouse, on a gentle rise within the floodplain of the river. The site, however, is located high enough to stay dry even when the water rises. The excavations

summarised below focussed on the central part of the 'island', where visible earthworks – a medieval enclosure and a causeway – were reported.

There is evidence of Mesolithic and Iron Age use of the site, but no features indicating Roman or early Anglo-Saxon occupation, although Roman finds were fairly common. These had probably been brought to the site from elsewhere.[209] The period of middle- to late-Saxon occupation of the site, until its abandonment in the late 9th century, has been subdivided into two main phases: 1 – 7th centuries; 2 – early 8th century to late 9th century. Of a particular interest to this study are phases 2.2 (mid-8th to 9th century) and 2.3 (mid- to later 9th century). Phase 2.2 is characterised by a fairly regular arrangement of small buildings in the northern part of the site and two parallel north-south-orientated halls in the central part of the excavated area. Phase 2.3 shows a significant reduction in a number of structures and, most notably, replacement of parallel south-north halls with two axially aligned east-west orientated structures.

During phase 2.2, the new rectangular building identified as a church (8851) replaced an earlier post-in-trench building, also a possible church (7098), which had bowed walls, entrances in the middle of the long walls, external buttresses and an eastern annexe (fig. 1.35) (these two buildings for the time being are referred to as churches, in accordance with the excavators' interpretation). Two western extensions were added to the old church in a subsequent phase. A notable feature of building 7098 is a burial of a horse underneath the 'chancel'. The cemetery adjacent to the church to the south-east does not seem to display any exceptional characteristics and sits firmly within the context of other contemporary cemeteries.[210] The new church (8851), mostly of post-in-trench construction, was of a similar size and roughly in the same position, with two opposed entrances in its long walls, although the south

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[209] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 13, 26-32, 142-144.
[210] Ibid., p. 370.

doorway seems to have been blocked by a later post.[211] The area to the north of the church and the associated cemetery seems to have been enclosed by a ditch with a gated entrance. Here the post-built 'halls' 7500 and 8892 seem to have played a prominent role (fig. 1.33). Each had a hearth located in the south end and opposed entrances in the long walls, and the two were connected by a path. Another possible hall 0734 of post-in-trench construction was located further west.[212]

By the mid-9th c, the church and its cemetery seem to have been abandoned and the enclosure to the north changed significantly: the multiple buildings to the north were replaced with one building 6864 and a cemetery (cemetery 2); two aligned halls 8893 and 8927 replaced earlier buildings in the central area (fig. 1.34). Building 8927 initially coexisted with the church and was connected to it by a fence. It is not well preserved, but there is evidence of an entrance in the middle of the south wall, a possible internal partition and no traces of a hearth. The western hall 8893 was associated with its neighbour; no hearth has been located and only one entrance on the south side could be identified. Cemetery 2 seems to have been associated with structure 4531 and a clay surface 4669 – possibly a building – to the east of this structure. It is possible that structure 4531 was a shrine. It is notable that 64.5% of articulated skeletons in this cemetery were those of children, which is different from cemetery 1.[213]

The excavators have categorised all the buildings found on the site by groups, assigning domestic, agricultural and manufacturing functions. The groups of halls and churches stand out. Both churches lacked a hearth and may have had windows to the east of entrances, judging by the paired posts. However, a similar feature in C12 at Cowdery's Down has been interpreted as a support for a ridge piece.[214] The construction of both church buildings clearly indicates their high

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[211] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 48-52, 63-66, 362.

[212] Ibid., fig. 2.2, pp. 24, 67-69.

[213] Ibid., fig. 2.2, pp. 24, 100-103, 213-14, 370-1.

[214] See James, Marshall and Millett 1984, pp. 190-4.

status. Their identification as churches is not unproblematic but it is possible, especially considering their location outside the enclosure, which seems to be central, the absence of rubbish deposits, the presence of coloured glass and the proximity of the cemetery.[215] The buildings identified as halls were of a substantial size and were associated with food debris but not pottery, suggesting consumption but not production. In both phases 2.2 and 2.3, one of the buildings in the group of halls seems to have been subservient to the other and connected by a path. Overall, a fairly high status of occupation and a possibly substantial degree of ornamentation of the central buildings have been proposed. The excavators have suggested that the halls were short-lived, designed to make a statement during the lifetime of the owner.[216] Agriculture, manufacture and trade were highly developed at this site. The lack of coins, however, suggests that this was not a commercial trading centre. Instead, imported ceramic wares are present in some quantity, as is the case at Flixborough and also Hamwic.[217] This places the site in the context of the productive sites discussed by Pestell.[218] At the same time, many of the finds suggest similarities with Whitby.[219] The evidence of literacy and learning, including styli and inscribed objects, led the excavators to propose a possible monastic function for the settlement, or at least some clerical activity there.[220] As with Flixborough, however, Pestell's argument is relevant here: styli are not necessarily diagnostic markers of monastic foundations.[221] Alternatively, if the settlement was indeed monastic, then the ditch which enclosed the northern part of the settlement in phase 2.2 could be interpreted

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[215] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 362-63.

[216] Ibid., pp. 363-369; for continental examples, see Hamerow 1999, 2002.

[217] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 371-7. For the site at Hamwic, see Ellis and Andrews 2006, pp. 90, 95, table 1. Hamwic, however, was a trading centre, whereas Flixborough is not likely to have been involved in trade, despite its wealth – see above.

[218] Pestell 2004, p. 35.

[219] Carr *et al* 1988, pp. 376-7; for Whitby, see Peers and Radford 1943, pp. 47-73.

[220] Tester et al 2014, pp. 371-7.

[221] Pestell 2004, pp. 36-48.

as a *vallum monasterii*. This barrier, with a new gated entrance, was maintained in the following phase. If this was the case, Brandon could have been an outlying monastery subject to the abbey at Ely.[222] As Sarah Foot has emphasised, in time of flooding the site at Brandon would have been isolated – very much a desirable quality for a monastic foundation.[223] Equally, however, Tim Pestell has challenged the monastic status of Brandon, as the finds at this site in essence only indicate its high status and elite patronage; the evidence for the presence of a monastic community is inconclusive.[224]

Other sites, including Cheddar, have also provoked debates on their nature and function. Brandon demonstrates quite clearly that the excavators' initial interpretation can largely define subsequent discourse: where at Flixborough the uncertain and interchangeable character of the use of this site as monastic or secular was acknowledged at the outset, at Brandon structures 7098 and 8851 were interpreted by the excavators quite definitively as churches, setting the agenda for subsequent discussions. This reading of the archaeological record, however, is not straightforward, and, as we have seen, can be challenged. In addition to the arguments already mentioned, the construction of the 'church' buildings is very hall-like, with post-in-trench walls and opposed entrances. Similarities between early churches and halls, of course, have been acknowledged, but at Brandon, where these buildings date to the 8th-9th centuries, such an identification seems questionable.[225] By that time, churches elsewhere had already acquired a more distinctive shape, with entrances commonly located at the west end. The horse deposit also is paralleled most commonly at secular sites. However, these conundrums can also be seen as opening up a more complex view of what 'ritual' is, i.e. something that is not

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[222] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 380-383, 389, 393.

[223] Foot 2006, p. 99; Carr *et al* 1988, p. 371.

[224] Pestell 2004, pp. 59-64.

[225] For difficulties in identification of halls and churches, see Cramp 1976a, p. 249; Turner 2006, pp. 63-66, 69; Pestell 2004, pp. 59-64.

necessarily religious. This, along with other aspects of these sites, is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Since, at the stage of the presentation of evidence, I am following the principle of dividing the sites into the categories of 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical', a well-established format in the discipline of Anglo-Saxon archaeology, sites like Brandon and Flixborough end up in the middle. However, this in itself is a healthy challenge to the way we tend to categorise the evidence as either one or the other; in fact beyond these two categories, Brandon and Flixborough are consistent with sites described above and can be analysed alongside them. While at a quick glance it is already possible to see that Flixborough and Brandon are of high status and are associated with prehistoric occupation, like the sites above, chapter 2 shows that there is common ground for comparison between these and conventionally 'secular' sites. Chapter 5 develops this argument further, bringing the sites conventionally identified as 'ecclesiastical' into the equation.

Chapter 2: Analysis of secular and 'borderline' sites

In the previous chapter, I introduced secular sites with alignment, and looked at their geographical distribution and chronological development. Preliminary findings suggest that alignment in a secular context is a phenomenon that was not limited to any one kingdom and was particularly prominent in the 7th century. It also seems that almost every Anglo-Saxon site with alignment was previously occupied in the prehistoric period, while only one site, Portchester, showed evidence for occupation in the Romano-British period.

In this chapter I return to the same sites, paying close attention to particular physical aspects of built structures and approaches to planning, to try to identify recurring patterns across the group.[1] The chapter is divided into two sections, reflecting respectively on the 'hows' and 'whys' of the alignment of halls. The first part – the 'hows' – attempts to determine the ways aligned buildings could have functioned; the second part – the 'whys' – identifies possible explanations of alignment.

In contrast with the first chapter where general trends in geography and chronology were noted, this chapter focusses on the material evidence, noting specific correlations between sites and employing statistical analysis to understand their role in the context of alignment.

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[1] The categories for each site included: location (by kingdom and county), dates when alignment occurred, nature of evidence (i.e. excavation report or cropmarks), evidence of prehistoric features and Roman occupation, end of occupation and its character (i.e. continued in use or abandoned), status as assessed by excavators and historians, presence of burials, types of building (post-hole, post-in-trench etc.), any notable features, the number of key buildings, size-range of structures, ratios of length/width of the key buildings, direction of slope at sites, presence and location of rivers in relation to settlements, key axes of orientation of aligned groups, stylistic and structural parallels with other sites, as proposed by excavators and historians. These findings are summarised in appendix 1 and, while the attributes that proved to be inconsistent have been excluded from further analysis, the following discussion in this chapter touches on specific characteristics that appeared prominent as a result of this exercise.

1. How did aligned halls function?

There is sufficient available data to date and typologically categorise the range of known structures. However, as there is no written evidence to throw direct light on the function of alignment, this is explored largely through the archaeological evidence of planning and special deposits.

1.1. Communication and zoning

In the vast majority of cases, the only evidence for the function of the buildings at sites with alignment is to be had from entrances. We will consider the distribution of recorded entrances into aligned buildings and discuss what they can reveal about the functionality of these sites. The section concludes with two major observations on the character of zoning within these settlements and on communication (or lack of communication) between aligned buildings.

In Anglo-Saxon halls, there seems to be a general preference for doorways in the middle of long walls, regardless of how a building sits in relation to its surroundings. This might be taken to imply that the distribution of entrances had more to do with resorting to standardised building types rather than a response to planning needs. At the same time, there are a few instances in which entrances do seem to play a role in connecting buildings and point towards a certain type of use and grouping. It is to these sites and the character of the connections between their buildings that we shall now turn.

1. Yeavering

Yeavering is the site that has attracted most attention. The halls at Yeavering feature entrances at the short ends of the halls, which is unusual for the 'type'. These entrances allow for an uninterrupted passage through the halls. Jenny Walker has proposed the possibility of ritual procession through hall A2, which would have rendered entrances at the east and west ends more than just

functional, possibly responding to ceremonial needs and concepts of worldview.[2] Carolyn Ware has also discussed the principles of movement between the halls in area A, throughout all the phases of development at Yeavering, and noted a gradually increasing tendency to restrict and formalise the interior spaces of the halls. While during the earlier phases the interior of the halls was not yet subdivided and the buildings were united by an enclosure, in the subsequent phases, there is an increased definition of separate, more independent, internal spaces. The axiality, direct lines of sight and overall spatial transparency of the buildings in the earlier stages of use, not found in subsequent phases, seem to point to the unified character of the complex and the importance of mutual access between buildings.[3]

Further, there is a tendency towards functional zoning across the site. While the group of halls to the east is associated with the demonstration of power and ceremonial use, the group D to the west revolves around religious function, with the assembly area E, located at the intersection of these zones, serving as a uniting element. The whole complex is thus spatially subdivided into three major zones with distinct roles: ceremony/feasting, assembly and worship. At the same time, these zones appear to be parts of one coherent single settlement. This is indicated by the line of posts that pierces the three groups of buildings and underlies their unity. Michael Bintley has also emphasised the significance of the posts inside the halls as integral to alignment at Yeavering.[4]

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[2] Walker 2010, pp. 88-89.
[3] Ware 2005, pp. 157-159, fig. 53.
[4] Bintley 2015, pp. 37-38, 40.
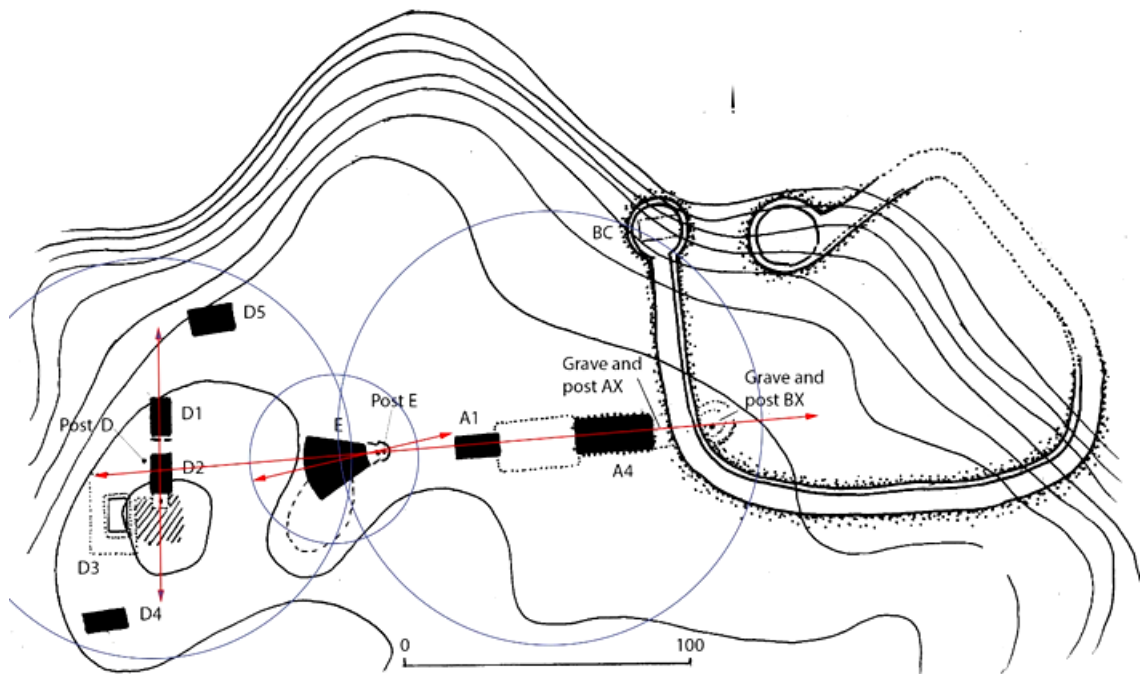
Fig. 2.1. Plan of Yeavering with proposed zoning, after Hope-Taylor 1977 (fig. 77, p. 162).

2.Flixborough

At Flixborough, there is a clear spatial correlation between buildings 1a and B6, constructed at the same time on the same gravel spread. The western entrance of 1a directly faces the eastern entrance of B6. By contrast, building 1b, which superseded structure 1a in the subsequent period, has entrances in its long walls on its north and south sides. Neither of these entrances relates to building B6 lying to the west or seems to respect the earlier burials associated with 1a.
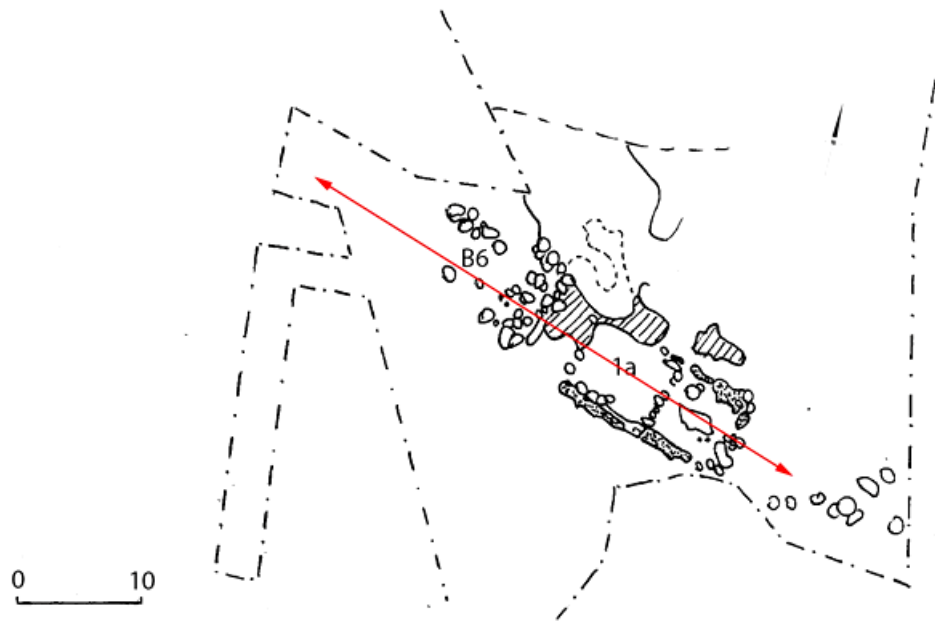
Fig. 2.2. Fragment of plan of the site at Flixborough in phase 3a showing alignment, after Loveluck and Atkinson 2007 (fig. 2.6, p. 13).

3.Cheddar

At Cheddar, the east and west halls seem to have had entrances facing each other in the period of their coexistence. The west hall was accessible from the east, which meant one could walk through it and straight into the East hall, whereas no doorway was located at the east end of East hall, possibly making it the 'final destination'. These two buildings at Cheddar are the only two at this site that seem to be demonstrate mutual communication and grouping. The contemporary phase (II) of the chapel to the north shows no evidence for windows or doorways, making it difficult to assess its relationship to the halls.[5]

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[5] Rahtz 1979, p. 209.
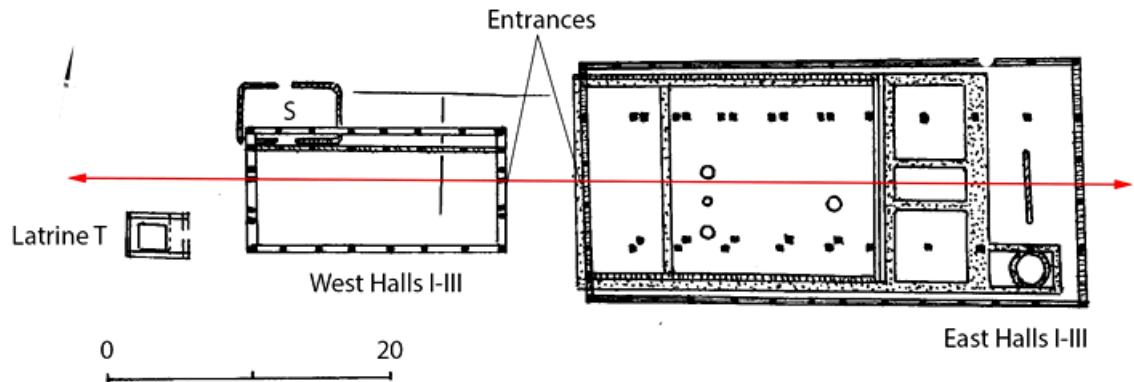
Fig. 2.3. Plan of halls at Cheddar showing alignment, after Rahtz 1962 (fig. 18, p. 56).

The three following sites - Cowage Farm, Cowdery's Down and Chalton – demonstrate more complex relationships between buildings and display a feature already noted by Andrew Reynolds – a close relationship between a hall and an enclosure containing smaller, possibly auxiliary, buildings.[6]

4.Cowage Farm

Cowage Farm is known almost exclusively from cropmarks and there is no clear evidence of entrances in individual structures. However, the site demonstrates fairly clear indications of zoning and grouping of buildings, suggesting attention to planning and showing direct spatial associations between units. The buildings are evidently arranged into three groups defined by their axes: the range associated with building B, those related to building D and the group of structures to the west. Building A – a possible church constructed far to the east and enclosed - seems relatively independent from the rest of the settlement. The relationships between other buildings found at Cowage Farm seem close and the zoning implies their interconnection and a systematic approach to their arrangement.

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[6] Reynolds 2003.
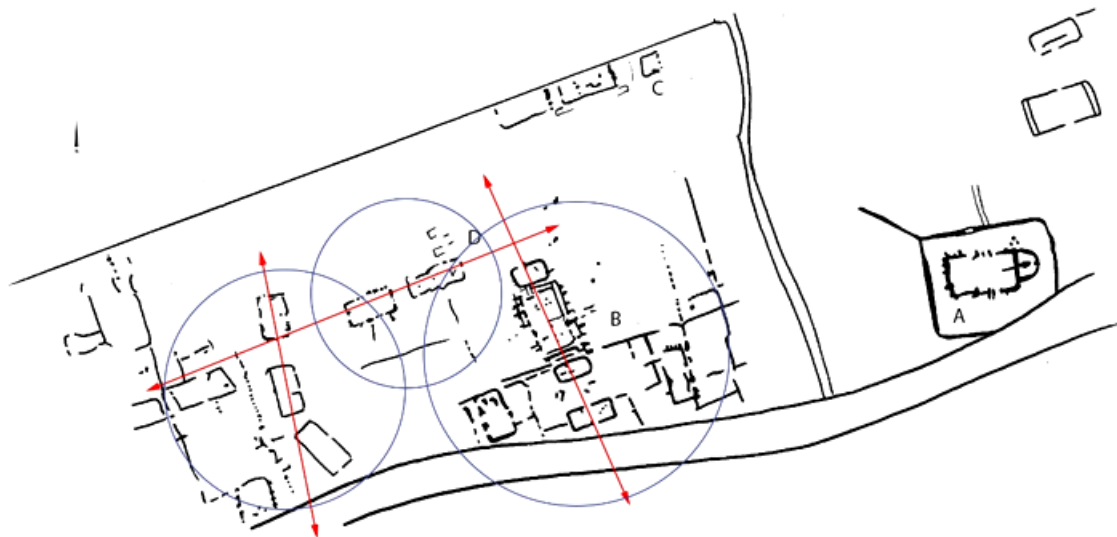
Fig. 2.4. Plan of site at Cowage Farm, showing alignment and proposed zoning, after Hinchliffe 1986 (fig. 1, p. 241).

5.Cowdery's Down

Cowdery's Down, in period 4C, dated to 609+-57, seems to consist of two major groups of buildings, both featuring alignment, with the structure C13 sitting in-between. Buildings C14 and B/C15, interpreted as agricultural, lying to the west, are of substantial size and form an accurately aligned pair. Both structures have opposed entrances on their northern and southern sides but nothing in the walls which face each other. Thus, their alignment is clearly expressed but does not allow for direct access or procession, as with the buildings at Chalton, for instance, which feature doorways facing each other. Building C12 to the east seems to be strongly associated with the enclosure located to the north-east: its entrance is aligned with the entrance into the enclosure and further with one of the entrances into C9. Building C13 does not seem to be associated with either group and has a curious adjacent burial.

At Cowdery's Down, as at Yeavering, Chalton and Cowage Farm, there appears to be a sub-division of structures into three groups or zones. Here the pair to the south-west constituted the first zone, C13 in the centre the second zone, and C12, associated with the enclosure, to the north-east, the third one.
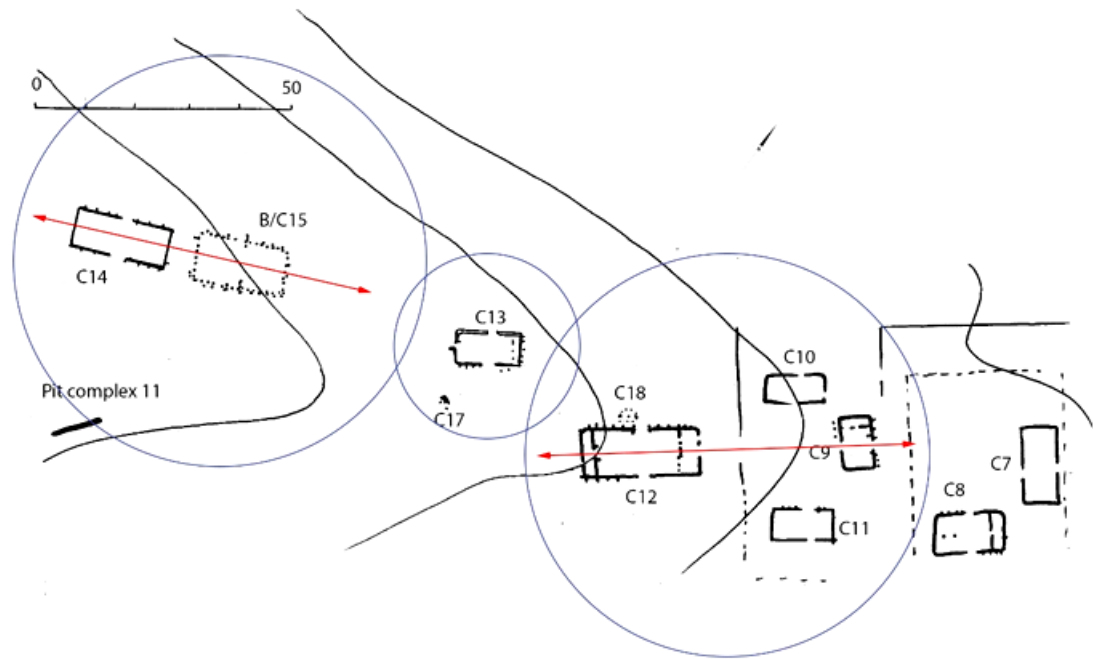
Fig. 2.5. Plan of Cowdery's Down with proposed zoning, after Millett and James 1983 (fig. 27, p. 194).

6. Chalton

Chalton demonstrates a particular attention to the grouping of buildings. The group of A1, A2 and A3 seems to be connected by the axial entrances, allowing the possibility of uninterrupted procession through these structures. This is particularly emphasised by the opening in the middle of the screen between buildings A1 and A2 and the doorway in the middle of the partition at the east end of structure A2. The excavators have suggested that the enclosure to the east was associated with building A1, although it is not certain whether there was an eastern entrance into A1 directly from the enclosure.[7] At the same time, structure A10, located to the south-east of this group, seems to be associated with the enclosure. The approach to the east entrance into A10 seems to be lined up with the entrance into the enclosure directly to the north and indicates association between A10 and the enclosed structures. Further south,

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[7] See above, pp. 65-66.

A12, A13 and A14 are tightly grouped and have entrances facing the courtyard formed by the arrangement of the buildings. As at Yeavering, the buildings at Chalton seem to have been sub-divided into groups: the pair of A1 and A2, the group of A10 with the enclosure to the north, and the group of A12, A13 and A14, which forms a courtyard, seem to stand out. At the same time, the grid-like arrangement of the settlement indicates that these separate groups belong to one scheme.
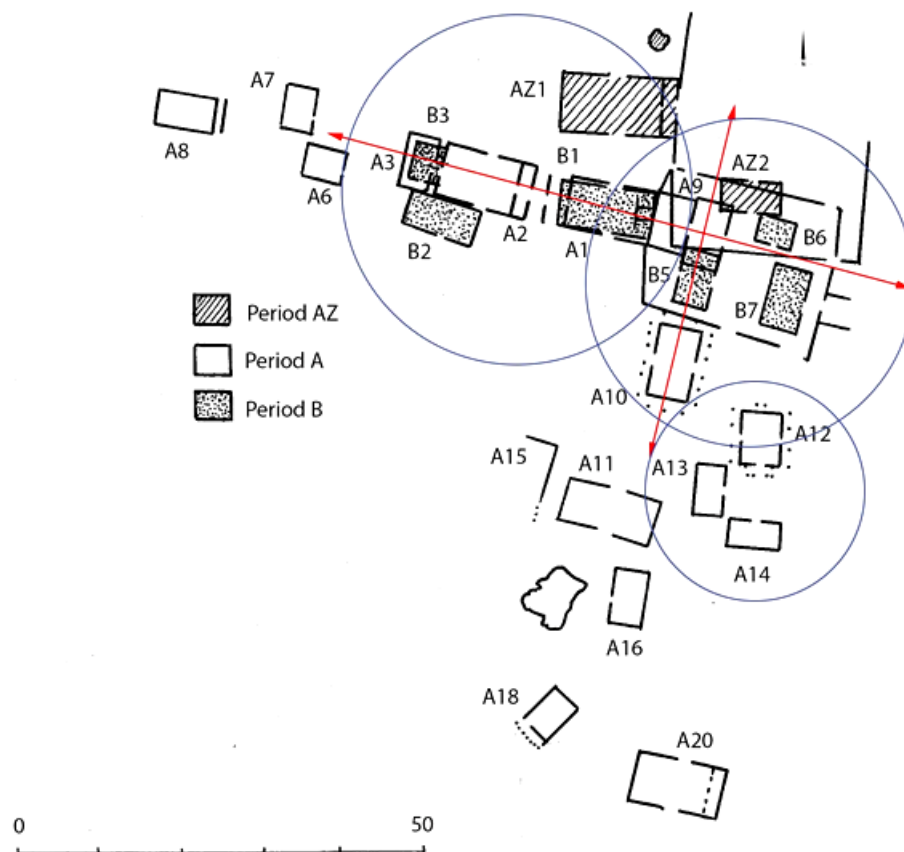
Fig. 2.6. Plan of Chalton with proposed zoning, after Addyman *et al* 1973 (fig. 3, p. 5).

7.Sprouston

At Sprouston, where buildings A and B are axially aligned, the grouping of other buildings and the relationships between their axes also appear interesting, especially in the light of the cases described above. The available evidence derives entirely from cropmarks, which means the positions of visible entrances are likely

but not certain. The pair of D1 and D2 seem to have generic opposed entrances in their long walls, as does building E. This building, interpreted as a possible hall, however, sits in-between two zones: the first of these zones is defined by the pair D, the second by the building F, on an entirely different alignment, to the north. The opposed entrances of E make it in some way a transitional, connecting point between the two zones. Building F, to judge from the cropmarks, apart from a conventional entrance at the end of an annexe has one entrance from the south side, facing the central area of the settlement with hall E, indicating an important line of access to this building and a relationship with other structures. Building F in Sprouston and its relationship with the rest of the settlement is considered below, but for the time being, it should be noted that the central buildings here also seem to constitute three zones within a single settlement, evenly spread out: the group D, the hall E and structure F.
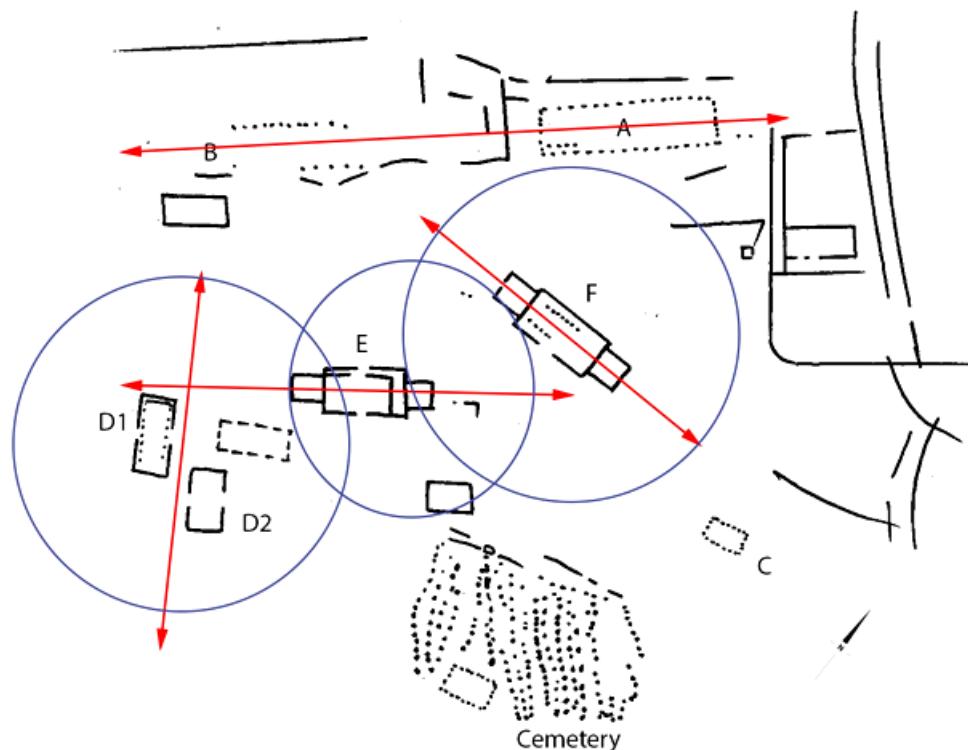
Fig. 2.7. Plan of Sprouston with proposed zoning, after Smith 1991 (fig. 4, facing p. 267).

8. Lyminge

Finally, at Lyminge, there is a strong possibility that the hall complex extended beyond the excavated area and included other structures. The buildings discovered to date suggest a grid-like approach to planning, with perpendicular axes, and a degree of zoning. The excavations are not complete but so far it is possible to say that the aligned pair of the 2012 hall and its satellite hall to the east seem to be spatially and perhaps functionally related. Similarly, the halls to the north, with their entrances facing each other, also seem to represent a functional group, although these halls are not in line with one another. The north-south orientated halls also spatially relate to the south (2012) hall and seem to 'complete the circuit' and create a spatial and possibly functional coherence over the whole area.

Fig. 2.8. Plan of halls at Lyminge with suggested zoning and alignment, after Thomas and Knox 2015 (fig. 2, p. 2).

The sites listed above provide clear evidence of attention paid to the planning of individual buildings as components of an overall composition of settlements. Connections between the buildings are facilitated by their axial alignment and communicating doorways. The combination of alignment and functionally related doorways can be taken as indicative of distinctive functional groups within settlements.

As a result, it is possible to identify two characteristic attributes of the layouts described above: (1) grouping and zoning, and (2) communication between buildings.

1.   Grouping and zoning

The phenomenon of the grouping of buildings within enclosures has already been observed by Andrew Reynolds.[8] The presence of 'service zones' has been suggested by Hamerow and also Blair.[9] My analysis of sites with alignment has further indicated a tendency towards zoning within the settlements, supported by different axes of alignment within different groups. Of all the sites discussed above, only Flixborough and Cheddar feature alignment but lack evidence for zoning.[10]

Here only the grouping of buildings at sites featuring alignment is being considered. The argument and the conclusions, therefore, could perhaps be either developed or contested if other sites are taken into consideration. However, within the scope of this project, it is clear that grouping is a feature of sites dating to immediately after 600. This is consistent with John Blair's observation that planning of buildings on a grid with the use of a perch module at both high-status and low-status settlements occurs after 600, with Andrew

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[8] Reynolds 2003.

[9] Hamerow 2012, pp. 94-98; Blair 2018, p. 141.

[10] Flixborough, however, has been interpreted as a possible monastery and is addressed in comparison with other monastic sites in chapter 5. At Cheddar, alignment seems to have been a short-lived feature during a period of reconstruction of the East Hall.

Reynolds' analysis of the development of enclosures and the ordered layout of settlements and with Helena Hamerow's argument that precision in settlement planning in the Anglo-Saxon world did not develop until the late 6th century.[11] Furthermore, the first large halls, often enclosed, an indication of increased attention to planning and status, appear around the same date.[12] Taken together with the fact that the phenomenon of alignment in high-status sites also begins to develop around 600,[13] this seems to indicate a fairly consistent tendency to regularity in Anglo-Saxon settlements of the period. Different aspects of regularity, however, seem to manifest themselves in different contexts, ranging from grids, as noted by John Blair, to straight lines, as we see here. Interestingly, these patterns in planning seem to have been contemporary with other phenomena, which indicate cultural shifts in a broader context, such as changes in land-holding practices, writing, mortuary practice and possible changes in pagan priesthood and attitudes to witchcraft.[14] Needless to say, the period after 600 is the time when Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were firmly established and Christianised, at least in the east, south and north of modern England, and when the lords were exercising a growing control over their estates.[15] Thus, a shift in architectural paradigm would appear to be consistent and contemporary with other social and cultural changes, including those concerning beliefs. Zoning,

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[11] Blair 2013, pp. 49, 54; Blair 2018, pp. 148-156; Hamerow 2012, pp. 70-71; Reynolds 2003.

[12] Hamerow 2002, p. 94; Hamerow 2004, p. 302; Turner and Fowler 2016, pp. 251-252. A further statement of increased attention to planning is John Blair's research into grids as a basis for planning of Anglo-Saxon settlements. – Blair 2013; Blair 2018, esp. pp. 148-163.

[13] The dating of the sites is mostly approximate and based on types of structures, more closely dated analogies elsewhere and historical narratives. C14 dating and more precise material evidence is only occasionally available. Due care needs to be exercised when putting any site in a chronological context. At the same time, such a picture of order and precision evolving in settlements from around 600 seems consistent in numerous aspects of settlement planning and therefore seems a reasonable model.

[14] Turner and Fowler 2016; Sofield 2015, pp. 353-354; Blair 2011, pp. 729-31; for 'cunning women' and their grave goods after 600, see Meaney 1989. On the significance of changes in the 7th century in general, see Blair 2018, pp. 174-176.

[15] Dark 2004, p. 296; Hamerow 2004, p. 309.

together with axial alignment, is perhaps an expression of evolving social patterns.

2.   Communication between halls

The existing evidence is far from conclusive, but entrances in the middle of long walls appear to be an ubiquitous and generic feature, possibly inherited from Continental architecture, as has been illustrated already by James, Marshall and Millett.[16] Of the cases considered above, only the halls at Cheddar completely lack entrances in their long walls. Cheddar, however, is from the late Anglo-Saxon period, when the distribution of entrances was far from standardised.[17] Generally, evidence of axial entrances, on the other hand, is not common in 5th-7th-century buildings and is mostly confined to larger structures.[18] They do, however, appear at sites with alignment. It seems that entrances in the ends of buildings feature where opposed lateral doorways, which were sufficient in other cases, fail to respond to particular spatial arrangements, most notably, to facilitate direct communication between axially aligned halls. At Yeavering it is halls A4 and A1. At Chalton the link seems to be between structures A3, A2, A1 and possibly the enclosure to the east, and also between the group A12, A13 and A14, where A12 also has an axial entrance. At Cowdery's Down, the arrangement of C12, open on each side, facilitates direct progress through the building and into the enclosure to the east. At Flixborough, there seems to be a strong connection between buildings 1a and B6, with their facing doorways. At Lyminge, the links within the southern group of aligned halls are not clear but there is a possibility of an axial entrance at the east end of the great hall.[19] It is, however, clear that in

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[16] James, Marshall and Millett 1984, pp. 184, 203.

[17] Hamerow 2012, p. 41.

[18] Ibid., pp. 38, 41. Among the examples of buildings with axial entrances at sites lacking alignment are Buckden, Waltham Abbey and West Stow. – see Rahtz 1976a, figs. 2.15 and 2.16.

[19] Alex Knox, pers. comm.

the northern range at Lyminge the western hall has an entrance in its eastern end, which would have provided direct access to the eastern halls.

At three of these sites, there are contrasting examples of aligned buildings with entrances only in the long sides. In these cases it seems that arrangement in one line was important but direct access was not. These include the pair of D1 and D2 at Yeavering (which, in particular, contrasts with the group of halls A, in which the buildings did have axial entrances), C14 and B/C15 at Cowdery's Down and A10 aligned with A9 inside the enclosure to the north at Chalton. In addition, at three of the sites where there is evidence of doorways, aligned buildings demonstrate spatial and functional independence: Bloodmoor Hill, Thirlings and possibly Staunch Meadow in phase 2.3. This contrasts with the interrelated character of the buildings discussed above. At these three sites, visual linearity does not seem to be supported by functional connections between aligned buildings, and entrances facing each other are absent. The presence of these two different approaches – functional connection between aligned buildings and evident lack of connection, despite axial alignment, especially when they occur at a single site at the same time - suggests that by contrast with the generic long-side doorways, openings at the short ends were a matter of choice and a planning tool and were made in response to surrounding structures. This, in turn, could suggest that the groups with facing doorways were for ceremonial use, where passage from one hall into another was deemed important, whereas those with generic mid-long-wall doorways served a different function and did not constitute stations on a processional route, despite the axial alignment of buildings.

1.2.   Specific functions of buildings in settlements with alignment.

Considering the general lack of evidence for the uses of individual buildings within settlements, the most promising function to consider, in addition to that of possible ceremonial use, is that of religious ritual, which, unlike other uses, could be manifested in the presence of associated burials and special deposits.

The discussion proceeds on the assumption that there were buildings on these sites that were specifically designed as spaces for worship, whether pagan or Christian, and, in some cases, for secular ritual.[20] More importantly, not only the presence of alignment but also the marked absence of it is taken into account as a source of information for the functions of buildings within settlements.

Ritual and religion

Sites of religious worship and spiritual significance were often associated with cemeteries and special deposits.[21] With the arrival of Christianity, funerary function gradually became associated with church buildings.[22]

Out of 21 sites considered here, eight feature burials within the settlement. There are animal burials at Cowdery's Down, Staunch Meadow and Yeavering, human burials at Bloodmoor Hill, Flixborough, Portchester, Sprouston, Staunch Meadow and Yeavering and cremations at Yeavering. In all cases the burials are unusual in some way and seem to indicate an out-of-ordinary function for the building with which they are associated.

Burials within settlements have generally been treated as having particular meaning, especially at places like Yeavering and Flixborough, where individual burials are deliberately segregated from the designated burial ground and

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[20] The multitude of interpretations of Anglo-Saxon buildings within settlements as churches (see sites in chapter 1 for examples) suggests their common presence. On the search for pagan temples in Anglo-Saxon settlements, see Blair 1995a; Wilson 1992.

[21] Williams 2011, pp. 252-255; Härke 2001. For votive deposits and burials as expressions of a belief system in Anglo-Saxon England, see Crawford 2004. For special deposits associated with buildings and ritual in England and in the North Sea Zone, see Hamerow 2006, sp. pp. 15-16, 21-26 (Hamerow's assessment of special deposits has been challenged by Morris and Jervis – Morris and Jervis 2011). For the links between burials and places of ritual associated with prehistoric features, see Semple 1998 and Williams 1997.

[22] Zadora-Rio 2003; Blair 2018, p. 78. Hadley and Buckberry point out that although churchyard burial was not a rule until the 10th century, burials adjacent to churches became common from the 7th century onwards. Hadley and Buckberry 2005, pp. 125-128. Mason and Williamson have suggested an interesting line of enquiry by arguing that pre-Christian cemeteries were places of spiritual power, and Christian churches developed in close proximity and direct association with them to take over this function. – Mason and Williamson 2017.

incorporated into the settlement pattern. 'Special deposits' within settlements have been analysed by Helena Hamerow and further discussed by Clifford Sofield, James Morris and Ben Jervis, and include inhumations of adults and infants, interments of animal corpses, and deposits containing disarticulated human and animal bone.[23] The positions of burials within settlements and the explanations proposed for them vary greatly; what unites them is that in the vast majority of cases these deposits are deliberate and that some are related to buildings and boundaries.[24] At each site listed above, burials are located within the settlement and spatially tied to particular structures.

Let us see how exactly these burials relate to buildings, what they can tell us about the buildings themselves and what other conclusions we can draw from observation of relationships between buildings, their alignment and the presence of burials within the broader context of a settlement.

As in the instances of zoning, the case-studies below are numbered for clarity.

1. Yeavering (see pp. 48-55 for plan and introduction)

It is notable that Yeavering is the only site that includes axial burials in architectural alignment, as opposed to off-axis burials associated with one of the buildings in an aligned group.[25] Meaney has tentatively identified burial AX, which contains a goat's skull at the feet of the deceased and a cross-staff, as that of a pagan priest who could have served in temple D2 prior to its transformation into a church.[26] Hamerow has proposed parallels between this grave and descriptions of burials of sorceresses by doors found in the Viking-age poems 'Baldrs Draumar'

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[23] See Hamerow 2006, Morris and Jervis 2011, Sofield 2015.

[24] Petts 2002; Hamerow 2006.

[25] This, as is illustrated in chapter 5, can be related to ecclesiastical aligned groups.

[26] Meaney 1985, pp. 19-21; Wilson 1992, p. 176; Hope-Taylor, however, suggests the staff is a surveyor's groma – see Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 200-203. This interpretation is supported by Blair. – Blair 2013, p. 23; Blair 2018, pp. 79, 122.

and 'Groagaldr I'.[27] In one instance of such a burial, the door is described as leading to Niflhel – one of the regions of Hel, - and in the other it is 'the door of the dead'.[28] In both cases, these burials seem to suggest some form of protective function and control over a crucially significant liminal space between the realm of the living and the Otherworld.

It seems that the axial burials BX and AX were associated with the eastern entrance into hall A4, which perhaps had some symbolic importance, in addition to its functional role and statement of status.[29] Alexandra Sanmark has suggested that the metaphor of the sparrow flying through the hall – a well-known passage from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica,* in the account of Edwin's conversion – evokes a soul capable of going between different worlds.[30] The sparrow flies into the warm lively hall from the outside stormy world and out through the other door; its flight parallels human life, preceded and succeeded by the external, the alien, the unknown. The hall thus is a space signifying life, a microcosm appearing both in opposition to and in connection with the unknown 'outside'. Its space is framed and defined and yet its open opposed doors allow the sparrow to fly and channel a flow of communication between worlds. Kathryn Hume has further emphasised the juxtaposition between the hall as a place of order and security and the chaotic world outside the hall, as illustrated in Old English poetry. In addition, this order has been understood in terms of positive categories of gift-giving, loyalty and friendship; the hall thus can be seen as a positive existential metaphor, beyond its simply architectural limitations.[31]

Jenny Walker thinks in terms of a combination of domestic and cultic functions in the Anglo-Saxon hall similar to those that Fabech has proposed for

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[27] Hamerow 2006, p. 11.

[28] Price 2002, p. 113.

[29] Jenny Walker has proposed the possibility of ritual processions in hall A2 focussing on east-west axis. – Walker 2010, pp. 88-89. By analogy, a similar use could be proposed for A4.

[30] Sanmark 2010, p. 163; for the passage see HE ii.13, pp. 182-184. On an explicitly Christian context of the episode of Edwin's conversion, see Barrow 2011.

[31] Hume 1974, pp. 66, 68-69.

Scandinavian halls. She argues that royal authority, seen as a part of world order, would have been expressed in some form of ritual, whether directly religious or not.[32] Alvin Lee has further proposed that a fundamental cosmological connotation of the elite secular hall is valid in a Christian context too, where the halls take on another meaning, as metaphors for heaven and hell and the God-created world.[33]

Thus, the hall being such an important space, it is possible that axial burial at the entrance could have been understood as a form of protection and have been conceived as part of an ideological image of a hall as a cosmological nexus, comprising social, political and religious aspects. The unprecedented precision of architectural alignment at Yeavering, punctuated by precisely aligned posts, invites the observer to understand the halls A4, A1/A2 and the theatre E as one powerful composition and a spatial unit revolving around the figure of the king. The protective element in the form of the axial burials BX and AX thus would relate not just to building A4 but to the whole sequence, piercing the line of structures with a form of protective energy. The posts, as masts, could be understood as facilitating the transition of this protective function and the open axial doorways as helping to channel it throughout. In this respect, it is notable that the easternmost feature of the complex – post BX – is positioned at the centre of a mound, which was still discernible at the beginning of Anglo-Saxon occupation.[34] The primary focal burial pit here has not been located; pit BX is likely to have been secondary and associated with an Anglo-Saxon phase, deliberately appropriating an earlier mound.[35] Anglo-Saxon associations between prehistoric landscape features, especially mounds, and the Otherworld, as well

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[32] Walker 2010, pp. 85-86; Fabech 1994, p. 174; Fabech 1999, p. 459. On the sacral role of the king, see Kobishchanow 1987, p. 108. The importance of distinction between ritual and religion has been emphasised: ritual does not have to be religious. – Insoll 2004, pp. 11-12; Hamerow 2012, p. 120, Chester-Kadwell 2009, p. 29; Bradley 2005.

[33] Lee 1972, sp. pp. 24, 178-181.

[34] Hope-Taylor 1977, p. 85

[35] Ibid., pp. 83-5.

as a range of associated dark forces, have long been acknowledged.[36] The decision to align the whole complex on the mound and to place the two protective devices – axial burials – in the zone between the mound and the entrance into A4 could be read as an intentional gesture, designed to tease the 'dark forces' by disturbing the mound and simultaneously proclaim the dominance of the king's power by overriding those forces with protective devices.[37] The very idea that it is only necessary to place a form of ritual 'filter' at one end of the string of buildings, facing the mound, perhaps is an indication of the linear, directional, nature of metaphysical forces – whether dark or protective. Thus, the spiritual component of linearity and in particular, of the burials included in alignment, seems prominent. In this respect, Burial AX provides an interesting parallel with subsequent instances of axial burials in Christian ecclesiastical contexts, which occur as early as the 620s in Canterbury, and may have had their origins in pagan practice.[38]

Yeavering seems to be a bi-focal site with two main axes of alignment. At the centre of the site, the precision of east-west alignment is maintained as far westwards as post E and possibly echoed further away in the post west of D2, which is not strictly on axis but is otherwise not apparently related to anything at all. To the west of the central group, buildings D2 and D1 are aligned north-south and are associated with building D3 and a cemetery. D2 has been identified as a temple, mostly on the basis of an unusual deposit inside the building.[39] The cemetery was characterised by a general east-west orientation of the bodies, head to west. The burials, however, were external to the enclosure to the south of D2. This enclosure has been interpreted as a possible space for ritual.[40] Such a

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[36] Semple 1998, 2013; Crewe 2012; Williams 1997, 1998; Whyte 2003; Davidson 1950.

[37] In early to middle Anglo-Saxon period, mounds were associated predominantly with terror, death and darkness. –Semple 2010.

[38] On the burial at Canterbury, see chapter 3, p. 203.

[39] Hope-Taylor 1997, pp 97-102, 168.

[40] Ibid., pp. 244-5.

function seems to be reinforced by the presence of a peculiar crouched burial with a single ox tooth in the grave close to the south-west corner of D2. This stands out among other contemporary, east-west, burials, possibly suggesting a ritual significance related to D2 and marking a persistence of native traditions, irrespective of the dominant system of public observance – whether pagan or Christian or a hybrid of both.[41]

Although the alignment of the main halls is more prominent and has been more widely discussed than the arrangement of surrounding buildings, it is the aligned pair of D1 and D2 that appeared on the site earlier than the main halls. The east-west axis of the halls had been established early on with small buildings A5-7 and A8, although subsequently these fell out of use and the focus shifted westwards, towards the western ring-ditch, which, following its original role as a stone circle associated with cremation burials, had been used for inhumation burials. D1 and D2 were a group with a screen between them with no discernible function. D3 was probably used as a kitchen. It was after the construction of these buildings that the hall complex was introduced, and that the posts E, BX and possibly D – to the west of D2 – were erected as a possible cultic feature.[42]

It is striking how, despite the alignment of posts, placed in all three zones D, E and A, the two groups in areas D and A respectively are misaligned, constituting two relatively independent cores. In this arrangement, structure E, with its post E on axis with the halls but with its own axis pointing west-south-west, only marginally belongs to either group. It seems to occupy a transitional space and to play a connecting role between the eastern and western groups, uniting the area of the temple and burials with the area of secular power.

It is useful here to turn to Bede's description of the encounter at Yeavering between King Edwin and the missionaries from Rome, prior to conversion. The

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[41] Ibid., p. 249. It is not the purpose of this thesis to draw a distinction between paganism and Christianity. In fact, as is illustrated in chapter 5, the tendency seems quite the opposite – the boundaries between pagan and Christian worshipping contexts are blurred.
[42] Hope-Taylor 1977, p. 161.

narrative, however reliable it may be, indicates the considerable influence enjoyed by Edwin's pagan priest, Coifi, as the king is recorded as having asked his opinion and advice.[43] This implies that the priest's religious authority was substantial, if not equal to that of the king.[44] The layout of the settlement, essentially divided into two zones – the realms of the priest and the king, with a place for assembly in the middle – could be seen as reflecting these two poles of power.

By contrast, the church B, constructed later and roughly included in the alignment, can be interpreted as a manifestation of the unity of secular and religious spheres of governance. At the same time, its subtle misalignment with the halls may be designed to underline its outstanding status as a place of ritual. Post BX seems to have been removed at this time, possibly signifying the end of the pagan era at the site. Michael Bintley sees this as a statement of the Christianisation of Yeavering and the fall of the old order.[45] Problematically, however, structure B contains internal burials, highly unusual for a church of this period, and this has led Sam Lucy and Elizabeth O'Brien to doubt its identification as a church.[46] We will return to the discussion of this building below, in comparison with structure 1a at Flixborough.

It would seem that Yeavering demonstrates a fairly clear relationship between the presence of ritual associated with certain buildings, the position of these buildings within the settlement and, importantly, their axial alignment. Using Yeavering as a starting point, I will consider the evidence for the possible

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[43] HE ii.13, pp. 182-184.

[44] For example, Tacitus discusses the considerable – not just religious – power of a priest alongside that of a king in the context of first-century Germanic paganism, – Tacitus, Germania 10, 11, in Anderson 1998. Ronald Hutton has suggested that it is Germanic and Scandinavian paganism that was introduced to Anglo-Saxon England in the course of the 5th century. – Hutton 2013, p. 293. On Coifi's role, see also Dunn 2010, pp. 82-83, and Barrow 2011.

[45] Bintley 2015, p. 42.

[46] Lucy 2005, p. 139; O'Brien's view is unpublished and referenced in Lucy 2005.

presence of ritual elsewhere, observing the ways in which cultic function could be expressed spatially in the context of axial alignment.

2. Cowdery's Down (see pp. 91-94 for plan and introduction)

While the cultic function of the special burials at Yeavering is difficult to argue with, the burial at Cowdery's Down problematizes the possibility of a general interpretation of special deposits as ritualistic. At Cowdery's Down, the burial of a cow with a boar skull below it, not on axis but close to the western entrance into building C13, is contemporary with the building and has been interpreted as a foundation sacrifice.[47] The practice of foundation deposits is well attested in North-western Europe, where such deposits are associated with dwellings, not necessarily always of elite status. This interpretation would hold for Cowdery's Down, the status of which, elite or non-elite, has been the subject of debate. Continental sites show a clearer trend in association between special deposits and entrances or boundaries, which on some occasions have been interpreted as protective, possibly paralleling the situation at Cowdery's Down.[48]

The identification of the function of building C13 itself has been controversial. The excavators suggested that it served as a place of communal ritual, although in view of the absence of related cultural material this has been questioned by Jenny Walker.[49] James, Marshall and Millett have also urged against a cultic function for C9 and C13 at Cowdery's Down.[50]

In the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, considering the variety both in the types of deposits and their relationships with settlements, it is difficult to draw any systematic conclusions about their functions. This is further problematized by the very small number of deposits actually associated with timber buildings. 50% of all special deposits studied by Hamerow have been found in association with

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[47] Millett and James 1983, p. 221.
[48] Hamerow 2006, pp. 22-26.
[49] Millett and James 1983, pp. 197, 247; Walker 2010, p. 96.
[50] James, Marshall and Millett 1984, p. 190.

SFBs, and most, if not all, of them are associated with the end of the occupation, with the abandonment, of buildings - very different in character from the deposit at Cowdery's Down.[51] This means that it is quite difficult to find close parallels for the role and meaning of the cow burial at Cowdery's Down.

At the same time, by analogy with the proposed cultic functions of buildings marked with special deposits at Yeavering, it is possible that the cow burial at C13 at Cowdery's Down is not simply a foundation deposit but a 'guardian' of a building, providing some element of protection. On this note, it is perhaps of importance that D2 at Yeavering and C13 could have been contemporary and therefore potentially constructed in similar ideological contexts.

Another aspect to assess is the position of C13 in relation to other buildings within the settlement. Considering the strongly pronounced alignment of C14 and B/C15 and the evident spatial relationship between C12 and the enclosed area containing C9, C10 and C11 to the north-east, building C13 stands out as a single structure, not associated with the group. Curiously, C13 and C12 are the only two structures on the site with three entrances; however, their doorways in the middle of one of the short walls face in opposite directions. This means they are unlikely to have been functionally related and that C13 would have served an independent purpose. Could C13, being the only building in the settlement associated with a special deposit and clearly singled out spatially, have had a special function, perhaps of a cultic kind? This suggestion is of course speculative, but such a function is possible. The probability of this interpretation is perhaps more likely when John Blair's identification of building A1, which belonged to an earlier phase at Cowdery's Down, as a pagan temple is taken into account.[52] The likely presence of some form of religious provision at an earlier stage of

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[51] Hamerow 2006, pp. 8-9, 2, figs. 1, 2.
[52] Blair 1995a, pp. 16-17.

development makes the presence of a temple at a subsequent stage, when the settlement had grown and evolved, seem more feasible.

3. Bloodmoor Hill (see pp. 74-80 for plan and introduction)

It is notable that at other sites where burials have been identified in association with buildings, possibly suggesting a ritual-related function, the position of these buildings also seems to single them out. Thus, at Bloodmoor Hill, there is a group of unnumbered structures arranged in one line in the central area, with another building to the east, which has its northern wall tied into the same axis. Structure 44, located immediately to the south of this line of buildings, has been identified as a mortuary because of its association with the cemetery. The orientation of this structure is the same as that of other buildings, but it is completely off the axis on which they lie. Such a position simultaneously suggests a relationship between all these buildings and a special function for Structure 44.

4. Staunch Meadow (see pp. 129-134 for plan and introduction)

At Staunch Meadow, the sequence of buildings 7098 and 8851 identified as churches, with the associated cemetery 1, is only marginally tied into the rest of the settlement to the north and is surrounded by an enclosure. The same is true for the later mortuary building 4669 with cemetery 2 in the northern part of the site. The earlier 'church' 7098 had a horse burial under the 'chancel' – not dissimilar from ritual deposits described above.[53] The subsequent church 8851, built on the same site in its last phase, coexisted with the two new aligned halls 8893 and 8927 to the north. It was not spatially tied into the group of halls but connected to the hall 8927 by a fence, suggesting at once its independent position and a certain relationship with the halls. Spatially, the distribution of buildings at

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[53] Certain symbolism was associated with a horse in Anglo-Saxon non-Christian burials and could have had an influence on the burial in building 7098. – Pollington 2008, pp. 60-61. Further on the significance of horses in Anglo-Saxon culture see Fern 2010.

Bloodmoor Hill and Staunch Meadow is different but in both cases they seem to share the principle of marginal location and the relative separation of a building associated with burials with respect to the rest of the settlement. The churches at Staunch Meadow, however, are of a later date (post-750) and their position, more independent and segregated from the rest of the settlement than the other examples discussed in this chapter, is consistent with the tendency to separate and enclose churches as distinct places.[54]

What unites all these buildings is their (at least potential) association, through burial, with some form of religious ritual, whether pagan or Christian.[55] At Yeavering, in its earlier phases, the context seems to have been pagan; a new Christian practice being purposefully embodied in architecture only with the erection of building B. Bloodmoor Hill and Staunch Meadow have been interpreted as Christian, although the presence of a horse burial under the 'chancel' of 7098 at the latter site suggests if not a pagan context at least an unproblematic coexistence of Christian and non-Christian traditions, which seems consistent with the evidence for the late survival of pagan traditions, especially in burial.[56] These burials, on the one hand, could have been apotropaic and hidden out of sight, only present as notional guardians, very likely unmarked, like the horse burial at Staunch Meadow, the cow burial at Cowdery's Down and the stack of skulls inside D2 at Yeavering. On the other hand, they could have formed small marked burial grounds, as opposed to individual burials, similar to the groups associated with building 44 at Bloodmoor Hill, cemeteries at Staunch Meadow and burials by the building B at Yeavering.

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[54] Cherryson 2010, p. 61.

[55] Places of pagan worship have a frequent association with burial, as is the case at Lyminge, Broadstairs, Dorchester-on-Thames and Springfield Lyons, among others - see Blair 1995a, pp. 7-10. Similarly, buildings found in Christian (or what looks like Christian) cemeteries have been commonly interpreted as churches, chapels or mortuaries. For example, see Shudy Camps (Blair 2005, p. 236), Hamwic (Cherryson 2010, pp. 60-62), Whithorn (Hill 1997, p. 31), Sprouston (Smith 1991, p. 281), Staunch Meadow (Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 24, 67-69), Sedgeford (Wilcox 2001).

[56] See Cherryson 2010; Buckberry 2010; Williams 2002; see also Wilson 1992 and Chaney 1960.

A common feature found at all sites is the unusual position of a possible cultic building with respect to the rest of the settlement. Each one of these structures was evidently associated with other buildings but only marginally tied into the overall spatial composition by being 'not-quite-aligned', suggesting both its integral place in the whole layout of the settlement and at the same time its independent function. By not being included in the same line with other buildings, these structures seem to occupy a form of intermediate, liminal position within spatial schemes of settlements. Their anomalous position in the plan of a settlement perhaps serves as a subtle visual clue to their unique function, easily perceived on approach to the site and further revealed on encountering the building.

5.Sprouston (see pp. 56-59 for plan and introduction)

In this light, it is now interesting to look at Sprouston, where a small (7x4m) post-built structure associated with a cemetery has been interpreted as a Christian church or oratory purely on the basis of its location. The cemetery and the associated building at Sprouston do not seem to be spatially related to the settlement, and so do not fit with the model of cultic zones occupying a specific intermediate position in a settlement. At the same time, Sprouston stands out as a site where careful attention was paid to alignment and grid-like arrangement in its Saxon phase. Thus, the aligned halls A and B seem to have defined the north-east – south-west axis of alignment, first supported by other minor structures and then by building E, built on the same alignment, with the pair of D1 and D2 arranged in an echelon on a perpendicular axis. The substantial trench-built structure F is the only one that not only ignores the existing grid but is built on the east-west axis, aligned with great precision. Buildings F, E and the group of D1 and D2 are evenly spaced out, possibly hinting at zoning, similar to that discussed above. Building F, therefore, is an integral part of the settlement core, and yet its unusual orientation possibly points towards a special status or

function. Its orientation, the presence of western and southern entrances but no openings to the east, judging by the cropmarks, together with the likelihood of the presence of a Christian community at Sprouston in the 7th century, leave one wondering if building F could have been a church. In this scenario, the small structure associated with the cemetery could have been a secondary chapel, as was possibly the case at Hamwick.[57]

In the context of alignment, it is striking that none of the possible cultic buildings are included in a string of aligned buildings. They stand in contrast to aligned groups, possibly underlining a different kind of rhetoric embedded in architectural linearity – that of political power and control but not necessarily religious worship.

6. Flixborough (see pp. 124-128 for plan and introduction)

A slightly problematic case in the light of the above proposal is Flixborough. Building 1a, which could be interpreted as cultic due to its association with burials, but is fully included in an alignment, as opposed to occupying a liminal position, like the examples discussed above. In addition, it contains some internal inhumations, which is very unusual, because burials, even if associated with a building, are usually located outside.

Building 1a is broadly contemporary with the structures discussed above and is associated with four burials inside the building and two outside. Five of these burials are of children and one of a woman with a perinatal infant. This stands in demographic contrast to the adult burials at Bloodmoor Hill, Staunch Meadow and Yeavering; the case of burials at Flixborough and the purpose of 1a altogether are very enigmatic.

Helena Hamerow's analysis of special deposits and burials in settlements suggests that out of 13 articulated human skeletons found within her sample one

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[57] Cherryson 2010, p. 62.

burial of an adult male could have been either inside or abutting a house at Sutton Courtenay and three burials – all of infants – at Barrow Hills and Eye Kettleby were inside SFBs and could have been associated with abandonment or dismantling.[58] Thus, either 9 or 10 – depending on the location of burial at Sutton Courtenay – out of 13 articulated human burials were found outside, and the remaining interior burials were of children. Flixborough seems to follow this pattern. However, problematically, the burials associated with 1a are numerous and seem very different from the single interments at SFBs at, for instance, Sutton Courtenay, Barrow Hills and Eye Kettleby, which can be treated as special deposits. At the same time, these burials are also different from a conventional contemporary cemetery: although they form a 'cluster', they are clearly very strongly associated with a building and demographically different from the nearby cemetery, which contains exclusively adults.[59] Further, in her overview of child burials in the Anglo-Saxon period, Sally Crawford has argued that child burials most definitely differed from adult burials in status and were commonly included in the settlement, as opposed to burial in a defined cemetery. This is the case at Flixborough itself: juvenile burials, associated with building 1a, are far removed from the partially excavated separate cemetery. This has led to the suggestion that building 1a could have been a private mortuary chapel.[60] An interesting parallel has been noted between Flixborough and the ecclesiastical site at Whithorn, where the cemetery containing exclusively children and women is associated with a mortuary chapel.[61] Is it possible that 1a at Flixborough performed a similar function?

Clifford Sofield has further suggested that despite the excavators' suggestion that structure 1b, built on the site of 1a, did not respect the burials, it

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[58] Hamerow 2006, table 1, p. 8. For Sutton Courtenay, see Leeds 1923, p. 169; for other sites – Hamerow 2006.

[59] Sofield 2015, pp. 362, 374, table 8.

[60] Crawford 2008, p. 201; Loveluck 2001, p. 10; Morris 1989, p. 133.

[61] Hill 1997, pp. 45, 170-172; Crawford 2008, pp. 201-202.

is equally possible that these burials may have been foundation deposits for the later structure, emphasising continuity.[62]

The excavators compare building 1a at Flixborough to the buildings identified as churches at Cowage Farm and Brandon (Staunch Meadow) and on this basis propose for it a possible religious Christian function, in line with the possible identification of Flixborough as a monastery at least in one of the phases of its occupation.[63] Indeed, these buildings are similar in their internal arrangement and association with graves, but the major difference lies in the location of graves: as at the sites mentioned above, at both Cowage Farm and Staunch Meadow the graves are external to the buildings. Rather problematically, building 1a also contains a hearth, absent in other structures identified as churches.

Assuming 1a is a church or another form of religious building, its location – included in the alignment and definitely spatially associated with its neighbour B6 - is very different from structures associated with ritual and burial in other places featuring alignment. As has been suggested, these tend to occupy either a liminal position, being simultaneously included in and excluded from the spatial organisation of the settlement, if not in a completely independent setting, as is the case with building A at Cowage Farm, or later, in the 9th-10th centuries, the church at Raunds.[64]

The indoor human burials along the walls of building 1a at Flixborough find closer parallels with a fairly common pre-Christian convention of depositing infants.[65] This type of burial definitely contrasts both with the organised, grid-like

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[62] Sofield 2015, p. 380.

[63] Loveluck and Atkinson 2007, pp. 115-16. However, the nature of this building, and therefore the identification of its function, are extremely problematic. – see Loveluck 2007, pp. 33-43.

[64] Boddington *et al* 1996, p. 5.

[65] This definition is rather problematic, especially considering the substantial degree of merging and mutual influence between Christian and pagan burial practices, but it is the establishment of churchyard burial with the proliferation of parish churches which manifested the inclusion in cemeteries of infants, previously interred within the settlements. – Crawford 2008, p. 202; see also Blair 2005.

outdoor cemeteries at Staunch Meadow and Bloodmoor Hill and with sporadic, single special deposits. A similar point needs to be considered in relation to structure B and its associated cemetery at Yeavering. Brian Hope-Taylor has interpreted this as a church, based on its close association with burials, both internal and external. String-graves to the south of the building, contemporary with it, seem to be a 'native', British, feature and contrast with the more expressly Christian extended inhumation burials associated with the building.[66] As at Flixborough, the picture appears to be rather blurred, especially considering the uncertainty in identification of building B as a church and Flixborough as a monastery. Whatever they are, one feature that unites them and sets them in fairly strong contrast with every other site discussed in this chapter is their simultaneous association with internal inhumations and their position in line, at Flixborough, or roughly in line with other buildings at Yeavering. However, it is still a question whether these two cases represent the same phenomenon, considering their differing dates (pre-650 for Yeavering and post-700 for Flixborough), the clear differences in demographic composition of the burials (adults at Yeavering and children with one female at Flixborough), the different type of structure, as far as can be reconstructed (the presence of a hearth at Flixborough, indicating a more likely domestic use) and possible regional variations (between Northumbria and Mercia).

Both sites, however, seem to be unparalleled in the ways their central buildings and their axial alignment relate to burials. The functions of both 1a at Flixborough and B at Yeavering remain unclear.[67]

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[66] Hope-Taylor 1977, p. 252. Identification of 'Christian' burials, however, is problematic. – see Meaney 2003; Geake 1992, sp. p. 90. On the complexities and fluidity of burial rites in Anglo-Saxon England, see Welch 2011.

[67] To add to the mixture, there is a very distant parallel of buildings with clay platforms outside, similar to the one at Flixborough, which were areas of ritual feasting, found at the Neolithic sites at Maes Howe and Barnhouse in Scotland. This analogy might seem farfetched but the two Neolithic sites represent a feast hall and a tomb and it has been suggested that close similarities in their spatial arrangement, construction and use, including the use of clay platforms, deliberately blurred the line between the

7. Portchester Castle (see pp. 107-109 for plan and introduction)

A final site featuring burials in conjunction with alignment is Portchester. Building S18 and the burials associated with it at Portchester Castle differ from other sites dramatically. This could be explained by their much later date. S18 has been interpreted as a bell tower on a thane's estate, which served the symbolic purpose of promoting his free status. [68] Further, it has been proposed that the tower could have then served as a religious focus until the foundation of the Priory nearby after 1130. [69] The burials seem spatially related to the tower, although the most likely entrance into the phase 1 structure would have been from the south – the opposite side of the tower from the cemetery. [70] Thus, the excavators have suggested a simultaneously religious and secular context for S18, which contrasts with examples discussed above, where buildings of ritual use were different from those that embodied civic functions. The late date of the tower at Portchester could perhaps be a reflection of a growing contiguity between secular and ecclesiastical powers; this stands in contrast to a site like Yeavering, where the two were evidently segregated in the early phases.

8. Possible cases of cultic function

In the context of the cases already considered above, both in relation to ritual and zoning, the sites at Cowage Farm and Drayton, not fully excavated, are of great interest. The spatial relationships between the buildings and their axial alignment suggest a degree of grouping within these settlements. By analogy with other sites of similar dates – Yeavering, Bloodmoor Hill and Cowdery's Down – it

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notions of 'tomb' and 'house' (Richards 1993, pp. 167, 172-175; Garnham 2004, pp. 210-211). I would like to suggest that perhaps a similar idea of a blurred, compound notion of tomb/house could explain 1a at Flixborough.

[68] Cunliffe 1976, ii, p. 303.
[69] Ibid., ii, pp. 60-61, 303-304.
[70] Ibid., ii, p. 49.

should be possible to analyse the grouping and distribution of functions within these settlements. At Cowage Farm, the buildings are evidently arranged into three groups: the ranges associated with buildings B and D and the group to the west. Building A, located well to the east and enclosed, seems relatively independent from the rest of the settlement and has been interpreted as a possible church - with the acknowledgement that an early church may be indistinguishable from a secular structure.[71] Given the presence of zoning here, it would not be surprising if one of the ranges was associated with ritual activity, following the spatial patterns discussed above.

In the same way, the grouping at Drayton may not be accidental; the unknown functions of the unexcavated buildings C, D and E leave room for debate.

Further, it is interesting that Chalton displays the same approach to the sub-division of buildings into groups, which may imply zoning according to use and/or meaning. There are no ritual-related finds at Chalton, which leaves open the question of ritual activity there. At the same time, at Friars Oak, for instance, even in the absence of associated deposits, Chris Butler has interpreted the building at site C as a shrine, due to its unusual structure and its similarity with other possible shrines at, for example, Spong Hill and Morning Thorpe.[72]

Conclusion

Overall, despite exceptions, the evidence still seems to indicate a correlation between the liminal, 'not-quite-aligned', position of a building within a settlement with clear architectural alignment and the possible cultic function of this building.

A somewhat radical alternative to this would be a complete absence of architectural spaces for pagan rituals in Anglo-Saxon society, in line with Sarah

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[71] Hinchliffe 1986, p. 251; Godfrey 1974, p. 132.
[72] Butler 2000.

Semple's observation that pagan worship could have taken pace in the open air.[73] Some structures in Scandinavia have been identified as temples or 'ceremonial buildings' at Uppåkra, Uppsala, Gudme, Sanda, Helgö, Hov and Lunda.[74] Although they differ dramatically in their construction, the outstanding finds related to these buildings point towards their cultic use with a lot more certainty than anything found in Britain.[75] In England no Anglo-Saxon structure has been firmly identified as a pagan shrine and our overall knowledge of ritualistic behaviour in what was perhaps a rather culturally and ethnically mixed Anglo-Saxon/British society is too limited to expect definitive conclusions on how it might have been expressed in the landscape or in built structures. In this light, it is worth mentioning that architecturally, church buildings often seem to have derived from halls, hence the frequent confusion in the identification of early churches.[76] For instance, building 7098 at Staunch Meadow has been interpreted as a church only on the basis of its association with a cemetery.[77] By contrast, the partly excavated building A at Cowage Farm, interpreted as a church because of its apse-like annexe, enclosure and east-west orientation, lacks direct evidence to confirm such a function.[78] The identification of building B as a church at Yeavering has also been questioned.[79] The range of different ground plans of known churches or possible churches, including simple single-cell ones, does not make the task of identifying architectural types easy.[80] In addition, the general identification of sites as religious or monastic can be difficult, as is illustrated by Brandon and

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[73] Semple 2010, 2011; see also Meaney 1995, p. 37.

[74] Larsson 2011; Haraldsen 1998; Jørgensen 2011, p. 83.

[75] Larsson 2011, pp. 200-201; Ljungkvist pers. comm.

[76] On possible origins of some church buildings, see Smenton 1963; also Turner and Fowler 2016, p. 252. On confusion in identification of sites, see Cramp 1976a, p. 249; Turner 2006, pp. 63-66.

[77] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 48, 362.

[78] Hinchliffe 1986, p. 251; Godfrey 1974, p. 132.

[79] Lucy 2005, p. 139; Smith 2015.

[80] On difficulty of identifying buildings as churches, see Tester *et al* 2014, p. 362; Smith 1990, pp. 106-116, Cramp 2014, p. 313; for an overview of types and plans, see Cherry 1976, pp. 156-159.

Flixborough.[81] Letha Smenton has proposed a direct correlation between Anglo-Saxon stone church buildings and timber architecture, suggesting a process of evolution which may have started with halls.[82] In this light, it is possible that churches took on the architectural characteristics of halls in the absence of direct cultic predecessors in the form of temples.[83] However, this model is purely hypothetical.[84]

What is important at this stage is the correlation between alignment, zoning and function: different axes on which lines of buildings were arranged often comprise functional groups and indicate spatial and functional coherence within the groups while simultaneously providing a distinction from other groups.

The resulting observations also seem to suggest that it is not only alignment but deliberate lack thereof that can point towards a certain function – in this case cultic. This would complement a possible ceremonial function observed in settlements with alignment and indicated by precisely aligned buildings with axial entrances, discussed in the previous section.

2. Why aligned?

This section explores the possible practical and cultural reasons why the buildings at these sites could have been aligned. The assessment of their functions above has led to hypotheses on some of the ways functions could have been reflected in the arrangement of buildings in one line or, equally notably, deliberately not in line. Below, two other possible explanations of alignment - existing topography and the influence of Continental planning – are assessed in more detail.

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[81] Gittos 2011, pp. 827-8.

[82] Smenton 1963; also Turner and Fowler 2016, p. 252.

[83] Or, alternatively, as Chaney has suggested, a pre-Christian temple could have shared the appearance of both hall and church. – Chaney 1970, p. 74.

[84] A further discussion of contiguous nature of halls and churches follows in chapter 5.

2.1. Influence of heritage and existing topography

As settlements were rarely founded on completely untouched land, pre-existing cultural features, in particular, structures and foci of worship, need to be taken into account. The evidence of prehistoric and Roman periods of occupation, which preceded the Anglo-Saxon phases and left archaeological traces, is considered below in two sections with the aim of establishing their possible influence on the alignment which occurred in the Anglo-Saxon period.

Roman heritage

It is notable that only one of these 22 sites – Portchester Castle - shows evidence of Roman occupation. Three other sites – Cheddar, Cowage Farm and Flixborough – are built near established Roman settlements but are not related to them. Cowdery's Down is located in the vicinity of a Romano-British enclosure, but there is an evident break in continuity between the two. Barry Cunliffe has suggested that continuity of occupation at Portchester into the sub-Roman phase was largely coincidental, resulting from the nature of its community in the Roman period. The evidence of domestic activities in Roman Portchester points to the presence of families rather than just an army unit, probably a community of *laeti*. This might account for the unbroken occupation of the fort after 410. Archaeologically, there is evidence there for Grübenhäuser as early as the 5th century, as well as for the continuous use of a Roman well and a scatter of domestic debris dating to 400-700. Substantial post-built structures started to appear in the 7th-8th centuries and the increasing wealth of the settlement in the 9th century is indicated by the presence of coins.[85] The significance of Portchester as a fort, rather than merely as a settlement, did not become relevant again until 904, when it was recorded as having been purchased by the King.[86] Thus, Portchester seems to represent a naturally and gradually evolving settlement,

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[85] Cunliffe 1976, ii, pp. 301-302; for the full report on Roman phase, see Cunliffe 1976, ii.
[86] Cunliffe 1976, ii, p. 303.

which owed the continuity of its occupation to the initial nature of the community stationed at the fort. There does not seem to have been any readily evident ideological or cultural value ascribed to the status of Portchester as a Roman foundation.

Despite the general absence of Roman structures, some sites display a scatter of Roman materials associated with Anglo-Saxon deposits (which means they may have been brought in from elsewhere); in other cases Roman finds are absent. Both at Staunch Meadow and Bloodmoor Hill the excavators suggest a purely practical explanation for the sporadic presence of Roman finds; nothing has been found at Cheddar, Faccombe Netherton and Lyminge. At Bloodmoor Hill the evidence seems to suggest a Roman phase of occupation but then there is a 250-year gap, which separates this phase from the earliest Saxon occupation, with no evidence of continuity. A few sites provide no information regarding the presence of Roman material, either because of the nature of available excavation reports, or from lack of research; the unexcavated sites at Atcham and Hatton Rock are cases in point. Most important, however, is the absence of Roman structures on all these sites and the absence of other direct evidence of occupation in the Roman period. Even the sites identified by cropmarks lack any indication of structures other than those generally accepted as Anglo-Saxon.

Thus, in the present state of our knowledge, it seems reasonable to assume that apart from Portchester Castle, there was no connection at these secular sites between the Roman and Anglo-Saxon phases of occupation and no Roman structures associated with the Saxon phases of occupation. It is interesting that while there is a close relationship between Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites and Roman occupation, there does not seem to be an analogous relationship between Roman sites and Anglo-Saxon secular settlements.[87]

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[87] See chapters 4 and 5 for further discussion.

It seems that the end of Roman Britain in ca 410 generally signified the end of Roman culture on the island. Across England, this has been associated firstly with a gradual decline of detectable activity in both town and countryside prior to this date, followed by the abandonment of Roman administration, whether more or less immediate or delayed, and a subsequent state of cultural and political flux, prior to the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.[88] There is evidence for the production of Roman-type coinage and for the regional survival of some aspects of Roman material culture, such as the 'Quoit Brooch' style objects found south of the Thames or the small communities mostly in West Country attempting to invoke *romanitas* in the 5th-6th centuries, but generally, for whatever reason, it would appear that Roman material heritage lost its attraction.[89] Even if Roman patterns were indirectly imitated, as is possibly the case with structure E at Yeavering that is reminiscent of a section of a theatre or amphitheatre, there does not seem to have been an active interest in the appropriation of Roman forms in secular settlements.[90] John Blair, in particular, has observed that the number of Roman centres with subsequent Anglo-Saxon royal associations is insignificant in comparison with royal sites not associated

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[88] Esmonde Cleary 2011; Gerrard 2013, esp. pp. 245-262; Nicholas Higham has suggested a decline rather than a sudden and dramatic abandonment in the 5th century (Higham 2013a, sp. pp. 46-47, 51), which still does not contradict the idea of the subsequent extinction of Romano-British culture. Michael Hunter and Margaret Deanesly have suggested some survival of Roman culture in the form of an interest in history and in the ideological claims of the Saxon kings, who aimed to be politically equated with Roman emperors. – Hunter 1974, pp. 40-42; Deanesly 1943, and, more recently, Gerrard 2013, p. 195; Yorke 2013. Overall, these interests seem to have concerned a very limited group of people and seem to have represented more general claims for antiquity and continuity rather than any particular admiration for Roman culture. Michael Hunter concludes by proposing a composite and somewhat blurred idea of the past in Anglo-Saxon England, which combined multiple cultural influences without specifically defining them as Roman or Germanic. – Hunter 1974, pp. 48-49. Further, Dodie Brooks has studied the breaks in continuity of occupation between the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. - Brooks 1986.

[89] On coinage, see Hunter 1974, pp. 38-39; on the 'Quoit Brooch', see Esmonde Cleary 2011, pp. 24-25; on communities attempting to be Roman after the fall of Roman rule, see Fleming 2014.

[90] See Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 241-244, and Barnwell 2005, pp. 178-180. Wood has expressed doubts over such an identification of Structure E. – Wood 2005, p. 188.

with Roman foundations.[91] The lack of associations between Roman foundations and high-status Anglo-Saxon settlements seems to indicate that abandoned Roman sites had limited importance and significance for the post-Roman population, outside ecclesiastical and funerary contexts.[92] The fort at Portchester is an exception.[93]

Prehistoric heritage

In this light, connections between prehistoric landscapes and Anglo-Saxon settlements, which have been established at 11 out of 22 sites, seem more deliberate. Yeavering, Hatton Rock, Drayton, Sprouston, Lyminge, Cowdery's Down and possibly Long Wittenham in particular show active association with prehistoric monuments.

Yeavering was laid out over an important prehistoric site; its link with the Iron-Age and Romano-British landscape has been discussed by Frodsham and Bradley.[94] The stage-like topography of the site itself, a flat plain raised above the river valley, framed by hills to the north and south, embraces the surrounding landscape – covered in the material evidence of prehistoric activity - into the structure of the settlement.[95]

The site at Drayton/Sutton Courtenay is rich in Neolithic barrows and enclosures. The Neolithic Drayton cursus is also located in the vicinity; it has

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[91] Blair 2005, p. 273.

[92] For the use of Roman sites for the construction of churches and martyria, see Bell 1998, pp. 11-14; for grants of Roman sites to monastic foundations and the establishment of minsters in villas and forts, see Blair 2005, pp. 188-190; further, a very deliberate selection of a ruined Roman villa as a site for a Saxon cemetery has been demonstrated at Eccles, Kent (Shaw 1994). Helena Hamerow has observed continued 'squatter' occupation of Roman villas, which, however, was not long-lived or substantial enough to suggest continued the significance of those sites. Instead, Anglo-Saxon settlements tended to be established on Romano-British farmland (Hamerow 2012, pp. 13-16).

[93] The question of continuity of occupation at forts is an altogether different one. There is more evidence for the continuous use of forts, especially along Hadrian's Wall. – Collins 2011.

[94] Frodsham 2005 (see also other essays in the edited volume); Bradley 1987.

[95] For evidence of prehistoric activity, see Hope-Taylor 1977, Tinniswood and Harding 1991 and Bradley 1987.

already been observed that the abundance of prehistoric features in the area does not seem coincidental and could have been taken as contributing to the status of the early medieval site.[96] Some of the structures seem to have a deliberate spatial association with prehistoric features: thus, a line drawn through buildings C, D and E roughly bisects one of the ring ditches, as Helena Hamerow has observed.[97] Furthermore, two ring ditches located to the north seem to lie exactly on the same alignment as buildings A and B.

At Sprouston, an earlier, likely prehistoric, structure is in alignment with a barrow, presaging the subsequent, Anglo-Saxon alignment at the site. The phase I structure in the southern part of the settlement is built end-on to a ring-ditch, in what looks like a deliberate design. At Long Wittenham, as far as can be deduced from cropmarks, what is probably an Anglo-Saxon hall is also axially aligned on an undated ring ditch – possibly a barrow. The northernmost hall at Hatton Rock is situated in close proximity to a ring-ditch, although the two do not seem to be aligned in any way. The Lyminge halls are constructed near a Bronze Age barrow and it could be of significance that the barrow itself, the north-eastern group of the halls and the great south hall are evenly spaced, creating a spatial rhythm for a unified composition of features in the landscape.

Finally, the early medieval settlement at Cowdery's Down is located to the north-west of a group of five ring-ditches and a Romano-British enclosure.[98] Three of the Bronze Age ring-ditches, broadly contemporary and arranged roughly in a line, could have been barrows. One of them contains a secondary crouched burial.[99] John Blair has particularly emphasised the fact that the settlement seems to be laid out in relation to the enclosure.[100] The presence of barrows, however, does not seem coincidental, especially considering the

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[96] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 329, 345.

[97] Hamerow *et al* 2007, p. 189.

[98] See more on this in chapter 5.

[99] Millett and James 1983, p. 159, fig. 11.

[100] John Blair, pers. comm.

location of other sites in proximity to barrows.[101] It should be noted that a line drawn through the centres of ring ditches 3 and 5 runs parallel to the buildings C14 and B/C15.

Of course making suggestions of specific associations between the axes of prehistoric features and those of early medieval buildings, as observed on plans rather than in the landscape where they might not have been as discernible, might seem a little farfetched; however, a significant degree of association between prehistoric features and these sites is unmistakable.[102] There is a strong possibility that Anglo-Saxon and prehistoric features could have been laid out in relation to each other and deliberately aligned, regardless of whether this was immediately visible in the landscape. For comparison, it is interesting to look at Buckland cemetery in Dover, dating to the late 5th- mid-8th centuries. The layout of this cemetery is quite complex, featuring three free-standing posts, and appears to be focussed on a prehistoric barrow, with another possible post at its centre (Fig. 2.9). The excavator, Vera Evison, has emphasised that the plan of the cemetery and the orientation of certain graves seem largely defined by precise alignments of the posts and the barrow. For instance, a line drawn between post Y and the centre of the barrow is only 3 degrees off true north; the line drawn between posthole X and the centre of the barrow defines the orientation of some of the Anglo-Saxon graves and the division of zones; some of the graves are deliberately set in one line, such as those on a line between grave 90 and posthole Z.[103] Such a degree of attention to laying out a cemetery, with a particular treatment of the barrow as its vital central feature, suggests that the geometry of planning at Dover might have been not only a convenient planning tool but an expression of a worldview, where linear spatial relationships between a prehistoric feature and other components were significant. It seems likely that

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[101] Semple 2013, see appendix 3, pp. 253-260.

[102] Associations between Anglo-Saxon settlements and prehistoric landscape of course have been explored before. – Semple 2004, 1998; Williams 1997, 1998; Hamerow 2012, pp. 142-143.

[103] Evison 1987, pp. 152-156, 160-161, fig. 2.

other sites of cultic importance discussed in this section display a similar approach, suggesting that their relationships with prehistoric features may not be coincidental after all.
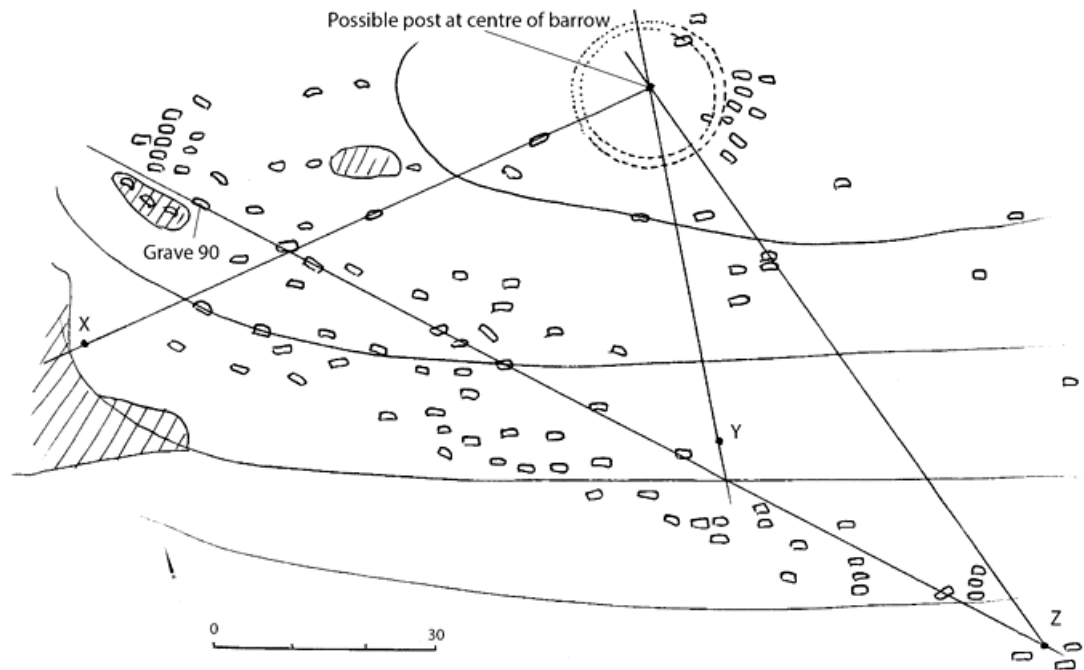
Fig. 2.9. Plan of cemetery in Buckland, Dover, with highlighted alignment, after Evison 1987 (text fig. 2, p. 14).

It should be noted that all the sites associated with large prehistoric features discussed in this section have been dated to the period before 700, except for Hatton Rock.[104] Among the later sites, Faccombe Netherton stands out as being surrounded by abundant evidence of prehistoric activity. Although occupation at this site seems to have been established only ca 850, it also seems to demonstrate a seventh-century pattern of 'planning behaviour', with alignment suddenly appearing as a strongly expressed feature at a certain point and contrasting with a previous layout. This is something that is not generally observed at sites of a later date, perhaps revealing the influence of earlier approaches to planning there.

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[104] This might be a reason for assigning an earlier date to this site, as proposed in Appendix 3, consistent both with the planning patterns it follows and with its association with prehistoric landscape.

Overall, a close association between prehistoric features and Anglo-Saxon settlements with alignment can be observed at approximately half of the sites, contrasting with an almost complete absence of associations with the Roman landscape. At four of these sites – Drayton, Sprouston, Long Wittenham and Yeavering – the axes of alignment of halls were orientated on prehistoric features, so that alignment in the Anglo-Saxon period could be directly explained by features of the prehistoric landscape. At other sites there are sufficient connections between Anglo-Saxon sites and prehistoric landscapes to suggest deliberately created and emphasised relationships between them, although there is not the evidence to show how individual prehistoric features determined particular axes of alignment. Whatever the exact relationships between the aligned Anglo-Saxon structures and prehistoric features, the observations of their proximity and association invite to trace the possible connections between them further and open a new line of enquiry, which is explored in chapter 5. In the meantime, another possible source of inspiration for alignment in Anglo-Saxon architecture is considered.

2.2. Possible influence of Continental architecture?

Anglo-Saxon settlements did not develop in isolation from their Continental counterparts. In this context, it is worth considering the Germanic origins of the migrant Angles, Saxons and Jutes and to look to the Continent for precedents, parallels and influences both for types of construction and for settlement layouts in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The origins of the Anglo-Saxon hall have been extensively studied and debated.[105] However, no convincing example of a direct ancestor of the type of Anglo-Saxon hall has been discovered

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[105] On development and origins of halls, see Rahtz 1976a; Addyman 1972; Dixon 1982; Fernie 1983; Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 213-232; Hamerow 1997; Marshall and Marshall 1991; James, Marshall and Millett 1984; summarised in Hamerow 2012, pp. 18-22. For structural types of Germanic timber-framed buildings, see Fehring 1991, pp. 155-163; Hamerow 2002, pp. 12-30. For construction of Anglo-Saxon buildings, see Blair 2018, pp. 51-67; Gardiner 2012.

to date. Rather, there are multiple examples of particular features found both in the native landscape and abroad that could have inspired Anglo-Saxon practice. Instead of looking for the origins of the hall as such, we will examine the layouts of Continental settlements of comparable status to see if alignment features there too and could have inspired the layouts of Anglo-Saxon settlements.

German archaeology of this period seems for the most part to have come up with villages and groups of farmsteads, and not royal vills. Although the village and farming sites show evidence of careful planning, they seem to be without direct counterparts in England, which makes comparison difficult. The sites that throw the clearest light on the issues, broadly contemporary and comparable in status, are perhaps Germanic Herrenhöfe and Scandinavian magnate complexes. Helena Hamerow has drawn a parallel between Germanic Herrenhöfe and Anglo-Saxon royal vills, suggesting their similar status and thus allowing for direct comparison.[106]

Germanic territories

First of all, we will examine some examples of planning at early sites in modern Germany and the Netherlands to compare their layouts with ones in Anglo-Saxon territories.

The regular radial plan of the settlement at Feddersen Wierde was largely defined by its location on a mound. A Herrenhof was situated to the east of the main settlement area.[107] Although the general plan does show buildings arranged in lines, these are in fact separate enclosed farmsteads. It is possible that their linear arrangement was the result of efficient planning aiming to make the most of limited space on the mound. Although the Herrenhof to the east is enclosed and is evidently of a higher status than the nucleus to the west, the buildings

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[106] Hamerow 2010.

[107] For excavations at Feddersen Wierde, see Haarnagel 1979.

there continue the general 'radiating' layout.[108] During phases 1-3 (1st-2nd centuries), the structures within the Herenhof appear to be paired side by side, whereas from phase 4 (3rd c) the structures are stretched out in a line. Towards the 5th century, however, the layout becomes more dispersed. These planning shifts have been attributed to a changing economic environment.[109] The Herenhof buildings are also orientated east-west, in line with the predominant orientation of Anglo-Saxon halls. The evident attention paid to the linear disposition at Feddersen Wierde cannot be overlooked and must be considered as a possible antecedent of Anglo-Saxon axial alignment (fig. 2.10). However, it needs to be noted that the period of the 3rd-4th centuries when alignment was occurring there significantly pre-dates the earliest examples of the phenomenon in the British Isles. Furthermore, Brian Hope-Taylor, while admitting some common elements, drew attention to differences in the engineering principles used at Feddersen Wierde and at Yeavering, leaving open the question of a relationship between the two sites.[110] It should be noted that at the contemporary Scandinavian site at Skørbaek Hede there is a very different approach to planning, with an emphasis on the parallel siting of buildings (fig. 2.11).[111]

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[108] For further discussion of Herrenhof, see Burmeister and Wendowski-Schünemann 2010. It is still worth noting that there is a stronger emphasis on linearity in the Herenhof area, which invites further research.

[109] Hamerow 2002, pp. 77-79.

[110] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 218-219.

[111] See Hatt 1938.
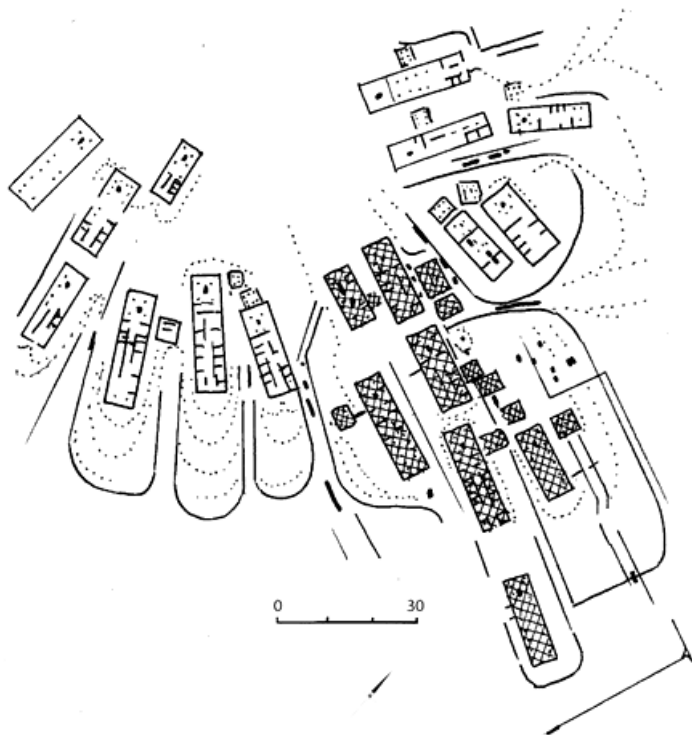
Fig. 2.10. Plan of structures at Feddersen Wierde in horizon 4, after Burmeister and Wendowski-Schünemann 2010 (fig. 4, p. 113).
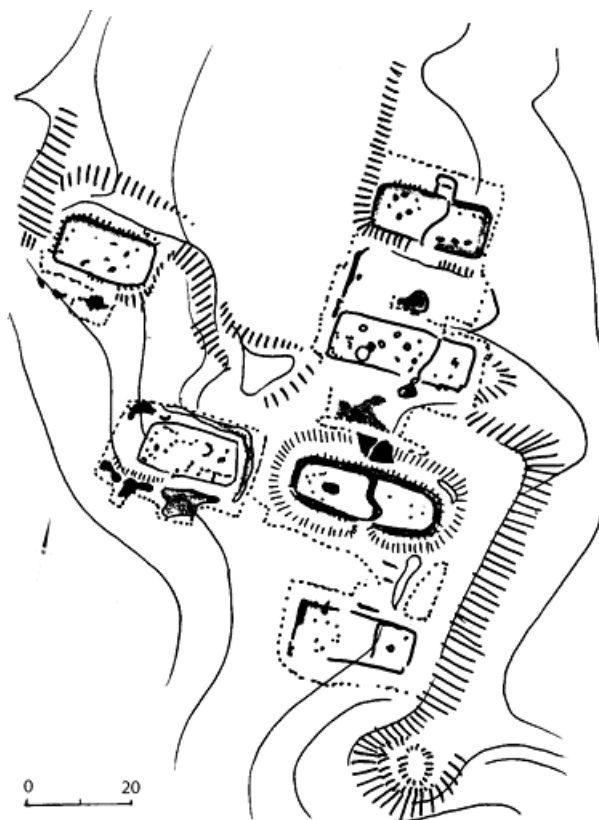
Fig. 2.11. Plan of buildings at Skørbaek Hede, after Hope-Taylor 1977 (fig. 96, p. 215).

The later, 7th-8th-century, Germanic settlements seem to have been centrally planned with rows of regularly arranged farmsteads, as at Kirchheim (7th-8th centuries) and Elisenhof (8th-11th centuries), in modern-day Germany, and at Odoorn (6th-9th centuries) and Dalen (7th-8th centuries), in the Netherlands.[112] A similar arrangement has been observed at Vorbasse in Denmark (6th-7th centuries).[113] At all these sites the emphasis is on the parallel rather than linear arrangement of buildings.

The 9th-12th-century settlement at Gasselte in the Netherlands demonstrates a similar approach, with buildings within individual enclosures set side by side (fig. 2.12). This is also to be observed at Wijster (4th-5th centuries) (fig. 2.13) and Kootwijk (8th-10th centuries) (fig. 2.14).[114]
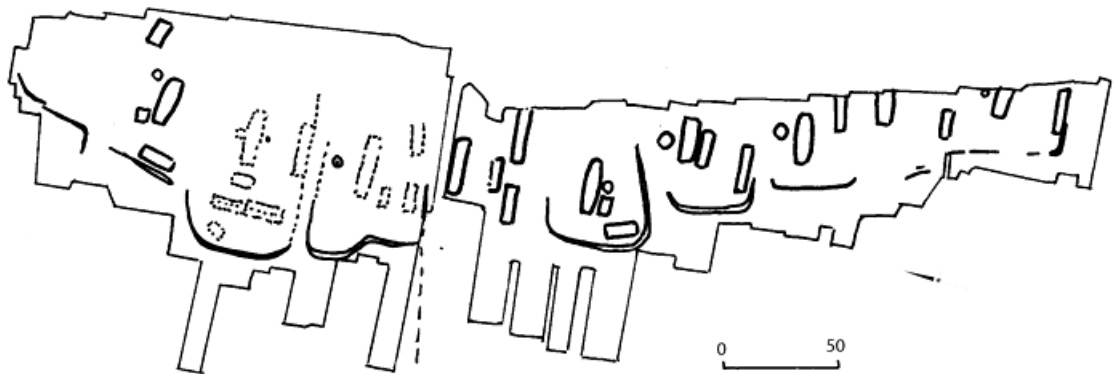
Fig. 2.12. Plan of settlement at Gasselte, after Fehring 1991 (fig. 68, p. 169).

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[112] Fehring 1991, pp. 170-171; Hamerow 2002, pp. 55-62, 66-68, 90-91; for individual sites, see Christlein 1981; Waterbolk 1991; Zimmermann 1991; Hvass 1988.

[113] See Hvass 1983.

[114] For Wijster, see Haarnagel and Schmidt 1984; for Kootwijk, see Heidinga 1987; for Gasselte, see Waterbolk and Harsema 1979; summary in Hamerow 2002, pp. 62-64, 68-75.
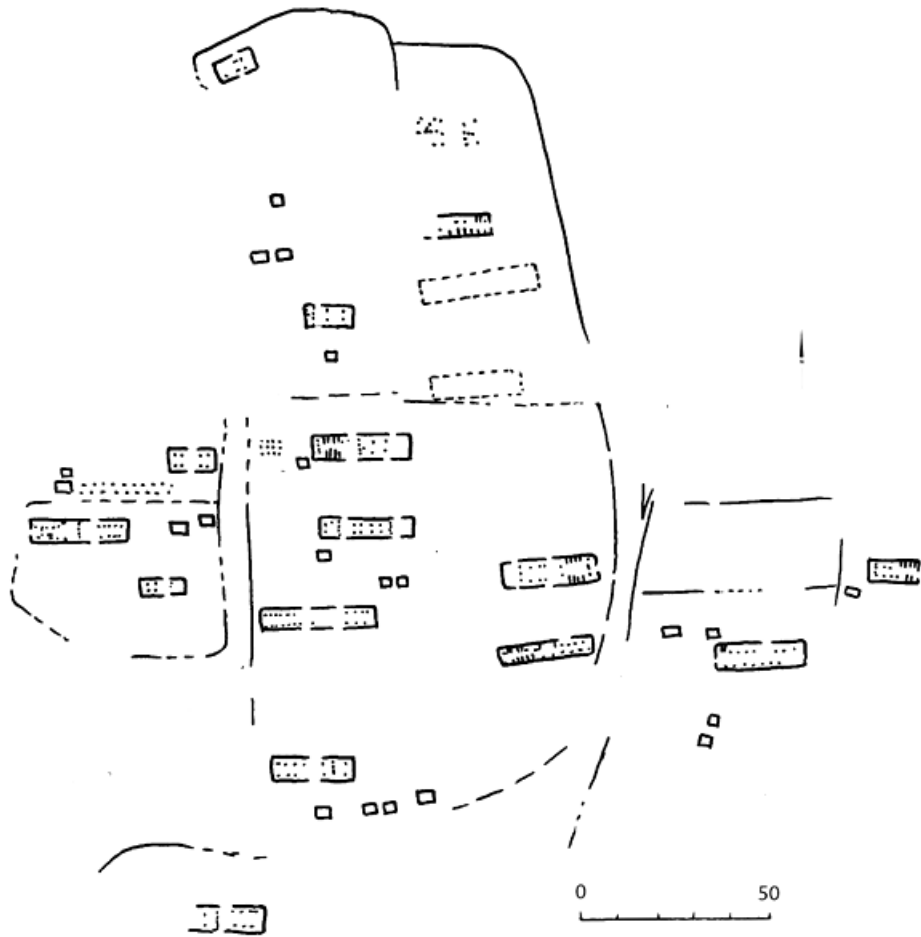
Fig. 2.13. Plan of settlement at Wijster, after Hamerow 2002 (fig. 3.14, p. 69).
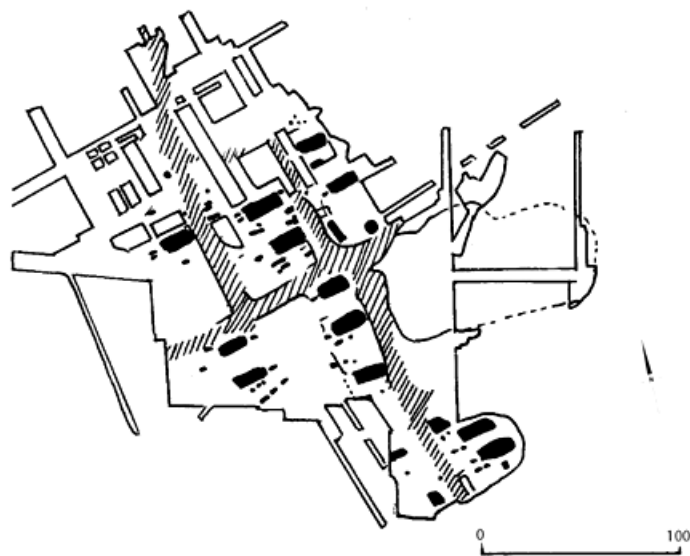
Fig. 2.14. Plan of settlement at Kootwijk, with emphasised parallel arrangement in phase 2B, after Hamerow 2002 (fig. 3.16, p. 72).

The layout of the settlements at Gasselte, Kirchheim and Bielefeld-Sieker (before 540 AD) (fig. 2.15) along linear features - a trackway or a stream - is reminiscent of North Elmham and Wicken Bonhunt, laid out along ditches which mark out lanes.[115] This suggests the possibility of related planning principles on a larger scale. Out of the three, however, only the site at Kirchheim is broadly contemporary with the two sites in Britain. Still, the parallel layout of buildings at the German sites contrasts with the evident tendency towards axial alignment at Anglo-Saxon sites such as Wicken Bonhunt.
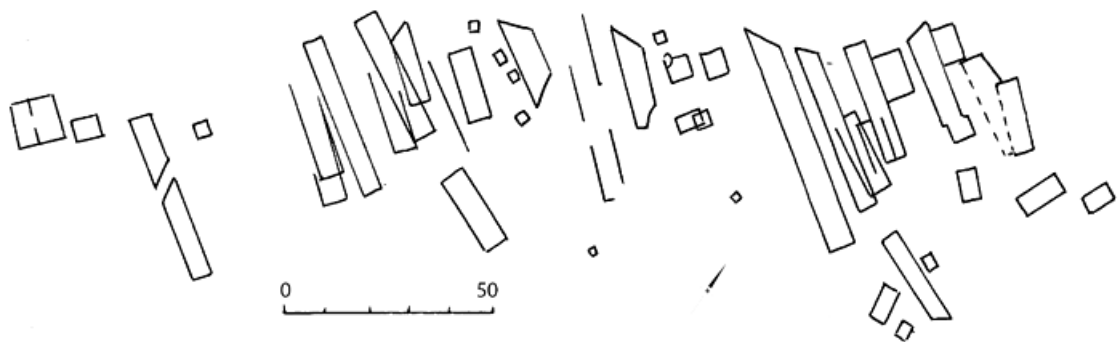
Fig. 2.15. Plan of settlement at Bielefeld-Sieker, after Hamerow 2002 (fig. 3.7, p. 61).

A more easily comparable example of an individual farmstead is that at Dalen (7th-8th centuries) in the Netherlands (fig. 2.16). This site is isolated and did not form part of a group of farmsteads. It is broadly contemporary with the 7th-century Anglo-Saxon sites.[116] The two main longhouses are also of a comparable size – just under 20m in length. However, it is characteristic that here the longhouses and other structures are arranged side by side, rather than in one line.

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[115] For an overview of the site at Bielefield-Sieker, see Hamerow 2002, pp. 59, 61; for a report see Doms 1990; for North Elmham and Wicken Bonhunt and their layouts see Reynolds 2003.

[116] For summary, see Hamerow 2002, pp. 80-81; for report see Kooi *et al* 1989.
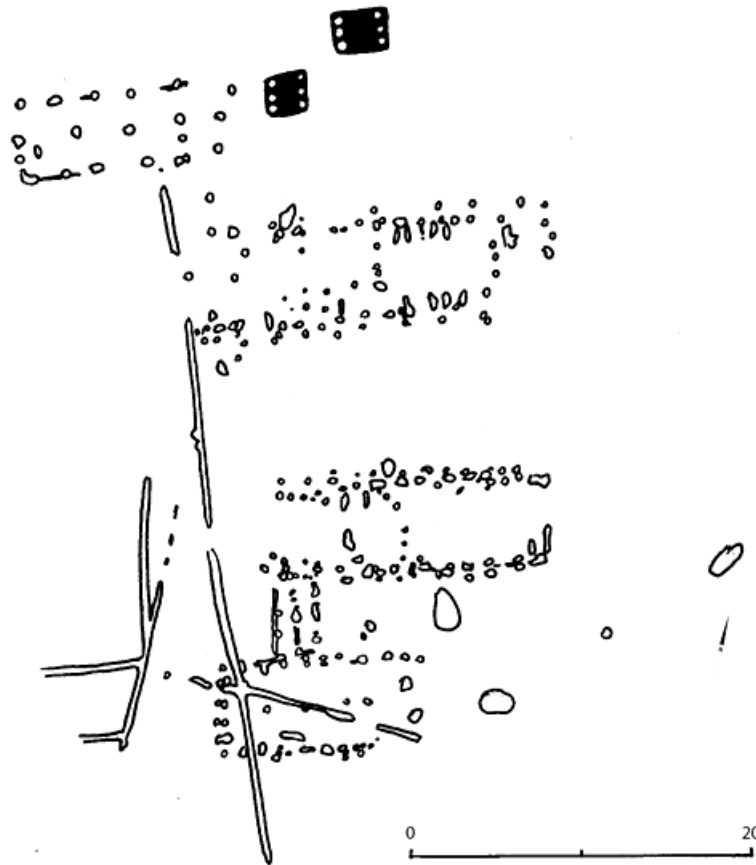
Fig. 2.16. Plan of settlement at Dalen, after Hamerow 2002 (fig. 3.23, p. 81).

Scandinavian settlements

It has been suggested that Scandinavian magnate complexes were similar to Anglo-Saxon elite and royal settlements in their social and political roles – they could have been consolidated centres of power, with control over resources, which emerged during the Migration period, characterised by rivalry and lack of political stability, similar to the situation in 7th-century England.[117] We will now consider whether similarities in economic and political structures in both regions could have led to similarities in the planning of high-status settlements.

The site at Lejre in Denmark features a main hall, repeatedly rebuilt on the same site from the late 7th to the 10th centuries, a satellite structure X to the south

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[117] Hamerow 2002, pp. 91, 167.

of it and a small building to the north, all parallel to each other (fig. 2.17). The status of Lejre as a royal centre and a model for 'Beowulf' has been debated, but its social status does seem to parallel that of the royal centres of 7th-century England.[118] What is notable for the present study, however, is a complete absence of axial alignment in an otherwise regularly planned settlement.
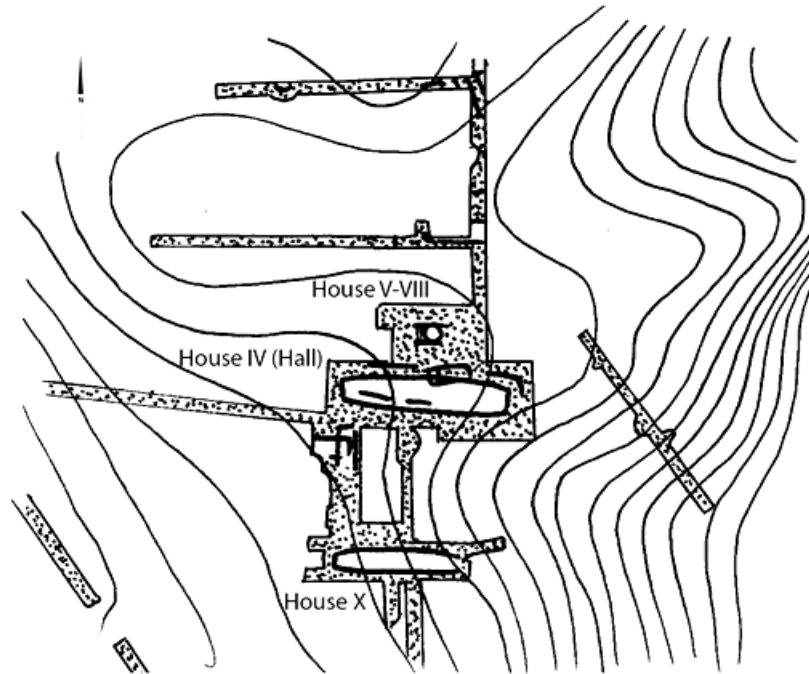
Fig. 2.17. Plan of buildings at Lejre, after Christensen 1991 (fig. 6, p. 168).

A similar arrangement of two halls positioned side by side is to be found at Gudme-Lundeborg, in Denmark, which has been interpreted as a manorial residence – a centre of both secular and religious power. These two halls existed between the 3rd and the 5th centuries.[119] Building group 2 at Helgö (fig. 2.18), in Sweden, also demonstrates a particular emphasis on the parallel disposition of buildings, which, notably, also responds to the topography and follows the slope.[120]

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[118] Christensen 1991, pp. 183-184; Niles 2007, p. 89; Blair 2018, p. 42.
[119] Jørgensen 2011.
[120] For a full report, see Holmqvist, Arrhenius and Lundström 1961.
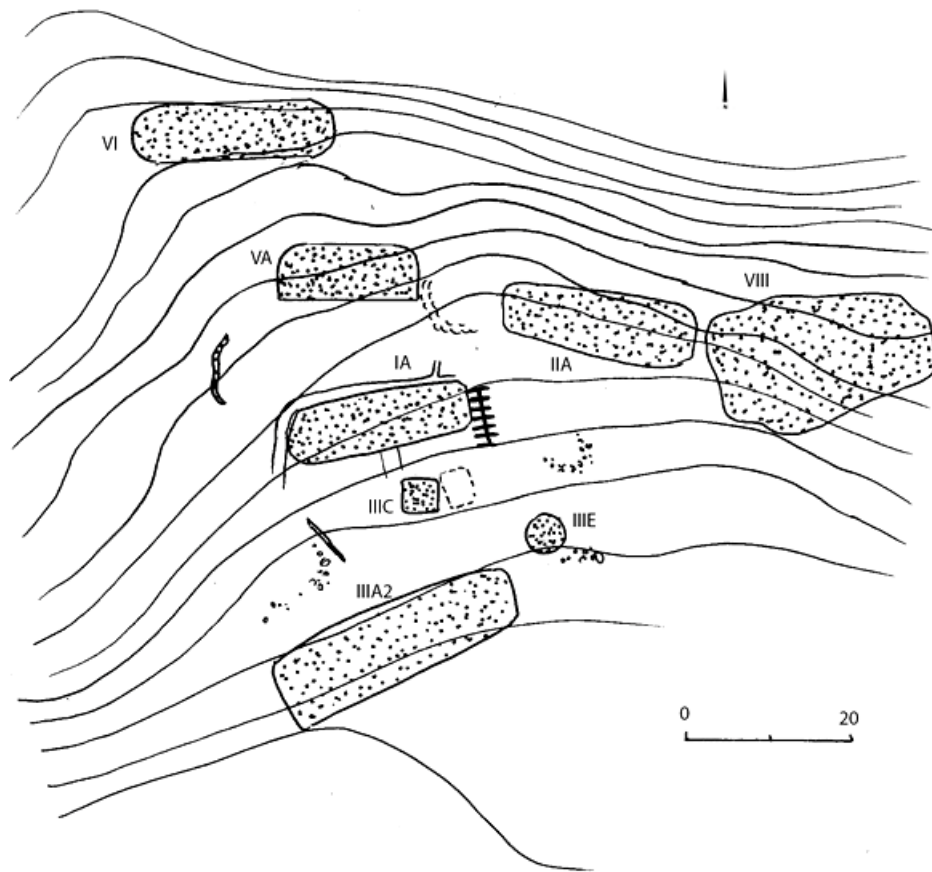
Fig. 2.18. Plan of structures at Helgö, after Arrhenius 2013 (fig.2, p. 5).

A possible royal site at Gamla Uppsala (fig. 2.19), also in Sweden, is characterised by a striking contrast between the presence of alignment in the area of burial mounds in zone E and the absence of alignment in the area of the halls, which are located on separate terraces. The mounds date to the 6th-7th centuries.[121] The structures to the north of the mounds were located on the highest ground, in the most visible area, in the 6th century and remained in operation until the 8th century. Building A has been interpreted as a hall, whereas areas B and C were possibly royal workshops.[122] It seems that, following the general tendency for Scandinavian halls to be built in dramatic natural locations, the site at Gudme, like that at Helgö, makes use of the topography, with planning

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[121] The dating of the mounds has been challenged only recently by Ljungkvist and Frölund (Ljungkvist and Frölund 2015) and was previously dated to 400-550 AD. – Lindqvist 1936; Lindqvist 1945.

[122] Ljungkvist and Frölund 2015.

respecting the existing landscape.[123] For this study, it is significant that while the major mounds are arranged in a straight line, the halls do not repeat this pattern but instead follow the natural topography.
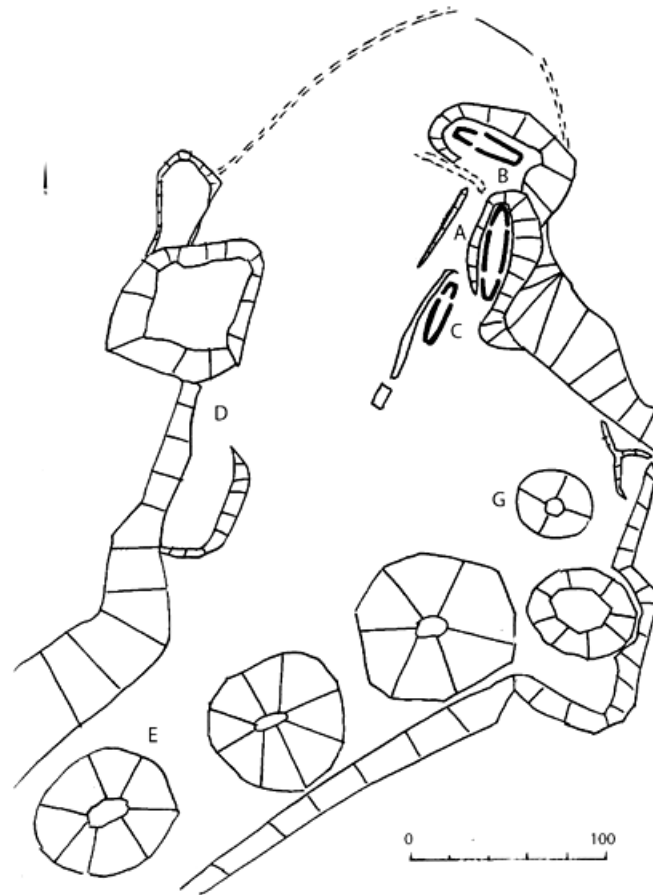
Fig. 2.19. Plan of the site at Gamla Uppsala, after Ljungkvist and Frölund 2015 (fig. 6, p. 13).

These sites by no means constitute an exhaustive list of Continental parallels for Anglo-Saxon hall complexes, but they do provide an overview of approaches to planning at sites of comparable status to demonstrate the differences in general trends. The direct comparison of site plans has its limitations as a method, because it focuses largely on layouts and does not take into account any regional variations and nuances of individual sites. In addition,

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[123] See Harrison 2013.

the selected sites represent only a limited sample. Nevertheless, this approach shows that the overall tendencies towards alignment in Anglo-Saxon England contrast with the much less linear layouts of Continental high-status settlements. A similar observation has been made by Helena Hamerow: the Anglo-Saxon Herrenhöfe, as Hamerow calls them, display an unprecedented tendency towards symmetry and linearity.[124]

In conclusion, regularity in approaches to planning can be observed both at Anglo-Saxon and Germanic sites and is especially evident at Feddersen Wierde. However, nothing seems to suggest direct links between Anglo-Saxon and Germanic sites. In Germanic settlements, although there is some degree of emphasis on linearity in planning, the dominant type of layout involved parallel structures. Connections between Anglo-Saxon elite centres and Scandinavian magnate halls, despite correlations in status, seem even less likely. The very approach to building a high-status residence, making a statement in architecture and creating a prominent landmark, seems to differ dramatically in Anglo-Saxon England and in Scandinavia, where single structures tended to be placed on mounds and in coastal locations, ensuring that they were visible and also allowing them the opportunity to observe.[125] The normally short lives of Anglo-Saxon high-status settlements also seem to be at variance with the characteristic Continental practice of renewing buildings on the same spot and the greater longevity of settlements.[126] Thus, it seems reasonable to look elsewhere for the sources of inspiration lying behind Anglo-Saxon alignment.[127]

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[124] Hamerow 2010, pp. 60-61.

[125] Jane Harrison, pers. comm.; see Harrison 2013; Herschend 1998, pp. 39-40.

[126] Hamerow 2002, pp. 82, 160.

[127] This is explored further in chapter 5.

3.Final thoughts

In this chapter the settlements initially presented in chapter 1 have been grouped and assessed in accordance with their most prominent features, with axial alignment as their definitive characteristic. As a result, some of the 22 sites received more attention than others. It has become evident that alignment is not a coherent and uniform phenomenon; the degree of deliberation in displaying this feature and its significance varies across the sites. Despite variety in alignment, the general uniformity in approaches to planning in high-status settlements in the 7th century and the importance accorded to their relationship with the surrounding landscape are clear. The lower-status slightly earlier Anglo-Saxon settlements, such as Bloodmoor Hill (500-700) and Thirlings (410-680), also demonstrate a degree of linearity.[128] The slightly later possible monastic sites at Staunch Meadow (mid-8th – late 9th centuries) and Flixborough (7th- 11th centuries) also display alignment and careful planning, but here they are not as dominant as at other, earlier, settlements. The 8th-century site at Wicken Bonhunt shows sequences of aligned buildings which may be the result of underlying decisions concerning the planning of the settlement as a whole – the same situation can be observed at North Elmham.[129] It should be noted that the middle Saxon period was also characterised by the emergence of systems of enclosures, which seem to have become the dominant features in planning and zoning, having been only marginally used in earlier settlements.[130] This is something that is to be found at North Elmham and Wicken Bonhunt. Raunds, Portchester and Sulgrave (all post-800) seem to belong to an established type of late Saxon enclosed thegn's manor, where alignment forms part of a nucleated plan. Faccombe Netherton (850-1070) also belongs with this group, although

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[128] Still, the layout of these settlements is a lot more refined and deliberate than that of a village. - See Hamerow 2012, pp. 67-119, for examples.

[129] Hamerow 2012, pp. 86-87; on North Elmham, see Wade-Martins 1980.

[130] Reynolds 2003; Hamerow 2012, p. 88.

there is a curious sudden change to an axially aligned layout in one of its phases.[131] Finally, there is a very late instance of alignment at Cheddar (9th-13th centuries); here alignment seems to be coincidental, perhaps as the result of the short-lived coexistence of the West and East halls.

Thus it seems that both pre-600 and post-700 instances of alignment are exceptional. Thirlings is the only possible example of the former. As a result, it is possible to propose a chronological model for the development and significance of alignment, with a particular focus in the 7th century, where there is clear evidence that it was employed as a planning tool by those who governed. 7th-century aligned settlements tend to be of high status, in some cases royal. They relate to the landscape, engage with prehistoric features in a more or less direct way and are the outcomes of an evident decision to create certain spatial relationships between buildings, expressed in alignment, layout of structures (i.e. positions of entrances) and grouping. The grouping of the buildings, often articulated by alignment within clusters, has also led to a discussion of functional zoning, resulting in the proposal that structures not included, or only marginally included, in groups and alignment are likely to represent separate functional zones related to religion and ritual. During the post-700 period, there seems to have been a continued attention paid to planning, as can be seen at Flixborough, Staunch Meadow and Wicken Bonhunt, and a tendency to longer occupation. This may be consistent with a time of greater political and cultural stability than in the 7th century. However, in this period, it is only at Flixborough that there is an emphatically deliberate expression of alignment, akin to that found in earlier sites, with the axis maintained over a period of time. In the later Anglo-Saxon period there appears to be little consistency in the layout of sites in general, suggesting a tendency for planning to become more place-specific. This contrasts with an evident desire in the early Anglo-Saxon period to impress and to engage

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[131] This is touched on again in chapter 5.

with an outside audience. This is what may have led to the adoption of similar building types and planning approaches across England and to a particularly active engagement with existing topographies. Alignment at later sites seems to be a by-product of generally adopted regular planning, in the case of high-status sites usually on a territory confined by an earthwork. It seems that alignment as a planning tool died out in the late Anglo-Saxon period, being replaced by general regularity of planning within a limited territory of individual sites. However, an awareness of its significance and possible meaning may have endured sporadically, for instance, at the late settlements at Faccombe Netherton and Flixborough.[132]

One of the questions this chapter (and indeed thesis) has not attempted to address is that relating to the identification of specifically Anglian, Saxon or Jutish influences in architecture and planning. Although such ethno-cultural associations have been proposed for specific sites, especially by Hope-Taylor, Smith and Scull, together with more general observations on the geography of migration and settlement of these different peoples, the overall picture remains far from clear.[133]

The use of the hall still remains a mystery, and this in turn limits our understanding of the spatial organisation of the building itself and its surroundings. Some light has been shed on this issue, but the very limited nature of the available evidence remains a major obstacle to research. Much of our understanding of what happened in the hall comes from 'Beowulf', and Rosemary Cramp has compared Beowulf's Heorot with existing archaeological records of excavated halls.[134] Kathryn Hume has further discussed the significance of the use

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[132] This suggestion perhaps goes against Andrew Reynods' somewhat generalised remark that linear arrangements were a feature of any high-status site, in his overview of late Anglo-Saxon settlements. – Reynolds 2002, p. 112.

[133] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 213, 223, 246-7, 250, 267; Smith 1991, pp. 285-288; Scull 1991. On migration and geography of settlement, see Brugmann 2011; Hedges 2011. See also Yeates 2012 on migration and ethnic divisions in Britain in the Roman and sub-Roman periods.

[134] Cramp 1993b.

of the hall, on the evidence of Anglo-Saxon poetry.[135] Stephen Pollington has attempted to reconstruct a hall in detail on the basis of literary evidence, although this attempt suffers from a lack of substantive evidence and is not always entirely convincing.[136]

The number of buildings clearly conceived as central within a settlement seems to vary from one, as at Cowage Farm, Sutton Courtenay or Faccombe Netherton, to two, as at Yeavering, Atcham and possibly Cowdery's Down, to three, as at Hatton Rock. The identification of the 'main' building of these two or three is not a straightforward task either. At Yeavering and Lyminge, both the larger and the smaller structures are thought to be halls, although it is impossible to tell whether and how they differed functionally and therefore if they formed a double core with two parts of equal significance or instead a main hall and a less significant satellite. The possibility of the use of separate halls by different members of families or genders also remains in question as there is no evidence with which to even begin such an enquiry.

With these limitations in mind, it has still been possible to explore some of the aspects of the planning of Anglo-Saxon settlements and the role of alignment within them. From this, alignment emerges as a phenomenon of particular significance in the 7th century – a meaningful attribute and an important planning tool within elite settlements. In the following chapters, alignment at ecclesiastical sites is introduced and discussed, followed by an analysis of the relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical expressions of the phenomenon and a discussion of their possible origins, common significance and mutual impact.

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[135] Hume 1974.

[136] Pollington 2003, chapter 2.

Chapter 3: Introduction to ecclesiastical case studies

The origins of the 'Anglo-Saxon Church' in general are difficult to pin down, but the earliest Anglo-Saxon Christianity, before Aidan and the influence of the Irish Church of Iona, consists of three essential strands: (1) the Roman Church that survived the collapse of Roman rule in 410, (2) the Romano-British Church particularly strong in the western regions of Britain, and (3) the Roman Church introduced by Augustine on Pope Gregory's mission from Rome and then continually encouraged through influences from Rome and Gaul.[1] While the latter has a definitive starting point – 597AD – and a recorded history – Gregory and Augustine's letters and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* – the other two are subject to debate.[2] To what extent did Roman Imperial Christianity survive in the British Isles and how firmly was it introduced in the first place? For example, at Worcester, Stephen Bassett has observed that the site, in all likelihood, was already Christian by the time the Anglo-Saxon bishopric was established in 680.[3] The existing scholarship on the influence of Irish Christianity does suggest that there were close connections between Irish and British Christianity prior to the formal establishment of the post-597 Church in the British Isles. Charles Thomas, for example, has written about intrinsic links between Christian communities in Ireland, Roman Britain and Gaul in the 5th century, and Fouracre has argued that both the British and the Irish recognised their common European origins.[4] This discussion, in turn, is tied to another on the degree of Continental influence on the Anglo-Saxon Church. In this respect, the idea that Christian influences on

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[1] Blair has discussed the structure of the Irish Church and its influence on the formation of the Anglo-Saxon Church and has urged against the use of the term 'Celtic'. – Blair 2005, pp. 5, 11, 45-46. Nancy Edwards, however, carried on using this term after this date. – Edwards 2009.

[2] On the evidence for Roman church in Britain, see Thomas 1981; Petts 2003, esp. ch.3; Petts 2016; Dunn 2010, pp. 113-115; on the Romano-British church, see Thomas 1981, pp. 295-306; Fouracre 2009; on the Augustinian mission and Conversion of Britain, see Meens 1994; Wood 1994; Mayr-Harting 1991; Yorke 2006; Gameson (ed.) 1999; Stancliffe 1999 (in Gameson), Dunn 2010, ch. 3 and 6.

[3] Bassett 1989, pp. 230-248; also see Bassett 1992, pp. 20-26.

[4] Thomas 1981, pp. 295-306; Fouracre 2009, p. 127.

Britain were largely introduced from Gaul and the Mediterranean, as argued by Frend, has been criticised by Sharpe and then superseded by Pryce's argument that the impact of Gaulish practice was in fact not central at all and that instead it was the already established Christianity in the British Isles that was the dominant predecessor of Anglo-Saxon Christianity.[5] This is a suggestion rather than a proven fact, but one that informs the lines of enquiry in this thesis, namely the hypothesis that 7th-century England, and particularly the appearance of alignment, were conditioned largely by Insular developments rather than by external influences.

An additional complication to a discussion of ecclesiastical sites is the issue of their status, which could be monastic, episcopal, or – and this is very debatable – parochial. The word 'minster', which is commonly used in the context of the Anglo-Saxon Church and is used below, has introduced confusion to our already limited knowledge of the provision of pastoral care in Anglo-Saxon England. Sarah Foot has argued that the word 'minster' is simply a version of 'monastery' or 'monasterium', depending on translation; 'minster' being Old English, 'monastery' modern English and 'monasterium' Latin, widely used in ecclesiastical circles in England. Monasteries emerged widely and were tightly connected with the ruling elites. It is, however, difficult to talk about monastic foundations in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms immediately following the Conversion. The question still stands though: how did monasteries and other churches provide pastoral care to an outside lay community?

The degree and shape of parochial provision in the Anglo-Saxon Church have been discussed for a long time, and 'minsters' have played a central role in this discussion. The 'Minster model' or 'Minster hypothesis' was proposed initially by John Blair, who argued that a network of mother-churches, or minsters, in which all resources were concentrated, operated in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.[6]

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[5] Frend 1979; Sharpe 2002, pp. 85-102; Pryce 2009, sp. pp. 145-146.
[6] Blair 1988; Blair 1992.

This hypothesis was taken further by Palliser, who argued that surviving provisions at Beverley Minster and at Ripon are indicative of the original roles of these foundations as 'minsters' in the sense proposed by Blair.[7] The 'minster hypothesis', however, was later challenged by Cambridge and Rollason, who questioned the prominence of pastoral care in the Anglo-Saxon Church, and also by Cubitt.[8] Cubitt has suggested that two overlapping structures were responsible for the provision of pastoral care – one monastic and the other diocesan.[9] Other key points of her criticism were the fact that the model assumed that pastoral needs were paramount, that it did not acknowledge regional differences and that it overlooked the crucial role of the bishop.[10] Pickles, in the same volume, drew attention to an intrinsic connection between Anglo-Saxon bishops and monastic foundations and the necessity for a bishop to establish a network of local churches with clergy to administer pastoral care.[11] There does not seem to be any solid evidence for the shape of pastoral care in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms immediately after 597 (hence this debate), but some of the aspects of the sites discussed below, in particular the archaeological context of St Pancras' church at Canterbury, contribute to the discussion. The Sees generally tended to have their centre at former Roman settlements, although at this stage, with the exception of Canterbury, these no longer functioned as urban centres.[12]

These factors come into consideration further on; however, it is important to introduce them at the outset, as the background to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England is complex, and researching Anglo-Saxon church buildings should not be limited to the plans of sites in simply formal terms. However, the plans of sites, is

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[7] Palliser 1996.

[8] Cambridge and Rollason 1995; see also Rollason 1999 and John Blair's response to the critiques. – Blair 1995b.

[9] Cubitt 1995, p. 113.

[10] Cubitt 2009, p. 396. The episcopate's concern with pastoral care has also been recognised by Cambridge and Rollason. – Cambridge and Rollason 1995, pp. 92-93.

[11] Pickles 2009, p. 166.

[12] Ibid., p. 166; Fouracre 2009, p. 129.

where we have to start to understand the place of alignment in ecclesiastical contexts and any degree of systematisation in planning across a range of ecclesiastical sites. The analysis of material evidence is placed into a broader context further on. This chapter follows the model of the first one, introducing the sites in chronological order and taking note of features and aspects that ought to be looked at more closely. A detailed and contextualised analysis of the evidence follows in chapter 4. The big difference between chapters 1 and 3 lies in the fact that although a chronological narrative has been attempted in both cases, for ecclesiastical sites a clear sequence is more difficult to follow due to the layering of phases, which can obscure original schemes. Where secular sites tended to be abandoned after a period of use, thus sealing off the archaeological evidence, ecclesiastical sites lived on, making the identification of original plans difficult.

Due to the nature of the available evidence, this chapter includes more historical references and is somewhat less archaeological than chapter 1, since in many cases the possibility of archaeological investigation is prevented by subsequent standing structures. However, ecclesiastical sites tend to be recorded better than secular settlements, thus to some extent compensating for the limited opportunities for archaeological investigation. The better excavated, analysed and recorded sites include St Augustine's foundation at Canterbury and churches at Jarrow, Glastonbury, Wells and Winchester. Heysham also has been excavated and well recorded, although alignment there seems to be of quite a complex kind, revolving around the positions of special-status burials rather than churches themselves, which otherwise seem to be rather independent. This puts Heysham in an odd position in relation to other case-studies, but the complexity of relationships between various features of the site is definitely worth considering. Bampton, despite its late date, according to John Blair's interpretation, is the only site displaying possible alignment of churches and

prehistoric features and is reintroduced in a further discussion of relationships between prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon ideas of linearity in the final chapter.

Knowledge of some sites, such as Lindisfarne, Gloucester, Winchcombe and Worcester, is still rather speculative and is based largely on hypothetical reconstructions, interpretation of the landscape, spatial relationships between later still standing structures, and the re-evaluation of historical accounts, rather than on archaeological evidence. As is the case with secular sites, all of these have been previously discussed in some form but not in detail and never all together.[13] An example is Prittlewell, where the identification of two axially aligned structures has been based on very limited archaeological evidence and for the most part on an analysis of the standing masonry. The evidence for alignment is diverse, but even hypothetical reconstructions need to be taken into consideration, if only to be rejected.

One of the sites described below – Whithorn – includes alignment of secular as well as ecclesiastical buildings, but it was considered unreasonable to split it between the two chapters as it is fundamentally an ecclesiastical site and the aligned halls are directly associated with the monastery.

7th-century group

The first site to be considered, traditionally the place where Continental Roman Christianity was first adopted in England, is St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury in the kingdom of Kent. This has attracted extensive scholarship from as early as the mid-19th century. It was first studied by A.J.B. Hope and St John Hope, then by Saunders and Jenkins.[14] The most comprehensive publication is perhaps the 'English Heritage guide' edited by Richard Gem.[15] Just as Yeavering

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[13] See Gittos 2013; Blair 1992, 2005; Rodwell 1984 for earlier discussions.

[14] See Hope 1861; St John Hope 1902 and 1915; for later publications see also Potts 1926 and 1934; Peers and Clapham 1927; Jenkins 1975/6 on the excavations at St Pancras and Saunders 1978.

[15] Gem 1997.

can be seen as 'the cornerstone' of alignment in secular archaeology, Augustine's Abbey is perhaps the most iconic ecclesiastical site with alignment.

Canterbury/St Augustine's Abbey

Kent
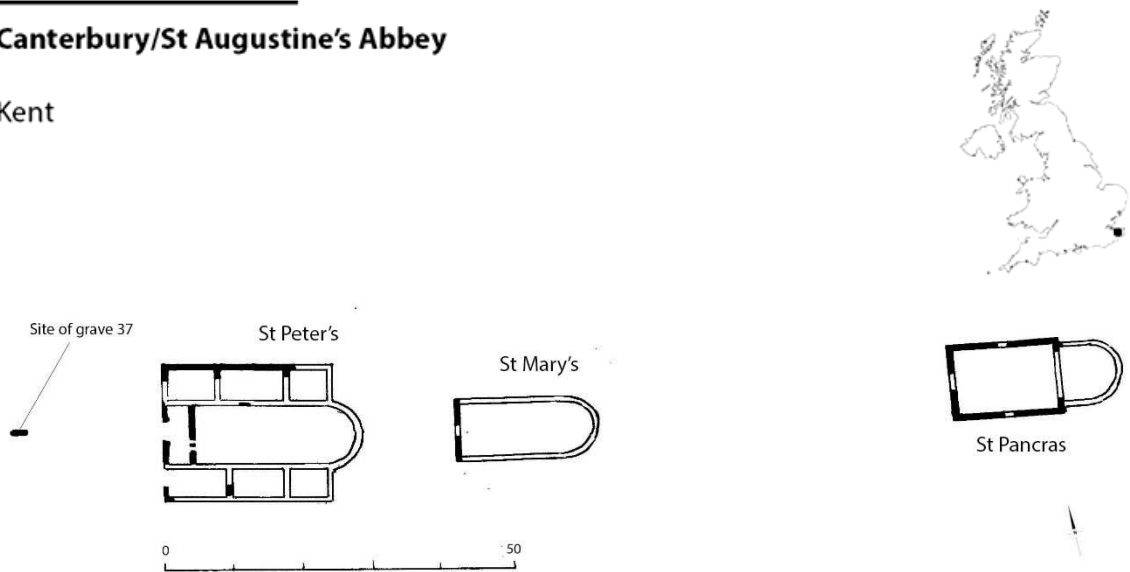
Fig. 3.1. Plan of extramural churches at Canterbury, Sts Peter and Paul and St Mary with St Pancras, after Gittos 2013 (fig. 13, p. 61).
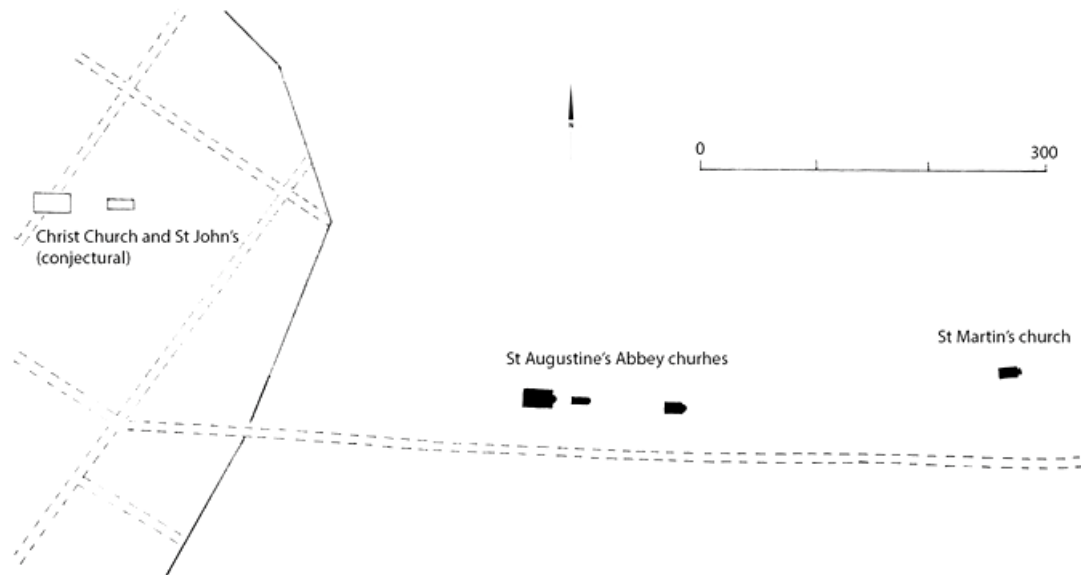
Fig. 3.2. Schematic plan of extramural churches at Canterbury, Sts Peter and Paul and St Mary with St Pancras and St Martin, after Brooks 1984 (fig. 1, p. 18).

The story of the monastery of Sts Peter and Paul at Canterbury starts before its foundation with the church of St Martin, just outside the city walls. This church could have been a pre-Augustinian structure, possibly adopted by the Christian Kentish Queen Bertha, the wife of King Ethelbert and a daughter of the Frankish king Charibert, after her marriage and move to England with her chaplain in the 580s. The age of construction of the original church is debated and different dates have been proposed from the late 4th to the beginning of the 7th century.[16] The Roman date is currently widely accepted.[17] The church stands at a distance from the other structures (fig. 3.2), but is very much a part of the landscape of early Anglo-Saxon Christianity in Kent.

Augustine, on his arrival in Britain, was granted land for the abbey between St Martin's church and the city.[18] The church of Sts Peter and Paul was built on this land between 597 and 619 (fig. 3.2).[19] The church of St Mary, lying immediately to the east on the same axis, was constructed by king Eadbald in 620, but later obscured when Wulfric's octagon filled in the space between the two churches, uniting them in the 11th century. Some 50m to the east, more or less on the same axis, the church of St Pancras was built sometime in the first half of the 7th century, with Roman brick incorporated in its fabric (fig. 3.1).[20] As reconstructed on the basis of archaeological evidence, the church of Sts Peter and Paul was a single-nave apsed church, flanked by adjoining porticus, three on each flank and one to the west. The central porticus, north and south, were initially designed as burial places for the kings and archbishops of Canterbury.[21] Three tombs set against the south face of the external wall in the north porticus were

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[16] Gem 1997, pp. 93-94; Jenkins 1965; Routledge 1897, p. 16; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, p. 143. See also Tatton-Brown 1992.

[17] Blockley 2000, p. 128.

[18] HE i.33, p. 114; Fernie 1983, p. 36.

[19] Gem 1997, p 95.

[20] Fernie 1983, p. 37.

[21] Gittos 2013, pp. 61-62.

discovered by Hope in 1914-15.[22] The church was built with Roman brick and featured buttresses at its west end, a feature later used at Reculver, possibly one of the signature features of the early Kentish churches.[23] The main entrance was via the west porticus. The altar probably would have stood at the east end of the nave, between two arcades – one separating the nave from the apse and another acting as a screen in front of the altar. Gem has proposed that there was a pair of eastern porticus accessible from the apse, acting as prothesis and diaconicon, as well as an ambo located further west in the nave on the central axis of the church.[24] These features would have paralleled arrangements in churches in the Eastern Mediterranean in Late Antiquity.

The funerary function of this church is beyond doubt; in accordance with Bede's account, the burials of the first bishops were discovered in the north porticus, while royal burials were located on the south side.[25] In addition to the royal burials, there is a curious grave 37 lying 14m west of the church of Sts Peter and Paul and in line with its central axis (fig. 3.1). The grave is contemporary with the church buildings; it contained a possibly shrouded skeleton and three small stones – two at each foot and one between the legs, 0.05m above the ankle. A part of another axial grave has been discovered to the east, with the skull resting on a 'pillow' of stones.[26] The graves were disturbed by later foundations but not by other burials, which suggests that initially they could have been marked as special. Otherwise, burials gravitated towards the area of the tower, to the south-west of the church of Sts Peter and Paul.[27]

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[22] St John Hope 1915, pp. 388-390; Blockley 2000, pp.42-43.

[23] Fernie 1983, p. 37; Blockley 2000, pp. 42-43.

[24] Gem 1997, p. 99.

[25] HE i.33, p. 114; ii.3, pp. 142-144; ii. 5, p. 150, ii. 7, p. 156; Gem 1997, pp. 97-100; The cross-wall in front of the altar could, however, be of a later date – Gem 1997, p. 108.

[26] Interestingly, this type of burial has been recorded not only in Kent, but also in Hartlepool – Saunders 1978, p. 50.

[27] Saunders 1978, pp. 43-44, 50.

The church of St Mary, a simple structure, as far as it can be reconstructed, with a hypothetical apse, was added subsequently, 12.5m to the east, aligned with Sts Peter and Paul's, although not with complete precision. Only the west wall of the church, containing courses of Roman tiles and a doorway, has been excavated. However, this has been securely identified as belonging to St Mary's.[28] This church appears also to have been used for high-status burials.[29]

The church of St Pancras – a buttressed single-veselled structure with a pair of porticus on either side and an articulated apsidal chancel with polygonal apse, flanked by another pair of porticus – was located at a further interval to the east, about 50m distant, in rough alignment with the two earlier structures. The construction and dedication of this church may have been a part of a programme to promote the cult of St Pancras, which had been initiated by Pope Honorius I (625-638) in Rome. There appear to have been two main Anglo-Saxon phases of construction of this church, and it needs to be noted that neither porticus formed a part of original construction.[30] Reused Roman brick and a technique of construction similar to that of Sts Peter and Paul seem to have been used in both phases.[31] While Sts Peter and Paul and St Mary, in existence by the 620s, do seem to be spatially associated, the church of St Pancras is separate. Its location and alignment could have been determined by other factors. The reasons for the choice of location are not obvious; there is evidence of Romano-British occupation but no contemporary burials either close to or further to the south of the church. Excavations in 1973 did, however, recover a section of a Roman road leading westwards to the city.[32] Rodwell has suggested that the apparent alignment of the complex of churches was determined by this road.[33]

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[28] Blockley 2000, pp. 52-3.
[29] Gem 1997, p. 105.
[30] Blockley 2000, p. 65.
[31] Gem 1997, p. 101; Blockley 2000, pp. 59-60.
[32] Blockley 2000, pp. 64-5.
[33] Rodwell 2001, p. 115; McClendon 2005, p. 60.

Richard Gem has noted that Augustine's foundation had a Frankish flavour to it: the church was an extramural establishment serving both as the core of a monastic community and as a royal funerary church.[34] This is similar to Frankish practice, as at Ferrières, Chelles and Saint-Denis, which is briefly discussed later. Considering the geographical position of Kent and the nature of trade links, this connection is hardly surprising.[35] Scholarship has tended towards treating Kent as a territory under strong Frankish influence, very different from the rest of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. To an extent the argument for the distinctive character of Kent is justified. However, I feel that such a preoccupation with its distinctiveness has resulted in an undervaluation of the features of Kentish culture that relate it to other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. As has already been noted in chapter 1, Yorke has observed that the origin legend of Kent is consistent with those of other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, indicating their common root and simultaneous development, according to the same principles of composition. In addition, Gem admits that the architectural expression at Canterbury was not as distinct in style as contemporary Frankish elite monastic churches. This might suggest that Frankish influence on Kentish culture in the post-600 period was limited.[36]

Of further importance is the fact that alignment at Canterbury was maintained and developed in the later Saxon period. The church of Sts Peter and Paul was extended westwards and in the 11th century a semi-subterranean apsidal chapel was built immediately to the west, its apse facing west. Saunders has proposed that this chapel may have been a mausoleum of someone of great significance.[37] The presence of graves, identified as royal and clustering around

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[34] Gem 1997, p. 101.

[35] On Frankish influences on Kent, see Myres 1989, pp. 126-128; Campbell *et al* 1991, p. 44; Fernie 1983, pp. 45-46; Cambridge 1999, pp. 222-225; Fouracre 2009, p. 130, and Behr 2000; on trade, see Wickham 2000.

[36] Gem 1997, p 101; Kelly 1997, pp. 35-36.

[37] Saunders 1978, p. 51.

the apse of this chapel, in a fashion similar to those at Hexham and Gloucester, supports this proposal.[38] The chapel would appear to complete the existing range of buildings to provide a western focus – an architectural response to the chapel of St Mary to the east. Saunders suggests that such a bifocal composition is Carolingian in flavour. However, as we shall see, there is also a local example of a bifocal arrangement.[39]

The most important feature of this site for the present discussion, however, is the axial alignment of the structures; not only the evident alignment of the church of Sts Peter and Paul with the church of St Mary, but also the shrouded burial to the west of the church of Sts Peter and Paul, which is arranged precisely on the axis of the church. A discussion of axial relationships between buildings and other features follows in the next chapter. For the time being, we shall review other cases of alignment, starting with Rochester, also in Kent, where a church was established by Augustine early on.

Rochester featured in John Blair's list of sites with alignment but, in my opinion, for the wrong reasons. Blair discussed the somewhat problematic alignment of the original church and the Norman tower, whereas in fact there is evidence of two aligned churches beneath the present cathedral. This research on the Anglo-Saxon origins of Rochester is unpublished and so has gone unnoticed. It is this unpublished evidence I am presenting here.[40]

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[38] Saunders 1978, fig. 6, pp. 51-52.

[39] Ibid., p. 51; David Parsons, however, has suggested that bifocal compositions are also associated with Boniface's mission to Germany. – Parsons 1983, p. 280.

[40] I thank Jacob Scott, one of the vergers in Rochester Cathedral, for sharing this material with me.

Rochester

Kent
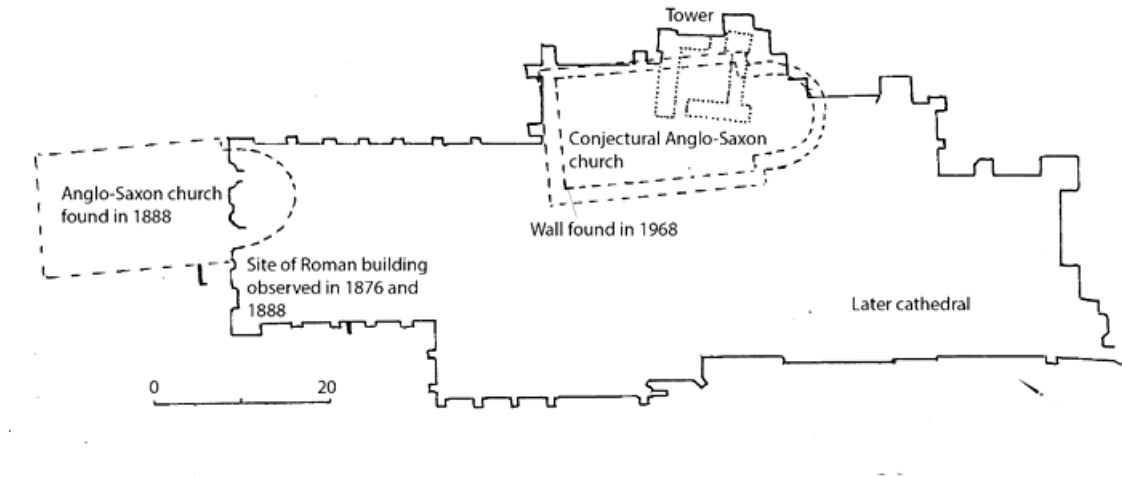
Fig. 3.3. Conjectural plan of Anglo-Saxon churches in Rochester, after Ward, unpublished.

It is known that the first church in Rochester (Hrofescaestir) was established by St Augustine and was funded and endowed with lands by King Aethelbert. Paulinus, bishop of York and then Rochester, and Ythamar, bishop of Rochester, were buried here in the 7th century, indicating the particular significance of this church.[41]

It is known that the Norman cathedral at Rochester stands on the site of one definite Anglo-Saxon church and two other buildings, whose identification and dating have been subjects of debate for decades.[42]

The apsed building discovered underneath the west front of the present cathedral is very likely the original minster church dedicated to St Andrew and

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[41] Livett 1889, p. 263, St John Hope 1898, pp. 195-197.
[42] See Livett 1889; St John Hope 1898; Radford 1969; Burnham and Wacher 1990; McAleer 1999.

founded in 604, when Justus was appointed bishop (fig. 3.3).[43] This church is orientated on a different axis from that of the Norman minster and points slightly further north-east. This orientation is followed by numerous surrounding graves.[44] Interestingly, the church lies within the Roman walls but is aligned neither with the walls nor with the nearby Roman roads. It was an aisleless rectangular building with an unusual nave-wide apse and was considerably smaller than its successors.[45] It made use of Roman materials, but its date is likely post-Roman.[46]

One of the other two buildings underlies the western portion of the south wall and the other is located under the north transept. If one of them is another church, it does not seem to have been recorded at all. There are 9th-century records of churches dedicated to St Mary and St Margaret but these two are definitely known to have been located outside the city.

The building underneath the south-west part of the present cathedral, observed in 1876 and 1888, has an eastern apse and, despite the apparent absence of other structural remains to its east and west, there are remains of *opus signinum* floors both to the east and to the west of the apse. *Opus signinum* has already been mentioned in chapter 1 in relation to another Kentish site at Lyminge, and is also found at Dover.[47] Gabor Thomas has demonstrated that the use of *opus signinum* was deployed as an expression of Romanitas, and was a feature of high-status Anglo-Saxon sites, including ones outside of Kent, such as Jarrow/Wearmouth.[48] St John Hope was of the opinion that a Roman origin for the south-west building at Rochester was unlikely and believed it could have been a Saxon church, built later than St Andrew's and designed to accommodate a

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[43] HE ii.3, p. 142.

[44] Livett 1889, p. 262.

[45] Nave-wide apses are known in Germany, as in the instance of St Severin's church in Passau-Innstadt. – Fehring 1991, p. 82.

[46] St John Hope 1898, pp. 212-213; Livett 1889, pp. 263-265.

[47] Thomas 2018, pp. 274-286.

[48] Ibid., pp. 283-284, 294-295.

larger congregation than the small earlier church. More recently, however, Ward has argued that a Roman date is more likely.[49]

The remains of a second possible structure were discovered underneath the north transept in 1968 and interpreted by the excavator, C.A. Raleigh Radford, as part of the pre-Conquest cathedral of cruciform shape.[50] The same foundations were discussed and re-interpreted by Alan Ward.[51] Ward convincingly interpreted these remains as being pre-Conquest in date, based on their relationships with other known floor-levels, the surrounding masonry, and the positions of the Norman pillars which do not relate to these foundations in any way. Instead, they could have formed the south-west corner of a second church, which was located on the same axis as the building to the west (fig. 3.3). This would accord with McAleer's proposal that one should look for the Anglo-Saxon cathedral in this area.[52]

Overall, it seems that out of three pre-Norman structures recorded underneath the present cathedral, two are likely to have been either coexisting axially aligned structures or successive phases of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral. St John Hope proposed that two of the structures were contemporary; that one was a monastic church, and the other fulfilled a parochial role.[53] The suggestion of a parochial role, although initially applied to the wrong building (the one underneath the south wall), could still hold when considering the function of the possible church discovered under the north transept.

John Blair does include Rochester in his list of aligned church groups, but for a different reason; that is alignment of the Anglo-Saxon church beneath the

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[49] St John Hope did not provide a solid interpretation of the *opus signinum* floors on either side of the apse; further, the walls recorded by him were not observed at a subsequent excavation. – St John Hope 1898, pp. 11-12, 17; Ward unpublished; see also Burnham and Wacher 1990, p. 80; McAleer 1999, pp. 12-13.

[50] Radford 1969.

[51] Ward unpublished.

[52] Ibid.

[53] St John Hope 1898, pp. 214-215.

west front of the present cathedral and of the tower built around 1100 immediately to the east of the north transept of the present cathedral.[54] The original purpose of the tower is unknown but it is said to have been used as a bell-tower in the 12th century.[55] The circumstances of its construction are rather unusual. The architectural character of the building points to a date just before the construction of the Norman cathedral. However, the tower is on a different axis and, although it is very close to the cathedral walls, was designed as an independent building. The windows on the north-west and south-west faces were blocked when the cathedral was built.[56] The tower is orientated differently from other structures, but the axis of the old church of St Andrew, if extended, bisects the tower, meaning that technically they can be seen as aligned, which is why it was considered by Blair. In addition to the differences in orientation, this alignment existed only for a short time, while the old Anglo-Saxon church was allowed to stand until the building of the new Norman cathedral reached its site, when it was finally demolished.[57] Unlike the alignment of the earlier structures at Rochester, proposed by Ward, not enough evidence is available to draw further conclusions about the relationships between the tower and the Saxon church. This instance therefore seems less secure.

Moving further into the 7th century and to Mercia (which incorporated the kingdom of the Hwicce), we come to the foundation at Gloucester, where the documentary evidence provides a specific date, but, unfortunately,

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[54] Blair 1992, pp. 254-255.

[55] McAleer suggests the tower is very early post-Conquest and even 1100 is too late for it. – McAleer 1999, p. 24.

[56] St John Hope 1898, p. 201; Livett 1889, p. 269; F.H. Fairweather has drawn particular attention to the oddness of the location of the tower in relation to other buildings and has questioned St John Hope's initial interpretation of this tower as the 'greater' tower described in the documents and its use as a campanile. Instead, he has proposed the existence of a now-lost central tower, putting this other one in the position of the 'lesser' tower. – Fairweather 1929, pp. 194-196. This proposal, however, does not alter the fact that the tower relates to the cathedral in a very unusual way and seems to antedate the cathedral.

[57] Fairweather 1929, pp. 192, 197.

archaeological data is lacking. Here even the location of the minster church cannot be established with certainty. The most recent conjectures are those of Carolyn Heighway.

Gloucester/St Peter's

Hwicce/Mercia
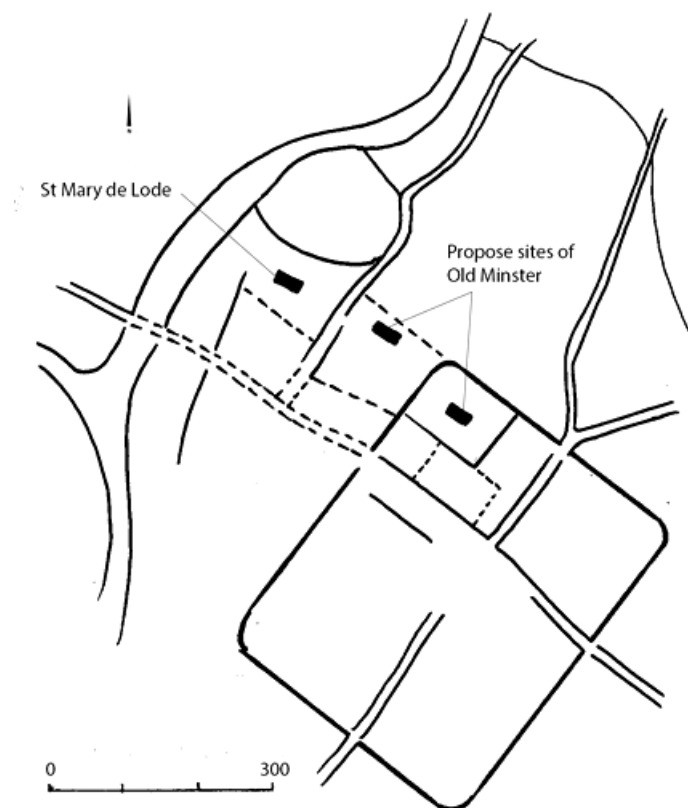
Fig. 3.4. Plan of the site of St Mary de Lode and the proposed sites of St Peter's in Gloucester in 7th-9th centuries, after Heighway 2010 (fig. 1, p. 41).

The minster was founded by Osric of the Hwicce in 679, when he received a grant from King Aethelred of Mercia. From then on, the minster was associated

with and largely supported by the Hwiccian royal dynasty and also received support from the Mercian kings.[58]

Gloucester had been a thriving Roman city up until the 5th century when it was probably largely, if not completely, abandoned. It is important to note this, as opinions on the degrees of abandonment differ.[59] The question of the abandonment of Roman Gloucester is part of a much broader debate around the degree of continuity of occupation at established Roman settlements post 410AD. A range of scenarios has been suggested, but there is no consensus, partly due to regional variations (for instance, there is a greater tendency towards continuity along Hadrian's wall) and partly due to the extremely limited evidence that can be interpreted in a variety of ways.[60] At sites like Gloucester and Rochester, the degree of survival of the Roman urban fabric at the time when these churches were constructed is unknown. Therefore, the impact of existing planning on the siting and orientation of these buildings is questionable. This issue is addressed more thoroughly below but for the time being it should be noted that the minster at Gloucester is likely to have been established in a largely deserted Roman town: other building programmes in Gloucester were not related to the former Roman layout, suggesting that this footprint had been lost. In addition, following Yeates' and Bell's research into correlations between sites of churches and temples, it is worth pointing out that there is no evidence that Romano-British temples were converted to churches in the Anglo-Saxon period. This could indicate an ideological decision but could also have been because the

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[58] Sims-Williams 1990, p. 124; Finberg 1972, pp. 31-49, 153-166.

[59] Hurst 1976, pp. 79-80; Heighway 2006, p. 219; Atkin and Garrod 1989, pp. 238-9.

[60] On continuity along Hadrian's wall, see Collins 2013. Even the 'squatting' of Roman villas, which has been one of the commonly accepted attributes of abandonment and decline in the post-Roman period, has been reinterpreted. On squatting, see Esmonde Cleary 1989, p. 134. On squatting as a pattern of occupation in late antiquity, see Lewit 2003; Petts 1997. The arguments are summarised in Gerrard 2013, p. 165.

majority of temples were no longer visible by the beginning of Anglo-Saxon occupation.[61]

The location of the minster church of St Peter itself is debated. Possible locations include the site of the 17th-century 'Parliament House' outside the Roman wall and a location further south-east, within the walls (fig. 3.4).[62] Despite the uncertain location of St Peter's, the site of St Mary's, associated with the abbey, is known and has been excavated.

The church of St Mary de Lode, built on the site of the Roman baths, is likely to pre-date the foundation of St Peter's abbey church, and its property might have been given to the minster at the time of its foundation in 679.[63] Steven Bassett has argued that St Mary's could have been a British Christian church, but alternatively, originally it may originally have been a mausoleum.[64] The first structure on the site seems to have been a wooden building containing three graves aligned on a Roman grid. Two of the graves were emptied at a later date and the skull was also removed from the third grave. It is impossible to tell whether the burials were Christian but the character of their interment, in a special separate building, suggests a particular status and the removal of the bodies possibly points towards ritual activity.[65] The likely date-range for the structure and the burials is 5th-7th centuries. This building was then replaced with newer structures multiple times, and the one in existence in the 10-11th centuries was definitely referred to as a Christian church.[66]

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[61] For instance, a Roman shrine to the north of the city does not seem to have had a medieval successor. See Heighway 2010, pp. 40, 42, 44. Yeates made an attempt to relate locations of churches with those of temples, but with inconclusive results – Yeates 2006, p. 830.

[62] Heighway 2010, p. 46, fig.1; Bryant and Heighway 2003, p. 171; Heighway 1983, pp. 12-13.

[63] Heighway 2010, p. 43.

[64] Bassett 1992, pp. 20-26; for an alternative opinion, see Heighway 2010, p. 43.

[65] The character of removal of the skull and the state of the vertebrae suggest that the head was removed after the decomposition of the body. – Bryant and Heighway 2003, pp. 112, 121-122.

[66] Ibid., pp. 117-122.

It is difficult to determine the exact character of use of the 5th-century structure, but it is likely to have been a Christian foundation. If it did function as a mausoleum, which was later incorporated into a church, it would parallel similar arrangements at Wells and Glastonbury.

The main approach to the site of the minster, whatever its precise location, would have been from the river to the west and inevitably through St Mary's precinct. This might suggest a degree of spatial unity between St Mary's and the minster church of St Peter.[67] In their report, the excavators suggest that St Peter's and St Mary's are likely to have been aligned, and either of the proposed locations of St Peter's church would allow for this. It is possible that the eastern limit of the enclosure of St Mary's could have defined the western limit of the precinct associated with St Peter's at a later stage.[68] Furthermore, it has been suggested that the minster could have comprised a group of more than two churches arranged in a line.[69] However, this suggestion has been made on the basis of John Blair's hypothesis that a group of aligned churches was one of the defining features of Anglo-Saxon minsters – the very hypothesis this thesis aims to question and explore.[70] Therefore, the possibility should not be taken as a given but instead is explored further in the context of other case-studies presented in this and the following chapter.

The Northumbrian group

Early medieval Northumbria dominates the picture of Anglo-Saxon monasticism in the 7th century due to the number of sites both recorded and preserved. Four of the Northumbrian sites – Lindisfarne, Hexham, Jarrow and Wearmouth - are discussed below as definitely or possibly featuring alignment. All four were of particular importance in the 7th century, Lindisfarne, Wearmouth

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[67] Heighway 2010, p. 47.
[68] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
[69] Bryant and Heighway 2003, p. 171.
[70] Blair 1992, pp. 246-256.

and Jarrow being prominent monastic foundations with royal endowment and Hexham and Lindisfarne also serving as bishops' Sees.[71] The somewhat obscure site at Heysham, which displays an unusual kind of alignment, is also included in this group as a 7th-century Northumbrian Christian foundation.

The first case to consider is Lindisfarne – a key Christian centre in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria. Further research is ongoing on Lindisfarne, investigating the area to the east of both the church and the ruined Priory. Here I am presenting the current view of the arrangements at this site.[72]
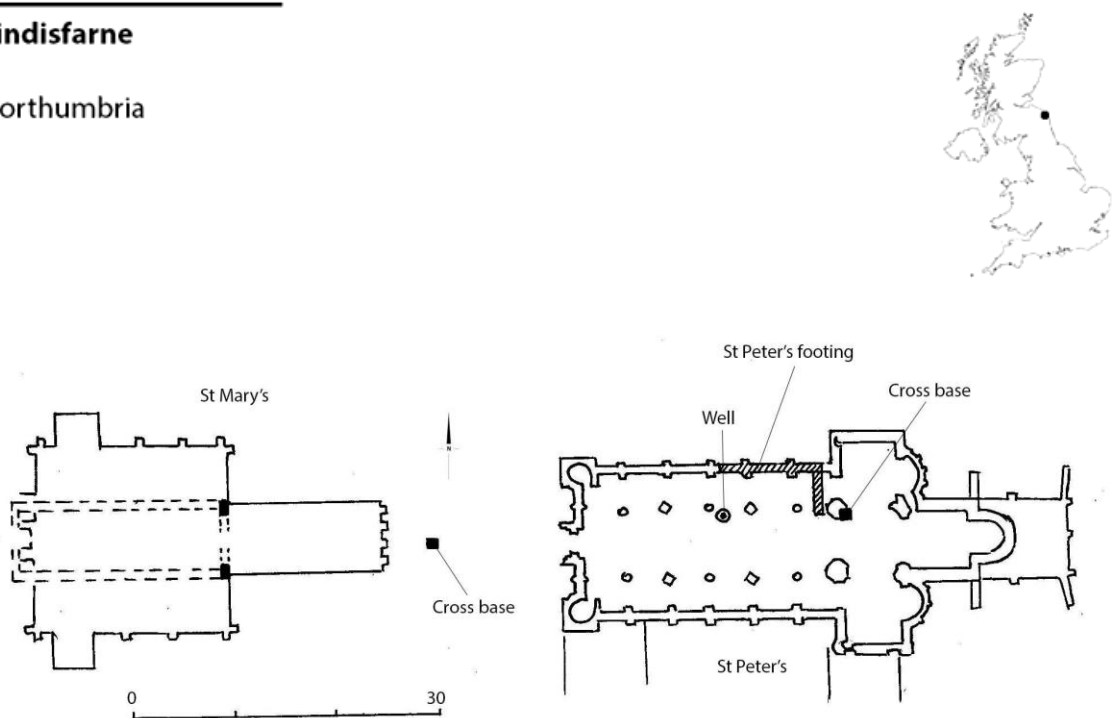
Fig. 3.5. Conjectural plan of churches at Lindisfarne, after Blair 1991 (fig. 2, p. 50).

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[71] HE iv.27 (pp, p. 434-5 on Lindisfarne); *Vita S. Wilfridi*, Webb 1965, pp. 90-91 (on Hexham); *Historia Abbatum*, Webb and Farmer 1998 (on Wearmouth and Jarrow).

[72] Current excavations to the east of the Norman Proiry are directed by David Petts. Some information on small finds is available to the public: 'Board-Game Piece from Period of First Viking Raid Found on Lindisfarne'. In: *The Guardian* [https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/feb/06/boardgame-piece-first-viking-raid-found-lindisfarne-archaeology], accessed 15th February 2020. Other reports are unpublished. For the recent excavations on the Heugh, see Carlton n/d and 2018 unpublished (accessible on academia.edu).

The monastery of Lindisfarne was founded on a tidal island, a mile away from the mainland and just across the bay from Bamburgh. It was established in 634 on the initiative of King Oswald by St Aidan summoned from Iona. Lindisfarne was a daughter house of Iona, and the link between the two foundations was initially very close. Royal connections seem to have been maintained well after the foundation: King Ceolwulf became a monk there in 737.[73]

A new timber church dedicated to St Peter is recorded on Lindisfarne sometime after Bishop Finan's consecration in 651.[74] In 687, the body of St Cuthbert was transferred to St Peter's church and enshrined to the right of the altar.[75] This building was then succeeded by a stone church, which it has been presumed was centred on the shrine of St Cuthbert.[76] A decision to construct the church above the shrine could have resulted in the slight shift of the axis of the later abbey southwards, which means that the earlier building could have been on the same axis as the present church of St Mary.[77] The foundations of an earlier structure found by Peers underneath the north wall of the Romanesque priory potentially confirm that the axis of the original building would have been situated slightly further north than the subsequent one. This earlier structure with its short nave is likely to have been narrower than the subsequent church.[78]

The later medieval monastery featured two aligned churches, still standing today – the rebuilt St Peter's to the east and St Mary's, which subsequently became a parish church, to the west (fig. 3.5). The church of St Mary, for the most part, is a 13th-century building. Deirdre O'Sullivan and Robert Young, however, have suggested an Anglo-Saxon date for some of the fabric of the present church,

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[73] O'Sullivan and Young 1995, p. 37; Swanton 1996, p. 45.

[74] HE iii. 25, p. 294.

[75] Gem 2015, p. 16; *Vita S. Cuthberti* c. 37, 40, in Webb 1965.

[76] HE iv.29-30; O'Sullivan and Young 1995, p. 4343; on the burial and then enshrinement of Cuthbert, see HE iv.29-30, pp. 442-444.

[77] Blair 1991, p. 51.

[78] Peers 1923-4, pp. 257-8.

perhaps from the 11[79] century, suggesting that this church is likely to have been a replacement of an earlier timber church, with an initial foundation in an even earlier period.[79] John Blair has added that the character of its construction, and especially the proportions of the original church, based on the dimensions of the present one (19.5x5.8m), which are very close to the dimensions of the nave at Jarrow (20x5.5m), are not incompatible with an early Northumbrian type.[80] David Petts has also suggested a pre-Conquest date for the masonry above the chancel arch.[81] Furthermore, a geophysical survey in 2012 revealed a possible stone structure to the east of the present abbey, on the same alignment as the other buildings.[82] The results of a brief excavation in 2016 are not conclusive.[83] Further excavations in 2019 are yet to be published.

Bede, except on one occasion discussed below, only mentions one timber church, dedicated to St Peter; elsewhere he refers simply to 'ecclesia' at Lindisfarne.[84] However, this reference does not provide a sure foundation on which to build hypotheses about the form of the early monastery as it is not clear whether 'the church' Bede is referring to is a particular building or the religious foundation. Either way, there is no direct mention of a church of St Mary.[85] At the same time, it is known that Finan's timber church was still standing in the 9th century and was transported to Norham when the monks had to leave in 875.[86] This could imply that another church was left behind to provide pastoral care for the village, and that there were two buildings to begin with. As is discussed in

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[79] O'Sullivan and Young 1995, pp. 44-45, 100.

[80] Blair 1991, p. 49.

[81] David Petts, pers. comm.

[82] Petts 2013.

[83] Instead, a burial ground and a timber structure – possibly an 8th-century workshop – have been found. - David Petts, pers. comm.

[84] See, for example, HE iii.25, 26, p. 308; iv.4, p. 346, iv. 27, p. 430, iv. 28, p. 348.

[85] O'Sullivan and Young 1995, p. 38.

[86] Blair 1991, p. 47.

chapter 4, it was stipulated at the Council of Clofesho in 747 that when a monastery was closed a priest should be left behind to provide pastoral care.[87]

Considering the itinerant character of ministry in this period, it is not clear that a church building had to be maintained for this purpose. However, other arguments have been put forward for the existence of two churches on Lindisfarne in the 7th century.

Richard Gem, on the basis of historical records, dates the church of St Mary to the 780s.[88] If this is correct, St Mary's church would have been constructed long after St Peter's, which was founded shortly after 651. At the same time, John Blair has emphasised the possibility of two early aligned churches at Lindisfarne and proposed a reconstruction plan (fig. 3.5). Blair points out that Bede states that St Aidan was buried in the 'greater church' ('basilica maior'), and that this may imply the existence of multiple churches.[89] Further, Symeon of Durham says it was St Aidan's church, built between 634 and 645, that was moved to Norham, and not Finan's structure of 651.[90] This either means that the church was misdated/wrongly attributed to Aidan or that Aidan's and Finan's churches co-existed.[91] Still, the reference could be to the foundation at Lindisfarne rather than a specific building, in which case ascribing it to St Aidan is perfectly reasonable.

More confusing is the evidence of minor features – two cross bases and a well.[92] John Blair suggests these are likely to be in their original positions, forming an alignment which acquired significance prior to the building of the Romanesque

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[87] On pastoral care, see chapter 4, p. 293, ft. 12; on the 747 Council of Clofesho, see Theodore's Penitential: Canons ii, vi, 7, 14-16, in Haddan and Stubbs 1869-1878 and also Cubitt 1995, pp. 99-152; on itinerant ministry and its role in provision of pastoral care in Anglo-Saxon England, see Blair 2005, pp. 161-164; Foot 1989. The Life of St Cuthbert (with the exception of his time on Inner Farne) is a good model of itinerant ministry and pastoral care to a non-monastic community. – *Vita S. Cuthberti* (Webb 1965).

[88] Gem 1993, p. 33.

[89] HE iii.17, p. 264; Blair 1991, p. 47.

[90] *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia,* in Arnold 1885/2012, p. 201.

[91] Blair 1991, p. 47.

[92] One of the cross bases is shown in Appendix 2, Photo 3.

abbey.[93] The evidence, however, is inconclusive as it is impossible to tell whether the cross bases are in their original positions and equally, whether the use of the well coincided with the use of St Peter's church. Finally, H. M. Taylor proposed a hypothetical parallel between the churches of St Peter and St Mary, described in 'De Abbatibus', and the churches on Lindisfarne. He suggested that the two churches on Lindisfarne coexisted in the Anglo-Saxon period and formed a group.[94]

Overall, notwithstanding the contradicting arguments, there is nothing to suggest that the churches did not coexist at Lindisfarne at some stage in the Anglo-Saxon period and that they could not have been aligned. It is plausible that Aidan would have modelled his monastery on the layout of Iona.[95] The possible double boundary of the monastery on Lindisfarne could be a reflection of Irish custom and therefore an indication of links with Iona, which would indicate significant Celtic influence.[96] The strongly expressed linearity on Lindisfarne, however, would be unprecedented in a Celtic context, where planning of sites is commonly defined by concentric curvilinear enclosures and fairly unsystematic disposition of churches.[97] This differs from the pattern of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical foundations, so if alignment existed on Lindisfarne, the monastic layout there is unlikely to have been inspired by Iona alone.

The next site, Hexham, is also of particular prominence and historical significance, although, unlike Lindisfarne, it has been excavated and presents a clearer archaeological picture of its 7th-century phase.

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[93] Blair 1991, pp. 49-51.

[94] Taylor 1974, p.163; Taylor 1978, iii, p. 1021.

[95] O'Sullivan and Young 1995, pp. 37-40, fig. 21.

[96] Ibid., p. 42; David Petts has proposed an alternative location of the northern boundary, but O'Sullivan's proposal still stands. – Petts 2017a.

[97] On the planning of Irish ecclesiastical sites, see Edwards 1990, pp. 105-112; Edwards 2009, p. 9; Silvester and Evans 2009, p. 27; Herity 1983, 1984.

Hexham

Northumbria
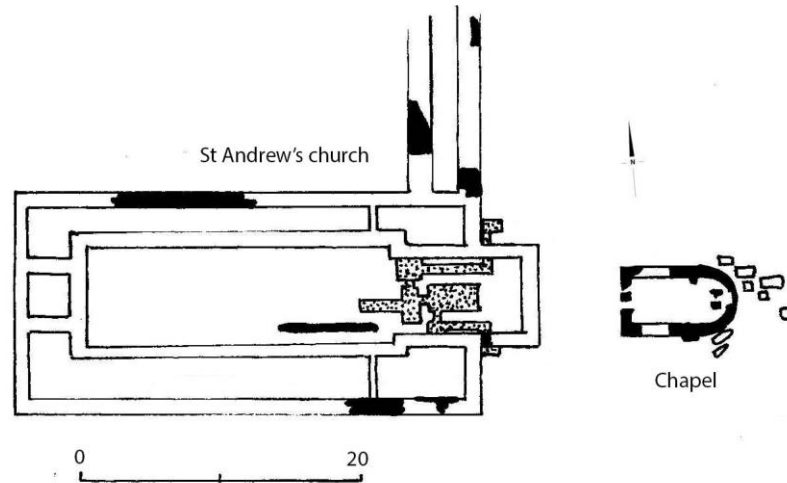
Fig. 3.6. Plan of the church and chapel at Hexham, after Cambridge and Williams 1995 (fig. 16, p. 78).

In the 7th and 8th centuries Hexham was a place of particular status and prominence. The territory of Hexham was the marriage dower of Queen Etheldreda, which she gave for the construction of a monastery in 674. The first abbot, and future bishop, Wilfrid, supervised the construction and brought relics of St Andrew from Rome to be deposited in the crypt. Acca, who succeeded Wilfrid in 709, continued to adorn the church with the relics of martyrs and Apostles and erected numerous altars within the walls of the church. [98]

At the same time, Hexham is a site with documentary evidence for multiple churches. Apart from St Andrew's, which is rebuilt but preserved, Richard of Hexham and Aelred – both 12th-century sources – record two more churches in

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[98] Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 73; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, pp. 297-298, 304-306.

the group: one dedicated to St Mary and another to St Peter.[99] The church of St Mary was round, evoking round Marian churches on the Continent, and has also been cited in relation to a cemetery, paralleling the possible funerary function of the Eastern Church at Jarrow.[100] Its location has been put to the south-east of St Andrew's, which could be supported by the evidence of remains of a later medieval church dedicated to St Mary in that area, although there is no archaeological evidence for this.[101] On the other hand, St Mary's was described as standing to the east of St Andrew's and close to its wall.[102] The church of St Peter was said to have been 'further removed' from St Andrew's; nothing else is known of its location.[103] In addition, there is evidence for an apsed chapel to the east of St Andrew's, located on the same axis, which is not mentioned in the records but is established archaeologically (fig. 3.6). Bailey has suggested that this chapel was in fact the church of St Peter.[104] This hypothesis, however, has not attracted further support.

The site was founded by Wilfrid of Hexham, who is known to have led the 'Romanization' of Northumbrian church in the mid-7th century.[105] The church of St Andrew was built in 671-673 - shortly after the council of Whitby in 664. This might lead one to expect that the architectural character of the building might have been intentionally Romanizing, celebrating the decision of the council. The crypt, an inherently Roman feature, has been occupying scholars for decades and has been discussed particularly in the context of Roman crypts.[106] Despite the Roman flavour of Hexham, however, the original plan of St Andrew's church,

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[99] Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 73; Richard of Hexham, 'Historia', in Raine 1864, i, pp. 14-15. Aelred, *De Sanctis Ecclesiae*, in Raine 1864, i, p. 181.

[100] For Continental analogues, see Krautheimer 1942; Gem 1983. For Jarrow, see Cramp 2005, i, p. 354.

[101] The remains of the medieval church are still *in situ*.

[102] Raine 1864, i, pp. 14, 181; Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 74.

[103] Raine 1864, p. 15.

[104] Bailey 1976, p. 67.

[105] O'Sullivan and Young 1995, p. 37.

[106] Bailey 1976; Fernie 1983, p. 61; Gilbert 1974; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, pp. 311-312; ii, pp. 516-518; Bailey and O'Sullivan 1979-80.

proposed by Cambridge and Williams, provides parallels with churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow.[107] Excavations to the south and east of the church have revealed numerous burials and the foundations of chapels but have not provided any evidence for pre-monastic occupation, making Hexham a definite Anglo-Saxon foundation.[108] The apsed chapel to the east, undated, could have first served as a baptistery and then as a mausoleum, and subsequently could have been turned into a relic-crypt, paralleling the function of the crypt at Repton.[109] This chapel is likely to have had an exceptional status, as it attracted numerous high-status burials close to its walls. One possibility is that the murdered King Aelfwold of Northumbria was buried there.[110] The exact location of another special-status grave – that of St Acca, Wilfrid's successor to the See - remains unknown. Acca is recorded as having been buried immediately to the east of St Andrew's church, outside, with stone crosses at his feet and head.[111] This opens up the intriguing possibility of an arrangement like that at Winchester, where the saint's grave is located on axis between two aligned buildings. Unfortunately, the area immediately east of St Andrew's church was disturbed by 19th-century foundations, making it impossible to test this proposal.[112] Alternatively, there is a group of six burials discovered to the east of the apsed structure, among them a monolithic coffin, another candidate for Acca's grave.[113] However, a cross, possibly one of the two associated with Acca's grave, was found near the

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[107] Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 76.

[108] Ibid., pp. 63-72.

[109] Ibid., p. 79; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, pp. 307-308; Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 80; Taylor 1987; John Blair has positioned some instances of alignment in England in a Continental context, especially in relationship to Continental groups of churches with interstitial isolated baptisteries, like Milan, and by analogy has stressed the possible baptismal functions of structures included within church groups in England. – Blair 1992, pp. 248-9.

[110] Cambridge and Williams 1995, pp. 79-80.

[111] Arnold 1885/2012, p. 33 (*Historia Regum* s.a. 740, par.31). John of Hexham in his continuation of the *De Gestis Regum* of Symeon of Durham tells about the discovery of the body, in Arnold 1885/2012, pp. 284-332.

[112] Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 69.

[113] For description of the coffin, see Cramp 1984, p. 16, pl. 181.

proposed location of St Mary's church, further south-east from St Andrew's.[114] Curiously, there are no burials recorded inside the apsed chapel itself, but there is still a possibility that bodies were put there in sarcophagi above ground level.[115]

The spatial relationship between the church and the apsed chapel is of importance. Although the church itself is difficult to reconstruct, there is evidence of entrances from the east, leading into the crypt. Bailey and O'Sullivan have convincingly reconstructed the south side of the crypt, on the evidence of the excavations in 1978. Pilgrims or priests would have exited turning southwards within the passage, then passed under a roofing slab and at the point where the passage is presently blocked they would have turned east along the south face of the wall discovered in 1978, towards the exit which would have led either into a porticus or out into the open air.[116] In the course of the same excavations, it has been established that the current floor level is the same as in Wilfrid's time. Further, a post-hole located just below the present floor level, on the line of the crossing step and the east-west axis of the crypt was discovered. It is thought to have held a cross-shaft placed behind the altar. The altar is likely to have stood above the relics in the crypt, to the west of this cross.[117] The location of the east wall of the church is not certain but it is likely to have been somewhere under the crossing, which would be consistent with the proposed position of the altar and the walls observed in 1882 and 1893, as proposed by Hodges.[118]

Overall, despite the existing evidence of the 7th-century fabric of the church, crypt and eastern chapel, reconstructing their uses and the specific relationships between these spaces is not a straightforward task. A similar dilemma can be seen at Jarrow where, despite extensive excavations, our

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[114] Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 101.

[115] Ibid., p. 80.

[116] Bailey and O'Sullivan 1979-80, p. 154; the proposed layout is consistent with the outline of the crypt on the first plan.

[117] Ibid., p. 155; on situation of the altar, see Taylor 1973.

[118] Bailey and O'Sullivan 1979-80, p. 155, fig. 1; see also Hodges 1888.

knowledge of functions and mutual relationships between the two aligned churches is also limited.
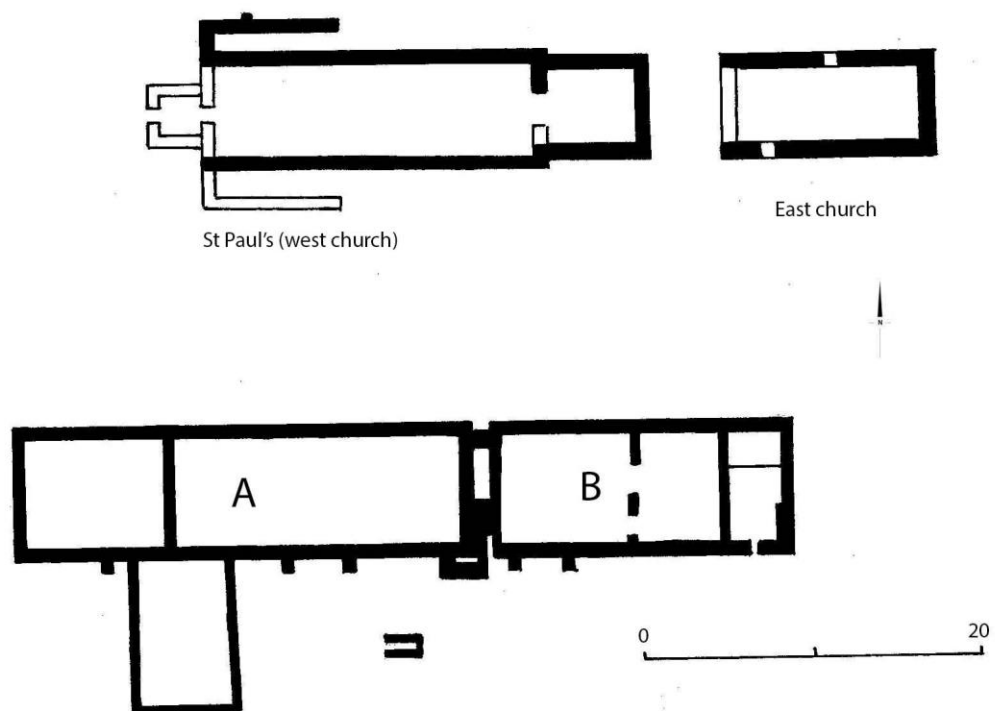
Fig. 3.7. Plan of major buildings at Jarrow, after Cramp 2005 (fig. 13.3, p. 149, vol.1) and McClendon 2005 (fig. 85, p. 86).

The monastery at Jarrow was founded by Benedict Biscop, a Northumbrian nobleman, in 682, eight years after both Hexham and Monkwearmouth (see below), under the continuing patronage of King Ecgfrith. The principal church at Jarrow was dedicated to St Paul in 685.[119] To the east of this church and precisely

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[119] Cramp 2005, i, p. 33.

aligned with it was a free-standing structure, currently referred to as the eastern church. Excavations have revealed that this building was a simple rectangle, with no adjacent structures, such as a narthex or porticus (fig. 3.7).[120] The foundation of this church is likely to be early, as the building technique is very similar to that used in the western church, in Building A also at Jarrow and in the western annexe at Escomb. The dimensions of this building are comparable to those of the present chancel at Wearmouth (4.7x12.8m internally) and some of the constructional characteristics are similar to those employed in the church at Escomb.[121] Altogether, this eastern church can be dated to the 7th-8th centuries; it may have served as either a funerary chapel or a church erected temporarily at the time of the construction of St Paul's.[122] The western church has been rebuilt but the evidence for its original appearance survives in earlier drawings and measurements; new evidence was obtained during excavations in the 1970s. The whole structure was of one build and consisted of a 19.8m-long nave and a 5.5m-long rectangular chancel, with a possible porticus on the north side at the west end.[123] There is evidence of a two-storeyed porticus to the west, paralleled at Wearmouth, and perhaps for two narrow passage-like aisles flanking the nave and running up to the point where the nave joins the chancel. Such an arrangement would be similar to that found at Wearmouth and also finds parallels in Continental churches of a similar date.[124] The present tower was originally built free-standing in the gap between the two churches, but adjacent to their walls and later united the two buildings into one. The lower storeys of the tower are of pre-Conquest date, possibly 793-5. It seems likely that in the initial layout, it was deemed important to keep a passage between the two churches.

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[120] Cramp 2005, i, p. 151.

[121] Ibid., i, p. 154.

[122] Ibid., i, pp. 154, 167.

[123] Ibid., i, pp. 160-161.

[124] Ibid., i, pp. 160-163; for Continental examples, see Duval *et al* 1991, pp. 212-213.

This need remained even after the construction of the tower, hence the doors in its south and north sides.[125]

A recent GPR survey detected a large void underneath the eastern church. It extends from the chancel steps halfway down the building (the present chancel of the unified structure) and has a depth of 2.25m. The stonework in the exterior of the east wall, partially obscured by buttresses, still suggests the possibility of openings which could have given access to this space. Turner *et al.* have argued that the void could have been a relic crypt, not dissimilar to those at Ripon and Hexham, whereas Rosemary Cramp has suggested it could have been a burial vault, possibly for Ecgfrith who died in battle and never made it to his intended resting place.[126] Alternatively, the void could have been a subterranean baptistery, although there are no known analogues in England, or it could even be a Roman building. This last, however, is also unlikely.[127]

Burials of Anglo-Saxon date are mostly concentrated to the south of St Paul's church – between the church and the range of Anglo-Saxon monastic buildings (A and B) to the south (fig. 3.7) – and seem to play a substantial role in the layout of the site, together with the architecture.[128] Building A - the largest stone structure on the site - was located roughly 15m south of the nave of the church of St Paul and has been interpreted as a refectory with a dormitory above. In its earliest phase, the building was a rectangle oriented east-west and subdivided by a wall located 8.5m east of the interior face of the west wall. An annexe was added to the south of the main building at a later stage. The south wall, located on a slope, was possibly supported by buttresses. This building evidently reused Roman stones and roof tiles, and possibly also Roman roof timbers, in its construction. There is evidence of plastering on both the external and internal faces of the walls. Building A was divided into two rooms by a

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[125] Cramp 2005, i, p. 165-168.

[126] Turner *et al* 2013, pp. 163-4; Rosemary Cramp, pers. comm.

[127] Turner *et al* 2013, p. 198.

[128] Lowther 2005; Cramp 2005, i, p. 356.

partition and could have been a two-storey structure, as the walls were solid enough to support an upper floor.[129] An octagonal column base was found on the axis of the eastern room. Small carved elements found nearby seem to be from an ornate polygonal shaft worked with vine scrolls. The relatively insubstantial diameter of this shaft (33cm) possibly suggests that it formed part of a piece of furniture rather than being a constructional element. This, however, is debatable. Taken together with the fine *opus signinum* floor and the fragments of elaborately carved stone found nearby, this shaft indicates a particularly high status for the east end of building A. The date of the construction of this building is not certain, probably between 683-ca 700 – subsequent structural changes are even more difficult to date.[130]

Building B was located 0.9m to the east of the east wall of Building A, roughly on the same axis and at the mid-point of the line of churches to the north, indicating particular accuracy of planning and attention to geometric relationships between all buildings. Building B seems to have been completed in one phase and possibly featured buttresses similar to those of Building A, implying a roughly contemporary date. The building was subdivided by internal walls into the main room and two small cells to the east. The rooms to the east have been interpreted as a living cell to the south and a small oratory to the north. To judge from the archaeological finds, the main room could have been used for a variety of purposes, probably with a dormitory above. A small well in the middle of the main lower room could have been inserted at a secondary stage.[131]

In their layout, both buildings are reminiscent of earlier and contemporary secular timber halls, although they are constructed of different materials.[132]

From a constructional point of view, although the units used for building differ from the 'northern system', based on the rod of 15 Saxon or Northern feet

[129] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 189, 192, 197, 359.

[130] Ibid., i, pp. 194-196, 201.

[131] Ibid., i, pp. 203-207, 359.

[132] Ibid., i, p. 359; Cramp 1976a, p. 239; Cramp 1976b, p.14.

(5.03m),[133] Jarrow employs a modular system based on squares, making it similar to planning principles found elsewhere in the north.[134] Although McClendon has argued that Benedict Biscop's churches are a direct translation of a wooden building tradition into stone, no earlier timber structure has been discovered at Jarrow.[135] The certain square east end at Jarrow and the probable one at Wearmouth, however, do suggest a timber inspiration as lying behind this form. The plans of churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow are also similar to that of a later timber church at Whithorn.[136] Although the type of churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow and their narrow aisles are generally paralleled on the Continent, the squared east end is harder to find.[137] The squared chancel is a particularly English pre-Conquest feature.[138] The non-apsidal form of the east end would appear to reflect local, rather than Continental, building principles, even though it has been argued that the foundation of these sites made intentional reference to the glory of Continental monasteries.[139] Similarly, both at Wearmouth and Jarrow, the 'Roman tradition' is evidently combined with local influences, for instance, in the designs of carved reliefs.[140] The fabric and principles of construction seem to be 'in the Roman manner' (in shaped stone) but it is difficult to define the degree of 'foreignness' of building techniques at the time of construction.[141] Jarrow makes extensive use of Roman stone, presumably from nearby South Shields; however, it is not directly associated with any Roman structures, despite suspected Roman

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[133] Huggins *et al* 1982, p. 59.

[134] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 207, 212; Bettess 2005, ii, pp. 625-628.

[135] McClendon 2005, pp. 82-83; Cramp 2005, i, p. 160.

[136] Cramp 2005, i, p. 352; Hill 1997, fig. 4.15.

[137] For Continental parallels, see Forsyth 1953, fig.190; Krautheimer 1986; Duval *et al* 1991, 212h; de Maillé 1971, fig. 190. Exceptions with square east end are found perhaps at SS Felice and Fortunato at Vicenza – Krautheimer 1986, fig. 138; the church of St Paul at Nivelles – de Maillé 1971, fig. 3; and some Gaulish churches – Duval *et al* 1991, 212 e and g.

[138] Cramp 2005, i, p. 354.

[139] Ibid., i, p. 348.

[140] McClendon 2005, pp. 82-83; Ó Carragáin also compares the plan of Building B to Roman examples - Ó Carragáin 1994, p. 13, and Ó Carragáin 1999.

[141] Cramp 2005, i, p. 352.

forts nearby.[142] It is also likely that the monastic territories at both Wearmouth and Jarrow were enclosed by a vallum, like monastic sites on the Continent and in Ireland.[143] Two carved crosses found in the 19th-20th centuries might have marked the boundaries of the enclosure.[144] However, the rectangular arrangement at Jarrow and other Anglo-Saxon monasteries should be contrasted with the circular layout of Irish sites.[145] In the formality of their layouts, both Jarrow and Wearmouth display similarities with Gaulish sites, such as Jumièges and Hamage.[146] Overall, Jarrow seems to be a product of various influences, but its perhaps most outstanding feature without a definite known predecessor is the two axially aligned ranges of buildings that dominate the layout of the monastery.

Jarrow and Monkwearmouth have always been considered sister foundations, until this assumption was challenged by Ian Wood, who instead has suggested that they were founded independently and under different patronage. Wood argues that Jarrow could have been founded directly by the king, whereas Wearmouth would have been established by Benedict Biscop's family after the initial grant of land; he believes that their closer relationship developed later.[147] The sites, nevertheless, have a lot in common, and alignment is one of the shared features that scholars have proposed. Problematically, however, where at Jarrow alignment of the two churches and the buildings to the south of them is tangible and evident, at Wearmouth the case of alignment is hypothetical and relies almost entirely on the idea that the two foundations were so similar that

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[142] Turner *et al* 2013, pp. 87, 89.

[143] Braunfels 1972, iii, p. 255; Louis 2002; Cramp 2005, i, p. 350; Rosemary Cramp suggests the likelihood of this, although the surrounding areas at both Wearmouth and Jarrow have been developed too intensely to find any reliable traces of it. – Cramp 2005, i, p. 349. Radford has interpreted a foundation north of St Paul's as a vallum base. – Radford 1954, p. 207-8, fig. 2. On enclosures, see: Cramp 2005, i, p. 349; Norman and St Joseph 1969, Hughes and Hamlin 1977, pp. 54-56; MacDonald 1997, p. 42; Christie and Hodges 2016. Cramp suggests further Irish connections – Cramp 2005, i, p. 359; Cramp 1986, 196-198; Cramp 1994a, p. 289.

[144] Turner *et al* 2013, p. 116.

[145] McClendon 2005, p. 83.

[146] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 357-8.

[147] Wood 2010, p. 100; see also Wood 2008.

alignment, being a definite attribute of one, would inevitably have been found in the other. In fact, alignment at Wearmouth remains conjectural, projected on the basis of the known arrangement at Jarrow, which is why in this chapter Jarrow is considered first despite being founded later.

Wearmouth

Northumbria
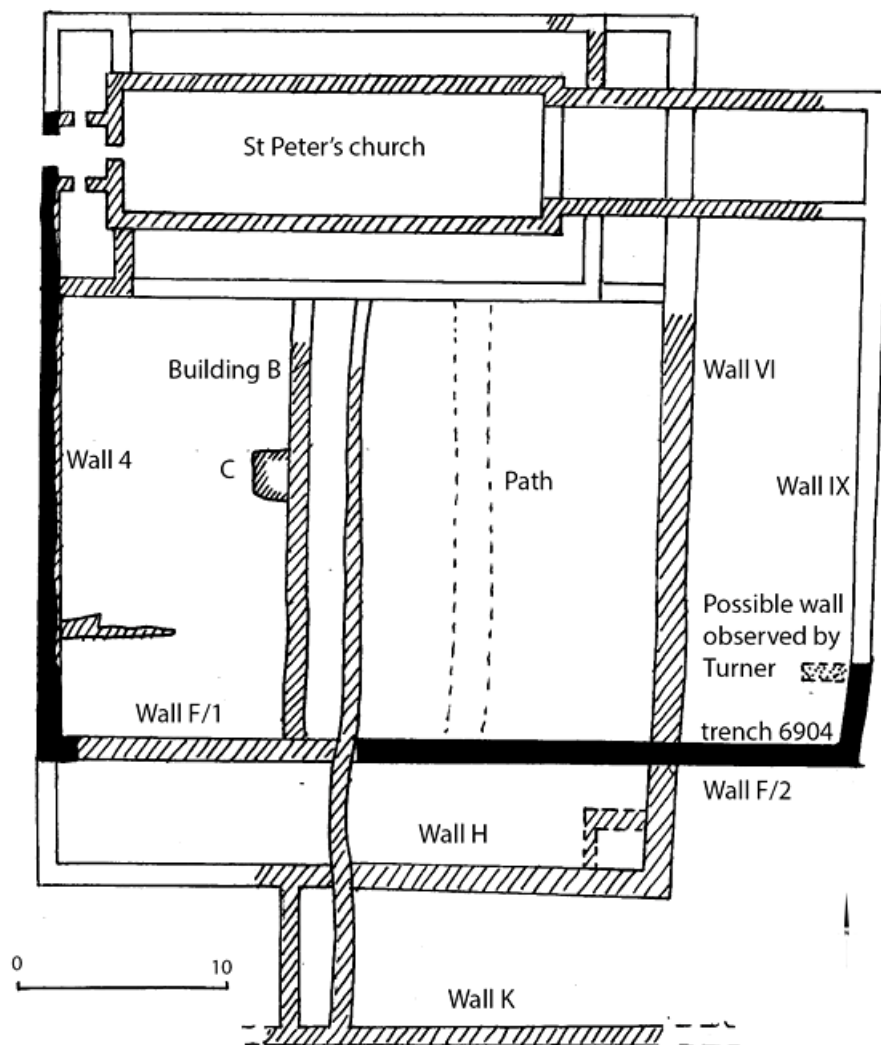
Fig. 3.8. Plan of excavations at Wearmouth, after Cramp 2005 (fig. 9.33, p. 109, vol.1).
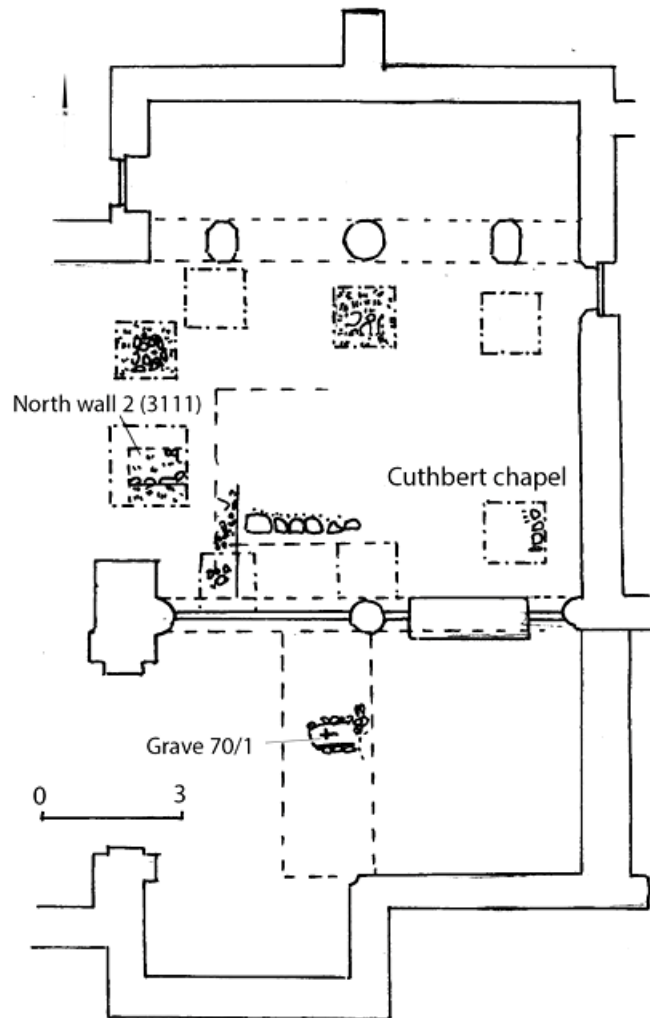
Fig. 3.9. Plan of excavated Anglo-Saxon features at the east end of St Peter's at Wearmouth, after Cramp 2005 (fig. 6.8, p. 60, vol.1).

Monkwearmouth was also founded by Benedict Biscop on land granted by King Ecgfrith. The site could previously have been occupied by a monastery founded by St Hild and already had a Christian burial ground by the time of Biscop's arrival.[148] The Bernician royal family was closely involved in the establishment and subsequent development of the monastery at Wearmouth. Biscop, aided by Ceolfrid, was in all likelihood inspired by the architecture and liturgy of Rome, where he had travelled prior to the foundation of the monastery,

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[148] Cramp 2005, i, p. 29; HE iv.23, p. 406.

and of Gaul, from where Bede tells us he summoned masons and glaziers.[149] The church dedicated to St Peter was founded in 674. It is known that a church dedicated to St Mary was built between 674 and ca 685 and that by 716 there was also a chapel dedicated to St Lawrence in the monks' dormitory.[150] As at Jarrow, there are no underlying Roman structures at Wearmouth but there was a Roman fort nearby. The builders made extensive use of Roman stone for the construction of the church.[151]

Despite the widely accepted opinion that at Monkwearmouth there was a group of aligned churches, there is no definite archaeological evidence to support this.[152] The reconstruction of the plan with St Peter's church to the west and St Mary's in alignment to the east was chiefly based on architectural analogies and Wearmouth's close historical connections with Jarrow (above).[153]

Knowledge of the original layout of the east end of the main church is very limited, and investigation of the areas adjacent to the church was constrained.[154] Investigations at the east end, however, showed the presence of a high-status pre-Conquest grave in the centre of the original chancel (Grave 70/1), which could have been roughly on axis (fig. 3.9). Although the layout is difficult to reconstruct, it is likely that the east wall of the chancel ran just east of this grave. There could have been a porticus to the north, but regardless of the exact plan, the wall 3111 (see fig. 3.9) would have been an external northern wall.[155] Unfortunately, beyond this hypothetical reconstruction of the east and of this church, there is no evidence of a separate structure to the east. While this could be explored in future excavations, at the moment this site can only be treated as

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[149] HE iv.18, p. 388.

[150] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 30-31, 33; Gittos 2013, p. 66; *Historia Abbatum* in Webb and Farmer 1998, ch.17.

[151] Turner *et al* 2013, pp. 139-141, 143.

[152] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 49-50, 55.

[153] Gittos 2013, p. 64; Blair 1992, p. 252; Cramp 2005, i, p. 359.

[154] Cramp 2005, i, p. 61.

[155] Ibid., i, pp. 63-64, fig. 6.8.

potentially featuring alignment, notwithstanding existing reconstructions and proposed parallels with Jarrow.[156]

To the south of the church, a cemetery and a possible range of buildings have been recovered (fig. 3.8). A path leading southwards from the church, together with some of the graves, are likely to pre-date the monastery. Since the limits of the monastic enclosure have not been established, it is difficult to define the spatial relationship between the monastery and the lay settlement.[157] Interpretation of the walls uncovered in this area has not been straightforward, but it is evident that building B could have represented a long, covered and elaborately decorated gallery, contemporary with the construction of the church porch. It also served an additional function of separating the burial ground into two possible different zones to the east and west. Following a series of alterations, the site seems to have acquired a long building formed by walls 4, VI, F and H, measuring 30.8x73.2m and subdivided into two rooms at the ground level. It is likely that this building/range of buildings had living quarters at the upper level. It thus seems that building B could have functioned as a link between the church and the living quarters of the monks.[158] Further, it is not certain whether the original wall B carried on further towards wall K to the south and whether wall K was a boundary or formed the north wall of another building.[159] The layout, with or without a building associated with the wall K to the south, is similar to Jarrow in constituting either two parallel buildings or two parallel ranges of buildings: those with ecclesiastical functions to the north and those of a domestic kind to the south.

Finally, a recent geophysical survey has identified a possible wall in an unexcavated area, just north of trench 6904. It seems that Wall F/2, having turned north at its easternmost point (marked in black on the plan) did not continue

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[156] Cramp 2005, i, p. 362.

[157] Ibid., i, p. 111.

[158] Ibid., i, pp. 108-113.

[159] Ibid., i, p. 99.

northwards as wall IX but instead turned back on itself and possibly formed the square eastern end of a building. This arrangement would suggest a possible later range of long structures in the area north of the buildings described above, similar to those at Jarrow.[160] Thus, Wearmoth is a site where, despite excavations, it is uncertain whether there was alignment of either churches or subservient structures. There is nothing to suggest there was no alignment, but there is no archaeological proof either.

Moving further north-west, to the edge of modern-day Lancashire, we find a site with hints of a rather unusual and complex expression of axial alignment - Heysham. Although this site is also Northumbrian, it is not as well recorded and not as well known as the monastic foundations introduced above.

This site includes the church of St Peter situated on the landward side of Heysham Head, sheltered from the winds, and surrounded by an extensive cemetery, and the chapel of St Patrick, located to the west of the church atop a rock. The dating is uncertain but it is likely to have been established in 7th-8th centuries.

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[160] Turner *et al* 2013, p. 133.
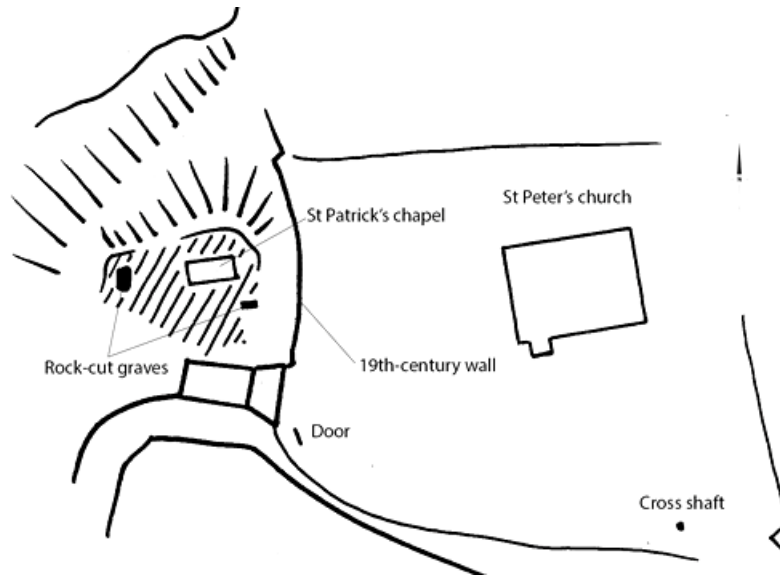
Fig. 3.10. Plan of the site at Heysham, after Potter and Andrews 1994 (fig. 2, p. 30).
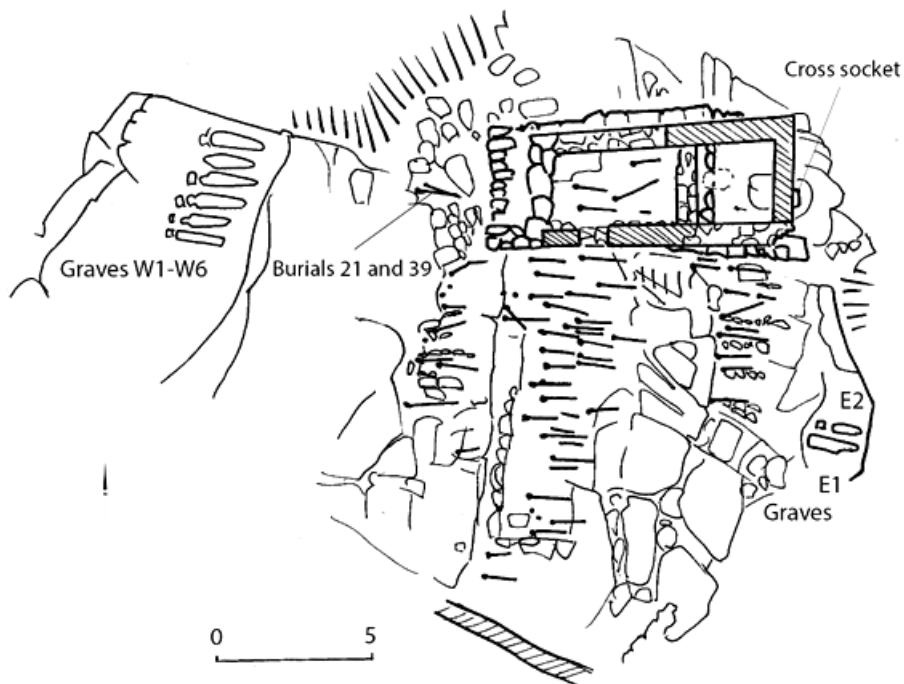
Fig. 3.11. Plan of excavations on the site of the chapel and the cemetery at Heysham, after Potter and Andrews 1994 (fig. 6, p. 34).

Documentary evidence for the early settlement at Heysham is very sparse. Domesday Book does not mention a church there but accidental omission is possible.[161] The earliest reference to a church is in a 1094 grant by Roger of Poitou to the Abbey of Sees in Normandy.[162] After Roger's grant, there is still little recorded of Heysham, maybe an indication of its insignificance and perhaps poverty. Its status as a separate vill also means a lack of information about it among the records of the church of Lancaster.[163] However, archaeological evidence sheds more light on the history of this area. Thus, the 8th-11th-century high-quality carved stone finds on the site seem to testify to Heysham having enjoyed some importance in this period.[164]Although St Peter's church is now largely rebuilt, it shows definite evidence of Anglo-Saxon fabric, largely in the west wall, the wall above the chancel arch and the walls above the south nave arcades. Based on an analysis of the early fabric, the excavators conclude that the nave of the Anglo-Saxon church would have had dimensions of 4.7x9.1m. The main feature of the Anglo-Saxon church surviving *in situ* is the now blocked west doorway. Another doorway survives, re-erected in the churchyard. There is also evidence of a west tower, possibly of Anglo-Saxon date, and a possibility of the existence of north and south porticus.[165] The excavators posit a late 8th – 9th-century date for the church, which would overlap with the period between 800 and 950AD proposed by Taylor and Taylor.[166]

To the west of the church is St Patrick's chapel, originally built possibly in the late 7th-early 8th centuries, and extended eastwards at a slightly later stage. The original building was of stone and rendered with plaster both on the inside and outside. The building measured 4m in length to 2.4m wide at its east end and

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[161] Tuck 1994, p. 54.

[162] Round 1899, no. 664, cited in Tuck 1994, p. 54.

[163] Roper 1892-1906, pp. 284-305, cited in Tuck 1994, p. 56.

[164] Cramp 1994b, pp. 56-61.

[165] Potter and Andrews 1994, pp. 50-52.

[166] Ibid., p. 52; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, p. 315.

2.2m wide in the west. There probably was a door at the west end, whereas after the rebuilding a new doorway was made on the south side. This doorway seems to have given access to a path leading eastwards along the south wall of the chapel, up a flight of steps adjacent to the same wall and further towards the west end of the church of St Peter. The proportions of the buildings point towards an Anglo-Saxon rather than a Celtic population and culture at Heysham.[167] The foundations of both buildings are roughly contemporary, and the structures are not precisely aligned. The relationship between them, even after a site visit, is difficult to define: the chapel is built at a much higher level than the church, at the top of the rock, and it has not been possible to locate evidence of a direct path between the entrances into the church and the chapel, especially since the possible path could have been interrupted by a 19th-century wall (fig. 3.10).

The chapel contains nine burials contemporary with the second phase of building and has an extensive, possibly walled, graveyard to its south. The great majority of the burials are orientated east-west, with the heads to the west.

A particularly interesting feature of the site is a group of six rock-cut graves, unique in Britain, located to the west of the chapel, some 7m away. Graves of this type are found in Spain and Portugal, where they are located on the sea shore but not associated with architectural structures.[168] The relationship between the chapel and the graves at Heysham, on the contrary, is pronounced. The east-west axis of the chapel, extended further west, divides the group precisely in half, aligning the group as a whole with the chapel. However, the orientation of the graves is slightly at an angle to the chapel.[169] The graves possibly pre-date the chapel and may have served as an early focus of

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[167] Potter and Andrews 1994; However, Leask has suggested that modular proportions of 3:1 are characteristic of Celtic structures, as they are common in stone and timber architecture in Ireland. – Leask 1955, pp. 6, 49-50.

[168] I am very grateful to Lilian Diniz for information and references on this. On rock-cut graves on the Continent, see Martín-Viso and Blanco-González 2016; Barroca 2010-2011; Tente 2015.

[169] For all of above, see Potter and Andrews 1994.

veneration.[170] The narrow shape of the graves makes them unsuitable for the deposition of complete bodies. These graves are more likely to have contained disarticulated bones and possibly served as relic deposits.[171] Furthermore, there is a pair of burials (39 and 21) lying precisely on the axis of the chapel, almost immediately to the west of it (fig. 3.11). These burials are superimposed and their relationship with one another is unknown, but their location, in isolation from the rest of the cemetery, and perhaps the fact that both bodies were buried on the same spot, seems significant. Two more rock-cut graves (E1 and E2), located to the south-west of the chapel, seem to be axially aligned with St Peter's church. This relationship would have been visible on site if there were grave-markers.

Overall, the osteological evidence seems to indicate that the burials associated with St Patrick's chapel are of higher status than those at the burial ground linked to St Peter's.[172] If the assumption that the sites of the rock-cut graves and the chapel were foci of veneration is correct, this trend is consistent with similar situations elsewhere, for instance, at Hexham, where higher-status burials gravitated towards the little apsed building.[173]

In addition, part of a cross shaft was discovered in the south-west corner of the churchyard, between the church and the chapel.[174] This may date to the early 9th century.[175] If it is *in situ*, such a location would seem to underline the explicit, although not always exact, linear arrangement of the buildings and focal features.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that there is a considerable temporal gap between the 7th-8th-century date of the first-phase chapel and the earliest radiocarbon-dated burials, which date between AD 960 and 1185. The dating of

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[170] Bu'lock 1967, p. 36.
[171] Thomas 1971, pp. 137.
[172] Potter and Andrews 1994, p. 68.
[173] Cambridge and Williams 1995, pp. 79-80.
[174] Cramp 1994b, pp. 58-60.
[175] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

the chapel, therefore, remains an open question and a fuller programme of radiocarbon dating is required.[176] At the same time, the archaeological evidence, including the fabric of the church, the rock-cut graves and the pre-Conquest carved stones, indicates a clear discrepancy between archaeological evidence and the historical records, which do not start until 1094.

7th-century sites with later alignment

The following group of five sites were all founded in the 7th century and are broadly contemporary with the sites above; however, alignment there has been identified in late phases, when new axially aligned structures seem to have been added to the existing 7th-century foundations. It is possible that these buildings replaced earlier structures, no longer archaeologically visible. However, in contrast with the sites above, there is no evidence that alignment was planned at the outset.

The first site in this group is Repton, which is unusual for featuring a group of halls aligned on a north-south axis that preceded the church and associated structures. One of these halls remained *in situ* when the church was constructed to the south and the cemetery appeared. About 60m to the west and slightly off the axis of the church a mausoleum was constructed in the same period.[177]

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[176] Potter and Andrews 1994, p, 68.
[177] Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, pp. 49-51.

Repton

Mercia
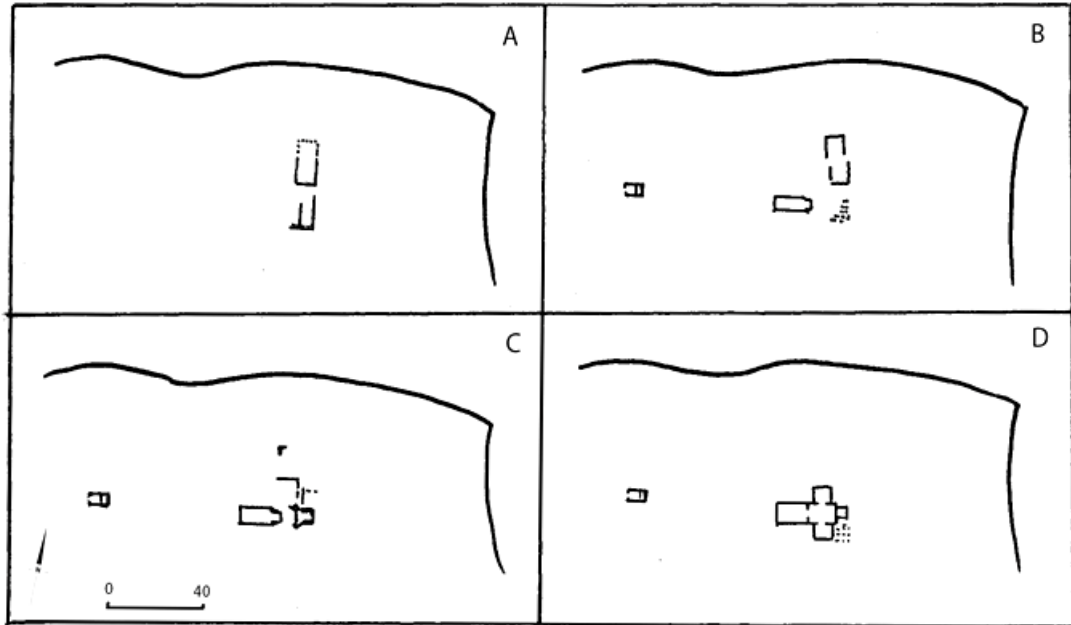
Fig. 3.12. Development of the site of the monastery at Repton; phase A shows two possible halls, 6th-late 7th centuries; phase B includes one of the halls, the first church (the outline is hypothetical) and the cemetery, late 7th-8th centuries; phases C and D show the subsequent development of the church; after Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001 (fig. 4.3, p. 51).

Hrepingas, which could be identified as Repton, is first mentioned in charter S 68 of 664, granted by Wulfhere, king of Mercia, to St Peter's Minster, Medeshamstede, as belonging to Peterborough Abbey.[178] The earliest excavated ecclesiastical buildings are even later and are mostly noted for their association with the cult of the royal saint Wystan, buried at Repton in 849.[179]

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[178] S68 in Sawyer 1968 in *Anglo-Saxon Charters* ([http://www.aschart.kcl.ac.uk/charters/s0068.html], accessed 26 November 2017).

[179] Rollason 1981; Thacker 1985; Biddle 1986, p. 16.

Nothing survives of the original church, but the archaeological evidence, which includes vessel and window glass, suggests the existence of a church here in the 7th-8th centuries.[180] The present-day crypt contains the earliest surviving architectural fabric on the site and is dated to after 715, on the evidence of a sceatta buried in the construction.[181] The church and the crypt seem to have been built in two separate campaigns and existed separately until the church was extended eastwards in the 860-70s to incorporate the crypt, that was subsequently remodelled; the newly formed church was then rebuilt again in the 13th century.[182]

The semi-subterranean crypt was built in one phase and had a regular square plan with all four walls identical in design and barrel-vaulted windows on each side.[183] The uniformity of the walls makes it difficult to locate the entrance, but Taylor has proposed an entrance from the west, based on the evidence of slightly differing designs of string courses.[184] It is very likely that the crypt was designed as a burial chamber or a mausoleum. Martin Biddle has also proposed a possible baptismal function, based on the discovery of a drain in the east wall.[185] From the moment of construction, the crypt attracted numerous external burials, clustered around its walls, especially on the east side.[186] It seems the crypt provided a certain devotional focus some time before the burial of St Wystan. This focus could have been associated with a special grave within its walls.

King Aethelbald was buried at Repton in 757, and it is possible that he was buried in this crypt.[187] Alternatively, according to Wystan's *passio,* Wystan was buried in his grandfather Wiglaf's mausoleum, which could also be identified as

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[180] Biddle 1986, p. 16.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Taylor 1987, p. 243; Biddle 1986, p. 16.

[183] Taylor 1987, pp. 211-212.

[184] Ibid., p. 216.

[185] Biddle 1986, pp. 16, 22; Taylor 1987, p. 219.

[186] Biddle 1986, p. 16.

[187] Ibid.; Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 755, in Swanton 1996, pp. 46-50.

this crypt.[188] Either way, the crypt may have had the status of a royal mausoleum from as early as 757 or at least from 839 – the date of Wiglaf's death. Biddle emphasises the important role of the axial position of the crypt in relation to the church, as reflecting its royal status, and subsequently, following the burial of St Wystan, its ecclesiastical importance.[189]

Possibly in the 830s, the church was extended eastwards. In the same campaign, the crypt was remodelled to include a new vault supported by four twisted columns and eight pilasters. Further, access to the crypt changed sometime after the burial of Wystan in 849: a pair of north-west and south-west passages were created to connect it to the extended church. The Viking invasion in 873 seems to have brought life at the monastery to an end.[190]

The second case-study in this group is Winchester in Wessex (Hampshire). As at Repton, at Winchester an axially aligned structure was added to the 7th-century church, the buildings were united into one structure, and later the whole complex was rebuilt.

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[188] Rollason 1983, pp. 6-7; Fernie 1983, pp. 117-118.

[189] Biddle 1986, p. 22.

[190] Ibid., pp. 18, 22, fig. 8.

Winchester

Wessex

ca 648 - 9th c

Old Minster church

Tower

9th - 10th cc

■ 7th century

▨ 7th-9th century

▧ mid-9th century

0   50
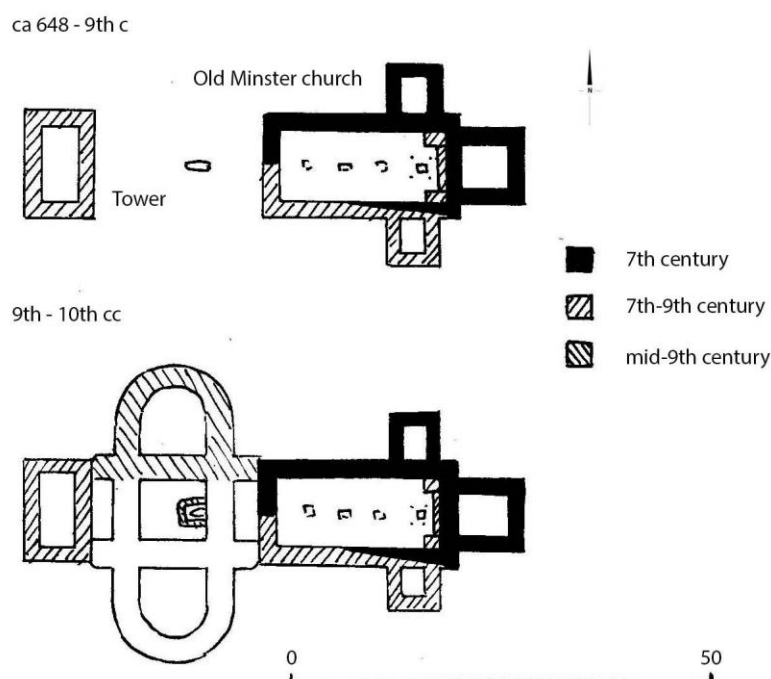
Fig. 3.13. Plan of stages of development of the church at Winchester, after Biddle 2018 (unnumbered, pp. 42-43).

There is a tradition that the first Christian king, Kynegils, converted by St Birinus in 635, destroyed a pagan temple at Winchester and began the foundation of the cathedral church.[191] This is the most likely date for the foundation of the church, followed by the establishment of a bishopric at Winchester by King Cenwahl.[192] This church was completed by Kynegils in the 640s and dedicated to Ss Peter and Paul. Both Kynegils and Cenwahl were buried before (or under) the

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[191] Willis 1984, pp. 3-5.
[192] HE iii.7, p. 234.

high altar, where the body of St Birinus, initially buried in Dorchester, was also translated.[193]

The 7th-century church had a rectangular nave and a major altar at its east end. Archaeological research has revealed the traces of a ciborium encompassing the altar. This arrangement of the high altar is similar to that in Reculver, suggesting a possible link with Kentish practice.[194] Three porticus – also a feature of churches in Kent – were constructed to the north, east and south. Interestingly, however, according to Rodwell, the Old Minster was laid out following the northern system of measurement – northern foot (0.335m) and northern rod (5.03m).[195] Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle believed the unit of measurement to be the same as the long Roman or Carolingian foot (0.33m) and proposed a very precise and systematic approach to construction: the porticus were exactly square – the southern and northern ones measuring 16.5x16.5ft and the eastern one 22x22.[196] The nave is 33x66ft and is made up of two squares, suggesting that the method of its laying out was reminiscent of that used for the halls at Yeavering. The dimensions of the whole church are thus 88x22ft - the sum of length and width is the same as that in the Temple of Jerusalem – 110.[197] Eric Fernie also compares the layout of the Old Minster with that of St German at Speyer (7th century).[198]

The Old Minster remained at the core of what turned out to be a developing architectural complex, which continued to evolve up until the construction of the New Minster next door by Edward the Elder. The tower to the west of the church was built in the 8th century, in strict alignment with the church.[199] In 862, St Swithin was buried on the same axis between the tower and

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[193] Willis 1984, p. 5, quoting John of Exeter f.5, b.

[194] Fernie 1983, p. 39.

[195] Rodwell 1984, p. 16.

[196] Measurements are given in feet here, to facilitate comparison with the Temple of Jerusalem below.

[197] Kjølbye-Biddle 1986, pp. 200, 207-209.

[198] Fernie 1983, p. 45.

[199] It should be noted that free-standing towers only started to become fashionable from the middle of the 11th century, which makes this one very unusual. – see Gem 1997, p. 109.

the church, according to William of Malmesbury, 'in a vile and unworthy place, where his grave was trampled on by every passenger, and received the droppings from the eaves' (fig. 3.13).[200] Wulfstan adds that St Swithun 'thought himself unworthy to be deposited within the church, but that he would not even lie amongst the other graves that received the rays of the rising sun and the noonday warmth'.[201] A new structure connected the church and the tower in the 970s and incorporated the tomb of the saint. Thus, the stages of development relevant for the present inquiry lie between the 640s and the end of the 10th century, when the free-standing aligned structures were united into one building.

Another similar situation occurred at Glastonbury, in modern Somerset, where a structure was built in the 8th century in alignment with a 7th-century church.

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[200] William of Malmesbury, De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum, ch. 75, in Hamilton 1870.
[201] Wulfstan, *Vita S. Swithuni,* i. 321, trans. Willis 1984, p. 6.

Wessex

St John the Baptist

Site of 'vetusta ecclesia'

Atrium

Well

St Peter and St Paul ('major ecclesia')

St Michael in the cemetery

East range
(10th c)

0   50
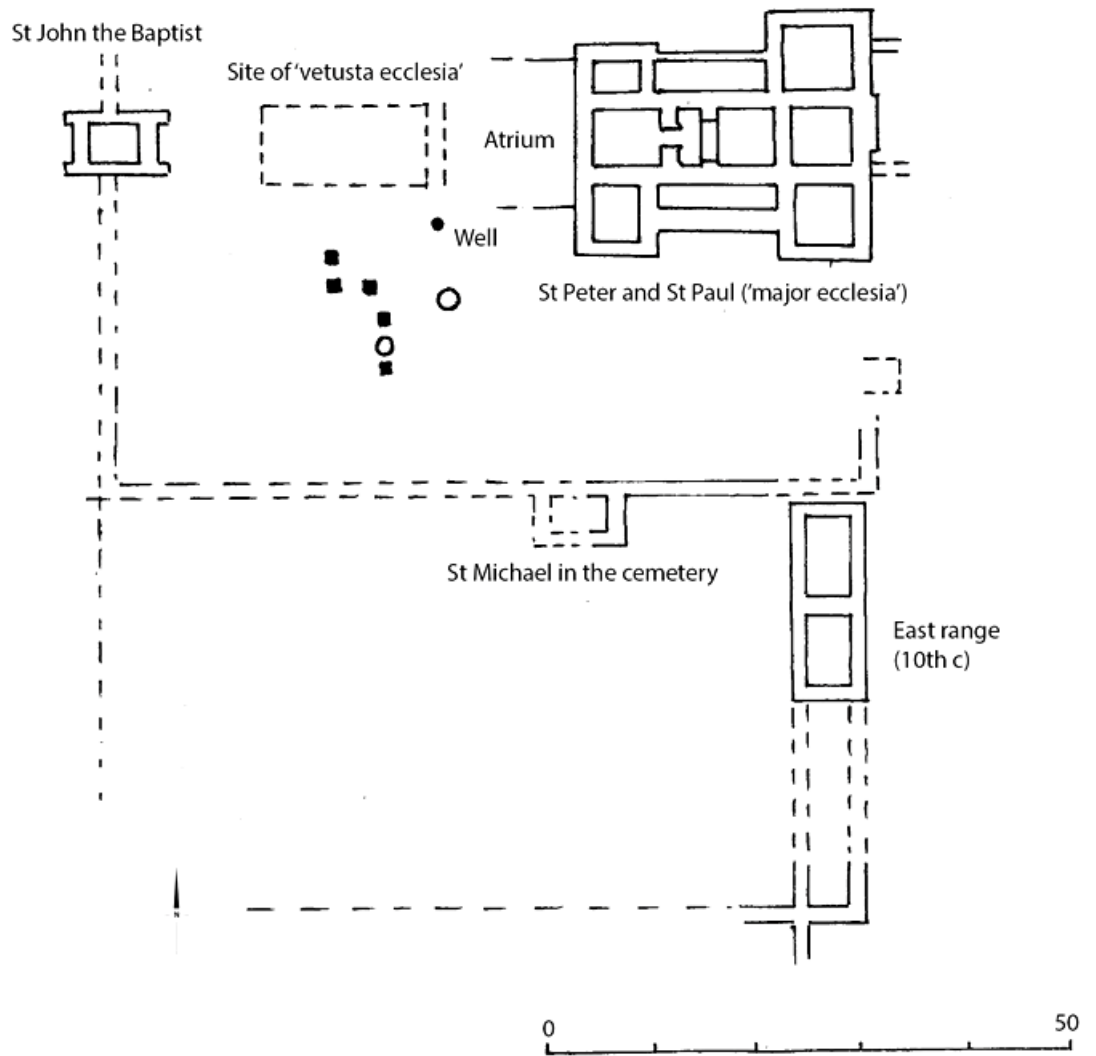
Fig. 3.14. Plan of Pre-Conquest buildings at Glastonbury, after Rahtz and Watts 2003 (fig. 44, p. 93).
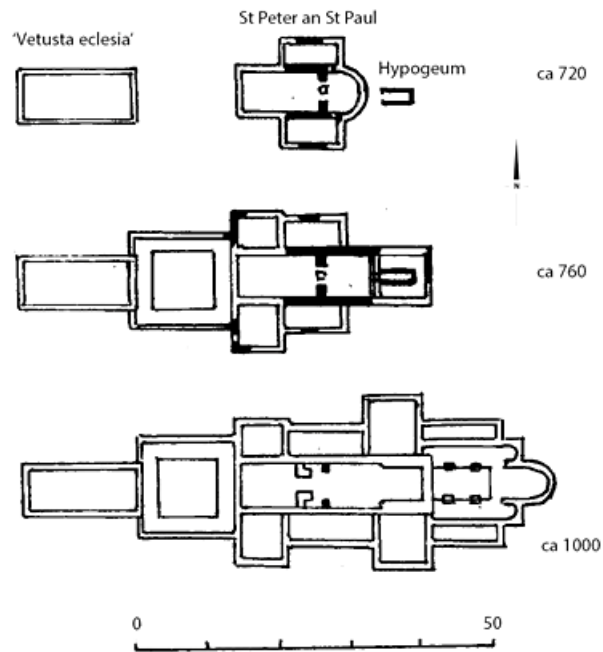
Fig. 3.15. Sequence of development of church at Glastonbury, after Rahtz and Watts 2003 (fig. 55, p. 103).

This site, located in the west part of the kingdom of Wessex, was early exposed to the Christianising influence of the western missionaries and later to Augustinian Kent.[202] The earliest historical evidence for the monastic foundation of Glastonbury dates from charters of Kings Cenwealh (641-72), Centwine (676-85) and Ine (688-726).[203] It appears that the royal interest in Glastonbury coincided with the consolidation of West Saxon rule in the formerly British Devon, Somerset and north Wiltshire.[204] It is possible that the Saxon kings appropriated the assets of British religious communities and created a legend of Glastonbury's descent from British and Irish antecedents. The creation of such evidence to legitimise descent and therefore the inheritance of territories and prestige is not

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[202] Rahtz and Watts 2003, p. 35.
[203] Gilchrist and Green 2015, p. 57.
[204] Kelly 2012, p. 13.

unique to this site and was widespread across the English kingdoms.[205] William of Malmesbury went even further, to describe an early church in Glastonbury, dedicated to Mary, as initially having been founded in AD 166 or even earlier by one of the disciples of Christ, and later rebuilt of wattle, covered with wooden planks and roofed with lead.[206] However, despite William's efforts and the later medieval associations of Glastonbury with St Patrick and St Bridget, archaeological research has found no structural evidence pre-dating the Saxon churches.[207]

A more realistic claim by William of Malmesbury is his association of the rebuilding of St Mary's church with Paulinus, implying it would have been constructed ca 625. This church, later referred to as the *vetusta ecclesia*, was held in great veneration and survived until 1184. However, physical evidence for this church has not been discovered; its location is largely based on medieval references and an inscription on a column found in 1921, it is supposed in the general area of the church. Nothing is known of its architectural appearance.[208] A hypogeum, originally located at some distance to the east of the probable location of this church, may have served as a crypt or mausoleum and has tentatively been dated to the 7th-8th century, by analogy with the hypogeum of Mellebaudis, near Poitiers; however, it could also be of an earlier date (fig. 3.15).[209] In the early 8th century, during the reign of King Ina, an apsidal cruciform church of St Peter and Paul was constructed in the space between the church of

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[205] Foot 1991. On origin legends and ethnogenesis, see also Yorke 2008; Härke 2011; Frazer 2000; Hamerow 1997 and Oosthuizen 2019, ch. 3.

[206] Scott 1981, pp. 66-67.

[207] The same claim is made in *Vita S. Dunstani*, see Winterbottom and Lapidge 2013, pp. 50-51; for William of Malmesbury's *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*, see the translation in Scott 1981, p. 67. For the of lack of archaeological evidence, see Gilchrist and Green 2015, pp. 58-59 and Rahtz and Watts 2003, pp. 90-91, 95. Margaret Deanesly's evidence for a very early foundation of the *vetusta ecclesia* and the Roman occupation at Glastonbury, including remains of the buildings, is not entirely justified. However, her statement that the legend of Glastonbury's early foundation might have had some origin in fact, is worth considering. – see Deanesly 1963, pp. 13-19.

[208] Rahtz and Watts 2003, pp. 90-91.

[209] Ibid., p. 101; Rodwell 2001, p. 78.

St Mary and the hypogeum to the east.[210] William of Malmesbury seems to imply that this church was located immediately to the east of the *vetusta ecclesia*.[211] Early medieval references to the building (or rebuilding) of this church describe features and materials, such as the proportions of the church and floors of what may have been *opus signinum*, that may reveal Kentish and perhaps Roman or Gaulish influences.[212] During the late 8th century, the two churches were joined together by an atrium, porticus were added to the church of Sts Peter and Paul and the hypogeum was incorporated into the eastern end of the church.[213] Throughout the 9th century, Glastonbury may have been a secular site rather than a monastery, and a subsequent curious shift in planning, perhaps consistent with the change of status from secular to monastic, may be associated with the appointment of Dunstan as abbot in 940.[214] Further alterations followed under Dunstan in the 10th century, when the cemetery developed to the west, and the church of St John the Baptist, which essentially served as a gatehouse with a chapel above, was built, probably on axis with the existing structures, thus maintaining a chain-like complex at the heart of the monastery (fig. 3.14).[215] This church was designed 'to serve as a little beacon'.[216] This reference indicates that the church of St John may have been designed to be perceived visually as an index, defining a strong line continuing eastwards, through the churches of St Mary (*vetusta ecclesia*) and St Peter. There is no archaeological evidence for this early church of St. John the Baptist, but the remains of a church located on the same site and dating to the late 12th century have been excavated.[217] Later, the

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[210] Rodwell 1984, p. 18; Rodwell 2001, p. 115.

[211] *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie* 40, in Scott 1981.

[212] Rahtz and Watts 2003, p. 97. On *opus signinum*, see Thomas 2018, pp. 283-284, 294-295.

[213] Rodwell 1984, p. 19; Rahtz and Watts 2003, p. 98.

[214] Blair 2018, p. 318; Costen 1992, p. 27. The notion of the secular minster, used by John Blair, is the subject of a much-debated system of classification of Anglo-Saxon religious foundations and forms of pastoral provision. – see Blair 2005, pp. 342-5.

[215] Rahtz and Watts 2003, pp. 100, 110.

[216] Ibid., p. 100; *Vita S. Dunstani* – trans. in Scott 1981.

[217] Gilchrist and Green 2015, p. 392, fig. 4.1, p. 81.

new church of St Mary was built, presumably on the site of the *vetusta ecclesia*, thus obscuring the archaeological evidence for the earlier church, and was consecrated in 1184. It was designed as a separate building and then connected to the church of Sts Peter and Paul by a Galilee.[218]

Considering the apparently strong linearity of the overall architectural composition at Glastonbury, it is interesting that a possibly Roman well to the south-east of St Mary's church, lying off axis, does not seem to be geometrically included in the overall arrangement of the complex.[219] Similarly, a freestanding pillar found to the north of the church of St Mary does not seem to be spatially tied into the string of buildings. Rodwell maintains that alignment at Glastonbury was largely determined by a Roman road, the continuations of which have survived.[220] This chain of separate but liturgically connected buildings was similar to contemporary groups in Winchester and Canterbury. Overall, provided the accepted location of the *vetusta ecclesia* is more or less correct, Glastonbury demonstrates an interesting case of accurate alignment on an east-west axis, evidently respected and still maintained in the 10th century, when the church of St John the Baptist was built on this axis.

The next case in this group is the original Cathedral at Canterbury in Kent, which, by contrast with Augustine's Abbey, was located within the city walls.

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[218] Gilchrist and Green 2015, p. 65.
[219] Rahtz and Watts 2003, p. 107.
[220] Rodwell 2001, p. 115.
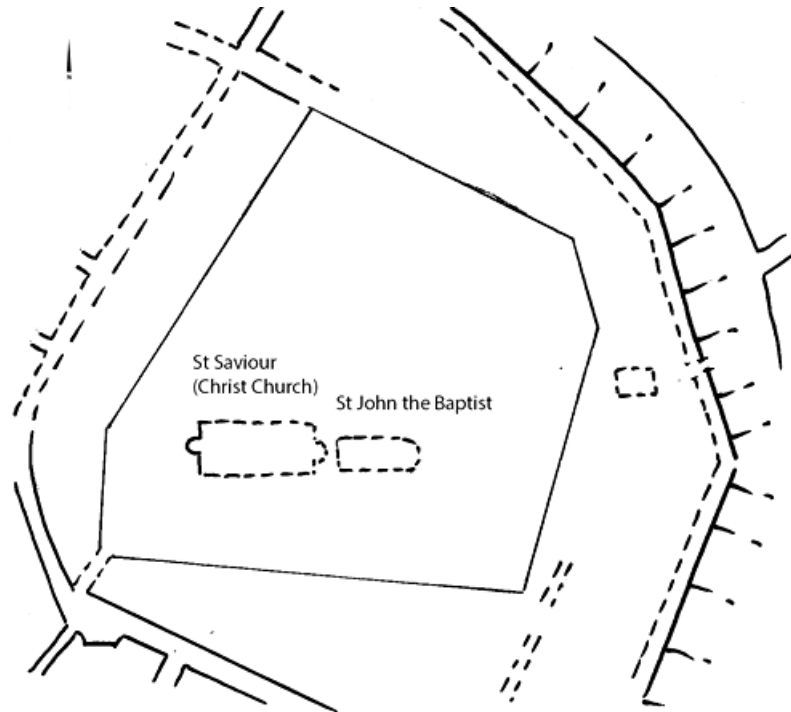
Fig. 3.16. Detail of reconstructed plan of Anglo-Saxon Canterbury, after Brooks 1984 (fig. 1, pp. 18-19).
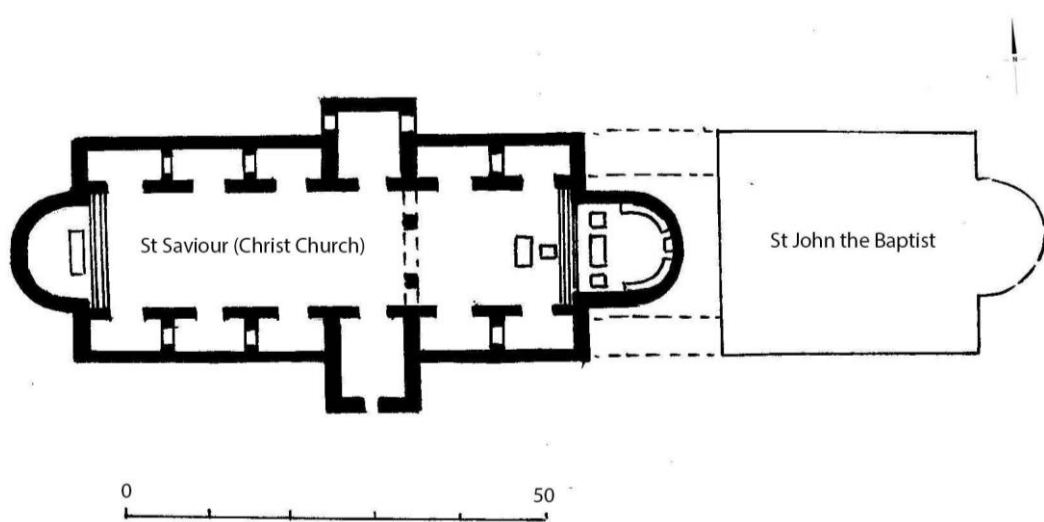
Fig. 3.17. Conjectural plan of Anglo-Saxon cathedral at Canterbury, after Brooks 1984 (fig.2, p. 38) and Blockley 1997 (fig. 43, p. 110).

At the time of the first description of the cathedral complex at Canterbury by Eadmer, in the early 12th century, the Anglo-Saxon provision included two churches – St Saviour's (Christ Church) and St John the Baptist, - together with a number of monastic buildings, including a cloister with an adjoining dormitory and refectory.[221] The main cathedral church, dedicated to Christ, is said to have been of Roman origin, before it was consecrated (or re-consecrated) by Augustine.[222] However, in the light of Bede's inclination to emphasise the antiquity of Anglo-Saxon churches, a Roman date for this church should perhaps be viewed with scepticism. Kevin Blockley suggests the old church was encased in a new one and extended westwards in the 9th century.[223] If the original church was Roman, it almost certainly would have been built on a Roman grid, in line with the city walls (as we will see was the case at other sites in the next chapter). If this same church was encased in the 9th century, the 9th-century structure would have maintained this orientation. Instead, the new church was orientated east-west, which means that if it did encase anything, it would have been a post-Roman, likely Augustinian, foundation. This would suggest that despite Bede's suggestion of a greater antiquity, which can be explained on ideological grounds, this church is more likely to date to the 7th century.[224] Blockley himself suggests that the old church at Canterbury is likely to have been similar to other 7th-century churches, at Rochester, Lyminge, Minster in Sheppey and Reculver.[225]

Later, however, strong references to Rome and to Continental architecture are evident. The new 9th-century church had two liturgical foci – the main altar of the Saviour in the chancel and the oratory of St Mary at the west end, possibly

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[221] See *Vita Sacnti Bregowini* in Scholz 1966. On layout, see Taylor 1969, p. 127 and para. 16.

[222] HE i.33, p. 114.

[223] Blockley 1997, pp. 95, 100, 111.

[224] On Bede and Romanitas, see Gem 2015, pp. 17-19. On Anglo-Saxon England and Romanitas, see also Izzi 2010, ch.5; Hilliard 2018; Bell 1998, 2005.

[225] Blockley 1997.

with apses at either end, two towers on the north and south sides of the nave, and ranges of porticus flanking the nave on the north and south sides (fig. 3.17).[226] According to Eadmer, a crypt, modelled on that of St Peter's in Rome, was located underneath the presbytery.[227] The very dedication of the cathedral church to Christ may be a reference to Rome, echoing the dedication of the Lateran basilica and other episcopal churches in Italy.[228] The reconstruction of the east end, however, can only be conjectural, as it lies unexcavated beneath the crossing of the present cathedral.[229]

Axial alignment at this site is evident in the 8th century, prior to the rebuilding of the main church. According to Eadmer, a Christ Church monk writing at the end of the 11th century, the church of St John the Baptist had been built to the east of St Saviour's, almost adjacent to it, by archbishop Cuthbert (740-60).[230] Nothing is known of the architecture of this building, but Taylor has suggested it could have been connected to the cathedral by covered walkways.[231] It was after the construction of this church that burials were allowed within the city walls.[232] Eadmer referred to it as an *ecclesia*, while the Christ Church cartulary termed it a basilica.[233] Both imply an independent foundation. As the church is known to have performed numerous functions, including serving as an archive, being used for judicial orders and providing space for high-status burials, it may well have had

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[226] Although the layout of the oratory of St Mary with the archbishop's throne and the shape of the west end are debated, it is likely that it was located on the ground floor and had an apse, as illustrated on the plan. For the debate, see Brooks 1984, pp. 39, 45; Taylor 1969, who argued for the apsed ground-floor chapel, and Parsons 1969, pp. 182-3; Gem 1970, p. 196; Gilbert 1970, pp. 206-7, who argued for an upper western gallery with a chapel there. For Continental parallels of major bi-focal churches (for example, Fulda, St Maurice d'Agaune and Cologne), see McClendon 2005, pp. 159-160; Parsons 1983, sp. p. 295.

[227] Brooks 1984, pp. 41-42; Taylor 1969, pp. 105-108; both refer to Eadmer *De Reliquiis*, ed. Wilmart 1935.

[228] McClendon 2005, p. 60.

[229] Blockley 1997, p. 95.

[230] Scholz 1966, pp. 139-140.

[231] Taylor 1969, fig. 2, pp. 101-130.

[232] Blockley 1997, p. 95.

[233] Ibid.

porticus for these subsidiary functions, which would have likened it to other contemporary Kentish churches.[234] Eadmer also mentions that the church had a baptismal function.[235] Brooks has suggested that Cuthbert could have been inspired by Continental models, after his journey to Rome in 740 or 741, and built his baptismal church in emulation.[236] At the same time, the funerary function of this church is important: it is likely to have been built as a new burial-place for the archbishops, to take over from the previous location in the porticus of St Peter and St Paul's. This could provide an explanation for its location to the east of the cathedral church and in proximity to its altar.[237]

Canterbury is also a rare case of a site where the functions of churches are recorded. In other cases, we know virtually nothing about the locations of buildings, let alone the uses of individual churches.

Alignment at Worcester has been noticed mainly thanks to Warwick Rodwell. Rodwell's 1984 article pioneered research into relationships between topography and individual church buildings and discussed the impact of Roman planning on the locations of subsequent churches, and also on the planning of religious complexes, including axial alignment. Amongst other things, this article has drawn attention to the two sites in Worcester, where alignment occurs between the churches situated virtually next to each other.[238]

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[234] See Brooks 1984, p. 40; Scholz 1966, pp. 139-40, 144.

[235] Original Latin text in Scholz 1966, pp. 139-40.

[236] Brooks 1984, p. 40.

[237] Ibid., p. 51; Taylor 1969, pp. 113-114.

[238] Rodwell 1984, fig. 5, pp. 10, 16-18.

Mercia
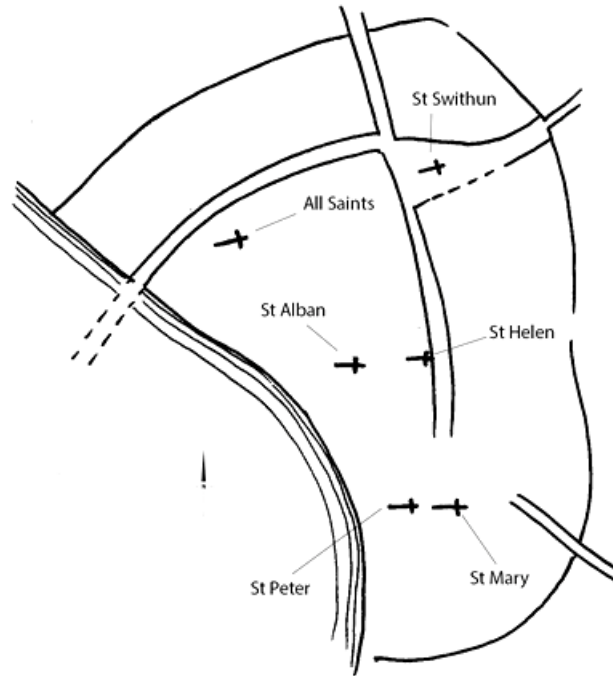
Fig. 3.18. Schematic plan of disposition of churches at Worcester, after Rodwell 1984 (fig. 5, p. 10).
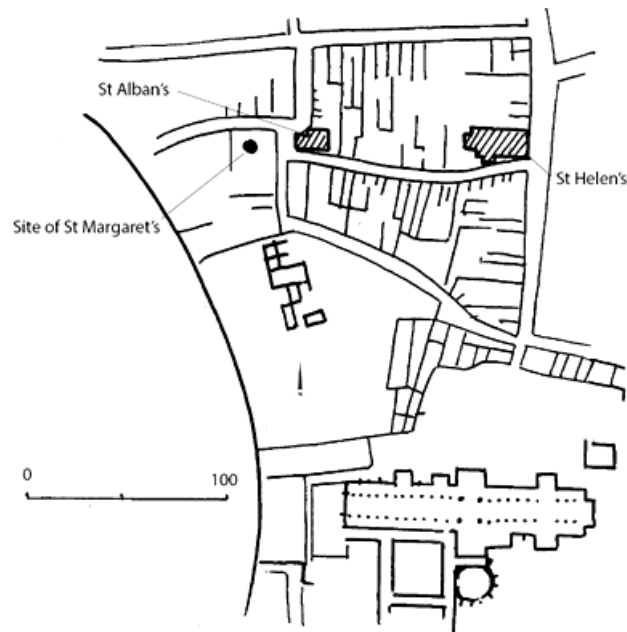
Fig. 3.19. Plan of Worcester, after Baker *et al* 1992 (fig. 2, p. 68).

Worcester was occupied in the Roman period, although not much is known about the character of this occupation.[239] The question of continuity between the Roman and sub-Roman periods of occupation is, unsurprisingly, debated, as it is for Gloucester and Rochester. The earliest datable phases of post-Roman settlement belong to the 5th-8th centuries, and the earliest churches are known to have been located within the walled area.[240] The See was established in ca 680 and was set up for the Hwicce who until then had been subject to the Mercian See. There is evidence of two separate but adjacent cathedral churches in the 7th and 10th centuries, which were replaced after 1084 by Wulfstan's cathedral.[241] The locations of these two churches, dedicated to St Mary and St Peter, are uncertain but they are likely to have been located in close proximity to each other. The church of St Mary is first mentioned in 966, built by Bishop Oswald, in addition to St Peter's church which had been in existence since the 690s. Documentary evidence suggests that St Peter's was becoming too small for the growing congregation; this could have led to the establishment of St Mary's. On the other hand, it is equally likely that Bishop Oswald founded the new church for the new Benedictine monks he had appointed, as the secular community remained at St Peter's.[242] Rodwell suggests the churches could have been aligned (fig. 3.18), based on bishop Wulfstan's description of these two churches as 'almost contiguous'.[243]

Another possible example of alignment in Worcester, also pointed out by Rodwell, is less convincing and involves the churches of St Helen, St Alban and St Margaret (fig. 3.19).[244] The original church of St Helen is likely to have pre-dated the foundation of the See in 680 and must have had a significant status in the

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[239] Baker *et al* 1992, p. 69.
[240] Ibid., p. 72; for a proposal in favour of continuity of occupation, see Bassett 1989, sp. p. 244.
[241] Baker *et al* 1992, p. 73.
[242] All documentary evidence in Baker *et al* 1992.
[243] Rodwell 1984, p. 18; see also Gem 1978, p. 15.
[244] Rodwell 1984, p. 18; see also Carver 1980.

region.[245] The chronicle of Evesham Abbey records a grant given by Aethelwold of Mercia to the abbey churches of St Alban and St Margaret in 721, which means that both churches also must have been Anglo-Saxon foundations.[246] The church of St Margaret is now lost but Baker *et al* have proposed its location to the west of St Alban's, suggesting an east-west alignment for all three churches. While St Helen's is set further away, St Alban's and St Margaret's churches, if we follow Baker's proposal, lay right next to each other.[247]

A further instance of alignment noted by Rodwell at Worcester concerns the churches of St Swithun and All Saints.[248] They are clearly located on the same axis, but set at a significant distance from each other, with a river and bridge in between, and are not considered here, as such distant alignment has been excluded in the limitations to this study.

These five sites, Repton, Winchester, Glastonbury, Canterbury and Worcester, are roughly contemporary and form a group in which alignment was a later addition. At Repton, the 8th-century crypt was added to a possibly 7th-century church, before the whole complex was rebuilt; in Winchester, the tower was built in line with the 7th-century church in the 8th century, also before a major rebuilding; at Glastonbury, the church of Sts Peter and Paul was also added in the 8th century to the likely 7th-century *vetusta ecclesia*, also followed by a major rebuilding; at Canterbury, the likely 7th-century foundation was added to in the 8th century before being rebuilt in the 9th century; finally, at Worcester, while the age of St Alban's and St Margaret's is unknown, the church of St Peter was in existence in the late 7th century, with St Mary's being added in the 10th century, both subsequently replaced by one cathedral church. Thus, following Rodwell's argument, each of the four sites at which alignment appeared at a later stage

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[245] Baker 1980, p. 34; Basset 1989, pp. 225-256.
[246] Baker *et al* 1992, p. 72, citing the chronicle translated by Macray 1863.
[247] Baker et al 1992; on arrangements and dates of the churches, see also Bassett 1989, pp. 232-245.
[248] Rodwell 1984, p. 17.

include a 7th-century original foundation; at each, alignments existed for a limited period of time until the rebuilding of the whole complex into one church.

Post-700 sites

A topographical approach, similar to Rodwell's but on a smaller scale, has been taken by Stephen Bassett at Winchcombe, where the proposal for two aligned churches has been made largely on the evidence of the orientation of a road and the records of multiple churches in this area. Bassett's interpretation of this site is hypothetical but definitely worth considering.

Winchcombe

Mercia
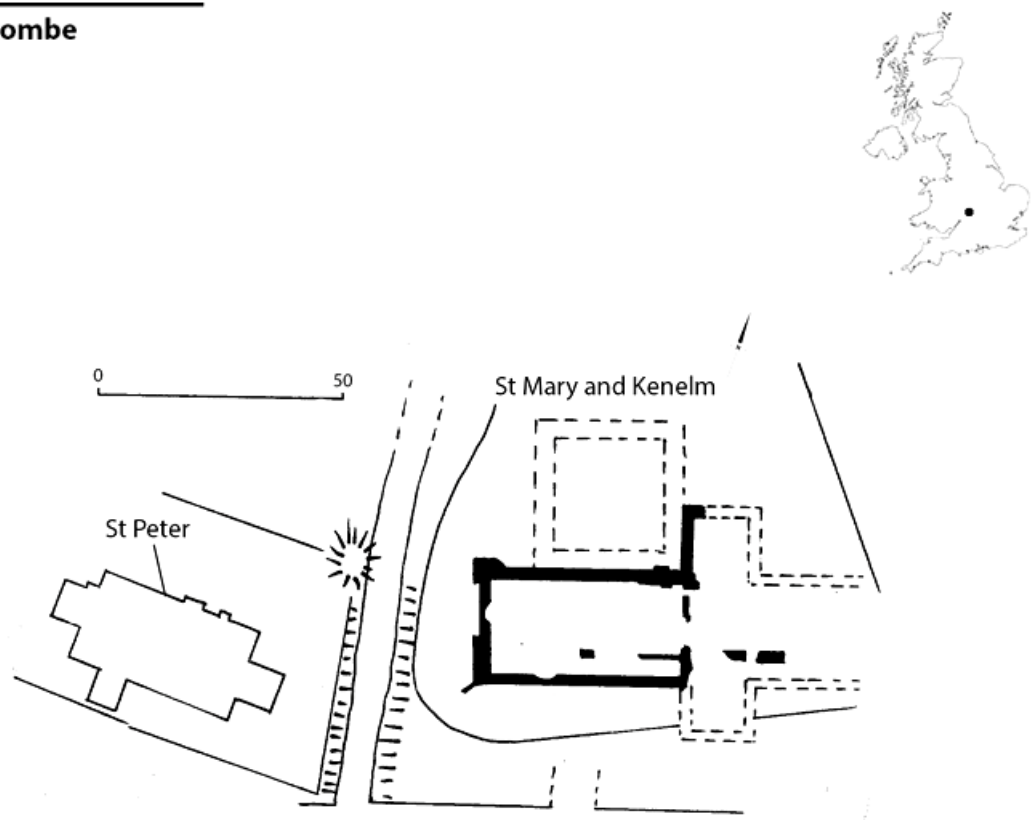
Fig. 3.20. Plan of churches at Winchcombe, after Bassett 1985 (fig. 2, p. 86).

Winchcombe in Gloucestershire was recorded as a royal Mercian centre, and the earliest written evidence of the abbey church dates to the time of a charter of King Coenwulf of Mercia (between 796 and 821).[249]

The church, it has been argued, could have existed even earlier, constructed in the reign of Offa.[250] By the early 9th c, the church at Winchcombe definitely had royal burials associated with it – at least those of Coenwulf and his son Cynhelm, whose veneration soon grew into a cult, like those formed around a royal burial at Repton.[251] The excavated remains of the abbey church seem to mirror the alignment of the existing High Street to the south of the church.[252] The parish church of St Peter, immediately west of the abbey church, was there at least as early as the mid-11th century. The presently standing 15th-century church is aligned on a later road, which originally would have been a straight continuation of the High Street (fig. 3.20). This has led Stephen Bassett to suggest that the earlier church could have been aligned on the original line of this road, which would mean that the original church of St Peter would have been axially aligned with the abbey church of St Mary and Kenelm. Bassett proposed that the church of St Peter either had an early Anglo-Saxon foundation date or was founded by Oswald in the second half of the 10th century.[253]

In addition to these two churches, there is a 16th-century record of a chapel of St Pancras associated with St Peter's. Bassett argues that this chapel was located to the east of St Peter's – between St Peter's and the abbey church on the same axis – and could have been the original burial place of Cynhelm.[254] Another possible location of this chapel is indicated by a small mound in the

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[249] The charter is not complete but the text that is preserved makes it possible to reconstruct the building it refers to as a church. – Bassett 1985, p. 82.

[250] Levison 1946, pp. 25, 29-31.

[251] Bassett 1985, p. 85; see also *Passio of Cynhelm* in Hamilton 1870, p. 294.

[252] Bassett 1985, p. 86.

[253] Ibid., pp. 87-89.

[254] Ibid., pp. 89-90.

churchyard, which, however, would be off the axis of the abbey and St Peter's church, if those two were aligned.[255]

Overall, alignment at Winchcombe is hypothetical, but perhaps no more hypothetical than that at Lindisfarne and Monkwearmouth. Bassett's argument makes it worth considering and puts Winchcombe in a comparable context with other sites with alignment, especially in the light of its royal patronage and royal saints' cult, which pertain to other sites discussed in this chapter.

By contrast, the following site – Whithorn, in the kingdom of Northumbria, founded in 731 – is excavated and well recorded. While we do rely on the excavator's interpretation, the physical evidence at this site constitutes a very solid case of axial alignment. The Anglo-Saxon incarnation of the monastery at Whithorn was constructed in one campaign, launched for a very specific cause, and was never rebuilt on a major scale.

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[255] Bassett 1985, p. 91.

Fig. 3.21. Plan of post-731 stage of development at Whithorn, after Hill 1997. (fig. 2.9, p. 41)
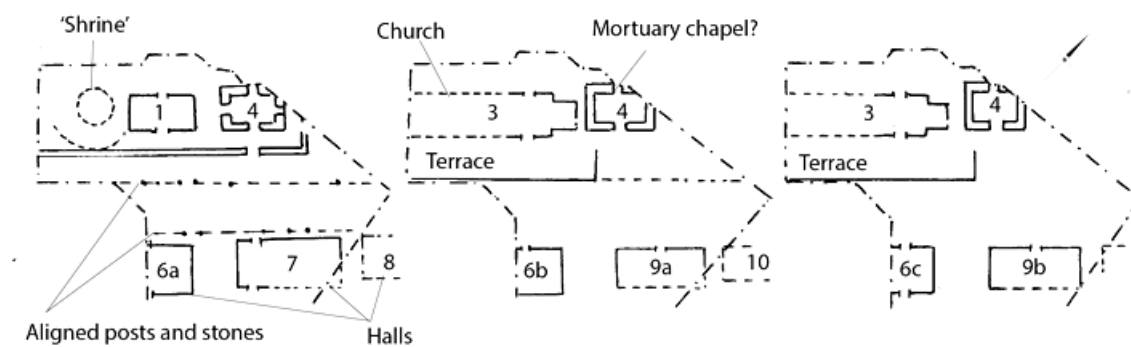
Fig. 3.22. Stages of development of the area of the oratories/church and halls, after Hill 1997. (fig. 4.1., p. 135)
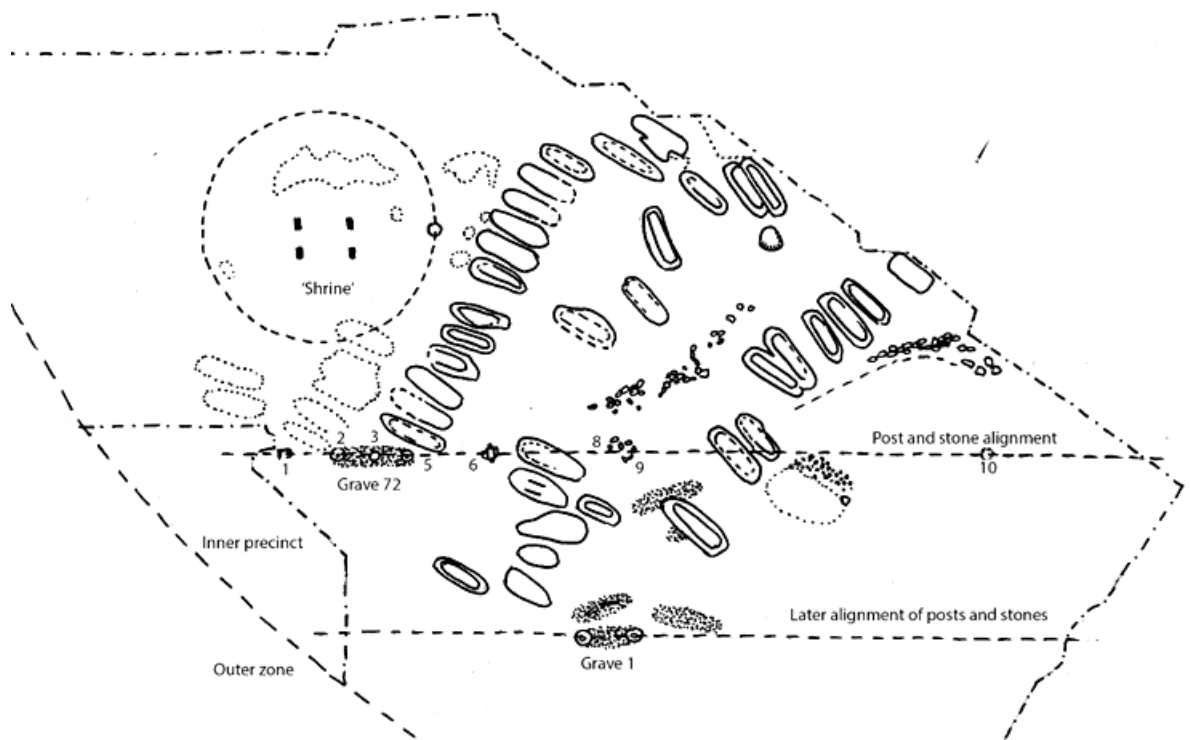
Fig. 3.23. Plan of aligned posts and stones, after Hill 1997. (fig. 3.31, p. 110)

Whithorn is a complex site displaying various instances of alignment. Meticulous excavation has recovered the alignment of small features, as well as buildings, which seem more than purely functional. Thanks to Hill's research, the detailed information we have on the phases of development of this site demonstrates that alignment was associated with one specific period and is not found earlier or later. This settlement provides plenty of tangible evidence for alignment and merits a detailed consideration. The discussion starts in the 5th century, before alignment first appeared.

The monastery at Whithorn was probably established in the late 5th- early 6th century. There is no evidence of previous Roman occupation. The first phase of the development of the establishment – from ca 550 to ca 730 – was characterised by a double annular layout, with an inner, arguably consecrated, precinct and an outer, residential, zone. The settlement was laid out generally following Irish practice. A stone church together with the tomb of the founder (St

Nynia) located to its west and on the same axis were in existence at the beginning of the 6th century.[256] Irish monastic sites display a consistent pattern of spatial arrangement of consecrated grounds, with the church and the saint's tomb located to the east of a large open area (platea or plateola), reserved for the presentation of gifts or public address. Whithorn follows this principle and, additionally, includes a cemetery to the south of the open area.[257] The outstanding features of the inner precinct were the developing graveyard and three successive 'shrines'.[258] All these shrines were of circular design with an inner element and an outer boundary and were closely related to the graveyard next to them. All the shrines appear to be of a particular type, possibly deriving from Continental prototypes.[259]

During the first period of development, a curious case of alignment of small features occurs on the site of the cemetery. This alignment probably originated in phase I/4 – around ca 700 – and not earlier and is unlikely to have been accidental or functional. Instead, it may have been designed to mark a symbolic boundary between the shrines and graveyard to the north and the unused ground to the south.[260] The line, from west to east, comprises an unexcavated socket, four sockets associated with Grave 72, which also lies on this axis, a rectangular stone slab, a sub-rectilinear cavity of an unestablished nature cutting into a later grave, two more sockets perhaps for timbers, and finally a socket containing a slim stone and marking the east boundary of an earlier shrine (fig. 3.23). It is important to note that this alignment survived the radical

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[256] Hill 1997, pp. 30, 38-39.

[257] Ibid., pp. 34, 35; Herity 1984.

[258] Hill 1997, pp. 33-34.

[259] There are no close parallels to this site, although Arfryn, Bodedern, Anglesey (see White 1972) and Catstane, Midlothian (see Cowie 1978; Rutherford and Ritchie 1974) have some similar features. These sites all display Continental influence – Hill 1997, p. 34. The type of shrine could, however, be local – see Thomas 1971, pp. 58-67.

[260] Hill 1997, p. 112.

transformation of the site in ca 730 and was joined by a parallel row of aligned post-holes in the following period.[261]

This period coincided with the beginning of Northumbrian domination.[262] Bede records that a Northumbrian bishopric was established at Whithorn by 731, attesting to Northumbrian expansion into Galloway and to the political aspirations of the Northumbrian church.[263] Archaeological evidence suggests that the Northumbrians may have gained control over Whithorn towards the end of the 7th century.[264] A radical modification and reconstruction of the minster only began in ca 730 and continued until the 760s or 770s.[265] Among other alterations, a sequence of three aligned buildings – two timber oratories and a stone-founded burial enclosure at the north-east end of the range – were built over the site of the shrines and the cemetery and were enclosed by a low stone wall. The axes of the oratories followed the socket-line of an earlier shrine. A range of aligned stones and posts, described above, was preserved during the earliest stage of development and was superseded by a terrace, which had its south edge lying on the same axis, in the later 8th century.[266] To the south of this terrace, there was a range of axially-aligned timber buildings with load-bearing walls.[267] A row of large aligned posts lay immediately to the north of the halls and may have served as structural braces supporting halls 6 and 7 (fig. 3.22) and among them were the two posts at the head and foot of the earlier grave 1 positioned on the same

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[261] Hill 1997, pp. 110, 112, figs. 3.30, 3.31.

[262] Ibid., p. 18.

[263] HE v.23.

[264] Hill 1997, pp. 17, 37. Architecturally, this was expressed in a new type of typically Northumbrian building with opposed timber-framed doorways, introduced at Whithorn in the late 7th or early 8th century. Considering the distribution of roundhouses, which prevailed in Ireland at this time, this points to the arrival of Anglian monks or clerics sometime before the establishment of the bishopric in ca 730 and a continuing Northumbrian cultural influence. - Hill 1997, pp. 37, 44, 138-9, fig. 4.3; James, Marshall and Millett 1984.

[265] Hill 1997, pp. 40, 134.

[266] Ibid., p. 103, figs. 3.29, 4.1, 4.5.

[267] Evidence is available from halls 6a and 7, which belong to the first phase, and this feature is important for further discussion. – Hill 1997, p. 176.

alignment.[268] The unoccupied area between the enclosure and the halls produced a large number of 8th- and 9th-century coins, suggesting wealthy occupants or visitors and therefore the high status of this part of minster. The halls have been interpreted as a range of guest quarters for pilgrims.[269] Despite their evidently Northumbrian palatial style, John Blair has emphasised their distinctness from royal timber halls - as the buildings at Whithorn are smaller and more regularly arranged.[270] Either way, it is telling that this evident instance of alignment occurs in an area of high-status residence. It is also important to note that the most obvious and strongly expressed instance of alignment occurred at the first stage of Northumbrian occupation.

Around 800, the two oratories were united into a timber church, while the stone burial enclosure was rebuilt into a clay-walled burial chapel, facing the inner precinct and probably acting as a gateway into it. The two retained the same axial alignment. The ranges of halls and small buildings were rebuilt later in the 8th century and seem to have fallen out of use in the middle of the 9th century.[271]

The new church, although Northumbrian in type (with two opposed doorways), was built of timber, whereas in this period, Northumbrian churches were already largely built of stone.[272] The church was a long rectangular building, with a rectangular east end, and a screen separating the chancel from the nave. Notably, the church also respected the position of the earlier shrine on this site

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[268] Hill 1997, pp. 135, 105-106, 174-176, fig. 3.29. Grave 1 belongs to phase 1.5 cemetery – sometime after ca 700 – and is a coffined burial with two large post-holes at either end of it, which were associated with a structure, which may have been a graveyard monument. Grave 72, belonging to a slightly earlier phase, also features four posts cut into it, perhaps serving as grave and boundary markers. The eastern post seems to have remained in place until the mid-8th century. Interestingly, considering the generally accurate east-west alignment of graves on the site, these two were oriented differently.

[269] Hill 1997, pp. 41-42, 46.

[270] Blair 1992, p. 262; James, Marshall and Millett 1984.

[271] Hill 1997, pp. 42-43.

[272] On the ubiquitous character of building and re-building of Northumbrian churches in stone from the 7th century onwards, see Turner and Fowler 2016, pp. 252-253.

(see fig. 3.22), suggesting awareness of the earlier ritual focus.[273] The altar seems to have been located at the east end of the nave and would have been near the focal monument in the preceding eastern oratory.[274] The church was flanked by rows of vertical posts, which are not found elsewhere but have been interpreted as arcades supporting extended rafters.[275]

The burial chapel also seems to have embraced contrasting building traditions: while its clay-walled construction was common in humble vernacular buildings in Galloway, it also featured windows of coloured glass and it contained five burials, possibly of high status. The chapel is likely to have served as a temporary mortuary for lay members of the community.[276] John Blair described the chapel as a mausoleum, likening the arrangement of the church and the chapel to Repton, Wells, Glastonbury and St Oswald's at Gloucester. Hill, however, maintains that the Whithorn chapel had a more dynamic function – serving as a mortuary and a gateway - and belongs to a different type of building, especially in the light of its unusual construction.[277]

Overall, Whithorn shows a wealth of archaeological evidence for a special interest in alignment. The alignment of the main church with the tomb of St Nynia can probably be categorised as a case of a completely different nature, a reflection of an Irish custom. However, the first-period alignment of stones, graves and timbers marking the boundary of the cemetery and perhaps consecrated land containing shrines, the Northumbrian architectural alignment of oratories, followed by the church and the chapel, and the series of halls, is

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[273] Hill 1997, pp. 44-45, 148.

[274] Ibid., pp. 45, 103. The position of the altar is similar to that in other early English churches. – see Parsons 1986, pp. 105-7. The focal stone seems to have been included in the screen separating the nave and the chancel. The altar was subsequently moved further east, closer to the stone. The chancel was extended at the same time, possibly due to constructive problems associated with earlier structures on the site. – Hill 1997, pp. 148, 153.

[275] Hill 1997, pp. 45, 149, fig. 4.12.

[276] For reasoning – see Hill 1997, pp. 45, 169; for the Irish rules of burying in consecrated grounds, see Hill 1997, pp. 33-34; O'Brien 1992, p. 135.

[277] Blair 1992, pp. 262, 252-3; Hill 1997, p. 45.

particularly strong. Although occupation of the site continued after a major fire in the middle of 9th century, this alignment was never restored and therefore would seem to be confined to a specific period between ca 730 and ca 845 and is the first instance of ecclesiastical alignment that does not involve a 7th-century foundation.[278]

Late Anglo-Saxon sites

Winchcombe and Whithorn occupy a somewhat liminal position in the context of chronology, in between the group of sites that originated in the 7th century and a group of sites dating to the 10th century and later, starting with the new monastery in Gloucester in Mercia.

Gloucester/St Oswald's

Mercia
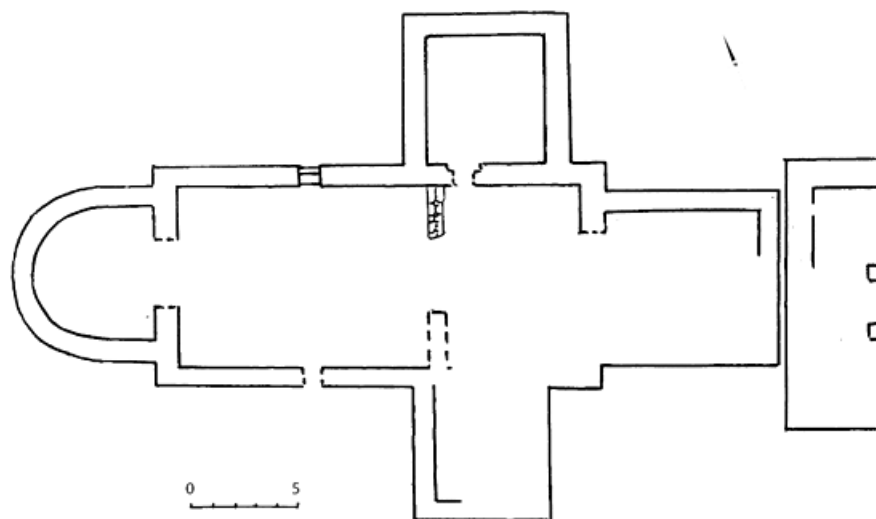
Fig. 3.24. Plan of St Oswald's minster church and part of crypt to the east at Gloucester, after Heighway and Bryant 1999 (fig. 2.28, p. 72).

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[278] Hill 1997, p. 48.

St Oswald's minster was founded by Queen Aethelflaed, daughter of King Alfred, and Alderman Aethelred of Mercia – a strong royal connection.[279] The original dedication of the minster was to St Peter, despite the existence of a minster with an identical dedication right next door, and is likely to have gained an additional association with St Oswald with the translation of the saint's relics to the New Minster in 909.[280] The relics would have made the church a locus of pilgrimage.

The minster was founded on a site of Roman occupation. This area was outside the fortress and may have been a tilery up until the end of the 3rd century, when it started to be used for burial.[281] In Anglo-Saxon times, the land on which the church was built probably belonged to the royal family and already featured four carved stone crosses, which seem to have pre-dated the minster. However, none of the crosses was found *in situ* – two of them were incorporated in the foundations. Three of the crosses are stylistically similar to 8th-century Northumbrian crosses, and one belongs to a west Mercian type. Bryant reckons that the group of crosses would have stood together and were associated with high status; however, there does not seem to be any clear evidence for this.[282] Still, the presence of relics and these monuments, however they were situated, and the royal connections all point to the high standing of Gloucester in Anglo-Saxon Mercia.[283]

The minster church itself, founded ca 900, was a rectangular building with porticus in the east, north and south and a western apse. The church was built

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[279] William of Malmesbury *De Gestis Pontificum*, 293, ed. Hamilton 1870, cited in Hare 1999, p. 34.
[280] Michael Hare discusses parallels, including the same dedication of the Old and New Minsters at Winchester and the two churches dedicated to St Peter at Worcester by 969, and the confusion caused by historical sources and concludes that although two neighbouring dedications to St Peter are unusual they are nevertheless very likely. – Hare 1999, pp. 34-36.
[281] Heighway and Bryant 1999, pp. 51-53; see also Heighway and Parker 1982.
[282] Bryant 1999, pp. 154-155.
[283] Heighway 1984, pp. 36, 45.

partly of Roman stone, and the presence of a western apse possibly indicates Continental influence. The apse is a fairly puzzling arrangement: it was added after the foundations were finished but before the walls were erected, apparently an afterthought quickly added to the original plan. The absence of burials gravitating towards the apse might indicate that the apse housed an altar in a bi-polar church rather than the deposited relics of St Oswald.[284]

In the subsequent period, possibly in the early 10th century, a wall was added, running north-south across the church, close to its centre. The excavators have proposed that this could have been designed to support a timber tower.[285] More importantly for this study, however, Building A was constructed immediately to the east of the church. This building was set in an exact orthogonal relationship to the east wall but slightly shifted off-axis (fig. 3.24). It had a sunken floor and could have had four internal supports. The excavators identified Building A as a crypt, similar to that at Repton. There is no evidence of access to the interior, and only the possibility of a ground-floor door from the east has been eliminated. It is likely to have had an upper floor, and entrances leading directly to an upper level are equally possible. The proposed date of the construction of this crypt is consistent with the translation of St Oswald's relics in 909 and the burial of Aethelred in 911 and of Aethelflaed in 918. Burial under the floor-level seems unlikely as this was prone to flooding and no graves were discovered.[286] This means that if there were burials in the crypt, they would have been above ground, potentially like those at Hexham.[287]

Possibly in the mid-11th century, the western apse and the central tower were demolished and the west wall of the church, along with the corners of the crypt, was buttressed in a fashion similar to that of St John the Baptist at

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[284] Heighway and Bryant 1999, pp. 54-57.

[285] Ibid., pp. 62-63, fig. 2.19. On the 10th-century church, see also Heighway and Bryant 1986.

[286] Heighway and Bryant 1999, pp. 62-67.

[287] See above, pp. 221-115.

Glastonbury. However, Heighway and Bryant have suggested that, unlike at Glastonbury, this was done here for structural reasons.[288]

The Anglo-Saxon burial-ground is contemporary with the 10th-century church and extends north-west, north-east and south of the church. No early burials are recorded inside the church – the earliest burials within the building date to the 12-13th centuries. There is only one burial, B464, that underlies the north porticus and pre-dates the church. This is dated to 680-990 AD.[289] This timespan belongs to the period when burial grounds became associated with churches (although the church did not impose any restrictions on burials until the 10th century).[290] Could this mean that the 10th-century church was preceded by an earlier one?

This church was contemporary in its foundation with and also similar in status and purpose to the New Minster in Winchester, including their shared function as royal mausolea.[291] The church of St Oswald has been identified as a free royal chapel, designed to surpass in prestige the Old Minster dedicated to St Peter, its status resting on its possession of precious relics and royal patronage.[292]

However, despite owning the relics of one of the most prominent Anglo-Saxon saints, the minster saw an unusually early decline, by the early 11th century. The reason for this probably was a shift in the character of royal patronage and the presence of rival cults, especially since the relics of St Oswald were divided very early on and St Oswald's only owned a small fraction, the authenticity of

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[288] Heighway and Bryant 1999, pp. 69-76.

[289] Ibid., pp. 194-196, 202.

[290] Zadora-Rio 2003. Gittos also remarks that churchyard burial gradually developed from 7th century onwards, although other locations continued to be used too. – Gittos 2013, pp. 51-52. See also Blair 2005, pp. 60-65 on burials *ad sanctos.*

[291] Biddle 1976, p. 314; Barlow, Biddle, von Feilitzen and Keene 1976, pp. 313-318; Hare 1999, p. 41.

[292] Heighway 1984, p. 46; this curiously parallels Saint-Denis, whose non-central location, royal patronage and martyrial status defined its outstanding position in Merovingian and, particularly prominently, Carolingian France. – see Emerick 2011, pp. 134-135. On relics in Anglo-Saxon England, see Rollason 1989; Thomas 1971, ch. 5; Thacker 2002a and 2002b.

which could well have been disputed.[293] William of Malmesbury associates the decline with Danish activity in the area.[294]

Like Gloucester, the site at Wells in Wessex is associated with Roman occupation although, like Gloucester, it did not develop until the late Anglo-Saxon period, with the exception of a mortuary and a cemetery that were in existence earlier. This site is also not a straightforward one.

Wells

Wessex
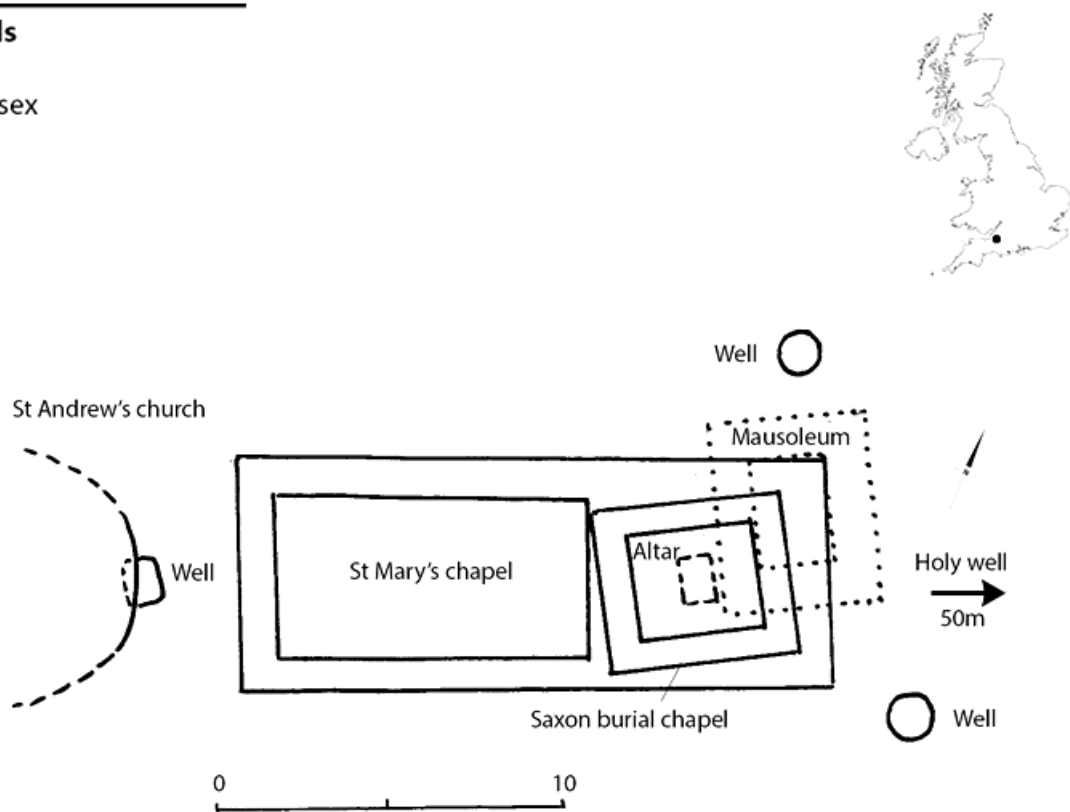
Fig. 3.25. Plan of Anglo-Saxon St Mary's chapel at Wells, after Rodwell 1984 (fig. 6, p. 13).

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[293] Hare 1999, p. 38.

[294] William of Malmesbury *De Gestis Pontificum*, 293, ed. Hamilton 1870, cited in Hare 1999, p. 38.
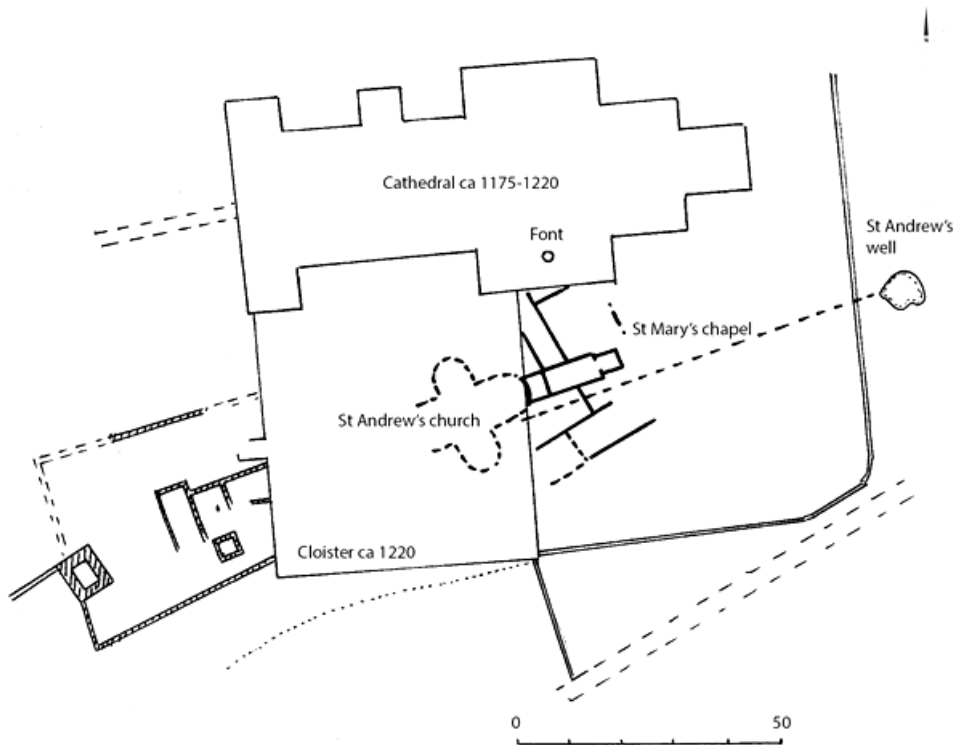
Fig. 3.26. Plan of Anglo-Norman site of Wells cathedral, after Rodwell 2001 (fig. 107, p. 117).
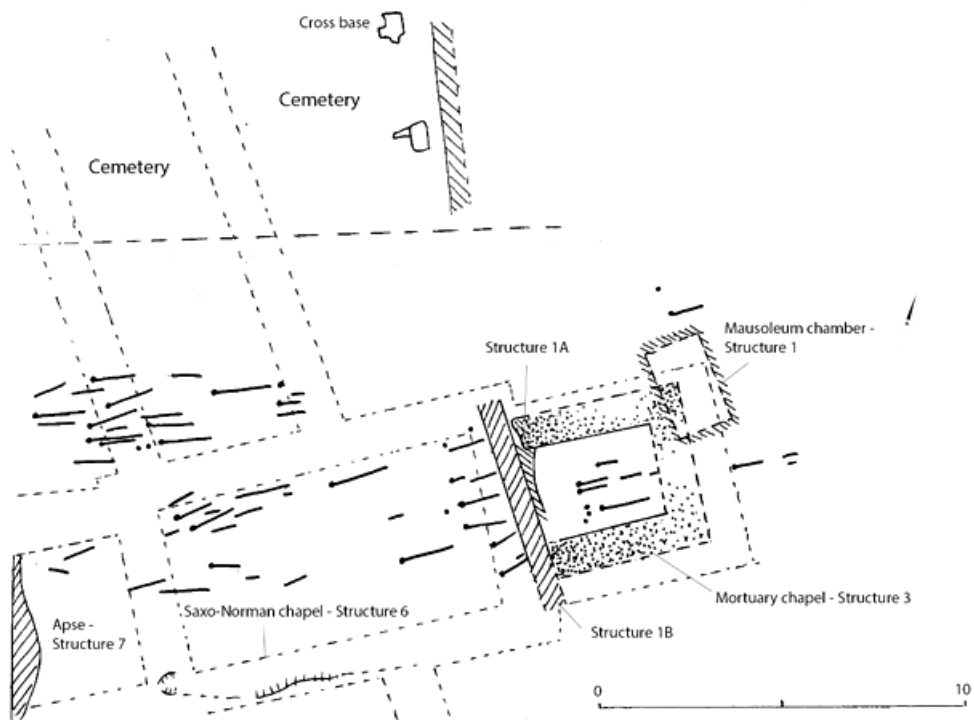
Fig. 3.27. Plan of Anglo-Saxon and earlier features on the site of Wells cathedral, after Rodwell 2001 (fig. 42, p. 56, vol.1).

The archaeological evidence for Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical buildings in the vicinity of the cathedral at Wells is difficult to interpret due to the complexity of the data and to later disturbances of the site.[295] Alignment at Wells seems to have developed over time and the definite alignment of St Andrew's church and St Mary's chapel can only be determined in the 10th-13th centuries. There was, however, an earlier mortuary chapel (Fig. 3.27, Structure 3) on the site of St Mary's, which in turn had superseded a probable Roman mausoleum. The mausoleum dated to the 4th-5th centuries, and was demolished in the middle Saxon period; the mortuary chapel was built in the 8th century or later, and was replaced by St Mary's chapel in the Saxo-Norman period.[296] There is a burial site to the north, evidently associated with Structure 3, which presumably served as the southern boundary of the burial site.[297] There are three burials on axis inside the mortuary chapel, of two adults and a child. Two more burials – an adult male in a coffin and an infant – flank the axis and are accompanied by three skulls buried separately immediately to the west of the coffin (fig. 3.27). These burials are clearly separate from the rest of the cemetery. This indicates their particular importance for the local community and implies that the mortuary chapel was built specifically to enshrine them.

Further to the south-west and on the same axis as the mortuary chapel and the later chapel of St Mary, excavations have revealed an apsed structure, which, sadly, was impossible to examine fully, but which nevertheless may be identified as the minster church of St Andrew (fig. 3.25). The excavator has dated the church to the late Anglo-Saxon period and observed that the apse was centred on an earlier well-shaft lying to the east of the group of buildings.[298] This

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[295] Rodwell 2001, p. 55.

[296] Ibid., pp. 57, 74, 82, 85, 87.

[297] Ibid., p. 60.

[298] Ibid., pp. 73-75.

well, aligned with the church, was dedicated to St Andrew and could have been used for baptisms (fig 3.26).[299]

It seems that at Wells the linear composition started to form in the late Anglo-Saxon period, with the construction of the church of St Andrew, the rebuilt mausoleum and the 'holy' well to the east of the architectural complex. At a later stage, the church of St Andrew and the new chapel of St Mary became physically conjoined.

The arrangement of St Andrew's church and St Mary's chapel accords with John Blair's proposal of the dedication pattern of middle Saxon church groups, which often included a church dedicated to the Virgin and another dedicated to an Apostle.[300] At Wells, however, this would have occurred much later than elsewhere.

Another Saxo-Norman site, although with a significant early feature nearby, is Prittlewell in Essex.

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[299] On baptism in Anglo-Saxon England, see Foot 1992, p. 172; Gneuss 1985, pp. 91-141; on architectural provision for baptism, see also Morris 1991; Thacker 1992, p. 147.

[300] On dedication patterns in Anglo-Saxon church groups, see Blair 1992, pp. 253-255, 257; Blair 2005, p. 201.

Prittlewell

Essex

Anglo-Saxon doorway

0   15

▦ 10th or early 11th century

▨ late 11th century
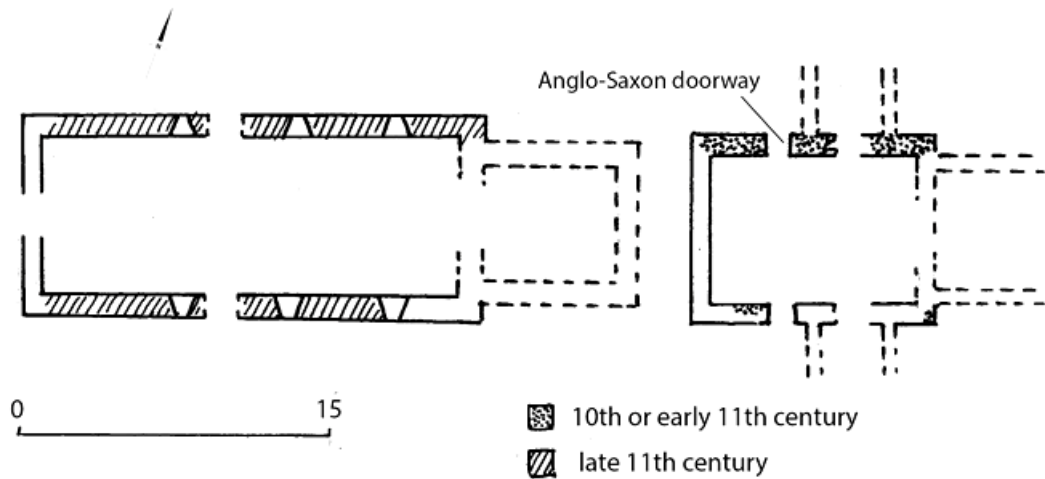
Fig. 3.28. Conjectural plan of the Saxon-phase buildings at Prittlewell, after Secker 2016 (fig. 14, p. 131).

The site is located in south-east Essex, on the neck of the peninsula between the Thames and Roach estuaries. It has been suggested that Prittlewell, along with Southchurch and Great Wakering located nearby, is an early minster site. Daniel Secker has recently largely reviewed this site to reconsider the dating of the remaining fabric. By the 12th century at the latest, Prittlewell was a wealthy mother church with two chapels in Eastwood and Sutton. There is documentary evidence that Prittlewell might have been a part of Shopland which belonged to a royal estate in the late Saxon period, again, indicating royal connections, like the sites discussed above.[301]

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[301] Secker 2016, pp. 115-118; for documentary evidence see Sawyer 1968, nos. 1793, 1522; Rippon 2011, p. 20.

At the core of the modern-day town are West Street/East Street running north-east – south-west and forming a perpendicular junction with North Street. It is likely that the former two are of Late Saxon origin, whereas North Street dates to the 13th century. The present largely 15th-century church of St Mary is located at a junction of North Street and West Street and is in alignment with West/East Street. The church includes Anglo-Saxon fabric in the north wall of the chancel and a substantial amount of early Romanesque masonry in the nave. In addition to the visible fabric, excavations in 1952 revealed the north-east and south-east corners of the same Saxon structure underneath the chancel. Excavations in 1954 established matching foundations on the south side. Having reviewed this evidence and analysed the fabric, Daniel Secker has argued that instead of being a building with remains of an Anglo-Saxon fabric in the chancel, St Mary's church in fact incorporates two separate axially aligned buildings, which were unified in the 14th century (fig. 3.28).

He has suggested that the footprint of the present chancel follows the foundations of an earlier separate Anglo-Saxon building, which formed the nave of a church with dimensions of 9.85x6.80m.[302] The dating of the Anglo-Saxon masonry incorporated in the later wall is debated and is largely based on the character of the visible doorway in the northern wall of the chancel. While Philip Johnson and the Taylors have proposed a 7th-century date, Daniel Secker argues that on the basis of comparison with doorways in similar positions at Bishopstone and St Oswald's, Gloucester, the Prittlewell door is likely to be of a later date: late 10th-early 11th centuries.[303] The nave has never been excavated, although enough fabric is extant to identify an early Romanesque church which preceded the present church and had dimensions of 21.5x9.25m.[304]

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[302] Secker 2016, p. 120-26.

[303] Gowing 1958, p. 12; Taylor and Taylor 1965, ii, pp. 499-500; Secker 2016, pp. 126-7.

[304] Secker 2016, pp. 127-130.

Secker also points out that, although the currently visible fabric of the western church post-dates the eastern building, it occupies the central position within the churchyard, perhaps suggesting that the eastern structure was an afterthought. This could imply the possibility of an earlier foundation underneath the Norman church. By analogy with complexes at Bradford-on-Avon, Wells and Bishopstone, where the smaller structure in the group possibly had mortuary functions, Secker also suggests a funerary function for the eastern building.[305]

The status of the churches remains problematic as Prittlewell is not recorded as an early minster and is first mentioned only in Domesday Book. At the same time, it is possible that Prittlewell could have been founded in the 10th century to replace Wakering – the only certain pre-Viking minster between the estuaries of the Thames and the Roach. It is certain that Wakering was in decline and possible that it had even ceased to exist by this date, and this could explain the foundation of Prittlewell at this time, at a more central location.[306] As we have seen at other high-status complexes, both secular and ecclesiastical, including Repton, Lyminge, Yeavering and Gloucester, once a site is in decline it tends to be replaced by another.

The lack of historical evidence and of archaeological investigation poses further problems in connecting the site of the churches with the nearby 7th-century burial of the 'Prittlewell Prince'.[307] Although there is no evident spatial connection, the situation of the churches and the burial within a little over 500m of each other invites investigation and could also inform further discussion of the date of the foundation of an original church at Prittlewell. Furthermore, we are likely be missing an early royal vill in the kingdom of Essex as well: as chapter 1 has demonstrated, the only high-status site in Essex – Wicken Bonhunt – is not

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[305] Secker 2016, pp. 131-134; for Bradford-on-Avon, see Haslam 1984, Hinton 2009, Blair 2010, Rodwell 2001; for Bishopstone, see Blair 2010; for Wells, see above.

[306] Secker 2016, pp. 132-4; for historical context of Wakering, see Blair 2005, p. 353, no 293; Dale *et al* 2010, p. 227; RCHME 1923, pp. 69-61.

[307] See Hirst 2004.

recorded until the late Saxon period, while the presence of a princely burial suggests that there must have been high-status residences in Essex in the 7th century.

The final site to be considered in full in this chapter is known from evidence dating largely from the late Anglo-Saxon and post-Norman periods that has been interpreted by John Blair.[308]

Bampton

Mercia
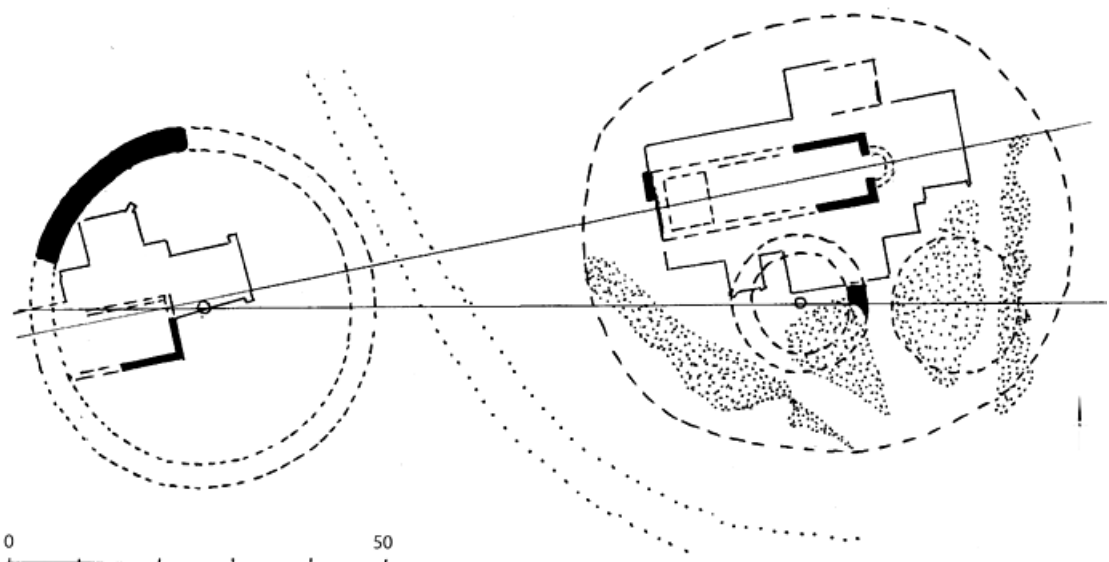
Fig. 3.29. Plan of churches and barrows at Bampton, after Blair 1998 (top fig., p. 129).

A religious community in Bampton, on the upper Thames in west Oxfordshire, in the territory of Mercia, is first recorded in the 950s. By the 1050s,

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[308] Blair 1998.

the church and its land belonged to Exeter cathedral.[309] John Blair dates the core of the standing church of St Mary to the late Saxon or early Norman period. The fabric of the Deanery, 60m to the west of the church and roughly on the same alignment, contains 12th-century masonry. This building seems to have been a two-storey chapel of a kind normally associated with bishops' palaces in the Norman period and therefore implying high-status connections.[310] This is supported by the evidence of a gift of land by King Eadwig to the minster-priests of Bampton in ca 955.[311]

Excavation trenches to the north of the Deanery and to the south of the church showed evidence of two Bronze Age ring-ditches surrounding possible barrows. It appears that the Norman chapel stands entirely within the larger westernmost ring-ditch. Another, smaller, barrow is located to the south of the church. To the east of it is another mound, still visible in the landscape (fig. 3.29). A feature further west has not been excavated but its character suggests the possibility of a third barrow, exactly in line with the first two. In contrast with this evidence of Iron Age activity, there does not seem to be a Roman structure directly on the site of the church and chapel, although Bampton is surrounded by Roman remains.[312] This is also in contrast with other sites discussed in this chapter, where the presence of Roman remains was common whereas prehistoric evidence is virtually non-existent.

Furthermore, Anglo-Saxon burials, the earliest dating to 700-850AD, were discovered in the churchyard. Some of the burials cut into the ring-ditch and the barrow to the south of the church, suggesting both the ditch and the mound were still visible as earthworks in the Anglo-Saxon period.[313]

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[309] Blair 1998, p. 124.
[310] See Blair 1987 on Bishop's palace and chapel in Hereford.
[311] Blair 2005, p. 349.
[312] Blair 1998, p.128.
[313] Ibid.

This site seems to demonstrate a 'double' case of alignment: the precisely east-west orientated sequence of three barrows and the south-west – north-east line created by the church and the possible chapel. The two lines seem to intersect roughly in the centre of the larger barrow. The reconstruction is hypothetical; the presence of the third barrow in particular is uncertain. Nevertheless, the relationship between two alignments is unique and deserves further consideration.

Outcomes for further exploration

As in the case of the secular settlements, most of the sites presented here provide only glimpses of their original layouts and sometimes even less than that. At the same time, there are good reasons to at least suggest the presence of alignment and, as with secular cases, to conclude that planning at these sites was a result of decisions made with deliberation and authority. In fact, there is even more evidence in ecclesiastical contexts than in secular ones that these foundations had elite and often royal patrons likely overseeing their planning, again suggesting that the link between status and alignment is not coincidental.

Map 3.1. Schematic map of distribution of ecclesiastical sites with alignment.

As for the secular case-studies, the distribution of sites is broad and encompasses the kingdoms of Mercia, Wessex, Kent, Essex and Northumbria at different periods of time. Interestingly, the earliest sites appear in Northumbria and Kent with the later ones concentrated in the western part of Britain. This trend follows that set by the secular sites and perhaps can also be mapped onto the peaks of power in different parts of England, where Northumbria and Kent flourished in the 7th century.

Following the model of chapter 1, the sites have been presented in chronological order. This reveals that the bulk of evidence dates to the 7th and to a lesser extent the 8th century. This is followed by a gap in the 9th century before alignment can be again detected in the late Anglo-Saxon – early Norman period.

The analysis of the temporal distribution of sites is less straightforward than for the secular sites: the majority originate in the 7th century, but at some, axial alignment occurs in a subsequent period (mostly in the 8th century), which blurs the lines between the 7th- and 8th-century foundations; in the case of secular architecture, these were clearly separated. Further, the added structures may stand on older foundations, thus concealing earlier alignment. This is not something we can know in the absence of archaeological research. Either way, statistically, out of 19 aligned church groups, four date to the late Saxon period and two to the 8th century, whereas 8 (42%) date to the 7th century and another 5 (26%) are on sites that originated in the 7th century.
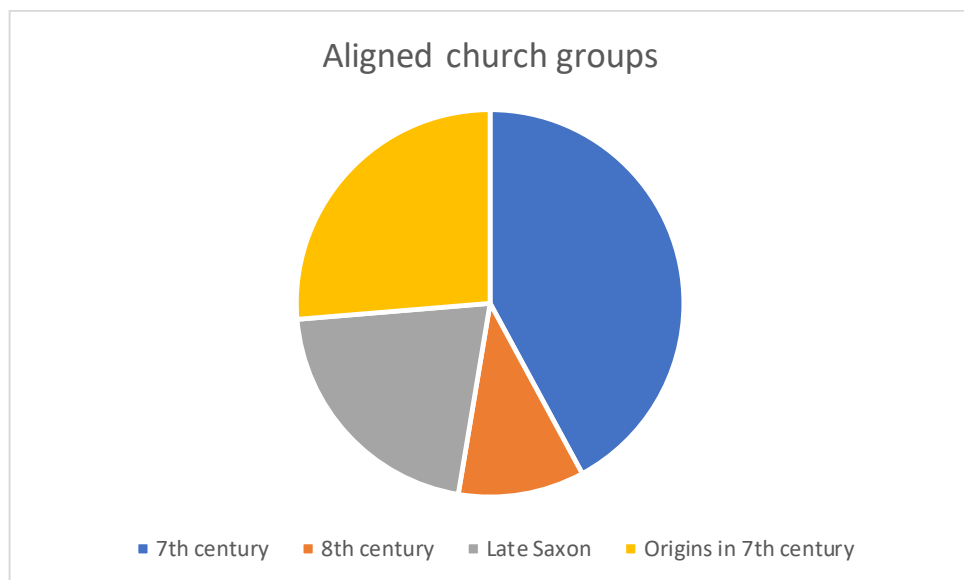
Graph 3.1. Chronological distribution of aligned church groups in Anglo-Saxon England.

It has been observed above that the geographical distribution of the sites with alignment is broad. Regional influences on architectural expressions, as well

as a variety of different Christian traditions, including the strong Continental context of Kent, deliberately Romanising processes in Northumbria, and a probable Celtic tradition in the Hwicce region, cannot be discounted. At the same time, it is clear that axial alignment cuts across these various influences. It is significant that the largest proportion of these sites emerged in the 7th century, whether in Kent, Northumbria or Wessex. What made the 7th century the common denominator?

It was in the 7th century that the Church was being established in the Anglo-Saxon territories, was still searching for architectural expression and was particularly open to influences. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, defining Anglo-Saxon Christianity is not an easy task due to its manifold origins, including Celtic, Frankish, Roman (Papal) elements and even the remnants of Christianity from the period of Roman rule. At the same time, there are unifying trends. Episcopal Sees were established across the kingdoms as part of a network of one Anglo-Saxon church. Huw Pryce has argued that Romano-British Christianity was a direct predecessor of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, proposing a significant degree of continuity between the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods, and across the former territories of the Provincia Britannia, resulting in considerable unity between the churches in different kingdoms in the Anglo-Saxon period.[314] Foot has drawn attention to the fact that Theodore was styled *Archiepiscopus Britanniae* in 679 and that ecclesiastical governance followed the patterns of the Roman Provincia Britannia, treating Britain as a unified territory. The idea of a *gens anglorum* was also spreading long before Alfred, with the Anglo-Saxons seeing themselves as the people who lived in 'Britannia'.[315] In the light of Yorke's argument for the parallel development of kingdoms and a large degree of interaction between the Anglo-Saxon elites across the kingdoms, referred to in chapter 1, the conversion of Anglo-Saxon kings followed by

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[314] Pryce 2009, see sp. p. 145.
[315] Foot 2006, pp. 120-121.

conversion of the aristocracy can be seen very much in a political context. Christianisation can be understood as a part of the process of 'creating a common identity shared by the Anglo-Saxon elites'.[316] All of this was happening in the 7th century and is particularly striking, considering we have already seen a very similar pattern in the secular context, where a greater cultural unity between the kingdoms in the 7th century than previously thought has been identified.[317] On the basis of the evidence discussed above, it seems that the 7th century was the critical period in the establishment of architectural alignment.

One striking and very notable difference between the secular and ecclesiastical sites is their relationship to Roman structures: at secular contexts with aligned structures association with a Roman site is extremely unusual, whereas ecclesiastical sites with alignment are almost ubiquitously associated with Roman settlements, and in a few cases founded in the middle of Roman towns.[318] On a practical level, ruined Roman settlements were a source of stone, which was used in the construction of churches, but was irrelevant in the construction of timber halls. Hawkes, however, reminds us that a lot of Anglo-Saxon churches were still wooden and thus perhaps closely related to halls.[319] On an ideological level, we could be seeing the expression in secular architecture of a tension between the Roman past and the establishment of new powers, while in ecclesiastical contexts the Anglo-Saxon church and 'Romanitas' went hand in hand, especially after the Council of Whitby.

It is also interesting that while the halls display a basic uniformity of structure across different kingdoms, the shapes of churches differ depending on the region: the most notable groups perhaps being the Northumbrian, with their

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[316] Pryce 2009, p. 153; on political context of the conversion of elites, see Higham 1997, Stancliffe 1995, Tyler 2007 and Yorke 2003.

[317] On parallels in development of kingdoms, see Yorke 2008, pp. 27-28.

[318] See Thomas 1971, p. 20. Fouracre has observed that the establishment of new Sees in particular followed the network of Roman civitates. – Fouracre 2009, p. 129.

[319] Hawkes 2003, p. 71; see also Fernie 1983 and Morris 1983.

rectangular chancels and particular proportions, and the Kentish, with apses and arcades at the east end, as well as other characteristic features.[320] Despite this, church groups in Northumbria, Kent and indeed other parts of England follow the same principle of alignment as the hall groups. These two observations suggest that although the churches are subject to greater architectural diversity and a greater impact of 'Romanness', their display of alignment follows that of the halls.

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[320] See Taylor 1961, pp. 7-8; Taylor 1978, iii, pp. 1028-1030.

Chapter 4: Analysis of ecclesiastical sites

The approach followed in this chapter on ecclesiastical sites is similar to that taken for secular settlements. A similar spreadsheet, which can be found in Appendix 1, was created. As in the chapter on secular sites, the table has revealed some patterns and correlations, which have formed the categories discussed below. One major new aspect of aligned sites – liturgical use – features in this chapter, although in many ways it relates to the ceremonial and processional use discussed in secular contexts. As above, the key questions to be addressed are, quite simply, why churches were aligned and how their alignment related to their use. A number of subordinate questions and hypotheses are presented below to explore possible answers to these questions.

The first part of the chapter explores the 'hows', touching on the functional aspects of these churches, and the second addresses the 'whys' and deals with the possible reasons for the existence of alignment, including topographical conditions, Continental influences and liturgical use.

1. How did it all work?

This section looks into the available evidence for the functional aspects of aligned churches, in as much as they can be deduced from archaeological and architectural remains.

1.1. Communication and zoning

First, the physical evidence for possible shared functions of and connections between buildings. Doorways and pathways, indicating points of access, are the key sources of information. In addition, the spatial relationships between buildings and the precision of their alignment are considered as possible indicators of the distribution of the functional roles of the churches within complexes.

By comparison with the relatively extensive evidence for doorways (which once seemed so sparse!) in secular case-studies, there is very little surviving evidence of this kind in church buildings. This is mostly due to the fact that many of the structures are either entirely hypothetical or are reconstructed on the evidence of a single element which serves to identify the building as a likely church – such as the apse of St Andrew's at Wells or the corner of an Anglo-Saxon building at Rochester. In the structures that have been excavated the lines of the foundations tend to be preserved but usually not the locations of the entrances. In the majority of cases, it is typologically likely that there was an entrance from the west; little else can be firmly conjectured.[1] However, there are some sites - Canterbury, St Oswald's in Gloucester, Hexham, Heysham, Jarrow, Prittlewell and Whithorn - that do provide information on possible connections between buildings.

1.Hexham (see pp. 221-225 for plan and introduction)

At Hexham, the crypt was accessible both from the outside and the inside of the church. The outside entrances were oriented towards the eastern chapel, suggesting almost direct connection between the crypt and the chapel. As the crypt appears to have been designed to facilitate uninterrupted movement, it seems logical that the eastern chapel, associated with multiple burials and a possible focus of devotion, was logistically integrated into the complex.

2.Jarrow (see pp. 225-230 for plan and introduction)

Nothing can be said of the doorways in the west church at Jarrow, although their presence is indicated by the evidence for porticus at the west end and on the north side of the west end. The entrance is likely to have been from the west.[2] The eastern church had an entrance in the middle of its north wall and another

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[1] With the exception of St Oswald's, which had a western apse and a crypt to the east.

[2] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 160-163, fig. 13.16.

at the west end of the south wall. Rosemary Cramp has struggled to determine the function of these doors as there is no surviving evidence for outside structures to which they might relate; however, the south door could have served as an exit to the cemetery.[3]

Taking into account the attention paid to the planning of churches at Jarrow, it would seem that initially, a direct convenient passage from one building into another was perhaps deemed unimportant, and alignment of the two structures took precedence. By contrast, the north-south passage between the churches seems to have been of significance: even the late-8th-century tower inserted into the intervening space seems to have retained this passage in the form of doorways in the north and south sides of the tower at ground level to maintain this passage.

Rosemary Cramp has proposed a possible distinct funerary function for the eastern church; a proposal that was subsequently reinforced by the discovery of an underlying void, which may have been designed as a crypt.[4] It is possible that this crypt was made as a memorial cenotaph for King Ecgfrith, who was killed in battle in Scotland in 685 but whose body never made it to Jarrow.[5] Furthermore, it is possible that the entrance to the crypt was from the east, away from other monastic buildings; and this could point to a more independent function for the eastern church, further explaining why there was no direct connection with the western church.[6]

3.St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury (see pp. 200-206 for plan and introduction)

At St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, Richard Gem and Kevin Blockley favour a mid-7th-century date for the construction of St Pancras, following the

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[3] Cramp 2005, i, p. 151.

[4] Ibid., i, pp. 154, 167; for the crypt, see Turner *et al* 2013, pp. 163-4.

[5] Cramp, pers. comm.

[6] Turner *et al* 2013, pp. 163-4.

revival of the cult of St Pancras under Pope Honorius (625-638).[7] If this dating is correct, it would mean that St Pancras post-dates Sts Peter and Paul's and St Mary's, and was laid out in relation to the two already existing churches. However, St Pancras seems spatially independent from the other two and in its original state also quite different in plan.[8] All three churches show evidence of western entrances. At St Pancras, in its original phase prior to the addition of porticus, there was also a doorway in the south wall and possibly one in the north wall.[9] While it is impossible to reconstruct the plan of St Mary's, there is a noticeable contrast in use and layout between the churches of Sts Peter and Paul and St Pancras: the former is self-contained and somewhat enclosed, with the porticus opening into the church itself, whereas the latter, with entrances on each side of the nave, seems simple, open and outward-facing. 31 graves of early medieval date have been found in association with St Pancras church; they seem to comprise a group of churchyard burials as opposed to high-status graves, for which the porticus at Sts Peter and Paul's were specifically reserved.[10] Considering the somewhat removed location of the church of St Pancras, I suggest that this church may have been designed to have a 'parochial' function, predominantly serving the needs of the local laity.

This proposal is not unproblematic. The concept of pastoral care in Anglo-Saxon England is not well understood and there are different views on how it was delivered.[11] At the council of Clofesho in 747, it was decreed that bishops should

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[7] Gem 1992, p. 59; Gem 1997, pp. 101-104; Blockley 2000, pp. 127-8; Charles Thomas has suggested a Roman date for this church (Thomas 1981, pp. 170-174), but this proposal does not seem to be supported archaeologically.

[8] A single chancel arch as opposed to an arcade on columns, no porticus and multiple entrances.

[9] Blockley 2000, p. 70; Taylor argues that there was only one entrance, implying there were no outside entrances into the porticus. – Taylor 1978, iii, p. 1027, table 23; see also pp. 146-148.

[10] Blockley 2000, pp. 68-69.

[11] The key sides of the argument are those of John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Blair and Sharpe 1992) and of Eric Cambridge and David Rollason (Cambridge and Rollason 1995; I thank Sandy Heslop for drawing my attention to this article). The former authors develop a hypothesis that the network of parish churches, more or less as we know it today, did not begin to evolve until ca 900-1100, and that before this date minsters (monasteries) were centres for the provision of pastoral care. – summary in

ensure that monasteria were not filled with lay visitors.[12] However, although pastoral work involved monks preaching in villages outside of the monastic enclosures, there is also evidence of the laity coming to the monasteries.[13] Further, Theodore's Penitential states that a priest must be left behind to cater for the needs of the local laity if a monastery moves, suggesting a close connection between lay and monastic communities.[14] This could well have involved a corresponding architectural provision. Is it possible that St Pancras church was predominantly used to serve the laity?

If so, this case perhaps could be paralleled by some architectural arrangements on the Continent, where churches built in close proximity served distinct functions, for example at Chelles, where two almost aligned churches belonged to two separate foundations – the monastic church of Notre-Dame and the church of St George, which was a part of an earlier royal foundation.[15] Similarly, at Jouarre, the church of St Peter, built, in a somewhat similar fashion, slightly off axis, was parochial at least by 9th century and possibly earlier.[16]

4. St Oswald's, Gloucester (see pp. 270-273 for plan and introduction)

At St Oswald's in Gloucester, the apse of the church is at the west end and the crypt to the east is almost adjacent to the east wall. No entrances into the crypt could be reconstructed, paralleling the situation at Repton. The absence of

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Cambridge and Rollason 1995, pp. 87-8. Cambridge and Rollason, on the other hand, suggest that the system of pre-900 pastoral care was a lot more complex than has been proposed and that in fact pastoral care was primarily an episcopal, rather than a monastic, responsibility. This would mean that provision would have been made beyond monastic foundations in the form of episcopal churches, oratoria etc. – Cambridge and Rollason 1995. I am inclined to follow the latter point of view. In addition, the *ecclesia libera* – free church, unattached to a monastic foundation – is known in Ireland in the 7th century and it is not impossible that this type of church was at least known in England. For the source (*Liber Angeli*), see Hughes 1966, pp. 275-81; for a reference, see Swan 1994, p. 50.

[12] Council of Clofesho: Canon 19, see text in Haddan and Stubbs 1869-1878; Cubitt 1992, p. 197.

[13] Cubitt 1992, pp. 200-201, 205; Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 7 (Webb 1965, pp. 80-82).

[14] Theodore's Penitential: Canons ii, vi, 7, 14-16, in Haddan and Stubbs 1869-1878.

[15] Berthelier and Ajot 1995, pp. 184-187.

[16] De Maillé 1971, pp. 93, 97-8.

evidence for access suggests that entrances into crypts in these places may not have been prominent. However, at St Oswald's, the east wall of the church has not been fully reconstructed, leaving open the possibility of a doorway and therefore direct access between the church and the free-standing structure.

5.Heysham (see pp. 237-241 for plan and introduction)

The spatial relationship between buildings and burials at Heysham is quite complex and requires special attention. Although St Patrick's chapel and St Peter's church are not precisely aligned, it is the arrangements of rock-cut graves that create spatial links between the two buildings. The graves and their relationships with the buildings are addressed below. Of all case-studies considered here, the site at Heysham provides the only example of a thoroughfare to a building, in this case leading to one of the doors of the chapel. The path runs along the south wall of the chapel, perhaps leading to a gate adjacent to the west end of the building and connecting the eastern and western cemeteries. It is, however, impossible to tell how and whether the chapel was connected to the church – there is no direct path between the two, neither do their positions on different levels with a steep rock edge separating them suggest any form of direct access. Taylor and Taylor have confidently proposed that the chapel only had one entrance in the south wall, which means it would not explicitly have been connected with the graves to the west.[17]

6.Whithorn (see pp. 263-269 for plan and introduction)

Whithorn demonstrates perhaps the most exciting relationship between its aligned buildings, their surroundings and their predecessors. The character and possible meaning of the alignment of minor features (stones and burials) is discussed below; here we will confine ourselves to looking into the ways the

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[17] Taylor 1978, iii, p. 1028, table 26.

buildings were made accessible. The entrances into the Northumbrian-phase buildings at Whithorn, both secular and ecclesiastical, demonstrate a curious consistency in the use of mid-wall entrances, typical for halls. In the earliest phase, this allowed for the mausoleum to open almost directly into one of the halls through a corresponding gate in the surrounding enclosure (Fig. 4.1, structures 4 and 7). Subsequently, the mid-wall entrances remain as a common feature, but did not practically serve to provide direct access between the buildings. Notably, even the church conforms to the same type. Within the enclosure, shared by the church and the mortuary, architecturally, there is little to indicate that the two structures belong to a group, apart from their alignment.
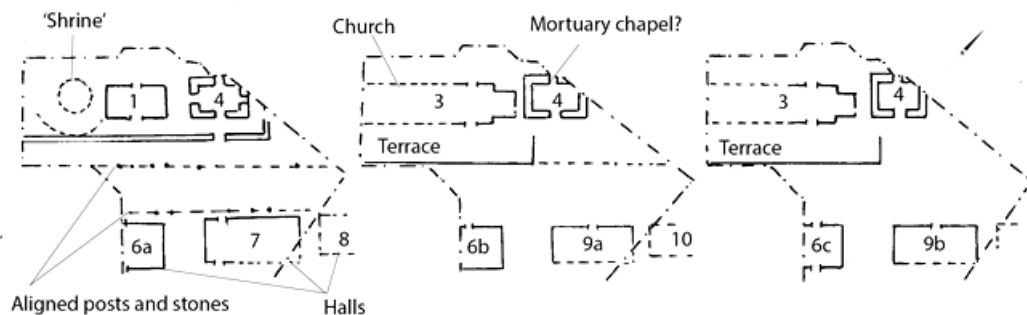
Fig. 4.1. Plan of the area of the church and halls at Whithorn. Left to right: phase II/3 (735-760); phase II/4 (ca 760); phases II/5-6 (early 9th c) (fig. 4.1, p. 135).

To sum up, Hexham seems to be the only site at which the two church buildings could have been conceived in relation to each other and direct access from one into the other was possible and is still archaeologically visible. The only other possible instance is found at Canterbury cathedral, where Harold Taylor has proposed that the cathedral and the church to the east were joined by covered walkways.[18] At St Oswald's and at Repton, the structures secondary to the church

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[18] Taylor 1969, fig. 2, pp. 101-130. The possible upper doorway at Jarrow has been interpreted as a possible entrance into the west gallery, not implying any connection with the west church. – Taylor 1978, iii, p. 342.

have been interpreted as mausolea but it is not known how and whether they were accessed. At Jarrow, if there was external access into the possible crypt, it faced away from the rest of the monastic buildings. At Whithorn and Heysham - even considering the close proximity of buildings at Whithorn - there is no evidence of direct communication between the aligned buildings. At St Augustine's in Canterbury, all structures seem functionally independent, decidedly so in the case of St Pancras. At other sites, from plans of sites and the points of access into the buildings, it does not seem possible to make any deductions as to the ways the buildings related to each other. In fact, there is no evidence for any form of access from one building into another being articulated architecturally at any one of the sites with alignment.

Thus, with the exception of Hexham and possibly Canterbury cathedral, there is no evidence at any of the sites to suggest that their aligned buildings were spatially linked and were *used* as groups or shared any functions discernible from their layouts. Plans of individual buildings seem to have been conceived as spatially independent, contrasting with the secular halls, where doorways facilitated direct procession.

By contrast with Anglo-Saxon sites, in a great number of Continental and Mediterranean church groups, the churches are not built in one line, and movement from one space to the other is embedded in the plans of the complexes, as is the case at Trier, Umm er-Rasas, Cimitile, Djemila and elsewhere.[19] For instance, the very layout of the group of churches in Djemila makes it quite clear how movement between the spaces was conducted, for example from the baptistery to the north basilica for first communion, and how it was guided by the very fabric of the buildings – by walls, mosaic decorations and entrances.[20] Furthermore, at complexes such as the monastery of St

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[19] On Umm er-Rasas, see Moskvina 2016; on Djemila, see Leschi 1953; on Trier, see Weber 2016; on Cimitile, see Lehmann 2004. Continental examples are discussed in more detail below.
[20] Leschi 1953; Février 1964.

Catherine at Sinai, St Peter's in Rome and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the very idea of processional movement was at the centre of the visitor's experience.[21] At San Vincenzo al Volturno, where the cult of relics of St Vincent was developed in the early 9th century, a number of churches have western apses, so that the entrances face the river, which was the point of entrance to the monastery. Thus, the access into the churches and the choreography of movement around the site took precedence over an ideal orientation of churches.[22] However, these sites were places of pilgrimage, designed to facilitate devotional movement. One Anglo-Saxon expression of a similar arrangement, which seems to take into account a flow of visitors through the crypt, is Hexham.[23] Otherwise, there seems to be a fundamental contrast between a Continental church group, where movement and use were guided by the architecture itself and shared between all the buildings, and a more static Anglo-Saxon church group, where individual buildings were conceived as self-contained, with not much indication of the spatial relationships between them. Here axial alignment as a preferred form of arrangement of buildings within a group takes precedence over accessibility and shared use of the buildings, leaving open the question of how alignment relates to the function of individual buildings.

1.2. Individual functions

Pilgrimage and burial were aspects of first-millennium churches both in Britain and on the Continent. They were commonly articulated in the architectural shape of church complexes and are often visible archaeologically.

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[21] See Egeria's account in Wilkinson 1971, sp. pp. 43-136-138; Emerick 2005, p. 52.

[22] On the Continent, it seems even more common to plan the group of churches in relation to their surroundings, which, as a result, often overrides the east-west orientation of individual churches. In Anglo-Saxon England orientation seems more important. -On San Vincenzo al Volturno, see Hodges 1997; Hodges, Leppard and Mitchell 2011.

[23] Still, Eddius Stephanus' description of St Andrew's church at Hexham (*Vita Wilfridi*, ch 22, in Webb 1965, pp. 154-155) is perhaps a testimony to the complex and maze-like character of the building – one designed to have the visitor confused and overwhelmed rather than guided.

Having looked at the ways churches and associated structures related to each other, we shall now look into the specific functions of individual buildings to see how they could relate to axial alignment. Each of the following sections represents a function that a first-millennium church is likely to have performed.

Pilgrimage

The shape of pilgrimage in the Anglo-Saxon church is not easy to discuss. Pilgrimage as a concept revolves around a specific idea of Christian significance - either a holy place or a relic.

A holy place, or *locus sanctorum*, is a manifestation of connection between place and sanctity. Thacker and Cubitt, amongst others, have written on the notions of local and universal saints and places associated with them.[24] Early local cults of saints developed around the shrines of martyrs. This was problematic in England, because the only known place with a claim to such 'fame' was St Alban's.[25] However, perhaps to compensate for the lack of martyrial shrines, the process of deliberate 'localisation' of saints to create a holy space through an association with a holy person was strong in England and relied on the concept and presence of relics.[26]

Relics can be corporeal (physical remains) or incorporeal (objects associated with touching the holy body) – both kinds of relics emitted 'virtus', a kind of 'spiritual radioactivity', in Charles Thomas's words, that could transfer to those coming into contact with the relic. However, although there are plentiful records of cults of local saints and of multiple relics brought over from the Continent, there is little evidence for the ways shrines and relics were framed

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[24] Thacker 2002a and 2002b; Cubitt 2002; see also Blair 2002 and Rollason 1989.

[25] Sharpe, however, has pointed out that it is likely there were other cults that got lost in time. – Sharpe 2002, p. 76.

[26] See Thacker 2002a, 2002b; Dunn 2010, pp. 148-152.

architecturally in Britain in our period.[27] All that can be said is that overall, the process of development of places for the veneration of relics across the English kingdoms was different from that on the Continent. Charles Thomas has argued that on the Continent, the cult of relics, having appeared early, was critical to the development of architectural spaces. The sequence of development proposed by Thomas is as follows: early Christian cemetery – special tomb – enclosures around tomb – basilica to enclose tomb.[28] In Britain, the cult of relics develops much later and instead follows the architectural typology of church buildings being established. Shrines in Ireland and Britain appear in the 7th century and are added to existing churches, thus dictating an entirely different kind of relationship between shrines and churches than on the Continent.[29] There are, however, known instances of imitation of Continental examples, where the notion of veneration in some shape was picked up in the design of the buildings from the outset. Crypts, as spaces intentionally designed for the veneration of relics, are only known at Hexham, Repton and Ripon. Among the sites with alignment, only the complex at Hexham has articulate architectural provision for mass access to relics. At Repton and Winchcombe, which are recorded as centres of the veneration of local royal saints, there is no architectural indication of what the shrines looked like and how they were accessed. Shrines of saints do not seem to have taken a consistent form of location either: for instance, St Cuthbert, and then St Eadberht, were enshrined to the right of the altar in St Peter's church on Lindisfarne; St Swithun, according to his own wish, was buried between the minster church and the tower in Winchester; St Acca was laid to rest outside the east wall of the church in Hexham; St Wilfrid was buried inside St Peter's church in Ripon; St Cedd was buried at Lastingham in a grave and then transferred to a

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[27] On relics in later Anglo-Saxon England, see Rollason 1986. On cults of relics, see Crook 2000. On shrines of saints elsewhere, see Hahn 1997. On cults of Christian kings, see Yorke 2003.
[28] Thomas 1971, p. 138.
[29] See Thomas 1971, pp. 138-145.

shrine inside the church.[30] Although miracles associated with these and other saints after their death are recorded and acts of pilgrimage described, such as bishops and abbots gathering at Wilfrid's shrine on the anniversary of his death or people visiting St Cuthbert's tomb to be cured of illness, there is a clear lack of evidence for the architectural shape of and approach to shrines of Anglo-Saxon saints.[31]

Funerary

A number of structures within aligned groups – at Canterbury, both in the abbey and the cathedral, Glastonbury, Hexham, Gloucester St Oswald's, Repton, Jarrow, Prittlewell, Whithorn, Wells and possibly Gloucester St Peter's and Heysham (12 in total) - have been identified (with varying degrees of certainty) as having been designed for funerary functions, shown in the graph below.
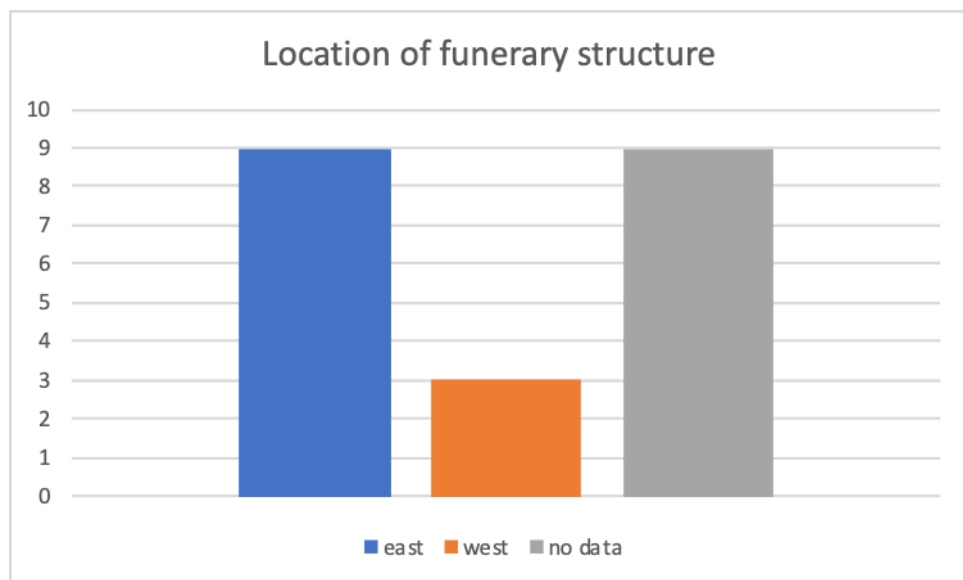
Graph 4.1. Statistical analysis of location of funerary structures in aligned church groups.

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[30] On Cuthbert and Eadbert, see Bede's *Vita S. Cuthberti*, ch. 40, 43 (Webb 1965, pp. 121-123); on Swithun, see Lapidge 2003, p. 639; on Acca, see Raine 1864, p. 205; on Wilfrid, see *Vita S. Wilfridi* ch. 66 (Webb 1965, pp. 203-204); on Cedd, see HE iii.23, pp. 286-288.

[31] Eddius Stephanus, ch. 68; Bede, ch. 44-46. It is possible that shrines in the 6th-7th centuries, including the English ones, resembled the small so-called house-reliquaries. – John Mitchell, pers. comm.; for a discussion of saints' shrines of this period, see also Crook 2000, pp. 68-76.

It is perhaps worth noting that the majority of buildings identified as funerary were located to the east, which could be of significance in a Biblical context, indexing Jerusalem, the Garden of Eden and God, generally conceived as gravitating eastwards.[32]

Baptismal

The contrast between known architectural provision for baptism at Continental (Frankish and Mediterranean) sites and the almost complete absence of such evidence at Anglo-Saxon sites is striking. While churches with baptismal functions or baptisteries were included in the Frankish church groups and even axially aligned, as at Reims, Mainz, and Auxerre, no similar functions have been attributed to aligned structures in England, apart from, perhaps, at Repton and Canterbury.[33]

The only Anglo-Saxon church with a recorded baptismal function is that of St John the Baptist at Canterbury, built in the 8th century and mentioned by Eadmer in the 11th-century, in his *Vita Beati Bregowini*.[34] There is evidence for late baptisteries in Potterne and Barton-on-Humber.[35] Possible earlier baptisteries also existed in Winchester and Southwell.[36] At Wells, the springs could have been used for baptismal rites.[37] Apart from these few cases, not much is known, not only about the architectural setting for baptism, but the rite itself

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[32] The significance of the east as Holy and the place where God dwells is found in Genesis 2:8; Ezekiel 43:2, 4; Revelation 7:2; see also the 6th-century Cosmas Indicopleustes' map of the world, with the Garden of Eden to the east. – Cosmas Indicopleustes, 6th-century Manuscript cod. vat.gr.699. In: *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.699], accessed 14 September 2016; the map is on fol. 40v.

[33] For Reims, see L. Pietri 1975b; for Mainz, see Gauthier 1975; for Auxerre, see Picard 1975.

[34] Original text in Scholz 1966.

[35] Foot 1992, p. 181.

[36] For the former, see Kjølbye-Biddle 1998; for the latter – Dixon, Owen and Stocker 2001, pp. 258-264.

[37] Morris 1983, pp. 35-8.

in Britain: there are no known Anglo-Saxon baptismal orders before the 10th century, which contrasts with an abundance on the Continent.[38]

Most Anglo-Saxon monasteries are sited overlooking running water, which could have been used for baptism.[39] Further, it is recorded that Paulinus baptised King Edwin's subjects in the River Glen at Yeavering, where there appears to have been no specific architectural space provided for baptism.[40] It seems that a defined space specifically dedicated to baptism may have been of a lesser importance in England than it was on the Continent.[41] In addition, baptisms could have been performed by itinerant priests, away from churches, and could have focussed on the necessity for running water.[42] In the anonymous *Vita S. Cuthberti*, the saint is described preaching and baptising in the countryside.[43]

Alignment in England was more frequently associated with funerary functions than baptismal ones. However, as noted above, burials, mausolea and baptisteries located on a central axis were not unknown on the Continent. As a result, it seems there is an overlap between Anglo-Saxon and Continental church groups with regard to the significance of alignment between the main church

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[38] Foot 1992, p. 172; Gneuss 1985, pp. 91-141; on post-10th-century baptismal ordines, particularly the Red Book of Darley, see Gittos 2005, pp.70-75; on aspects of baptism, see also Dunn 2010, pp. 141-144. Regarding architectural provision for baptisms, it has been proposed that *oratoria* (chapels) may have performed a baptismal function in Anglo-Saxon England (see Morris 1991, Thacker 1992, p. 147). However, this hypothesis is complicated by Continental examples of *oraetoria* coexisting with churches which also had baptisteries, such as Amiens, where the *oraetorium* of St Martin was built next to the churches of St Mary and St Firmin (St Peter and Paul) and the baptistery of St John. In this case, however, it must be noted that the location of the baptistery is hypothetical and that the two churches are not mentioned in texts until the mid-9th century. – L. Pietri 1975a, pp. 2-9; see fig 4.8 in this thesis. For evidence of baptismal liturgies on the Continent, see Ferguson 2009; Day 2007. For architectural evidence of baptism in Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, see Blair 2005, pp. 201-202, 459-463, and Jones 2001.
[39] On the location of monasteries, see Morris 1989, p. 111.
[40] HE ii.14, p. 188.
[41] For scale and diversity of the architectural shapes of baptism, see Ristow 1998 and Khatchatrian 1962.
[42] Foot 1992, pp. 182-3; Richard Morris has emphasised the importance of a priest attached to the community, as opposed to a community attached to a building, especially at Bamburgh and Breedon. - Morris 1989, p. 132. On the use of running water in baptism, see Cramer 1993, pp. 9-10; Connell 2009, pp. 465-466.
[43] *Vita S. Cuthberti* ii. 5,6,8, in Webb 1965; Cubitt 1992, pp. 200-1, 204-5.

building and a structure or feature with a specific function, whether baptismal or funerary. However, Continental church groups display greater freedom in the orientation of churches and their positioning in relation to each other (see map 4.1), regardless of their functions, whereas most of Anglo-Saxon groups seem more rigid and particular in their axial arrangement and in the easternmost position of a building with a specific function.

However, while functional distinction might explain the need for more than one church in any one place, it still does not explain why they would be aligned. The last aspect of aligned complexes that needs to be considered, often enigmatic and potentially significant, is the presence of additional smaller features, such as posts and burials, on the axes of aligned buildings.

1.3. Special burials and features

It is unfortunate that our knowledge of the immediate surroundings of church buildings, in the vast majority of cases, is very limited. However, among the features that are often recorded, be they *in situ* or not, are standing crosses, significant posts, burials and other features. The following section discusses this evidence in more detail.

As was briefly touched on in chapter 2, secular sites such as Yeavering and Buckland utilise small features – stones, posts and burials – to create defined axes. This practice also seems to hold for church groups, where burials are joined by wells and sometimes standing crosses as elements of compositional significance.

At Whithorn, there are two instances of the alignment of features. An earlier line of posts, stones and grave 72 is parallel to the axis of the church and chapel to the north. It is notable that the orientation of the grave, in alignment with the features, takes precedence over the east-west direction, followed by other graves in this area. This grave was evidently specifically singled out to be

included in the alignment. Another alignment of a similar nature occurred later and coincided with the construction of a series of halls to the south, with some of the axial posts tied into the construction of the halls. Two of the posts are possibly not structural, because they mark the head and foot of grave 1, also included in the alignment. Like grave 72, grave 1 defies the east-west orientation adopted in the graveyard to align with the posts. These alignments seem to support the axis of a sequence of earlier shrines, over which the church and the chapel were built, suggesting the particular importance of this axis and perhaps the desire to retain it. In addition, the interior of the church featured an axially placed 'focal stone' to the east of the altar.[44]

As has been mentioned above, St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury seems to consist of two nuclei spatially related – the churches of Sts Peter and Paul and of St Mary – and the church of St Pancras, which was associated with these buildings but somewhat removed. In addition to the obvious pairing of the churches of Sts Peter and Paul and of St Mary, there is an axial burial to the west of St Peter and Paul. This burial contains stones, which seem to have been laid out in a ritualistic fashion.[45] Both the burial and the church of St Mary are roughly equidistant from the church of Sts Peter and Paul, creating a certain rhythm; the two buildings together with the significant grave form a unified configuration.

The complex at Glastonbury also includes an axial funerary focus in the form of a hypogeum, which was later incorporated into the church of Sts Peter and Paul. It is, however, notable that two other features – a Roman well and a pillar – were not axially aligned and did not seem to be spatially tied into the composition of the buildings at all.

At Hexham, where the eastern chapel is situated precisely on axis with the church and is surrounded by burials gravitating towards it, there is a possibility that St Acca was buried in the axial position to the east of the east wall of St

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[44] Hill 1997, figs. 4.10, 4.15.

[45] See p. 200 for description.

Andrew's church as recorded in Symeon of Durham's *Historia Regum* and by John of Hexham.[46] There is, however, a chance that this burial was located in the vicinity of St Mary's to the south-east, where the remains of a cross, said to be one of St Acca's burial crosses, were found.[47] Another possible cross or post stood just behind the altar, somewhat similar to Whithorn, yet again placing emphasis on axiality in the building.[48]

At Heysham the rock-cut graves would have taken a lot of effort to make and I believe their locations must have been carefully chosen. There seems to be a geometric relationship between these and the churches at this site: the group of six graves to the west of St Patrick's chapel is spatially linked with the chapel itself, although not precisely aligned. The group of two graves to the south-east of the chapel, on the other hand, is roughly aligned with the church of St Peter but, it appears, with nothing else. The church and the chapel are brought together as one composition through the arrangement of graves and their geometric relationships with the buildings. Two more ordinary (not rock-cut) superimposed axial burials are located immediately to the west of the chapel, again underlining the axial composition created by the buildings and burials.

The church at Monkwearmouth includes an axial high-status grave (70/1) at the east end of the original chancel. At Winchester, the focal burial of St Swithun, although outside the church, following Swithun's own wish, initially also was on axis. At Lindisfarne, John Blair has proposed that the orientation of the church of St Peter, rebuilt after 687, was shifted in order to be centred on the shrine of St Cuthbert there, originally to the right of the altar. This is another possible example of the significance of axial relationships between churches and important burials.

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[46] Arnold 1885/2012, pp. 33, 284-332.

[47] Cambridge and Williams 1995, p. 101.

[48] Bailey and O'Sullivan 1979-80, p. 155.

At Repton and Winchcombe, the axial position of the mausolea could have been enhanced by association with the royal saints buried there – Wystan at Repton and Coenwulf and Cynhelm at Winchcombe. The crypt at Repton, as at Hexham, attracted multiple external burials and could have been a focus of veneration. The mausoleum at Wells contains burials deliberately situated on axis but, even more notably, there the group of churches is aligned on a well. [49]

Standing crosses, being fairly ubiquitous, remain an elusive feature of Anglo-Saxon sites of Christian significance. They are found free-standing within monastic enclosures and churchyards, marking graves and sites of commemoration and significance, as the cross at Heavenfield did. [50] Carved stone crosses are unique to the British isles in the early medieval period and their origins have been traced back to sacred trees and posts and Roman triumphal columns. [51] John Blair has interpreted the standing crosses as a continuation of a tradition of pre-Christian sacred landmarks. [52] Although it is clear that crosses were integral elements in the spatial compositions of monastic sites and must be considered, it is frustrating that virtually none of them are found in their original positions. John Blair has partially based his reconstructions of alignments of churches at Lindisfarne and Barton-on-Humber on remains of cross-bases. [53]

[49] Rodwell 1984, p. 18; For comparison, similar instances of springs and wells more-or-less axially aligned with churches occur at St-Paul-in-the-Bail, Lincoln, St Helen on the Walls, York, and St Peter's at Barton-upon-Humber. – Rodwell 1984. Axially aligned cisterns and wells are also found inside churches, as is the case in the Old Minster in Winchester, at Glastonbury (at St Mary's), Exeter - see Fox 1956, p. 208; St Kentigern's Well at Glasgow, Lichfield (St Peter), the Galilee chapel at Durham – see Rodwell 2001, p. 116. Further, the location of the *vetusta ecclesia* in Glastonbury was perhaps determined by the presence of a Roman well nearby. – see Rahtz and Watts 2003, p. 107. Holy wells are consistently associated with Irish monastic sites but there are usually situated outside the enclosure and at a distance from the site, by contrast with the immediately accessible known wells in Anglo-Saxon England. On Irish wells, see Swan 1994, p. 54.

[50] HE iii.2, pp. 214-216; MacLean 1997.

[51] On trees, Bintley 2013 and 2015; Hooke 2010 and 2013. On interpretation of the cross at Heavenfield as a rival to a pagan sacred tree, see Dunn 2010, p. 64; Ellis Davidson 1988, pp. 21-27. On Roman origins of crosses, see Hawkes 2003, pp. 76-80; for Greek influences, see Moreland 1999; on Bewcastle cross as a tomb cross see Karkov 1997 and Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 1985. See also Mitchell 2001b.

[52] Blair 2005, p. 227.

[53] Ibid., fig. 43; Blair 1991.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that these bases were found *in situ*. Of the sites discussed above, the only cross-base preserved in what was probably its original position is at Heysham, where it is buried under the east wall of the extended chapel. Curiously, contrasting with Blair's proposals of the significance of the axial position of crosses at Lindisfarne and Barton, this cross is set markedly off-axis. At Hexham, Acca is said to have been buried to the east of St Andrew's church with crosses at his head and feet, which could have been on axis. [54] In all other instances there are no grounds for speculation on the original positions of crosses.

It seems that although axial alignment spreads across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the ways to emphasise and 'ground' the lines in the landscape take different forms depending on the region and the local influences, including burials, mausolea, posts, crosses, wells and stones. The emphasis on both posts and crosses in the northern regions might suggest that these had related values. At the same time, the southern kingdoms adopt the Continental rhetoric of burial or mausolea as a feature underlining the direction of an axis already architecturally defined by a church. [55]

Heysham in Lancashire, with its clearly Mediterranean-inspired rock-cut graves, remains enigmatic and poses the question of the cultural connections which led to such a peculiar exchange of traditions. It also exemplifies the regional character of features included in aligned compositions. However, it seems that despite the differences in their forms, with upright vertical elements being more common in the north and wells and burials more characteristic of the south, these features served the same symbolic purpose. Whatever shape they take they seem to accentuate the above-ground linearity of these compositions

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[54] Arnold 1885/2012, p. 33; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, pp. 297-315.

[55] Burials on axis or funerary structures on axis seem to be common on the Continent, found at Saint Riquier, Cornelimunster, Fulda. - see Crook 2000.

and at the same time situate them in the landscape and add meaning to *the place* thus formed.

2. Why aligned?

2.1. Topographical determination

It seems logical to begin searching for the reasons for alignment in the practical aspects of planning – topographical conditions and the presence of existing structures. Like the secular sites, the ecclesiastical case-studies are scattered across the territory of modern England with a slightly more dense concentration in the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia but otherwise no evident regional expression.[56] The vast majority of case-studies is located on sites which continued to be in use and underwent significant changes in their topography, resulting in the absence of evidence for original layouts. It is perhaps only at Wearmouth and Jarrow, where the exact changes in the landscape immediately surrounding the churches have been measured and recorded, that it is possible to attempt a reconstruction of the appearance of the landscape in the 7th century.[57] This kind of recording, however, requires specialised research and has not been done elsewhere. As a result, by contrast with the secular sites, it is impossible to discuss the positions and orientation of buildings in relation to slopes and relief. However, one of the key aspects of the orientation and location of church groups is their relationship with existing surrounding features.

Some alignments relate closely to a surrounding urban fabric and are likely to have been, if not defined, at least influenced by existing infrastructure, most notably roads. It is worth observing that ecclesiastical foundations tended to be urban phenomena, associated with an urban fabric, as opposed to secular high-status settlements, mostly laid out from scratch in rural areas.

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[56] See map 3.1.
[57] Turner *et al* 2013, fig. 3.21b.

The following section begins with observation and analysis of the orientation and position of aligned church groups, in order to establish whether alignment is an inevitable by-product of urban planning or a more significant attribute.

The sites have been divided into two groups: the first encompasses those that are evidently influenced by the existing topography and the second includes those where alignment is not pre-conditioned by any evident spatial constraints and seems to have been a free choice.

Group 1

1)   Winchcombe, although only hypothetically reconstructed, seems to illustrate quite well how the orientation and alignment of churches could be related to that of nearby roads. Stephen Basset has proposed that just as the current alignment of the 15th-century St Peter's church is parallel to the road to the south, the earlier church could have followed the original, east-west, line of the same road and was aligned with the abbey church of Sts Mary and Kenelm.[58]

2)   At Canterbury, a Roman road runs just to the south of St Augustine's abbey, potentially explaining the alignment of the buildings. At the same time, as is discussed below, a marked difference in location and orientation of the church of St Pancras from that of the more precisely aligned pair of Sts Peter and Paul's and St Mary's, may indicate that this layout is more complex than the simple spread of three churches along an existing road.

3)   At Glastonbury, a similar proposal has been made, suggesting that alignment conforms to the line of the nearby Roman road.[59]

4)   At Worcester, the pairs of churches of St Alban and St Helen and of St Mary and St Peter, replaced by a later cathedral, were built on parallel lines, possibly derived from the plan of the Roman settlement. However, the degree of continuity between the Roman and sub-Roman periods at Worcester and the

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[58] Bassett 1985.

[59] Rodwell 2001, p. 115.

state of preservation of the Roman layout by the time of construction of the churches is unknown.[60]

5)   At Gloucester, the orientation of St Mary de Lode and possibly St Peter's was influenced by the preceding Roman buildings: St Mary's was built on the site of Roman baths and St Peter's could have been aligned with the Roman city walls. Carolyn Heighway, however, specifically notes that these building programmes do not appear to have been designed to follow the Roman layout and in particular did not attempt to claim any significant spaces for ritual, such as the pagan temple to the north of the city.[61]

6)   The possible aligned churches at Prittlewell follow the line of the late Saxon East Street/West Street, broadly contemporary with the date of the church proposed by Daniel Secker.[62] An earlier date for the churches, however, is also possible, and this could invite a different explanation for their alignment.[63]

In contrast with the above cases, which are likely to have been shaped by existing urban topography, at least to some extent, at other sites the arrangements seem to stand out as not immediately explicable by their surroundings. Instead, linear arrangements here may originate in the natural topography or in symbolic or ideological factors.

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[60] Baker *et al* 1992, pp. 69, 72.

[61] Heighway 2010, pp. 40, 44. It is worth noting that although the site of the Roman shrine was not appropriated for the construction of the church, the use of the baths was perhaps more significant than has been thought. The construction of churches on the sites of baths is quite common in the Mediterranean (Hippo Regius and Djemila in Algeria, Sta Cecilia in Rome, the 6th-century baptistery at Butrint), mostly, it seems, for practical reasons to provide water for baptisteries but also to reclaim water for Christian use, as happened with the fountain in the 'cathedral' in Jerash or the springs at Wells. Such an appropriation could be considered a symbolic act. On relationships between early churches and baths, see Brandt 2011, Kullberg 2016.

[62] Secker 2016, pp. 126-7.

[63] Gowing 1958, p. 12; Taylor and Taylor 1965, ii, pp. 499-500.

Group 2

1)   At Bampton, John Blair has argued that the alignment of buildings is based on earlier mounds, with the two lines intersecting in the centre of the largest of the mounds.[64] The site at Bampton, although hypothetically reconstructed, is the only instance of two overlapping alignments at an ecclesiastical site – that of mounds and that of churches, - which suggests deliberation in the spatial construction of the site.

2)   At Winchester, the originally Roman grid of streets was abandoned with the construction of the minster, which seems to point at a decision to create a new alignment instead of conforming to the existing one.[65] The minster, as a result, is orientated more or less precisely east-west rather than along the former Roman streets.

3)   At Wells, the alignment of structures seems to be centred on St Andrew's well, which lies to the east. By analogy, it has been proposed that the location of the church at Barton-on-Humber was defined by an axial relationship with springs to the east, where the relationship between the church and the source of water has been presented as significant.[66]

4)   The arrangement at Heysham is quite peculiar and involves rock-cut graves, which may have been even more prominent players in creating linear arrangements than the buildings themselves. The graves and their analogues and relationships with the buildings are discussed in more detail below but for the time being it should be noted that prior to the construction of the church and the chapel the site was not in use. Thus, spatial relationships between the graves and the buildings would not have been affected by any existing constructions although they did make a good use of the rather dramatic natural topography.

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[64] Blair 1998.

[65] Fernie 1983, p, 24, fig. 8; similar deviations from Roman grid alignment towards a new Anglo-Saxon one have been observed in Bath, Chichester, Dorchester, Exeter and Gloucester. – Pennick and Devereux 1989, p. 126.

[66] Rodwell 1984, pp. 17-18.

5)   At Whithorn, the alignment of the church and the chapel is defined by the axis of earlier shrines. At the same time, the explanation cannot be quite as practical as those suggested for the first group. Although the shrines there appear to be only a minor feature, it seems that it was deemed important that their alignment was maintained, even though this was different from that of the existing church. In addition, a string of halls was laid out to the south of the church and chapel on the same alignment, with unusual minor features. These factors seem to indicate that alignment at Whithorn, although explicable, went beyond something as simple and mundane as, for instance, the line of a nearby road, and instead demonstrated thoughtful attention to choosing an axis which was important enough to interrupt the original layout of the minster.

6)   On Lindisfarne, the line created by St Mary's church, and possibly St Peter's church underneath the abbey, seems to be precisely continued by the cliff to the east, and echoed by the parallel line of the Heugh to the south. The site of the monastery thus seems to be protected by the Heugh, although it is still visible from Bamburgh, creating both an important visual connection and a secure somewhat harboured location. Lindisfarne and Heysham are the two sites where alignment would seem to embrace the natural topography to a greater extent than anywhere else.[67]

Overall, the evidence is not conclusive as there seems to be an equal number of sites with possible practical reasons for alignment, related to pre-existing – in the majority of cases Roman – planning, and ones which seem to demonstrate a break with an existing layout in favour of something different, often indicating a potential symbolic value in alignment. Three more sites – Rochester, York and Canterbury cathedral - could be associated with either group.

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[67] The recent discovery of a church on the Heugh, with a possible axially aligned tower, is striking. It has been difficult to date, but it is likely to be a later Saxon construction, perhaps an homage to the earlier monastic churches. – Richard Carlton, pers. comm; see also Appendix 2, Photo 4.

At Rochester, the orientation of the first Anglo-Saxon cathedral follows the line of the wall of the Roman castrum, instead of the east-west orientation.[68] Three different axes seem to be present at various stages of building. A possible Roman structure underneath the south wall and the Norman cathedral share one of these; the two likely Anglo-Saxon structures are aligned on another axis and finally, the tower later incorporated in the northern transept is set at an entirely different angle to both. Were all of these axes meaningful at different points in time or did they simply follow the changing urban layout and the shifting axes of nearby streets?

At York, locations of Anglo-Saxon buildings are notoriously difficult to pin down but there is equal evidence to suggest either that the early minster conformed to the Roman layout, or that it deliberately moved away from it. The layout of the streets and the orientation of some medieval churches along the Roman walls (north-east – south-west), at least in the 12th century, seem to suggest that the early cathedral could also have followed the Roman alignment.[69] At the same time, the precise east-west orientation of the present cathedral recalls the situation at the Old Minster in Winchester and the known Anglo-Saxon cathedral at Canterbury and could mean that in York, in a similar fashion, the setting of the cathedral church could have broken with the Roman alignment. At Canterbury itself, as has been said above, the first cathedral, according to Bede, was a restored Roman church, and this would probably have had a different orientation, in line with the city walls. This orientation would have changed to the present one with rebuilding, possibly in the 9th century.[70] However, Kevin Blockley has suggested that the original church was encased and extended with the

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[68] Payne 1895, plan facing p. 1. It is true that orientation of churches, especially in late antiquity, was not fixed as east-west; at the same time, Anglo-Saxon archaeology demonstrates ample evidence for a greater attention to precision of planning, by comparison with contemporary Continental churches. For continental churches, see Oswald *et al* 1990, Duval 1995a and Sennhauser 2003.
[69] Norton 1998, fig. 1.
[70] HE i.33, p. 114.

construction of the new cathedral, without mentioning a change in orientation. Thus, if the first building initially had run east-west, it would have been against the Roman grid-plan, suggesting that it was not in fact of Roman date.[71] Elsewhere, the role of the remains of pre-existing planning in the subsequent layout of aligned churches is even more debatable, particularly considering the absence of evidence for their preservation in the Anglo-Saxon period in most cases. What is worth noting is the relative frequency of Roman foundations at sites with alignment. This contrasts particularly sharply with secular sites, where Roman structures have only been identified in one location. Among the ecclesiastical sites discussed here, Roman connections have been established at 12 out of 22, or 54.5%. Of these sites, 6 are characterised by the reuse of Roman material in the construction of Anglo-Saxon buildings.

Some of the early cathedral sites with aligned buildings, such as Canterbury, Rochester, Winchester, Worcester and York (where alignment is hypothetical), were founded on the sites of large Roman centres and conformed to the remnants of the original planning. At the same time, as seen at Winchester and Canterbury, the Anglo-Saxon alignment did not always repeat the Roman one. Furthermore, spatial relationships between Christian churches and earlier Roman structures often seem coincidental, as is the case at Exeter, London, St Albans, Bath and Aldborough. There, although the churches are sited in the vicinity of major Roman public buildings, they are not evidently spatially related to them; this is clear from the plans of sites.[72] Tyler Bell's research into the relationships between Roman and Anglo-Saxon Christian structures also fails to provide a uniform conclusion with regard to any consistent significance in relationships between Roman and later structures. It is clear that connections exist but these do not always appear to reflect deliberation and design.[73] The

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[71] Blockley 1997, pp. 95, 100, 111.

[72] See Rodwell 1984, pp. 5-8, figs. 3 and 4. Fig 3 in particular demonstrates the unsystematic nature of spatial relationships between Anglo-Saxon churches and earlier Roman structures.

[73] See Bell 1998, 2005.

Roman heritage was present and frequently re-used but perhaps was not as ideologically prominent in Anglo-Saxon churches as, for instance, the spolia deployed across Europe in Late Antiquity or the building of churches directly into Roman structures, ubiquitous in the Mediterranean basin and often found in Gaul.[74] This is perhaps due to the state of preservation of Roman structures in England, which may not have been as complete as at sites elsewhere. At the same time, Anglo-Saxon builders, even when presented with the opportunity to occupy the site of a shrine or temple, as was the case at Gloucester and Bath, regularly declined it. This means that the appropriation of significant sites of Roman ritual may not have been on the agenda.[75] The reuse of Roman stone in this context should probably be seen as a practical expedient; even if it was done as a statement of appropriation and dominance of the Christian church over the pagan past, this was not made visually obvious. For instance, at Jarrow and Wearmouth, the origins of the stones used are not immediately clear to a beholder.[76] A possible Roman altar incorporated in the east wall at Jarrow is barely discernible as such.[77] The drafted stones at Jarrow were taken from the nearby fort at Arbeia (South Shields) and yet the fort itself was not chosen for the site of a monastery. At Hexham, the significance of the exposure of the evidently reused Roman stone in the crypt is subject to debate.[78] The famous Roman inscription on one of the window supports in Escomb, which is turned to its side and reads 'Bono rei publicae nato' - 'To the man born for the good of the state',

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[74] On spolia, see Hansen 2015; Brenk 1987; Kinney 2001.

[75] In Gloucester, St Mary de Lode – a possible British rather than Saxon church - is likely to be associated with baths or a temple precinct, whereas the Anglo-Saxon church of St Peter was built in an entirely different location. – Bryant and Heighway 2003, p. 112. For Bath, see Rodwell 1984, p. 8, fig. 4; for contrast, see a group of temples turned into churches in Roujan and Thérouanne. – Colin and Schwaller 2005; Duval 1995b.

[76] It is petrological analysis that tells us where the stone was from and not any deliberate visual indication on the walls. – Turner *et al* 2013.

[77] Turner *et al* 2013, p. 150, fig. 4.20. Rosemary Cramp and I struggled to identify it clearly as a Roman altar during a site visit.

[78] Eddius Stephanus only describes the 'beautifully dressed stone' in the crypt. – *Vita S. Wilfridi* ch. 22, in Webb 1965, p. 154.

does not seem to be particularly ideologically charged in its new position; it looks like a piece of stone that was simply reused, along with others taken from the nearby fort at Binchester.[79] It also needs to be remembered that church buildings were among the first ones in stone in Anglo-Saxon England and their construction was subject to practical experimentation and stood at the very beginning of a new building tradition. Readily available construction stone could have been a convenient bonus for the builders. This does not mean that Roman stone was devoid of ideological value but the lack of any overt demonstration of its 'Romanness', together with the inconsistent nature of correlation between Roman planning and Anglo-Saxon planning, suggests that demonstration of the ideological role of the Roman past in Anglo-Saxon architecture was not necessarily a primary consideration.

On the other hand, the articulation of symbolic or ideological messages in architecture can be very subtle, and it is often difficult to distinguish between something that is a result of practical necessity and something that is an intentional visual metaphor. Furthermore, these two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In the same way, the alignment of buildings on pre-existing structures does not deprive the alignment of a possible meaning beyond the purely rational. In short, 'practical' and 'meaningful' should not be taken as mutually exclusive.

It seems reasonable to conclude that it was not just the remnants of Roman roads and cities, nor just the specifics of natural topography, that led the builders to choose axes for alignment. Rather, the overview of individual cases has demonstrated a more varied process of decision-making. In some cases this may have resulted in aligning a church with existing features, but in others the Anglo-Saxon alignment deliberately went against the existing geometry. This is explored in the 'hows' section above. In the meantime, we will consider other possible 'whys' in the search for reasons for architectural alignment.

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[79] On Escomb, see Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, pp. 234-238; Hodges 1894; Turner *et al* 2013.

2.2. Continental influence?

A major hypothesis in the explanation of alignment to be addressed in the following section is that put forward by John Blair, who has argued that alignment in Anglo-Saxon church groups derives from alignment in Continental ecclesiastical complexes.[80] Continental influence on the development of Anglo-Saxon Christianity is of course difficult to deny, but does this mean that it was unidirectional and defined architectural expressions too?

First of all, we will look at the architecture and planning at the sites in question. It needs to be stated that groups of aligned churches are also representatives of a wider phenomenon – that of 'church groups'. These can be defined as architectural compositions including more than one church situated in close proximity to each other, often belonging to the same foundation, monastic or episcopal, commonly conceived as one architectural complex. The geographical distribution of this phenomenon is incredibly broad, encompassing Europe, North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean.[81] The earliest examples of church groups are recorded in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean from the 4th century, and later they are found in northern Europe and Anglo-Saxon England.

The existence of these ecclesiastical groups is fascinating and their purpose is largely unexplained.[82] There is no obvious reason why all necessary liturgical functions could not have been performed within a single building, as

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[80] Blair 1992, pp. 247-250.

[81] The assessment of the extent of this phenomenon is a subject for a separate large-scale research. The author has a draft proposal for a Leverhulme-funded project aimed at researching specific patterns of spatial arrangements within church groups across all these regions.

[82] Exploration of this phenomenon would require large-scale research across a wide geographical area and has not been attempted to date. Attempts have been made to examine individual church groups (see below) of a specific fraction of this phenomenon, such as double cathedrals or groups within specific regions (for instance, the Anglo-Saxon groups and their Continental parallels by Blair and the Frankish ones by Hubert). - Hubert 1963 and 1977; Lehmann 1962; Blair 1992, pp. 246-258, Blair 2005, pp. 199-201. For a summary of the proposals, see Gittos 2013, pp. 97-101 and in Petts and Turner 2009, pp. 291-294.

indeed they were in many churches and episcopal basilicas across Christendom. The presence of church groups, often with complex spatial relationships between the buildings, suggests that they were the results of choices made, rather than of necessity, and the products of careful planning. Dispositions of key buildings within the groups take a variety of forms and can be categorised as follows: parallel, as at Trier, axially aligned, like the groups in Anglo-Saxon England, T-shaped, as at Setif, in Algeria, diagonal, like the groups of churches at Nantes and Geneva, and in other less common configurations, like the triangular layout at the monastery of Saint-Riquier.[83] The geographical distribution of these types does not seem entirely random and it could be helpful to consider the aligned Anglo-Saxon groups within a broader European context. At the same time, the question arises whether alignment had the same meaning and function at all the locations in which it features.

John Blair's study of axially aligned church groups, putting aside the Anglo-Saxon examples, included churches in Jerash, Jerusalem, Milan, Ferrières, Angoulême and Melun. I would like to address these case studies individually before comparing them with the Anglo-Saxon sites.

Jerusalem and Jerash date to the 4th century and their plans were largely defined by pre-existing architectural and topographical conditions. At Jerash, the 'cathedral' and the church of St Theodore with an atrium between them were built into two standing Roman temples, joined by a courtyard (fig. 4.2). In the complex of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the site incorporated two major Christian foci – the rock of Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre itself, which defined the bifocal and linear character of the overall structure (fig. 4.3).[84] Alignment at these sites, therefore, was defined by external factors and was not so much a

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[83] On Trier, see Weber 2016; on Setif, see Février 1964; on Saint-Riquier, see Rabe 1995.

[84] On Jerash, see Crowfoot 1931; Kraeling 1938; Moralee 2006. On Jerusalem, see Coüasnon 1974; Krautheimer 1986, pp. 60-63. The arrangements and particularly routes around the complex, however, are far from emphasising linearity. – see Mitchell 2001a.

matter of *choice* for the patrons and architects as logically following from the *nature* of the site. For this reason, I would suggest that planning conditions at Jerusalem and Jerash were rather different from those encountered by builders and patrons in northern Europe and Anglo-Saxon England, where planning was rarely as restricted and confined by existing structures. As has been demonstrated above, the orientation of Anglo-Saxon church groups was sometimes guided by existing topography but their grouping and axial alignment was not. This means that the very approach to the planning of churches in England was rather different – free and deliberate - whereas alignment at Jerash and Jerusalem seems to have been a by-product of the desire to build in a very specific location with restricted space.
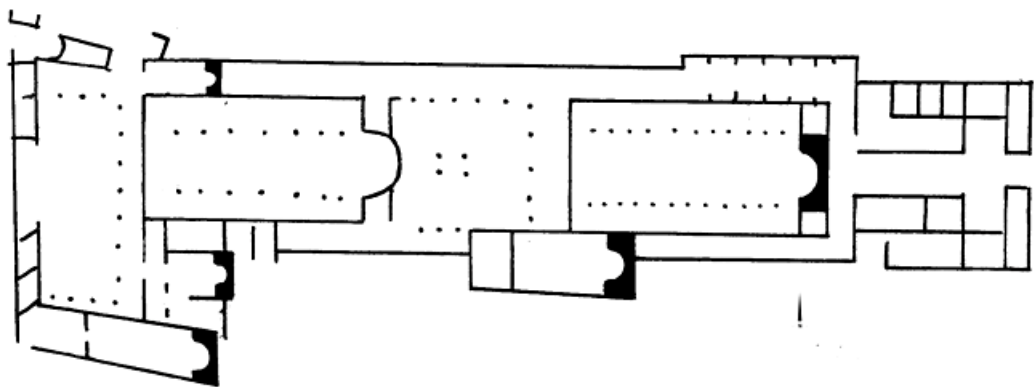
Fig. 4.2. Plan of 'Cathedral' and St Theodore's church in Jerash, after Blair 1992 (fig. 10.7, p. 248).
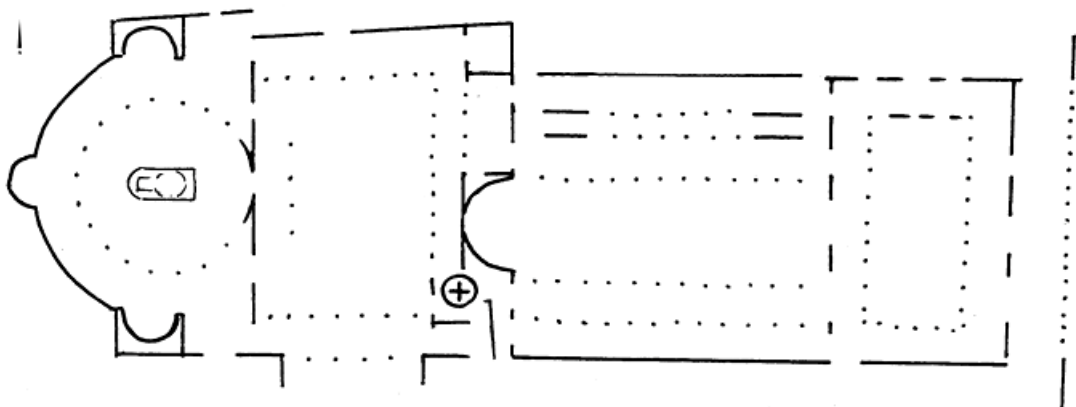
Fig. 4.3. Plan of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, after Blair 1992 (fig. 10.7, p. 248).

At Milan, where the site also dates to the 4th century and the location of the second basilica underneath the present-day cathedral is highly probable, the urban character of the location also is likely to have defined the positioning of the two almost aligned churches (fig. 4.4).[85]
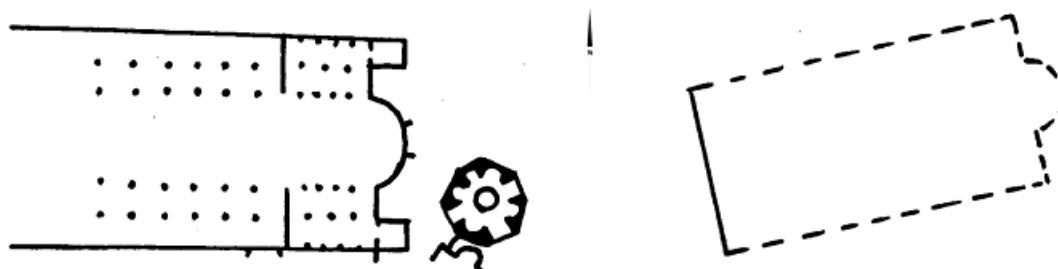
Fig. 4.4. Plan of basilicas at Milan, after Blair 1992 (fig. 10.7, p. 248).

These three cases are of very early date and seem too geographically remote to provide useful comparison with the post-600 Anglo-Saxon examples.[86] In addition, the very logic of building and approach to planning, heavily dictated by the existing urban fabric, is very different from the freedom of planning and the more conscious decision to build in line commonly characteristic of Anglo-Saxon sites. Therefore, I would suggest that they can be eliminated from further enquiry. This leaves the Frankish examples at Ferrières, Angoulême and Melun. In addition, there are sites at Saint-Denis, to which Helen Gittos has drawn particular attention, as well as Chelles, Paris, Amiens, Auxerre, Reims and

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[85] Dale Kinney, pers. comm.; Siena 1990, p. 106; more on the group in Mirabella Roberti 1972. Gino Traversi has proposed that the Basilica Vetus was located on the site of S Vincenzo in Prato. – Traversi 1964, pp. 41-46.

[86] Although Jerusalem is very relevant culturally and liturgically, its specific situation and topography, as well as the nature of spatial arrangements there, do not seem to have much in common with Anglo-Saxon examples.

Marmoutier.[87] I will first briefly discuss these instances of alignment and then introduce the context of other Frankish church groups.

The alignment at Ferrières could be later than is assumed by John Blair, who includes it in a group of sites pre-dating Anglo-Saxon alignment (fig. 4.5).[88] Carron dates the church of Notre-Dame to ca 1000, which means it would have been a late addition to the cluster and therefore not early enough to be considered in the context of influences on Anglo-Saxon architecture.[89]
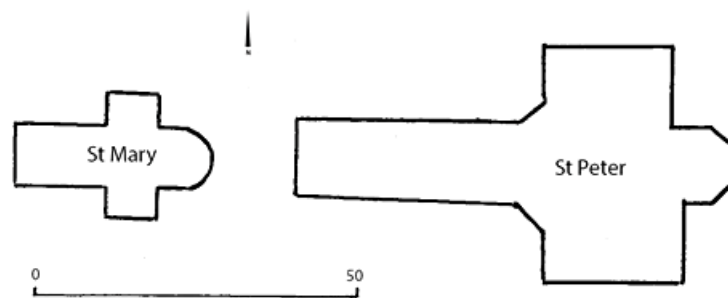
Fig. 4.5. Schematic plan of the churches at Ferrières, after Blair 1992 (fig. 10.7, p. 248).

At Angoulême, Brigitte Boissavit-Camus in her summary of archaeological research only speaks of one basilica in the original 6th-century foundation of the monastery.[90] This conflicts with Jean Hubert's proposal of two early aligned churches at this site.[91]

The only source I could locate on Melun, referenced by John Blair, is Jean Hubert's *Cathédrales Doubles de la Gaule*.[92] Hubert offers a plan of two churches but does not mention them either in his text or in his full catalogue of sites. Duval does not include Melun in his *Premiers Monuments*.[93]

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[87] Gittos 2013, pp. 62-63.
[88] Blair 1992, pp. 247-249, fig. 10.7.
[89] Carron 2014.
[90] Boissavit-Camus 2004, p. 11.
[91] Hubert 1963.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Duval 1995a.

In Paris, the churches of St Stephen (first mentioned in 690) and possibly Notre-Dame (6th c) comprise an aligned group underneath the present-day cathedral of Notre-Dame (fig. 4.6).[94] Both the alignment and the location below a later abbey building seem to relate to Anglo-Saxon examples, for instance, at Hexham, Wells and Glastonbury.
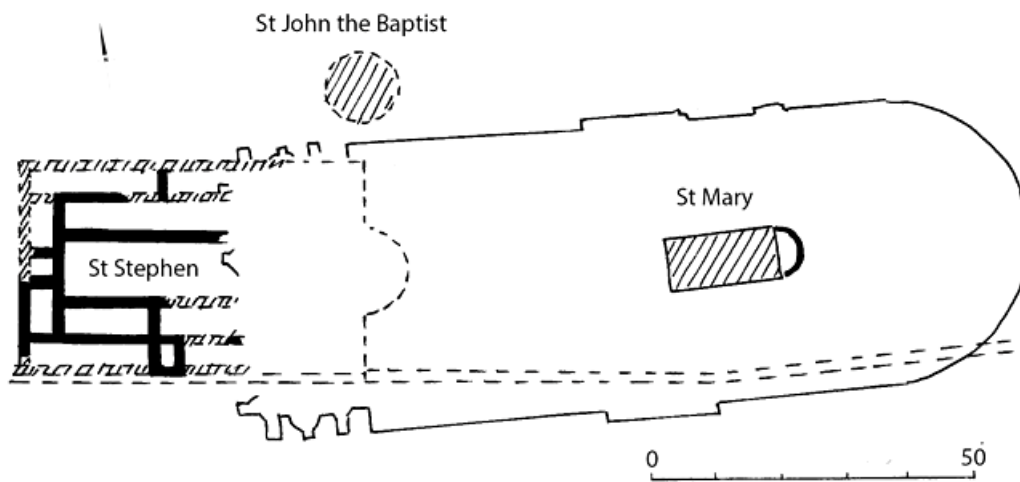
Fig. 4.6. Plan of structures at Paris, after Hubert 1964 (fig. 2, p. 9).

At Chelles, the churches of St George (mid-6th c) and of Notre-Dame (late 7th c) are almost on the same alignment (fig. 4.7). They belong to separate foundations, St George's being founded earlier and belonging to a royal residence, and St Mary's following and being a part of the abbey.[95] The abbey, as Helen Gittos observes, was closely connected with the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy.[96] This could suggest an exchange of cultural and architectural ideas.[97] The direction of influences, however, is difficult to establish.

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[94] Hubert 1964, sp. pp. 16, 18.

[95] Berthelier and Ajot 1995, pp. 184-187.

[96] Gittos 2013, p. 71.

[97] See HE iii.8, pp. 236-240, on Frankish connections; Dierkens 1989; Thacker 2002b, pp. 58-9; all in Gittos 2013, p. 71.
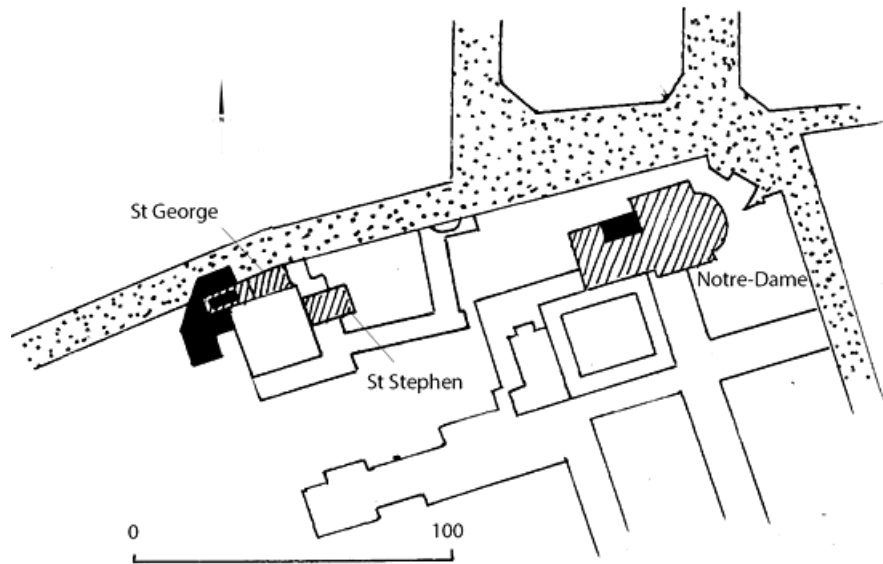
Fig. 4.7. Plan of abbey at Chelles, after Berthelier and Ajot 1995 (unnumbered, p. 184).

At Amiens, the oratory of St Martin (6th c) was axially aligned with the cathedral church of St Mary, at least in the 9th century, when St Mary's is first mentioned, but possibly earlier (fig. 4.8). This could be another example of alignment comparable with the Anglo-Saxon ones.[98]
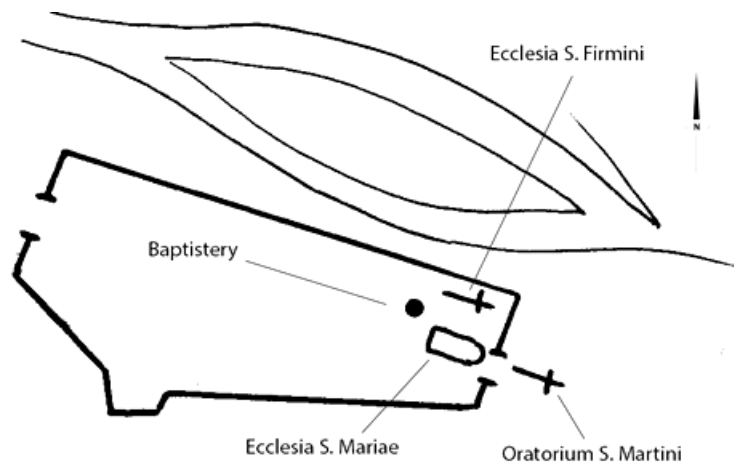
Fig. 4.8. Schematic plan of topography of churches at Amiens, after L. Pietri 1975a (unnumbered appendix).

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[98] L. Pietri 1975a, pp. 2-9.

At Auxerre there are multiple church groups, arranged in various ways, one of them – that of St Christopher, St Germain and the baptistery (all 6th c) - being axially aligned (fig. 4.9).[99]
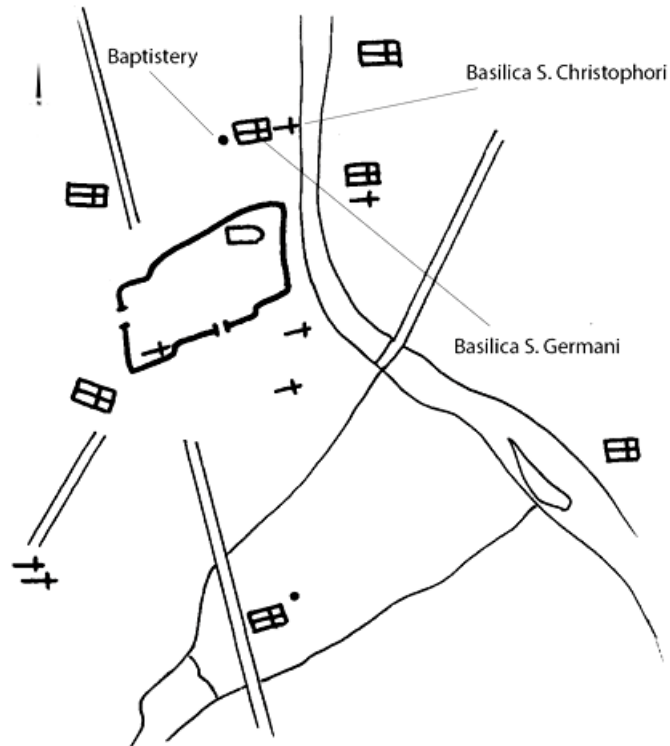
Fig. 4.9. Schematic plan of topography of churches at Auxerre, after Picard 1975 (unnumbered appendix).

Reims is a somewhat controversial case as the basilica Dei Genetricis Mariae (either 5th or 9th c), with its axially aligned baptistery, is also aligned with the church of the Apostles (5th c), which was, however, on the other side of the Roman cardo and located at a distance (fig. 4. 10).[100] However, this is quite similar to the arrangement at Winchcombe, reconstructed by Bassett, where the two major churches were located on either side of a road.

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[99] Picard 1975, pp. 18-25.
[100] L. Pietri 1975b, pp. 73-83.
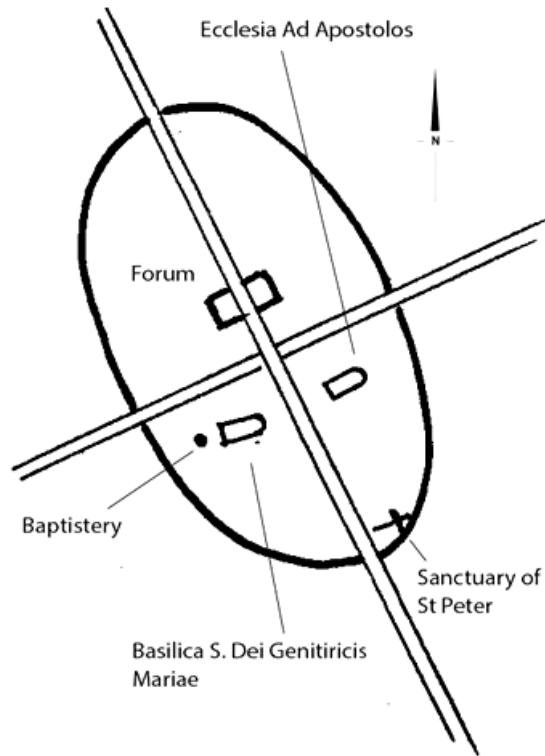
Fig. 4.10. Schematic plan of topography of churches at Reims, after L. Pietri 1975b (unnumbered appendix).

At Marmoutier, only the remains of cells survive but the 5th-century churches of St John and of Sts Peter and Paul are thought to have been built roughly in one line (fig. 4.11).[101]
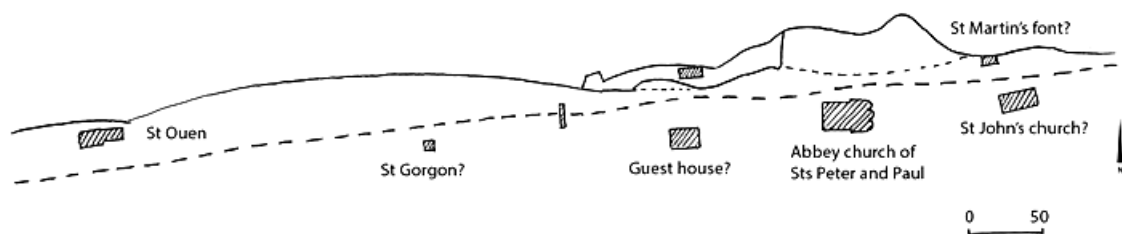
Fig. 4.11. Topography of the monastery at Marmoutier in 11th century (showing possible earlier buildings), after Lorans 2017.

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[101] L. Pietri 1975c, pp. 103-104; Lorans 2017, p. 61.

At Saint-Denis (ca 480 for the abbey church – 7th century), a peculiar arrangement of a string of three churches, dedicated to Saint Barthelmy, Saint Pierre and Saint Paul to the north of the abbey church of Saint Denis is an example of both alignment and side-by-side arrangement at the same time (fig. 4.12). It needs to be noted that only the side-by-side disposition of the churches of St Denis and St Barthelmy is certain and the location of the other two (aligned) churches is hypothetical.[102] There is, however, a multitude of features discovered on the axis of St Barthelmy's church, including a possible palace, suggesting that whatever the precise locations and arrangements of the conjectural churches are, this line did attract multiple buildings and was important.[103]
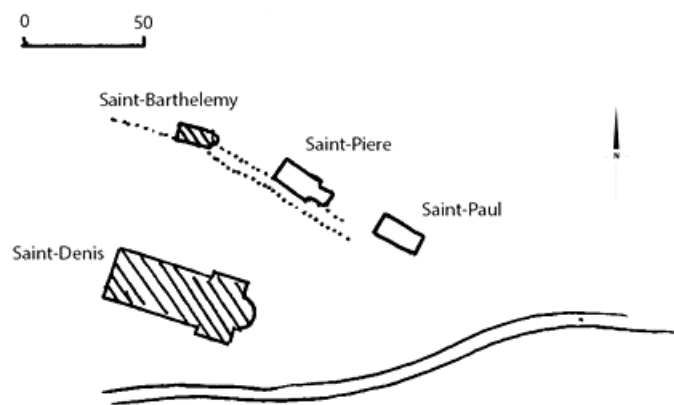
Fig. 4.12. Plan of Saint-Denis in the early Middle Ages (Saint-Pierre and Saint-Paul are conjectural), after Gittos 2013 (fig. 14a, p. 63) and Meyer and Wyss 1995 (unnumbered, p. 202).

From this, it would seem then that there are some similarities between church groups in Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and in Francia, and that alignment is a phenomenon that occurs both in England and in Francia. In this respect, the royal patronage at sites with alignment is a unifying factor and is particularly well illustrated by Saint-Denis, where the patronage of the Merovingian court in the

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[102] Meyer and Wyss 2005, pp. 201-208.
[103] Ibid., p. 202.

7th century was strong.[104] The relationships between the Anglo-Saxon and other Churches is a complex question, informed by the movement of missionaries that brought about diverse traditions and influences between different regions.[105] However, at least until Wilfrid's, Willibrord's and Boniface's missions to the Frankish Empire in the late 7th- 8th century, it is generally assumed that it was the Anglo-Saxon church that was absorbing Continental influences and not the other way around.[106] Indeed John Blair has argued that it was the Frankish churches that were the precursors of the Anglo-Saxon aligned groups.[107] Aided by Fouracre's argument that the Anglo-Saxons looked to Rome for a model of Christianity rather than to the Franks, I would like to suggest otherwise.[108] The dates of the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish aligned groups are difficult to correlate due to the broad range of dates proposed for the Frankish sites, which means that it is difficult to construct an argument based on relative chronology and that

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[104] Hen 2001, pp. 35-36.

[105] Fouracre, for example, has suggested that the Irish, the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks acknowledged their common origins. – Fouracre 2009, p. 127. On Frankish influences on Anglo-Saxon church in the Carolingian period, see Story 2017 and also Levison 1946 (Story's study is building on Levison's research). Wood has argued that the Anglo-Saxon church was already heavily influenced by the Franks in the Merovingian period. - Wood 1992, 1995a. Wilfrid was a key figure both in connections with Francia and in bringing about Romanisation of the Anglo-Saxon church. On Wilfrid, see volume edited by Higham - Higham 2013b; on the complexities of Wilfrid's relationship with the Irish Church, see Stancliffe 2003; on Frankish influences on Wilfrid and Biscop, see Wood 1995a. An alternative argument that it was Anglo-Saxon liturgy that influenced the Frankish one was offered by Hen. – Hen 2002, sp. pp. 312-322. On Columban influence on Anglo-Saxon monasticism, see Stancliffe 2017; Grimmer 2008.

[106] See Blair 1992, pp. 265-266; Howe 2004 and also Cambridge 1999 on architectural features. On Willibrord and Boniface, see Talbot 1954, Yorke 2007, Hen 1997. On Anglo-Saxon missionaries to the Continent, see Bremmer 2007. On the architecture of the Anglo-Saxon mission on the Continent, see Parsons 1983.

[107] See Blair 1992, pp. 246-250.

[108] Fouracre 2009, pp. 131, 133-135. For a similar view, see Howe 2004. Hen has also proposed that the Frankish Church was slower to adopt the Romanising influences. – Hen 2001, p. 64 (see also pp. 42-64), Hen 2011. These two arguments combined suggest that in the 7th century, there must have been a discrepancy between Anglo-Saxon and Frankish liturgical practices, with Anglo-Saxon England looking to Rome and the Frankish Church maintaining its own identity until at least the time of Pippin III (751-768). For an even more dramatic view for Anglo-Saxon and Frankish liturgies developing with a greater degree of independence from Rome that has been thought, see Hen 2002.

answers should be sought elsewhere. Three areas of enquiry – statistics, geography and liturgy – are considered here.

1)Statistically, in England, out of 35 church groups with a pre-conquest foundation and with at least some evidence for the location of churches, 10 feature certain or possible diagonal arrangements, one features churches positioned side by side, and 21 feature churches that are exactly or almost axially aligned or are possibly aligned with other ecclesiastical structures. Even considering the fact that eight of the total number of cases are hypothetical (five axially aligned and three diagonal), there is a clear tendency here for axial alignment (60%) over other forms of spatial arrangement. By comparison, 6 out of the 47 Frankish sites with church groups I have looked at are definitely aligned, and four more - at Ferrières, Angoulême, Melun and Marmoutier – possibly aligned. The dominant type of arrangement of Frankish church groups, widely scattered geographically, is side-by-side, comprising 51% of sites. The number of diagonal arrangements is marginally higher than that of aligned ones – 13 as opposed to 10.

This means that 21.3% of Frankish church groups are definitely or possibly aligned, as opposed to 62.9% in Anglo-Saxon England. Sites further afield have not been considered in this paper but alignment elsewhere on the Continent is even rarer than in Gaul.

Anglo-Saxon church groups

Aligned ■ Diagonal ■ Parallel ■ Unknown
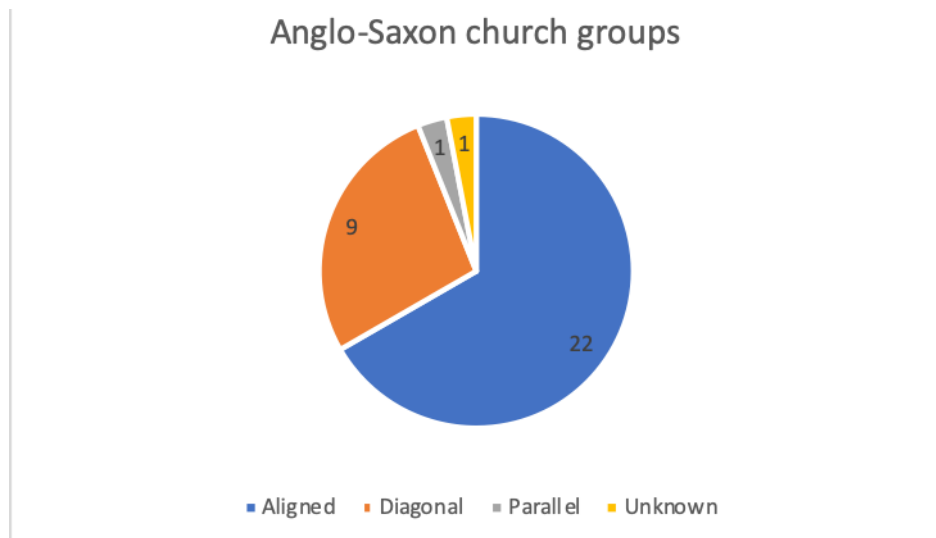
Graph 4.2. Statistical assessment of different spatial arrangements across Anglo-Saxon church groups.

Frankish church groups

Aligned ■ Diagonal ■ Parallel ■ Conjoined ■ Perpendicular ■ Triangular
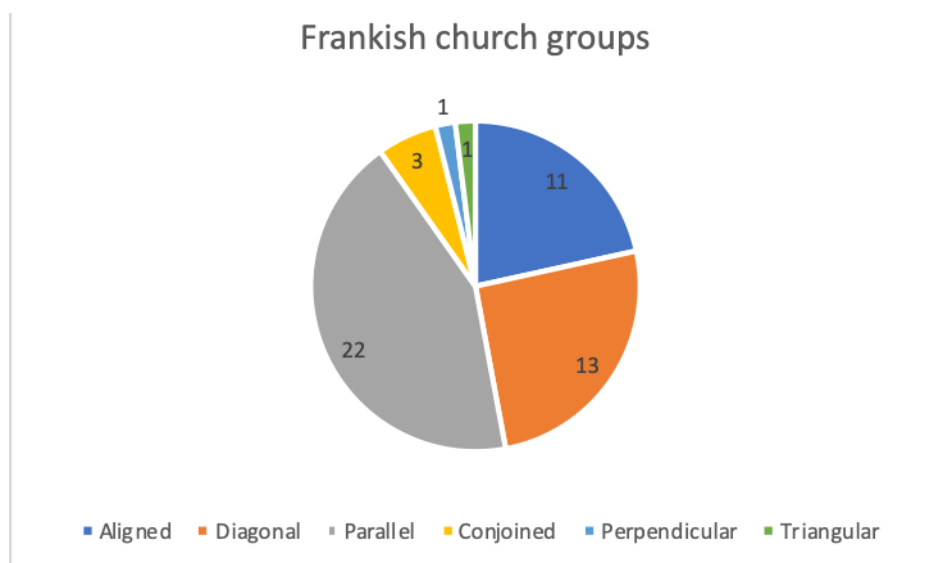
Graph 4.3. Statistical assessment of different spatial arrangements across Frankish church groups.

2) *Geographically,* it is clear that the more definite Frankish examples of alignment are concentrated in Northern France around Paris, with the more hypothetical ones, such as Angoulême and Ferrières, located in the west of France.[109] The geographical proximity of these regions to the British Isles, where

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[109] The clustering of groups with alignment around Paris has been noted by Helen Gittos. – Gittos 2013, p. 62.

there was a particular interest in and presence of alignment, could point to alignment being primarily an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, which found its way to Northern Europe. In favour of this geographic observation is also the fact that in the south of modern France, the footprints of groups include conjoined (i.e. sharing a side wall) churches or other annexes, such as chapels and baptisteries, which are more commonly found in Jordan, Palestine and North Africa. This may be an indication that influences in this region came in from across the Mediterranean. Examples include Grenoble and Linguizetta.[110] Thus, Frankish territories demonstrate gravitation of different types towards different regions, indicating where influences could have come from, and this regional distribution seems to point towards the northern, Anglo-Saxon, origins of alignment.
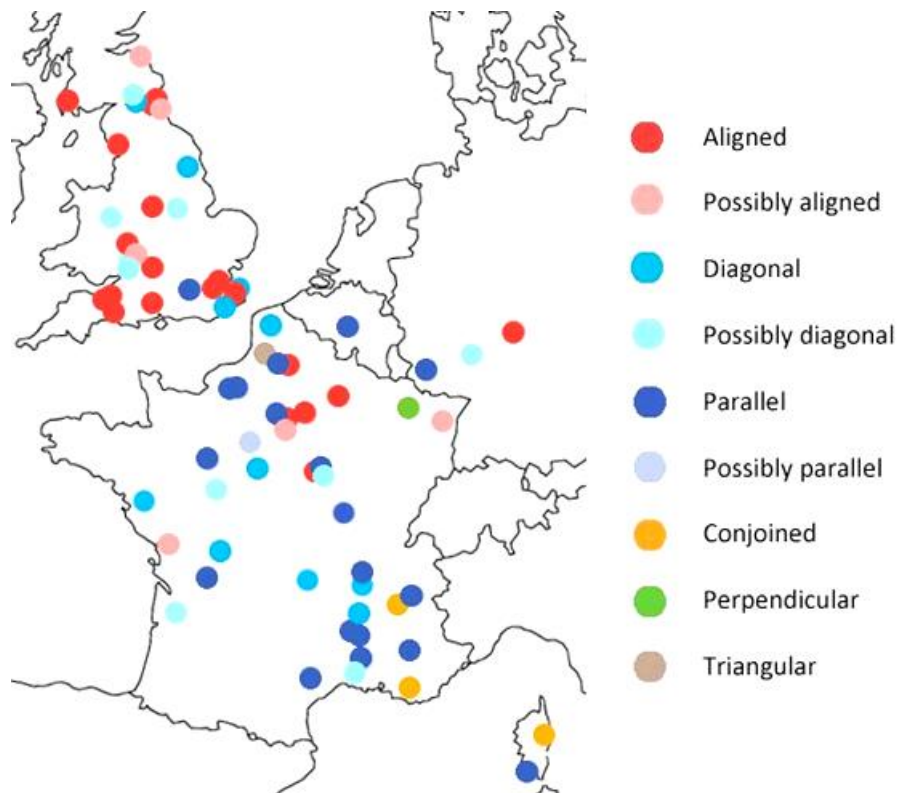
Map 4.1. Schematic map of distribution of church groups with different types of spatial arrangement.

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[110] See map 4.1 ('conjoined' churches).

3) *Liturgically*, how were these churches used? The use of Anglo-Saxon church groups has been addressed above, but there is one thing to note in relation to the possible use of Frankish church groups: the range of variations in arrangements even across Francia - from the parallel churches at Nivelles, to the perpendicularly positioned ones at Metz, to the diagonally located ones at Thérouanne, to the axially aligned ones at Paris.[111] This would suggest that although the *grouping* of those churches was important their *precise position* in relation to each other was not. There were degrees of regional variation in the liturgy – for instance, H.A. Wilson has suggested that the version of the Gelasian Sacramentary recorded in Vatican MS Reg. lat. 316 demonstrates a variety of influences adopted for local use.[112] Hen also notes a variety of liturgical practices in the 5th-7th centuries and even later.[113] If the types of arrangement of churches did indeed respond to the types of liturgy, it is impossible to trace direct correlations between them. However, a lot of liturgical practices were very local, focussing on different prayers and celebration of saints' days, whereas the types of church arrangements were widespread apart from a small number of odd cases (see map 4.1), suggesting that perhaps there was no link at all.[114]

Although the Frankish church adopted different layouts, with some regional preference, the dominant type of arrangement across the sites, widely scattered geographically, was side-by-side, comprising 51% of cases. Overall, there seems to be a much greater variety in spatial arrangements in Frankish church groups than in the Anglo-Saxon ones.

Thus, the evidence would seem to point to the architectural rhetoric of alignment as being characteristic of Anglo-Saxon England, likely originating there and subsequently spreading to the north of Gaul, something that is evident in the geography of the distribution of sites. Despite the commonly accepted view that

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[111] For Metz, see Heitz 2005; for Thérouanne, see Duval 1995b; for Paris, see Hubert 1983.
[112] Wilson 1894, p. xxvii.
[113] Hen 2001, pp. 28, 30-31, 33.
[114] On local character of liturgy, see ibid.

it was the Frankish Church that for the most part led Anglo-Saxon practice in this, there could have been a more mutual process of exchange, and sites with alignment in France, especially the concentration around Paris, may instead be the result of Anglo-Saxon impact on the Continent.

Other areas to look to for architectural comparison are Ireland and Scotland. Patrick Gleeson has argued that in Ireland, axes and large-scale axial compositions in the landscape served a fundamental ideological purpose of validating the power of kings through the creation of processional routes across existing landscapes of power.[115] Architectural alignment, however, is not a characteristic of Irish church groups. John Blair has already noted that the churches at Armagh and Kildare recall Continental rather than Anglo-Saxon groups, being arranged side by side and not in one line.[116] Similarly, no instances of aligned churches have been identified in Scotland.[117]

The last notable area to consider is modern-day Germany, which was a prominent destination for Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the 8th century and could bear evidence of Anglo-Saxon architectural influence. Interestingly, Boniface's mission to Hessen was characterised by the construction of churches in fortified locations and with bifocal arrangements, with both the east and the west ends emphasised as significant. This is something that was not typical for Anglo-Saxon architecture, with the lone exception of Canterbury cathedral.[118] However, one example of possible alignment is to be found at Fulda after 744, and could be a direct result of Anglo-Saxon architectural influence, mediated by St Boniface's mission.[119] In this case alignment is in Boniface's favourite monastery and could have been a consciously introduced feature of Anglo-Saxon origin.

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[115] Gleeson 2012.

[116] Blair 1992, pp. 256-257.

[117] On Scotland, see Friell and Watson 1984.

[118] Parsons 1983, p. 280.

[119] Parsons 1983, pp. 300-302; for plan and dating, see Oswald *et al* 1990, i, pp. 84-86, insert facing p. 80. This rests on the assumption that the original church to the west pre-dated Boniface's mission and the eastern church was added to it. – Hahn 1980, pp. 59-62, 69-70.

Overall, it seems that geographically, the phenomenon of alignment reaches beyond the British Isles. However, in a form that is comparable to Anglo-Saxon examples, it does not spread further than northern Gaul and Fulda in Germany. While Fulda may demonstrate a direct link between alignment there and across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the nature of influences in the Frankish examples of alignment is more difficult to pin down, although there is a general pattern of cultural exchange between the British Isles and Gaul.[120] Statistically and geographically, as has been demonstrated above, axial alignment is likely to have been an Insular phenomenon that found its way to the Continent, rather than the other way around.

2.3. Liturgy and dedication patterns

Churches of course are designed to facilitate liturgy. The relationship between axial alignment and the liturgical use of aligned churches is among the primary concerns in this attempt to establish the reasons for alignment and understand its role in the use of the buildings. Before proceeding with a discussion of alignment in relation to liturgy, let us consider what we know about Anglo-Saxon liturgy.

To date, perhaps the most fundamental work on the history of Anglo-Saxon liturgy is that of Richard Pfaff.[121] Helen Gittos has also written extensively on the subject of liturgy in the late Anglo-Saxon period, including an assessment of liturgy in parish churches, based on analysis of the Book of Darley, and has advanced a methodological framework for further research.[122] Other major contributions to our knowledge and understanding of Anglo-Saxon liturgy have

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[120] See, for example, Story 2017; Wood 1990, 1992, 1995a; Palmer 2009; Wallace-Hadrill 1950.
[121] See Pfaff 2009.
[122] See Gittos 2001, 2005b, 2011, 2013, 2016.

been made by Vogel, Billett, Bradford Bedingfield and Cubitt.[123] Knowles and Foot have written on monasticism in Anglo-Saxon England.[124]

However, despite the volume of information on liturgy in the late Anglo-Saxon period, we do not know as much about the earlier periods. Knowles, for example, has stated that the history of Anglo-Saxon monasticism can only be attempted from Dunstan's time, as the evidence from before then is too random.[125] At the same time, having concluded that alignment first developed in the 7th century, it is this period we should be asking questions about in exploring the possibility of a relationship between liturgy and alignment. It would be tempting to project what we know about later Anglo-Saxon liturgy back onto the 7th century. However, there is no obvious justification for doing this.[126]

We know that the possibly Frankish Gelasian Sacramentary of the 8th century – a papal initiative - was in use in Anglo-Saxon England.[127] The kinds of service books Bede had access to were also predominantly Gelasian.[128] Both the Synod of Whitby in 664 and the Council of Clofesho in 747 pronounced for the adoption of Roman usages. Cubitt has argued that Anglo-Saxon liturgy in the 8th century was a mixture of Roman and non-Roman practices.[129]

The further back in time, the more sparse the evidence is, especially for the 7th century, the era with which this enquiry is particularly concerned. Pfaff

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[123] Vogel 1986; Billett 2014; Bradford Bedingfield 2000, 2002; Gittos and Bradford Bedingfield, ed., 2005; Cubitt 1996.

[124] Foot 2006; Knowles 1963.

[125] Knowles 1963, p. xix.

[126] John Blair also warns against attempting such an extrapolation. – Blair 2005, p. 6.

[127] See Moreton 1976, Wilson 1894 and Hen 2001, pp. 57-61. In addition to the 8th-century, 'young', Gelasian sacramentary, liturgy in Anglo-Saxon Church was generally influenced by the Gelasian strand of liturgical texts. – Pfaff 2009, pp. 41-45. Bullough has also said that the Sacramentaries used in Anglo-Saxon churches in the 7th-8th centuries were close to 'Old Gelasian' (Vat. Reg. Lat 316). – Bullough 1983, p. 12. Cubitt has further explored the influence of the Old Gelasian strand on Anglo-Saxon liturgy, particularly the mid-8th-century likely Northumbrian Regensburg Sacramentary. – Cubitt 1995, pp. 132-149; Cubitt 1996, pp. 51-55. On distinctions between 'Old' and 'Young' Gelasian Sacramentaries, see Pfaff 2009, pp. 57-58.

[128] Pfaff 2009, p. 41.

[129] Cubitt 1995, pp. 130-132.

notes: 'what cannot be attempted at all is liturgy in the West before Gregory the Great'.[130] This means that patterns of Christian worship across England prior to 597 are more or less completely unknown. Considering Gregory's invitation to St Augustine to select suitable liturgy from a variety of churches and his rather gentle approach to pagan temples, it is likely that pre-existing Christian customs are likely to have survived and become intertwined with new ones introduced by Augustine.[131] Pfaff also suggests a variety of ways pre-597 Christianity in England would have shaped itself in response to particular influences, although we know nothing about the shape of the liturgy before Augustine.[132] It is even more frustrating that 'no even remotely useful fragments survive from before ca 670 from north of the English channel', which means the situation remains bleak for much of the century after Augustine's arrival.[133] Even later in the 7th century, evidence is very limited: we know that daily office was carefully observed at Wearmouth and Jarrow but the office books do not survive.[134] Even in the later period, from when the written sources have survived, we do not know how exactly liturgy was practised, as Gittos and Symes have noted.[135] Nothing at all can be said about worship at 'minsters' and smaller churches until the 9th century.[136] However, considering the strong Roman and Frankish influences at play, it is likely that from 597 the liturgy did not differ greatly at least in some of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (those that welcomed the work of Augustine's mission) and on the Continent. It is likely that the books Augustine brought with

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[130] Pfaff 2009, p. 12.

[131] HE i.27, pp. 80-82; i.30, pp. 106-108; even discussions of correlation between architecture and liturgy seem inconclusive. – see Gem 2005, 2015. On the complexity and limitations of 'Romanness' in Anglo-Saxon liturgy, see also Billett 2011.

[132] Pfaff 2009, p. 33.

[133] Ibid., p. 38.

[134] Bede, however, tells us that Benedict Biscop, on his fifth visit to Rome, in 678-9, introduced to his new monastery at Wearmouth the Roman mode of chanting, singing and ministering in the church. – *Historia Abbatum*, in Webb and Farmer 1998, ch. 6; HE iv.18, p. 388; Foot 2006, p. 192; Pfaff 2009, pp. 51-52.

[135] Gittos 2016, p. 20; Symes 2016, p. 239.

[136] Pfaff 2009, pp. 44-45, 53, 64.

him to Canterbury were Roman rather than Gallican. At the same time, however, the liturgical practice Bishop Liudhard brought with him when he moved to Kent around 580 would have been Gallican.[137] Outside Kent, however, things might have been very different and not always successful: we do know that Bishop Mellitus was driven away from London after an unsuccessful attempt of Conversion – this episode already paints a more nuanced picture than the idea of Augustine's mission having an even and immediate influence across the English kingdoms. In addition, as Gittos and Blair have indicated, a high degree of diversity is apparent in 9th- and 10th-century sources. It could be that similar, or even greater, diversity was present in the preceding centuries.[138]

Rather problematically for our understanding of how church buildings functioned, there is a tendency for architectural settings to be seen as sources of evidence for the process and shape of liturgical performance and vice versa, while evidence is limited in both areas.[139] This problem is particularly acute in the case of Anglo-Saxon churches known from archaeological excavation, where the small amount of available evidence contrasts sharply with much more extensive archaeological remains in the Mediterranean.[140] In Anglo-Saxon England, especially in the early period, we often simply do not seem to have enough architecture remaining to support definite statements about liturgical use. This is not to say that the task is impossible but merely to point out the limitations associated with the evidence. Attempts to extract information about liturgy from the architectural remains so far have not met with great success.[141]

As far as can be concluded from observation of the limited architectural evidence considered here, Anglo-Saxon aligned churches are a representative

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[137] Pfaff 2009, pp. 35-367; Ashworth 1958. The Romanisation of Gallican liturgy in Francia did not happen until after Pippin III. – See Hen 2001, p. 64 (see also pp. 42-64), Hen 2011.

[138] Gittos 2016, p. 13; Blair 2010, p. 177.

[139] See, for example, Marino Malone 2016; Gittos 2005a; Gittos 2016, p. 32; Gem 2005.

[140] Compare, for instance, Jarrow and Hippo or Djemila, where aspects of liturgical use can be reconstructed from the existing remains of the buildings.

[141] See Marino Malone 2016; Gem 2005.

type of 'church group' – a phenomenon widely spread across Europe and the Mediterranean basin. If there is any functional, historical, social or liturgical link between the groups in Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent, in the absence of evidence for liturgical use in the Anglo-Saxon church groups, it would seem reasonable to consider what we know of the liturgy in church groups in Europe and in particular the role of the Roman stational liturgy.

Jean Hubert has stated that some double churches, for instance, those in Milan and Brescia were used at different seasons: that St Mary's was the winter church and the second one, dedicated to a martyr, was used in the summer.[142] Hubert's observation, however, does not seem to be supported by any factual evidence. A similar hypothesis, but supported by marginally better evidence, has been proposed for a group of churches at Mar-Auraha in Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq.[143]

At Djemila in Algeria and Umm er-Rasas in Jordan, one of the churches may have been used primarily for the first communion after baptism, judging by the presence of an adjacent baptistery. In addition, architectural ensembles at both sites seem to serve a variety of distinct functions and to create coherent liturgical routes.[144] Ann Marie Yasin has observed that the separation of Eucharistic space from the focus of relic veneration led to the construction of architecturally distinct spaces for both.[145] Jean Hubert and Edgar Lehmann have associated Continental church groups with deliberately separate dedications to individual saints, which resulted in the construction of separate churches rather than the introduction of additional altars.[146] Ian Wood has further argued that in

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[142] Hubert 1977, p. 88. The evidence Hubert uses, however, is unclear.

[143] Yakobson 1983, pp. 79-81.

[144] On Djemila, see Leschi 1953 and Février 1964; on Umm er-Rasas, see Piccirillo 1991, 1994, and Moskvina 2016.

[145] Yasin 2014, p. 250.

[146] Lehmann 1962; Hubert 1985, pp. 288-90; Hubert associates individual dedications to St Mary and St Peter with St Columba and his followers; Ian Wood strongly disagrees with this - Wood pers. comm.- on the grounds that the popularity of St Peter started to spread after Sigismund brought his relics to the

Merovingian monasteries, where multiple altars in one church were uncommon, a number of churches with different dedications secured a number of patrons for the monastery.[147] Finally, St Augustine of Hippo mentions moving from one church to another in the course of the Eucharistic liturgy, and this would imply the clustering of multiple churches in one place to separate the *Missa Catechumenorum* from the *Missa Fidelium*.[148] At the site of Augustine's basilica at Hippo Regius, a second church is situated to the south-west of the main basilica, possibly to accommodate a 'twofold' Eucharistic liturgy of this kind.[149]

These are some of the possible uses that have been proposed for double churches. However, in Anglo-Saxon England, there does not seem to be any evidence in favour of any one of them. Furthermore, as Helen Gittos has observed, it does not seem plausible that church groups were built to a single liturgical or functional template; rather it is likely that there were a variety of individual reasons underlying their groupings.[150]

Finally, the grouping of churches has been discussed in the context of stational liturgy.[151] Stational liturgy originated in Jerusalem and became particularly prominent in Rome, with the mass being celebrated in different basilicas or titular churches, depending on the occasion. The use of different churches for services was particularly evident in Lent and Holy Week.[152] The influence of Rome was significant across Christendom, and the symbolic emulation of the topography of Rome on a small scale through the construction

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Rhone valley in the 5th century, whereas the cult of the Virgin was promoted by Venantius Fortunatus in the 6th century; see also Wood 1986.

[147] Wood 1981, p. 41.

[148] See Norman 1944, p. 189.

[149] The second basilica was clearly observed on site in 2017 but does not appear on published plans. – see Appendix 2, Photo 6.

[150] Gittos 2013, pp. 97-102.

[151] Not the same as processional liturgy – see below. For Anglo-Saxon England, see Gittos 2013, chapter 4, esp. p. 145; Taylor 1978, iii, p. 1020; for Francia, see Doig 2010, pp. 119-120, quoting MS lat. 268, Bibliothèque Nationale, for evidence of stational masses adopted in Rome by Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz (742-766).

[152] Baldovin 1987, pp. 153-7.

of multiple churches in one location was not unknown.[153] It is very possible that the Anglo-Saxon church followed a similar architectural template and that the liturgy was performed in different churches on various occasions, particularly underlined by the presence of different dedications, mirroring those in Rome. During Holy Week in Rome, major basilicas dedicated to patron saints were visited in the order of the patrons' importance for the city.[154] A similar hierarchy of saints and of churches dedicated to them may have existed in Anglo-Saxon England. At the same time, stational liturgy in Rome is inherently metropolitan in character – the churches are scattered across the city but easily reachable.[155] By contrast, the majority of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites, especially the monastic ones, encompass only a small number of known churches within an area – a scale definitely more modest than that of Rome.[156] This still does not mean that the two churches at Jarrow, for instance, could not have been used as two separate stations; it only means that stational liturgy would not have been performed on the same scale.

In addition to stational liturgy, there were liturgical processions, also linking different churches. Despite the fact that processions only became a common aspect of stational liturgy after the latter was already established, they were a distinct firmly established part of Roman liturgy by the time of Gregory the Great.[157] This is the time when this tradition could have been adopted in Britain as well. Baldovin, however, argues that these processions had an urban character and were intended to bring liturgy to the streets and out into the public. They would require walking some distance whilst singing the psalmody and

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[153] For stational liturgy in Rome, see Baldovin 1987, chapters 3 and 4; Emerick 2005; de Blaauw 2002; Doig 2010, sp. pp. 91-93.

[154] Baldovin 1987, p. 156.

[155] See the map of churches in Rome in Emerick 2005, fig. 1.

[156] Ó Carragáin has proposed the possibility of a small-scale version of stational liturgy in England, suggesting its non-urban character. - Ó Carragáin 1994, sp. p. 11.

[157] Baldovin 1987, pp. 151, 158-9, quoting also the *Epistolae* of Gregory the Great.

tended to start at a church with a piazza in front.[158] How could the same principles have been acted out in an Anglo-Saxon context, in the absence of large urban spaces?

Public processions in Canterbury and Winchester in the late Anglo-Saxon period are well-documented and have been the subject of study.[159] These had a collaborative character, bringing different communities together in worship.[160] Although little is known of the liturgy in individual minsters, and nothing at all from the early to middle Anglo-Saxon periods, we know of dramatic processions from the later sources (i.e. the *Regularis Concordia*), particularly prominent at Candlemas, Palm Sunday and Rogationtide.[161] Bedingfield, however, has suggested that when Palm Sunday processions appear in eyewitness accounts from 10-11th-century Anglo-Saxon England, they seem fairly early and experimental in character, perhaps implying their late origin.[162] Processions in Rogationtide, on the other hand, are more likely to go back to the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. These, more than others, were distinguished by a strongly pronounced stational aspect.[163] However, all the evidence we have for processions in Anglo-Saxon England seems to refer to walks of some distance between separate churches, some with singing on the way, and only a couple of very specific ones between buildings situated next door to each other.[164]

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[158] Baldovin 1987, pp. 158-163.

[159] Most notably, in Gittos 2013, chapter 4, and Bradford Bedingfield 2002.

[160] Gittos 2013, pp. 129-134; Bradford Bedinglfield 2002, pp. 58-9.

[161] See translation of *Regularis Concordia* in Symons 1953.

[162] Bradford Bedingfield 2002, p. 95.

[163] Ibid., pp. 191-197.

[164] Gittos 2013, pp. 134-144; Gittos discusses a procession to mark Ceolfrith's departure from Wearmouth in 716, where both churches at Wearmouth were visited, but the emphasis was still on the walk between Wearmouth and Jarrow, rather than the churches next door. A burial procession in Winchester is also recorded in the 11th century, where visiting both Old and New Minsters and all neighbouring churches was considered important. – Gittos 2013, pp. 107-108, 140-141. Singing of psalmody mentioned by Bede, describing processions from Hexham to the cross, and subsequently a church, at Heavenfield. – HE iii.2, pp. 214-216; also in a 11th-century burial rite in Winchester – Turner 1916, p. 66; both mentioned in Gittos 2013; Rogationtide processions described by Aelfric in late 10th century urge the participants not to ride, suggesting a fair distance. – Bradford Bedingfield 2002, p. 195.

Processions between churches within a monastery are known at Saint-Riquier, and these could be taken to throw light on Anglo-Saxon church groups; however, these still involved walking for up to 300 metres from one church to another. [165] This of course opens up the question of whether the churches at Saint-Riquier constituted a 'group' in the same sense that the Anglo-Saxon churches built right next to each other did.

The sites considered here have their churches nucleated rather than spread out; thus, even in urban locations, their layout is not commensurate with extended large-scale dramatic processions from one church to another. This is not to say that processions would not have been performed between them, or that these churches were not suitable for stational liturgy, but their architectural layout does not seem to suggest that movement between the buildings was among the primary planning aspects.

Something else is at play when buildings are constructed in such close proximity and in one line. In contrast to a great number of Continental complexes, where movement is guided by architectural layouts and points of access, Anglo-Saxon churches do not seem to offer any visible guidelines with regard to movement between the buildings. Instead, churches appear to be structurally conceived as autonomous, and the assessment of the functions of individual buildings within groups offered above seems to suggest their independent use. Having more than one church in one location could have been beneficial on occasions such as Palm Sunday, when a change of location as a part of the liturgy

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More evidence for urban processions is quoted in Blair 1992, p. 258, ft. 125 – all of them are between churches situated at a distance from each other, rather than in a tight architectural group.

[165] Rabe 1995, pp. 122-132. In addition, it is known that St Riquier would have used Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries, as recorded in the 9th-century inventory, - the same rites that would have been used in Anglo-Saxon England. – Wilson 1894, p. liv. On Anglo-Saxon church using Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries – Dix 1945, pp. 576-8.

was encouraged, or for various kinds of processions, but otherwise this may not have been among the primary considerations in the planning of church groups. [166]

Whatever the shape of the liturgy in church groups was, it still does not seem to explain architectural alignment. As we have seen, Anglo-Saxon church groups, and Frankish ones even more so, demonstrate a variety of spatial arrangements, which parallels a variety in liturgical practices, making any direct connections between the two virtually untraceable. [167] It would seem, however, that there is not necessarily a connection between the specific positions of churches and their liturgical use. As an example, Ian Wood has called attention to the 'disconcerting casualness' of the disposition of the churches at Nivelles. [168] The prevalence of alignment in Anglo-Saxon church groups suggests that either Anglo-Saxon liturgy included something that was facilitated by the linear disposition of churches – something that, unfortunately, we have no knowledge of - or that there is an altogether different, perhaps non-liturgical, reason why Anglo-Saxon churches were aligned.

Another issue is the potential significance of the positions of churches with particular dedications – this has been raised in the context of some Frankish groups. However, no conclusive parallels between positions and dedications have been observed in Anglo-Saxon context. [169]

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[166] The change of location after the blessing of the palms is still written into both Roman and English missals. – Roman Missal 1957, p. 194; English Missal 1958, p. 187; Mark Spurrell has pointed out that even the *Regularis Concordia* says nothing on whether the processions mentioned are between churches within or outside the monastic enclosure. – Spurrell 1992, p. 167.

[167] On diversity in Frankish liturgy in the Merovingian period, which continued even later under Charlemagne, see Hen 2001, pp. 30-31, 33, 72-73.

[168] Wood 1981, p. 43.

[169] Similarities in dedication patterns between Anglo-Saxon and Continental church groups have been proposed by John Blair. - Blair 1992, p. 257. While it is true that it was quite common for one of the churches within a group to be dedicated to one of the Apostles and another to the Virgin, Jean Hubert has observed that Frankish church groups tend to have the church dedicated to the Virgin situated to the west (Hubert 1985, pp. 288-91), whereas in Anglo-Saxon England its location is not fixed. Out of 22 Anglo-Saxon aligned church groups, 11 include one dedicated to St Mary. Of these, 4 are situated to the west, 2 in the middle and 5 to the east. The pairing of churches of St Mary and one of the apostles is common but positioning of churches with certain dedications does not seem to follow a rule.

3. Final thoughts

Before moving on, we shall draw some conclusions on the character of alignment at ecclesiastical sites. This chapter has resulted in the elimination of most of the possible functional and practical reasons for architectural alignment. There is no obvious liturgical function that would require the buildings to be arranged in one line. In fact, our knowledge of liturgy in Anglo-Saxon churches is generally obscure, and even specific functions, such as baptism or pilgrimage, are not easy to discern from the surviving architectural and archaeological remains. Topographically, there is no evidence to suggest that the existing shape of the landscape determined the axial orientation of churches. The nature of the relationship between the new Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites and existing, mostly Roman, structures is controversial and inconclusive, in some cases suggesting that alignment of Anglo-Saxon churches followed earlier Roman layouts, in others indicating quite strongly that Anglo-Saxon alignment deliberately broke with a Roman plan. That said, the relationship between ecclesiastical sites and Roman foundations seems a lot stronger than that between Anglo-Saxon secular settlements and Roman antecedents.

In comparison with secular case-studies, it is very difficult to assess relationships between the churches themselves and their immediate surroundings, and this significantly limits our understanding of axial alignment and functional zoning within the sites. Jarrow, Hartlepool and Whitby are the only sites at which the arrangements of monastic buildings other than churches have been recorded.[170] Vallums surrounding monastic sites deliberately have not been considered due to the inconsistency of the evidence and their probably limited relevance to the alignment of churches.

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[170] For buildings at Whitby, see Cramp 1993a; Rahtz 1976b; Peers and Radford 1943. For Hartlepool, see Daniels 1988.

As far as the plans of the buildings could be reconstructed and the points of access into them established, there is no immediately obvious practical explanation of alignment either. By contrast with hall complexes, Anglo-Saxon churches seem to have been conceived as independent and functionally distinct entities, with no evidence of direct access from one building into another. With regard to Continental influences and the hypothesis that Anglo-Saxon alignment simply derives from Continental practice, it has been possible to demonstrate that this is unlikely and that alignment in fact seems to be an insular phenomenon which had a marked impact on the north of Gaul, not the other way around. Instead, in the light of this absence of practical and functional reasons, the seemingly non-functional features, such as lines of stones and graves at Whithorn and the curious differences in alignment of the three churches at St Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury, begin to stand out.

Chronologically, as in the case of the halls, the most intriguing cases of ecclesiastical alignment occur in the 7th century, with 'echoes' of this arrangement in the later centuries. As this chapter has demonstrated, both the origins and functions of alignment in church groups are difficult to pin down. However, some of the findings, as well as the questions that emerged from the discussion, are presented in a different light below, in contrast and comparison with the secular sites, and in the search for the origins of alignment in both secular and ecclesiastical contexts.

Chapter 5: Summary of observations and prehistoric context

It is now clear that none of the lines of enquiry followed so far has succeeded in tracing the origins of alignment or in explaining its rationale and purpose. In this chapter, some final questions are addressed: is alignment in secular and ecclesiastical contexts an expression of the same phenomenon and, following on from this question, is it possible to say more about the origins of alignment?

1. Alignment in secular and ecclesiastical contexts – is it the same thing?

So far, cases of alignment at ecclesiastical and secular sites have been considered separately and largely treated as two distinct phenomena.[1] However, one of the central hypotheses being tested here is that there are significant similarities between the two, that the phenomenon of *alignment* was an equally common characteristic of both halls and churches, in short, that these are two aspects of the same thing. Among the key attributes of secular and ecclesiastical sites to compare are their dating, status and some physical features associated with the settlements, which are considered below.

1.1. Status

It has been proposed that alignment in architectural groups is an expression of status, but this idea has been based on fairly unsystematic correlations between linearity and specific examples of high-status architecture.[2] While this does indeed seem to be the case for individual sites, this study

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[1] Blair talks about monastic sites in their Continental context, only mentioning in passing that native traditions such as that found at Yeavering may have influenced the development of linearity at ecclesiastical sites. – Blair 1992, p. 250. Further, Blair and Reynolds discuss the planning of secular sites without addressing ecclesiastical layouts. – Blair 2013 and Reynolds 2003. Helen Gittos, having noted alignment at both secular and ecclesiastical Anglo-Saxon sites, still doubts their common origin. – Gittos 2013, p. 73.

[2] Explicitly stated in Reynolds 2002, p. 112.

attempts to analyse the use of architectural alignment systematically and to explore whether there really is a consistent connection between alignment and elite status over a range of sites.

First we have to assess available evidence about the status of sites, such as the circumstances of commission, at *both* secular and ecclesiastical sites with alignment, and then draw conclusions about the consistency of correlations between status and architectural alignment.

Secular sites

Yeavering, where alignment is most prominent, has been convincingly identified as Ad Gefrin, a documented royal vill, and so is a clear case of a settlement in which alignment is associated with the highest status.[3] According to Brian Hope-Taylor's interpretation, Yeavering was a direct outcome of political anxiety over the power of Northumbrian kings.[4] A degree of competition between the Bernician Æthelfrith and the Deiran Edwin, both of whom contributed to the development of the complex at Yeavering, might also be of significance: even in the united Northumbria, the tensions between the Deiran and Bernician dynasties were still ongoing in the 7th century.[5]

Nearby, **Sprouston** perhaps could be seen in a similar context. Although J.K.S. St Joseph initially argued for a more modest character for this settlement, Ian Smith subsequently argued for its royal status on the basis of similarities with Yeavering, surrounding agricultural infrastructure, and later references to Sprouston as a royal estate.[6]

Paralleling the developments in Northumbria, the powerful Kentish dynasty made similar claims to position and power. Based on the dating proposed for the south hall (600-650AD), the construction of the complex at **Lyminge**,

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[3] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 1-5.

[4] Ibid., ch. 6, sp. pp. 276-307.

[5] Hunter Blair 2003, p. 45.

[6] St Joseph 1981, p. 198; Smith 1991, pp. 285-288.

which has been identified as a royal settlement, could have coincided with the reign of Aethelberht (ca 589-616), whose outstanding status was emphasised by Bede.[7]

The settlements at **Drayton** and **Long Wittenham** seem to fit firmly into the context of the royal power of Wessex, being located on the Thames, on the front line of political conflict between Wessex and Mercia, and connected by a trackway to Dorchester-on-Thames, the seat of the first bishop of the West Saxons.[8]

The site at **Staunch Meadow** lies in the area of the fluctuating boundary between East Anglia and Mercia, which in 7th-8th centuries possibly cut across the nearby Isle of Ely. It can be argued that it occupied a strategic border position between the two kingdoms and thus was a part of a broader political scene.[9]

Finally, **Hatton Rock** has been assigned, albeit only hypothetically, to the reign of Offa and the period of Mercian supremacy. If correct, this might suggest a possible correlation between occurrences of alignment and times when it may have been necessary to visually proclaim the idea of dominance.[10]

Thus, architectural alignment at these sites not only correlates with claims to high status but also seems to occur at points of political control, often in areas of territorial tension. In contexts where power and domination had to be explicitly stated, alignment could be used as an architectural expression and an anchor of power, control and ownership over the land. This would not be unusual,

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[7] HE i.25, p. 72. For the proposal of the royal status of the excavated site, see Thomas 2011; Thomas and Knox 2013, p. 6.

[8] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 328, 347; HE iii.7, p. 232; Blair 1994.

[9] Tester *et al* 2014, pp. 1, 9.

[10] Rahtz 1970, pp. 140, 142. However, it needs to be noted that the date of Hatton Rock has been questioned (see Appendix 3), with a proposal that a 7th-century date would be more fitting, on the basis of the analysis of its plan and setting. If it is so, Hatton Rock adds to the number of 7th-century sites with alignment.

because such a relationship between the need to manifest authority and a search for its material expression is known from other contexts.[11]

Smaller-scale and lower-status case-studies also demonstrate that changes in status were accompanied by changes in planning and were consistent with the appearance of alignment at these sites. The change in layout – a move toward axial alignment - at **Faccombe Netherton**, for instance, seems to be coterminous with a shift in ownership, as the land passed from Wynflaed to either her son or her grandson.[12] Among the 'borderline' sites at **Flixborough** the persistent alignment, which existed between 750 and 850, was completely abandoned sometime in the mid- to late 9th century.[13] This coincided with an increase in specialised commodity production in the mid-9th century and a change in the character of the refuse deposited, pointing towards a major change in status, perhaps from significant monastic to secular.[14] This means that at Flixborough linearity in planning is consistent with – and limited to – a wealthy, high-status, possibly monastic phase of occupation. Both cases demonstrate that within the timescale of individual settlements, alignment seems to relate directly to shifts in status and use.

Ecclesiastical sites

Similarly, the majority of ecclesiastical sites are set very firmly in a political context. It is fair to say that all of them were founded with the close involvement of royalty and nobility. The close relationship between royals and nobles and the church in Anglo-Saxon England has long been established, and at some sites it is

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[11] On material artifacts as signifiers of power, see Carver 2011; on relationships between power and the decoration of brooches and bracteates in England and Scandinavia, see Gaimster 2011.
[12] See Fairbrother 1990.
[13] Loveluck 2001, pp. 85-88.
[14] See Loveluck 2001, pp. 103-113; Whitwell 1991, p. 247.

obvious that they were founded at times of shifting power, responding to a need for a visual demonstration of influence and control.[15]

The community at **Hexham** is likely to have been making a clear and strong claim in its architectural footprint. It was founded in ca 671-673 by Wilfrid, a leading figure at the Northumbrian court who championed the 'Romanization' of the Northumbrian Church and presented the Roman case at the Synod of Whitby in 664.[16] The presence and design of the crypt, which has long occupied scholars, and the dedication of the church to one of the Apostles, strongly point towards Rome.[17] Hexham was then an instrumental expression of Wilfrid's adherence to the Church of Rome, and a very material statement of his role as bishop, in an unstable and somewhat turbulent time for the Church in Northumbria: it was only a few years before Wilfrid was expelled and travelled to Rome to seek papal support.[18]

The monastic sites at **Wearmouth** and **Jarrow**, established later in the 7th century, can also be understood as political statements and social institutions with a strong link to secular authority.[19] Their founder, Benedict Biscop, was a member of a leading Northumbrian family.[20] It is also possible that Wearmouth and Jarrow owned a very substantial territory, stretching from the Tyne to the Don.[21] In the light of earlier unsettled boundary disputes between Deira and Bernicia precisely in this area, it is likely that the locations of the new monastic

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[15] On the relationships between nobles, royals and the Church, see Yorke 2003; Higham 1997, sp. pp. 26-34; Gem 2015, pp. 3-10. Dunn has observed that Christianisation followed a political pattern. – Dunn 2010, pp. 105-107. On close relationships between monasteries and secular authorities, see Foot 2006, pp. 77-80.

[16] O'Sullivan and Young 1995, p. 37.

[17] On the crypt, see Fernie 1983, p. 61; Taylor and Taylor 1965, i. pp. 297-312; Bailey 1976; Gilbert 1974.

[18] *Vita S. Wilfridi*, in Webb 1965, pp. 172, 190-191; see also Kirby 1974; Farmer 1974; Wood 1995c, pp. 7-8; Foot 2006, pp. 258-265.

[19] Foot 2006, pp. 34, 77-79; Dunn 2003, pp. 200-202; see also Foot 1999, esp. p. 37, on links between Anglo-Saxon monasteries and the secular world.

[20] *Historia Abbatum,* in Webb and Farmer 1998, ch. 1-8; see also Wormald 1976; Fletcher 1981; Wood 1995c, pp. 1-6.

[21] Cramp 2005, i, p. 350.

sites, in addition to other factors, were determined by a desire to establish a powerful presence in the region.[22] The Deiran Ecgfrith, having initially given the land and being further involved in the supervision of the construction of the monasteries, was probably also pursuing his own political interests here.[23]

The foundation of **Lindisfarne** was not without a political context either: it was established by the order of King Oswald as a daughter house of Iona – the most powerful religious foundation in the North – almost immediately after Oswald's victory over Cædwalla of Gwynedd and his subsequent ascension to the Northumbrian throne.[24] In addition, this site lies within sight and easy reach of the royal residence at Bamburgh.

The history of the church and crypt at **Repton** is closely tied to the cult of the royal saint, Wystan, who was martyred around 840. The date of the crypt, however, is considerably earlier (soon after 715). It could have been a political as well as a devotional focus at an early date, being associated with the powerful Mercian kings. The period of construction was probably in the reign of Æthelbald, and it is possible that the king commissioned it for himself as a burial place. Æthelbald strengthened and expanded the kingdom of Mercia and, after a synod at Gumley in 749, freed the Church from some of its obligations.[25] In this context, the construction of a royal mausoleum in conjunction with a church could be seen as an expression of continued royal control over the Church. It is also notable that the church and mausoleum succeeded a group of aligned high-status halls on the same site, thereby linking secular and ecclesiastical alignments as significant features from two different phases in the same place.

Whithorn is perhaps the best demonstration of the way the appearance of alignment could immediately follow a shift in political control. Bede records

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[22] Cramp 2005, i, pp. 28, 348.

[23] Ian Wood has proposed an even greater royal involvement than originally thought at Jarrow - see Wood 2008.

[24] HE iii.2-3, pp. 214-220; Mayr-Harting 1991, 94-99.

[25] Campbell *et al* 1991, p. 100.

that a Northumbrian bishopric was established at Whithorn by 731, attesting to both dynastic territorial expansion and to the rising political aspirations of the Northumbrian Church.[26] Archaeological evidence suggests that the Northumbrians may have gained control over Whithorn even earlier - towards the end of the 7th century. Thus, alignment at Whithorn, first of posts and graves and then of buildings, seems to coincide with their arrival around 700 AD, replacing an earlier typically Irish concentric arrangement.[27]

Clearly defined lines of graves, posts and buildings, which started to develop at Whithorn after 700, are reminiscent of the strongly pronounced line, also marked by posts and associated graves and defining the axes of buildings, found at Yeavering. The rows of halls at Whithorn, although smaller in scale than those at Yeavering, nevertheless display a similar approach to planning. In addition, there are clear stylistic affinities between the post-730 architecture at Whithorn and the types already established in Northumbria.[28] The construction of the church and the halls, featuring load-bearing walls, opposed doors and rows of posts flanking the walls, bears clear testimony to the influence of Northumbrian architecture. The area with aligned buildings has also been interpreted as being of high-status on the basis of small finds.[29] As at Yeavering, alignment at Whithorn seems to have been sustained over a period of time, developing and respecting earlier structures and features on the site. Thus, the line of graves and posts was retained, first being complemented by another row of posts flanking the halls to the south and then defining the edge of the terrace

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[26] HE v.23, pp. 558-560.

[27] Hill 1997, pp. 17, 37; Architecturally, this was expressed in a new type of a typically Northumbrian building with opposed timber-framed doorways, introduced at Whithorn in the late 7th or early 8th century. Especially considering the distribution of roundhouses, which prevailed in Ireland at this time, this implies the arrival of Anglian monks or clerics sometime before the establishment of the bishopric in ca 730 and a continuing Northumbrian cultural influence. - Hill 1997, pp. 37, 44, 138-9, fig. 4.3; James, Marshall and Millett 1984. On the Irish layout, see Edwards 1990, pp. 105-112; Edwards 2009, p. 9.

[28] Hill 1997, pp. 44-46.

[29] Ibid., pp. 41-42, 46.

associated with the new church. The halls were rebuilt but, crucially, remained on the same axis. The sequence of oratories and subsequently the church and the chapel, were built on the alignment of the earlier shrines. In this respect, it seems that alignment was used to connect the past and the present and reinforce a sense of continuity within the settlement, as well as to make a statement of Northumbrian control. Notably, although the occupation of the minster at Whithorn continued after a major fire in the middle of the 9th century, the alignment of buildings was not restored.[30] It would seem to have been confined to a period between ca 730 and ca 845, perhaps indicating that the language of alignment was only used when there was a need for it, immediately following the establishment of Northumbrian control, and died out when the need had passed.

Overall, among the sites for which there is adequate data, it could be argued that there is a consistent association of alignment with elite status. Moreover, there is also a link between the time of foundation of the sites with alignment and periods when, both politically and socially, there was a need to make a statement of control.

Outcomes

Although the data is somewhat Northumbria-heavy, especially in the case of ecclesiastical architecture, due to the location of available evidence, I would still argue that alignment is a pan-English phenomenon. The geography of this phenomenon is widespread enough to support this claim.

It seems that the construction of settlements with alignment coincided specifically with the wishes of influential patrons (some of them kings) and was a quick-spreading 7th-century trend. Architectural alignment was a phenomenon that fitted into a particular historical context. Early Anglo-Saxon England was a

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[30] Hill 1997, p. 48.

place of ideological tensions and shifting powers, both politically and culturally.[31] History has demonstrated again and again that architecture is used to make political statements, promote specific cultural associations and serve as a visual message easily perceived and decoded by anyone looking at it. The need for such messages was particularly acute in times of conflict and struggle for domination. Examples of this can be found throughout the centuries, ranging from ancient Assyrian palaces to Umayyad mosques to Stalin's Classicism.[32] In a similar way, an unsettled and fluid political climate in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, especially in the 7th century, could have introduced a ground for architectural experiments, with the kings and the elite actively searching for a visible and widely recognised means of proclaiming their authority, both before and after the introduction of Christianity by Augustine. But why would the elite choose to replicate the same architectural language across a number of elite sites rather than introduce unique forms at each of them? The significance of both Christian and secular high-status sites as influential centres cannot be overestimated. Ware and Walker have argued that sites like Yeavering were embodiments not only of political power but places of ritual and spiritual significance and sacred loci.[33] At the same time, Eliade has argued that across cultures the archetype of 'the sacred' is established through a repetition of the same architectural types, making it possible to suggest that a unified architectural language – in this case alignment - was adopted to convey the outstanding significance of these sites not only as political but also as

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[31] On shifts in the 7th century, see Blair 2018, pp. 111-114, 174-176; Turner and Fowler 2016; Yorke 2002, 2006. Stephen Yeates has added a new consideration of ethnicity to the mix as another factor causing tension. - Yeates 2012.

[32] On Assyrian architecture, see Frankfort 1996; Kertai 2015. On Umayyad mosques, see Flood 2001 and Grabar 1955. On Stalin's architecture, see Kosenkova 2010 and Khmelnitsky 2007.

[33] Ware 2005; Walker 2010. In a comparable context, Lotte Hedeager and Lars Larsson have described pre-Christian Scandinavian royal halls as sacred 'central places', not only legitimising the power of the ruler but embodying the model of the world within an architectural structure. - Hedeager 2002; Larsson 2011. On the theory of 'central place' in Scandinavia, see Fabech and Ringtved 1999. The idea of 'central place' in an Anglo-Saxon context has more recently been applied by Scull *et al*. – Scull, Minter and Plouviez 2016. The significance of Yeavering as a cultic centre has been discussed above. – see pp. 155-156.

ideological and spiritual centres.[34] Alignment, being a consistent attribute of high-status sites, thus could also have been an embodiment of the significance of these sites, as well as a visual manifestation of control – one that was understood across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Considering the close links between the elite and the religious foundations, it is hardly surprising that alignment features equally at secular and ecclesiastical sites. This could suggest a common root of alignment as a phenomenon.

1.2. Chronological development

Even though the dates of all the sites, both secular and ecclesiastical, range from the 6th to as late as the 11th c, both groups show a predominance in the earlier period.
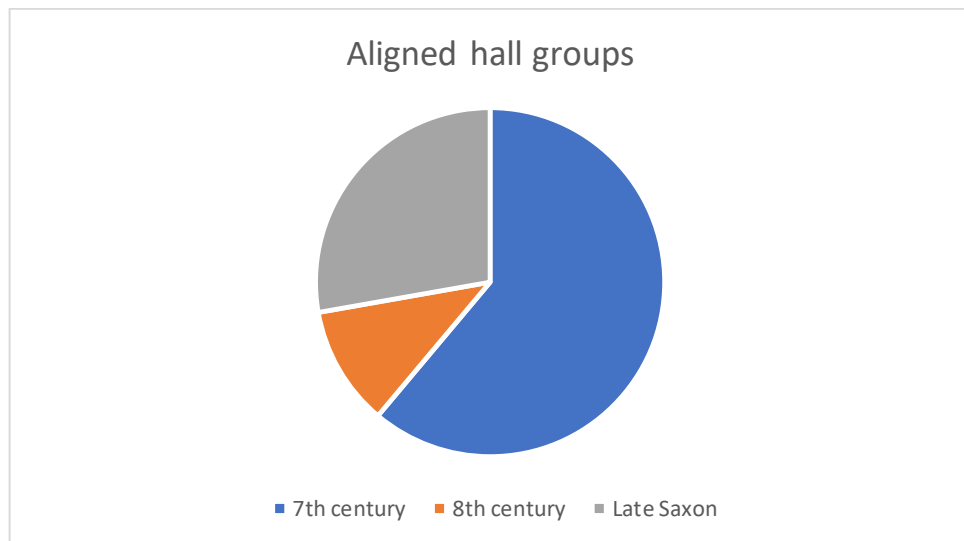
Graph 5.1. Chronological distribution of aligned halls in Anglo-Saxon England.

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[34] Eliade 1958, pp. 367, 371-372, 379.
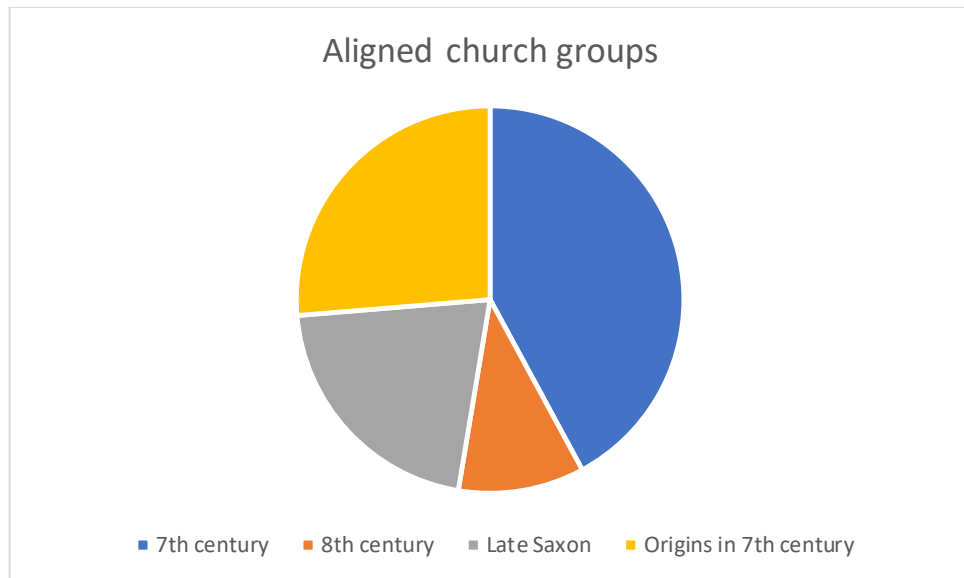
Graph 5.2. Chronological distribution of aligned church groups in Anglo-Saxon England.

Proportionally, the trends in the chronological incidence of aligned secular and ecclesiastical sites are remarkably similar, with a very clear emphasis on the period before 700. In the case of ecclesiastical sites, where exact phasing is a lot more uncertain than in the secular cases, largely due to the limited opportunities for archaeological investigation, a sub-group was created to represent the sites that originated in the 7th century but were subsequently altered, making it difficult to define when exactly alignment occurred for the first time. Both with and without this group, however, the prominence of alignment at 7th-century sites is evident. A smaller fraction of the sites dates to the 8th century and slightly more to the Late Saxon era, possibly indicating a small-scale revival of the practice (or perhaps reflecting uneven degrees of survival of sites with alignment in different periods).

The dating of some of these sites is of course speculative but – and here is the value of looking at all these sites together - the trends apparent from the sum of all of them are clear: the emphasis in the early period on the development of

alignment in both secular and ecclesiastical sites indicates that similar processes were at play in both groups.

It should also be noted that the date-range proposed for some of the secular sites, such as Bloodmoor Hill, Chalton, Cowage Farm, Cowdery's Down and Drayton, includes the late 6th century, whereas none of the ecclesiastical sites with alignment have been dated to earlier than the 620s.[35] This suggests that although the processes of development of alignment in secular and ecclesiastical contexts were largely contemporaneous, the alignment of halls could have begun somewhat earlier, with churches subsequently 'catching up'. It is important to bear this in mind for further discussion.

1.3. Other archaeological aspects

In addition to a common chronology, overlaps between the character of alignment in both contexts, together with features associated with aligned buildings, invite further consideration of a likely common root.

We have already observed parallel trends in the precision of alignment or the absence thereof, where the deliberate misalignment of structures may indicate a particular meaning and function. It is possible that in ecclesiastical alignment, a building in a spatially odd position in relation to other aligned structures could indicate a specific, possibly parochial function, as discussed above. In the same way, structures found in 'liminal' positions in relation to aligned structures in secular contexts could indicate their cultic use. Functions proposed for not-quite-aligned buildings in secular and ecclesiastical contexts are different but what unites them is the very idea that an oblique setting of a building in relation to an axially aligned range could be indicative of that building's particular function. The fact that this applies equally to secular and ecclesiastical

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[35] This is of course understandable, considering Augustine's arrival in 597, which serves as a *terminus post quem* for the vast majority of ecclesiastical sites. However, earlier sites built under the influence of the Celtic strands of Christianity lack evidence of alignment. This is particularly well demonstrated by Whithorn, which had a typical circular Irish layout prior to the period of Northumbrian control.

sites suggests the builders' and patrons' similar understanding of alignment, whether of halls or churches.

Secondly, some axial burials related to architectural alignment in both contexts bear a surprising resemblance to each other. Thus, the curious burial at St Peter and Paul's, Canterbury, with the unexplained stones at the feet of the deceased, suggests that the creators of the complex were perhaps looking to ensembles similar to Yeavering, which featured axial burials with enigmatic attributes in similarly significant points of an aligned complex, rather than to Christian funerary contexts. Such an overlap between probably pagan and Christian burial practices in focal places may be a symptom of a similar attitude to axial location. In a similar way, the axial burial of a horse under the 'chancel' of building 7098 at Staunch Meadow, found in what was most likely a Christian foundation, considering the post-750 date if not the possible identification of the settlement as monastic, is perhaps not too different from what looks like a pagan cow burial at the doorstep of building C13 at Cowdery's Down.[36]

It seems that alignment occurred across two commonly juxtaposed categories of 'Christian' and 'pagan', which is also relevant in the contexts of burials and ritual associated with hall complexes, discussed in chapter 2. The evidence suggests that there was not necessarily a distinct line between the two in our modern understanding of these terms.[37] The search for pagan shrines in Anglo-Saxon England has readily demonstrated the difficulty of such a distinction: we are often able to identify the signals of belief but we can hardly say what the

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[36] The significance of horse burial in non-Christian contexts during the Anglo-Saxon period has already been noted above. – see Pollington 2008, pp. 60-61.

[37] Instead, for example, Mason and Williamson have demonstrated that there were remarkable similarities in distribution of Christian churches and important pagan cemeteries, pointing at their direct association. – Mason and Williamson 2017. On the evidence of paganism in Anglo-Saxon England, see Wilson 1992; Hutton 2013; Meaney 1995; Dunn 2010; Blair 1995a; Pluskowski 2011. Hutton makes the specific point that native British paganism, as well as any traces of Roman Christianity, disappeared during the 5th century and that new beliefs and practices were then imported from the German and Scandinavian regions. – Hutton 2013, p. 293.

nature of this belief is.[38] Carver, Sanmark and Semple, in the preface to *Signals of belief*, suggest that both paganism and Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England should be thought of as coexisting sums of 'intellectual world views' rather than as 'religions'.[39] Patrick Wormald has also warned against the commonly accepted (or rather assumed) chronological model, which suggests that Christianity superseded paganism.[40] Instead, both can be seen as coterminous. It thus seems unsurprising that the use of aligned features would be so similar at the explicitly Christian Canterbury and at Yeavering, which was probably pagan at the stage when alignment was created. Such overlaps in practice point towards the common nature of alignment in both contexts.

As well as burials, the use of small features, especially posts and upright stones, is consistent across sites identified as secular and ecclesiastical. In both contexts, lines of posts trace a connection between these features and axial architectural compositions, working together to create an articulated landscape, punctuating the architectural composition and adding emphatic significance to the line on which the associated buildings are situated.

With regard to external axial posts, it is worth looking at axial crosses, such as the one found on Lindisfarne. If it was indeed found *in situ*, this cross would seem to suggest a role not dissimilar from that of the posts at Yeavering and the cemetery at Buckland.[41] In the same way, the crosses at the head and foot of St Acca's grave at Hexham, documented as being located immediately to the east of St Andrew's church, if they were aligned on the axis of the church, would mirror

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[38] On the difficulties of distinguishing between 'pagan' and 'Christian', see, for example, Pluskowski 2011, pp. 765-766; Dunn 2010, ch. 8. On the same problem in the archaeology of Roman Britain, see Mawer 1995.

[39] Carver, Sanmark and Semple 2010, p. ix; similar argument is echoed by Pryce in the same volume.

[40] Wormald 2006, pp. 67-69, 106.

[41] See pp. 153-154, 175-176 above.

the posts at the head and foot of graves included in the alignment at Whithorn. The discussion of standing crosses, however, merits a separate study. [42]

There are also examples of upright features marking the interior of buildings. It is particularly tempting to draw a parallel between the posts situated behind the seats in the hall and the 'theatre' at Yeavering and the possible post or cross at Hexham and the 'focal stone' at Whithorn, both located behind the altar. A place of power and focus – whether the ruler's throne or the consecrated altar – was thus associated with an axially positioned element, which provided a vertical aspect to the otherwise horizontal axis defined by the footprints of aligned buildings and features. This means that the ultimate places of power seem to have been integrated into and emphasised in axial compositions, 'stitched' to the ground by associated vertical elements.

Overall, it still seems reasonable to conclude that small features, such as posts, crosses or burials, and in rare cases wells, were not used at random and can often be seen as powerful components deliberately included in the lines of buildings as a reinforcing feature of alignment.[43] For the purposes of the present discussion, it is even more important that the use of these smaller features was equally common across the contexts we tend to treat as separate and often juxtaposed – 'secular' or 'ecclesiastical' and 'Christian' or 'pagan'. The dichotomy of 'Christian' and 'pagan' has been addressed above, but more needs to be said about 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical'.

This discussion has highlighted similarities in status, political significance, periods of construction, specifics of composition, and use of attendant features across a range of sites with alignment. This demonstrates that the lines between what we define as 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical' are blurred and perhaps not as significant as we might think. In this context, the difficulty in identifying

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[42] On standing crosses and their possible roles, see Mitchell 2001b, pp. 95-103; Orton 2003; Karkov *et al*, eds., 2006; Moreland 1999; Stevens 1977, pp. 58-65; Dodwell 1982, pp. 111-118.

[43] On wells in linear compositions, see Blair 1992, p. 257.

settlements as either secular or monastic, as has been observed by scholars, is not surprising.[44] Flixborough, Staunch Meadow and Cheddar have all caused controversy in their identification as monastic. This makes other 'borderline' cases, such as, for instance, Whithorn, where alignment of both churches and secular halls has been noted, much less surprising. Another testimony to the fluid character of the categories of 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical' is the easy replacement of one by another. Among sites which bear evidence of such a shift are Repton, Staunch Meadow, Cheddar, Lyminge, and possibly Flixborough.[45]

These observations indicate that secular and ecclesiastical foundations developed in mutual cultural, as well as architectural, proximity. Sarah Foot, for example, has discussed Anglo-Saxon monasteries as not only spiritual establishments but also as social, economic and judicial entities.[46] It has also been suggested that liturgy – a subject inevitably associated with churches – should in fact be seen in a broader secular context. Symes and McKitterick have proposed that liturgy was a key player in social processes and one of many aspects of 'worshipful activities', outside what can be described as 'Christian' and practised in the early Middle Ages.[47] Furthermore, Pfaff has suggested that the role of cathedrals until the 10th century was considerably more secular than is presently thought.[48]

This means that distinguishing between the categories 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical', as well as 'pagan' and 'Christian', for understanding the concept

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[44] Cramp 1976a, p. 249; Turner 2006, pp. 63-66, 69; Pestell 2004, pp. 48-64.

[45] In the case of Repton, John Blair sees this process of replacement of a secular high-status foundation with a monastic one as not coincidental and illustrative of similar processes observed elsewhere (Blair 2018, pp. 131-136). Staunch Meadow, for instance, archaeologically seems to have gone through stages of both secular and monastic control, where monastic and secular phases seem to have alternated; at Cheddar, a monastic context has been proposed by John Blair, and at Lyminge, royal halls were replaced by a monastic foundation developing nearby. All demonstrate evidence of a secular high-status foundation being superseded by a monastery.

[46] Foot 1999.

[47] Symes 2016, pp. 240-241; McKitterick 1977, pp. 115-154.

[48] Pfaff 2009, p. 64.

of alignment in Anglo-Saxon England is unnecessary if not unhelpful. Alignment appears across all of them and seems to function independently of them. The abandonment of these categories makes it possible to see alignment as a single phenomenon, found in different contexts but performing the same role, serving as an expression of outstanding significance and authority.

2. Where did alignment originate?

In the preceding chapters, a number of possible explanations of the origins of alignment have been eliminated: none provides an adequate answer to the question why multiple buildings were constructed in one line. In the majority of cases, alignment does not seem to have been determined by topography or pre-existing structures at these sites. In the context of ecclesiastical architecture, liturgical functions do not seem to explain the presence of alignment either. Nor does Continental influence seem to be the answer to the occurrence of alignment in England. Instead, I hope I have demonstrated the opposite: that alignment is an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, with a small number of parallels on the Continent, geographically concentrated in the territories just across the Channel. Furthermore, it has been proposed above that chronologically, it is likely that alignment first evolved in a secular context and then spread to the planning of ecclesiastical sites, which, in the absence of any secular Continental analogues, points even more strongly towards the local, Insular, origins of alignment.

2.1. Prehistoric alignments

A connection between Anglo-Saxon secular sites displaying alignment and the presence of prehistoric features has been observed above. Indeed, there is a good reason to turn to prehistory for a better understanding of the Anglo-Saxon landscape. The Anglo-Saxons would appear to have had a great respect for the

past and for heritage, with a particular reverence for prehistoric features. This has been addressed by Sarah Semple and others.[49]

Not much is known about the religious frameworks of the Anglo-Saxons following the migration and immediately preceding the Conversion, but it is fairly certain that they, at least to some extent, embraced Germanic beliefs and the pantheon of gods headed by Woden.[50] A continuation of a Saxon cult of ancestors and the mythical past among the Anglo-Saxon elite has been proposed by Pollington and Barrett.[51] Howe has also argued that the Germanic origins were among the defining aspects of the Anglo-Saxon culture.[52] With respect to Germanic beliefs, it is particularly important to note their close connection with the land and ancestors, which, in the case of settling on a new land, must have been a source of anxiety and concern and would explain the desire to reinforce connections with the existing landscape in the British Isles and so, in a way, to appropriate it.[53]

Richard Bradley has pointed out that references to the distant past and to origin myths are an obvious tool to legitimise the position of the elite and their political aspirations in the present.[54] Timothy Venning has highlighted the accompanying creation of ancestral legends and foundation myths among the Anglo-Saxons immediately after the settlement and in this has contrasted their Germanic culture with the more evident Romanness dominant in Gaul in the same period.[55] Bloch has emphasised that 'the presence of the past in the present' is a valid framework of cognition commonly used by different societies,

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[49] Semple 2004; Williams 1997; Crewe 2012; Whyte 2003. Blair 2005, pp. 166-245; Blair 2018, pp. 74-94.
[50] See Dunn 2010, sp. pp. 58-62; Meaney 1966; Yorke 2008; John 1992.
[51] Pollington 2008, pp. 63, 65; Barrett 1999. A similar cult in Norse mythology has been noted by Alexandra Sanmark. – Sanmark 2010, pp. 161, 168.
[52] Howe 1989.
[53] On Germanic and Anglo-Saxon paganism, see Ewing 2008; Branston 1957; Campbell 2007; Wood 1995b; Meaney 1966; Dunn 2010, ch. 4 and 5 (particularly pp. 74-76 on attitudes to the land). On identity of new settlers, see Venning 2013, pp. 10-16, and Ward-Perkins 2000.
[54] Bradley 1987, pp. 3-4.
[55] Venning 2013, ch. 1 part 1, sp. pp. 6, 10-11 and 24.

and Yorke has noted that association with ancient monumental landscapes was 'a ceremonial locus for the reinforcement of shared identities', which would especially apply to a new Anglo-Saxon society still in a state of flux at the turn of the 7th century.[56] There were plenty of reasons for the newly established Anglo-Saxon elite to look to the distant past and, particularly, to the past embodied in the existing landscape.

Roman alignments in Britain

The question of Romanness is an interesting one. Roman architecture is notable for the regularity of its planning. However, while regularity in planning is common in both periods, examples of alignment directly comparable with that found in Anglo-Saxon England are rare in Roman Britain.[57] It has been observed that ecclesiastical sites in general have a close link with Roman heritage.[58] However, despite these connections, none of the sites considered here has specifically demonstrated how a pre-existing Roman landscape could have contributed to the construction of multiple buildings in one line.

In his discussion of the origins of Anglo-Saxon halls, Brian Hope-Taylor noted a possible Romano-British predecessor in a peculiar form of a hall-like Roman villa.[59] An unusual instance of two such structures has been observed at Godmanchester, where a 2nd-century aisled hall-like building and a 4th-century open-plan hall, possibly residential, coexisted in the 4th century.[60] The two structures were roughly aligned and connected by a corridor. However, this case

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[56] Yorke 2008, p. 24; Brennan and Hamerow 2015, p. 327; Bloch 1977, pp. 278-292.

[57] On the subject of regularity, John Blair's work on the grid planning of Anglo-Saxon settlements has already been cited above.

[58] 54.5% of sites with aligned churches have demonstrated associations with Roman material. - see above and Table 2 in Appendix 1.

[59] Hope-Taylor 1977, pp. 232-237. For a hall-type Roman house, which used to be referred to as 'basilican villa' (Collingwood 1930, p. 130), see Rippon 2018, pp. 149-167; Smith 1997, pp. 23-45.

[60] Alice Lyons, pers. comm; Lyons 2019.

of alignment does not have any other parallels in the Roman context and is unlikely to have made a significant impact on Anglo-Saxon settlement planning.

Thus, the existing evidence for Roman axial alignment, distinct from that associated with grid plan layouts, is very limited and does not seem sufficient to support the possibility of Roman alignment having been a significant determinant of Anglo-Saxon practice. The influence of Roman planning on Anglo-Saxon settlements has been questioned too. For example, Sam Turner has argued that at least in the western regions of Anglo-Saxon England, preceding Roman occupation had little effect on Anglo-Saxon settlements. In Wessex in particular, there is a lack of evidence for relationships between Roman and early medieval settlements.[61] This applies to Anglo-Saxon settlements in general, including those with alignment. Axial alignment in prehistoric contexts, on the other hand, is widespread and offers examples for comparison.

Prehistoric alignments in Britain

The significance of the distribution of prehistoric features in the landscape and their spatial relationships with each other has been widely studied. Tilley has proposed a connection between barrows and cosmology, further explored by Field.[62] Bradley has looked into relationships between prehistoric spaces and ritual, Watson and Tilley have made connections between the distribution of barrows and movement around them, and other scholars have focussed on the significance of linearity in prehistoric landscapes, including cursuses, dykes and pit alignments.[63]

All these and other studies clearly demonstrate the importance of the role played by the landscape in prehistoric Britain. The prominent place of geometry

[61] Turner 2006, pp. 75, 98.

[62] Tilley 2004; Field 1998; Garnham 2004, pp. 167-173.

[63] Watson 2001; Tilley 2004; Bradley 1987; Garnham 2004, sp. pp. 146-152, 177-180; On meaning of dykes and boundary ditches, Wileman 2003; Mellor 2007, pp. 27-29; on lines in the landscape, Devereux 2000; Murray *et al* 2009 on pit alignments, sp. chapter 2.

in the landscape of Britain in the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, especially in arrangements of barrows, has been proposed.[64]

This section does not aim to present a comprehensive account of prehistoric sites with alignment but instead to provide enough context to illustrate how common and prominent linear arrangements had been across Britain before the Anglo-Saxon period. It needs to be noted that these sites are widely spread out, and many do not directly relate to particular Anglo-Saxon sites with alignment. Their ubiquitous presence, however, is enough to suggest that observers in the Anglo-Saxon period would not have escaped seeing them and perhaps being inspired by them. Research into the Anglo-Saxon reuse of prehistoric sites and features, as well as imitations - such as princely barrow burials - has suggested that ancient features were noted and probably revered.[65]

Examples of linearity

Firstly, I shall touch on prehistoric alignments directly associated with Anglo-Saxon sites with alignment. Prehistoric features as possible focal points on which to align Anglo-Saxon buildings have been discussed above;[66] here the existing lines in the landscape that could have inspired the idea of axial alignment in Anglo-Saxon planning practice are considered.

Excavation ditches to the north of the Deanery and to the south of the church at **Bampton** showed evidence of two Bronze Age ring-ditches surrounding possible barrows. The Norman chapel there stands entirely within the larger westernmost ring-ditch. Another, smaller, barrow is located to the south of the church. To the east of it is another mound still visible in the landscape. This feature has not been excavated but suggests a third barrow, exactly in line with the other two. In addition, Anglo-Saxon burials were cut into the ring-ditch and

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[64] See, for example, Johnson 2017, p. 4, and Garnham 2004, p. 215.

[65] See Semple 1998; Blair 2018, pp. 89-94. On princely burials see Blair 2018, pp. 114-115.

[66] See above, pp. 173-177.

the barrow to the south of the church, suggesting that both the ditch and the mound were still visible as earthworks in the Anglo-Saxon period.[67]

The site at **Cowdery's Down** also includes a group of more or less contemporary and aligned ring ditches – RD3, RD4 and RD 5. RD3 contains a burial, and all three are likely to have been barrows.[68] The site at **Drayton/Sutton Courtenay** contains at least five ring ditches that are likely to have been visible in the early medieval period and related to planning of the Anglo-Saxon structures.[69] To the north of this site is another group of three aligned ring ditches.[70]

The prehistoric linear sequence, which preceded the halls at **Yeavering**, includes a henge and a standing stone to the south-east of the site dominated by a ring-ditch and a stone circle, with a cremation cemetery associated with it. The stone circle and the ring-ditch continued to be foci of burials and were later incorporated into the developing early medieval settlement.[71]

Nearby, a linear sequence of five henge monuments runs along the Milfield basin, spread out at intervals of between 750 and 250m, and aligned on the summit of Yeavering Bell. Some of these monuments would have been marked by earthworks and most of them were subsequently adapted for funerary use.[72] No fewer than four of these prehistoric monuments were reused as cemeteries in the early historic period, indicating the desire of the local elite to retain links with the past, possibly a strategy to legitimise its standing in a time of change.[73]

Looking beyond the sites with Anglo-Saxon alignment, independent linear arrangements of prehistoric features are quite widespread in other areas. I shall look at cursuses, pit, post and stone alignments and lines of henges, but first of

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[67] Blair 1998.

[68] Millett and James 1983, pp. 159, 172.

[69] Brennan and Hamerow 2015, pp. 329-330.

[70] Excavated by Leeds - Leeds 1923, 1927; Barclay *et al* 2003, pp. 16-23, fig. 3.1.

[71] Bradley 1987, pp. 5-7. On prehistoric features at Yeavering, see also Frodsham 2005.

[72] Ibid., pp. 9-10; for excavation report, see Harding 1981.

[73] Bradley 1987, p. 10.

all, the alignments of barrows, which were seen as a sign of local dominance, high status and descent, are considered.[74] Neal Johnson has suggested that a general trend for the nucleation and linear grouping of barrows emerged around 1850-1500 BC, particularly on the Anglo-Welsh border.[75]

Wiltshire is another area rich in evidence for prehistoric activity and geometrically planned landscapes. The site of Stonehenge alone has inspired multiple examples of axially aligned barrows in the landscape. Apart from the aligned group of Cursus barrows, arranged parallel to the Stonehenge Cursus, and the straight rows of Old and New King Barrows to the east of Stonehenge itself there are other notable sites with expressed axial alignment in the vicinity: Winterbourne Stoke Barrows, Normanton Down Barrows, Wilsford Barrows and Lake Down Barrows.[76] In addition, Paul Devereux has drawn attention to the alignment of the Stonehenge Cursus, the Cockoo Stone, the Woodhenge and Beacon Hill.[77] At a largely overlooked site lying immediately adjacent to the Stonehenge megaliths there is a sequence of roughly aligned Mesolithic postholes, which have been interpreted as containing totemic poles.[78] This ancient arrangement could provide a parallel for alignments of posts found later in Anglo-Saxon England.

Cranborne Chase, on the border between Dorset and Wiltshire, shows a multitude of Bronze Age round-barrows, some of which are arranged in lines.[79] The Bronze Age barrow cemetery at Hardown Hill in Dorset includes five barrows arranged in a slightly curved line and orientated north-south. At least one of these

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[74] Barnatt and Collis 1996, pp. 79-80.

[75] For example, the Begwyns cluster, Upper House cluster near Gilwern Hill, Banc Gorddwr cluster, Walton Basin, Long Mynd cluster and Moel-ty-uchaf. - Johnson 2017, pp. 4, 63, 65, 93, 94, 112, 121, 125.

[76] Richards 2017; Wheatley 2013, sp. p. 20.

[77] Devereux 2003, pp. 70-71, fig. 9.

[78] Richards 2013, pp. 17-18.

[79] Barrett, Bradley, Green and Lewis 1981, pp.-218-219.

was found to contain secondary Anglo-Saxon burials, suggesting it was deliberately reused.[80]

A number of sites with evident alignment of barrows are known in Dorset.[81] In Somerset, the enigmatic Priddy Circles are arranged on a north-northeast – south-southwest axis and spread out over 1.2 km.[82] In Oxfordshire, a large group of barrows at Barrow Hills near Abingdon follow a very articulate linear northeast-southwest arrangement (fig. 5.1).[83] At Harrold in the Great Ouse valley, three of at least nine Bronze Age barrows (5,6 and 7) are arranged in a linear group.[84]

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[80] Evison 1968.

[81] For example, the Five Marys Group, the Bincombe Down group; Broomhill at Bere Regis, the Creech Heath Group, the Ailwood Down Group, Canford Heath, West Holme Heath, the Thorny Barrow Group at Studland, the Black Hill Group at Turners Puddle, the Thorn Barrow Group and the Five Barrow Hill Group, the East Hill Group at Bincombe at Tyneham, the Culliford Tree Barrow Group at Whitcombe, the Winterborne Herringston Groups, the Bronkham Hill Group and others. These and other sites with groups of barrows can be found in 'Earthworks: Round Barrows'. In: *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments of Dorset, volume 2, South-East (London 1970), pp. 434-480. British History Online* [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol2/pp434-480], accessed 20th July 2018.

[82] Darvill 1996, pp. 220-221.

[83] Barclay *et al* 2003, p. 32, fig. 4.41.

[84] Taylor and Woodward 1985, p. 112.
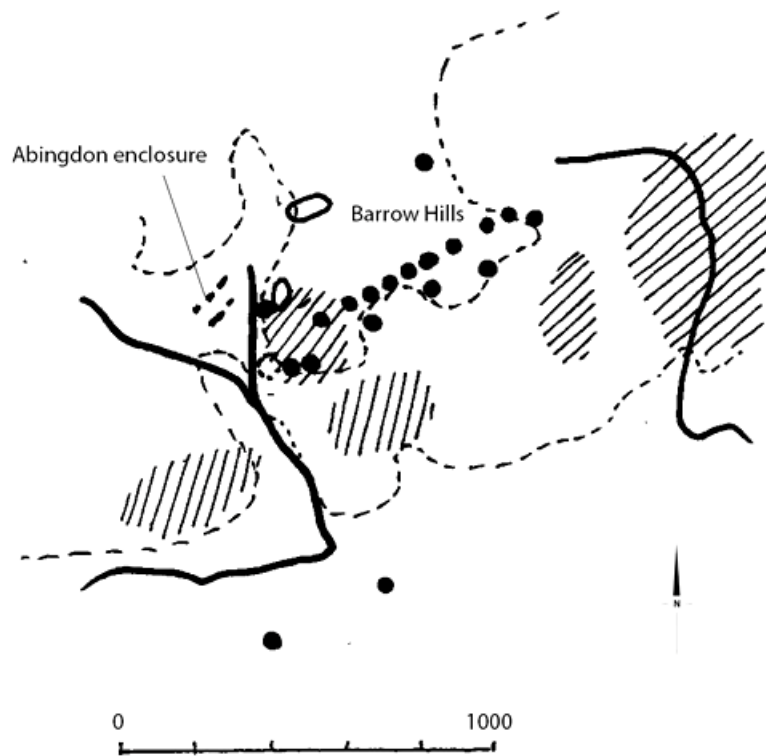
Fig. 5.1. Schematic plan of site at Barrow Hills, after Barclay *et al* 2003 (fig. 4.41, p. 101).

Five Bronze-Age ring-ditches – possibly part of a barrow cemetery - have been found at Roxton, Bedfordshire. Of these five, the strictly axially aligned and evenly spread out barrows A, D and E are notable (fig. 5.2). It has been demonstrated that barrows B and C were added to the already existing aligned group and there are contrasts in the character of burial between the two groups. The excavators have proposed that these barrows may have been created by the elite of Bronze Age Wessex.[85] At least two of them were still visible during the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods, as is indicated by secondary burials. These burials further indicate that this site was of importance, not just visible but also regarded as significant in the Anglo-Saxon period.

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[85] Taylor and Woodward 1985.
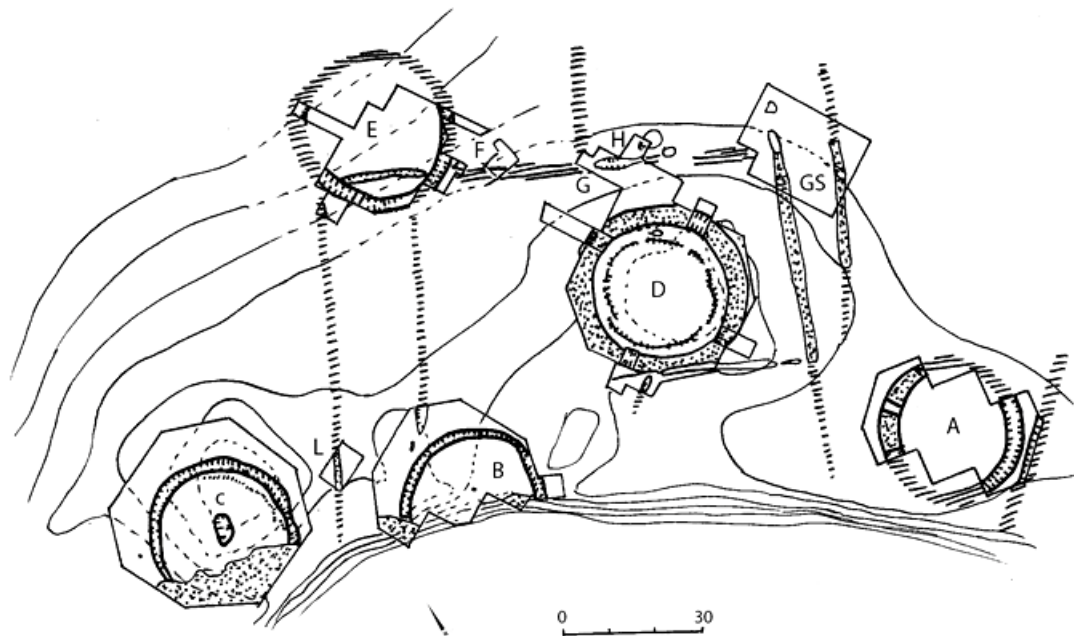
Fig. 5.2. Plan of excavated ditches at Roxton, after Taylor and Woodward 1985 (fig. c, p. 75).

In addition to barrow alignments, there are other widely spread prehistoric linear arrangements across England – most notably, cursuses and pits.[86] The systems of cursus monuments in the Upper Thames Valley have been particularly well explored and recorded. The emphasis on their linearity and association with processional movement has also been discussed.[87] It is particularly important to note that, despite the assumption that cursuses played a role in the division of land and the indication of ownership over a territory, there is evidence of 'non-practical', perhaps ceremonial, reasons for the existence and orientation of cursus monuments and 'avenues'.[88]

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[86] For a summary of cursus monuments and prehistoric avenues see Barber 2011.

[87] Barclay *et al* 2003.

[88] Among the earliest examples of ceremonial avenues recorded were ones located in Dartmoor and described by John Gardner Wilkinson in 1862. - Wilkinson 1862. See also Briggs 2008.

Pit alignments and linear ditch systems, particularly common in the 1st millennium BC in the east of England, have been discussed by Mellor and Willis.[89] Among other examples, an Iron Age pit alignment has been identified at Gardom's Edge, Derbyshire.[90] At Brauncewell and Nettleham Glebe in Lincolnshire, parallel rows of posts between ditches have been recorded.[91]

Post alignments, in addition to the ones above and the outstanding Mesolithic example at Stonehenge, appeared at the site of Barleycroft Farm in Cambridgeshire, where over a thousand posts were arranged in a series of rows, and at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire, where a timber causeway of 195 posts was consistently repaired over 150 years, and near Upper Bucklebury in Berkshire.[92] Stone alignments are known in Yorkshire, the Pennines, Cornwall and Devon.[93] Men-an-Tol is a curious site in Cornwall where axial alignment is formed by three carved stones.[94] Stone rows have been recorded on Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor, and have been interpreted as ceremonial sites.[95]

The site of three precisely aligned, evenly spaced and simultaneously constructed henges at Thornborough in Yorkshire, very likely a part of an ancient processional way, also comprises a group of three axially aligned barrows nearby and features early Bronze Age post alignments (fig. 5.3).[96] Another large-scale linear system of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments has been found at Etton/Maxey in Cambridgeshire.[97] In the valley of the River Nailbourne, to the

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[89] Mellor 2007.

[90] Barnatt, Bevan and Edmonds 2002.

[91] Mellor 2007, p. 19.

[92] Hutton 2013, p. 212; for Barleycroft Farm, see Evans and Knight 2001; on Fiskerton, see Field and Parker Pearson 2003; on Upper Bucklebury, see Collard *et al* 2006.

[93] Devereux 2003, p. 73.

[94] Preston-Jones 1993.

[95] Herring 2008.

[96] Gillings *et al* 2008, pp. 217-218; Harding 2003, 2013.

[97] French and Pryor 2005; Gillings *et al* 2008, pp. 213-14.

south of Canterbury, a monumental linear 'processional way' includes Bronze Age barrows, Romano-British barrows, springs and temples.[98]
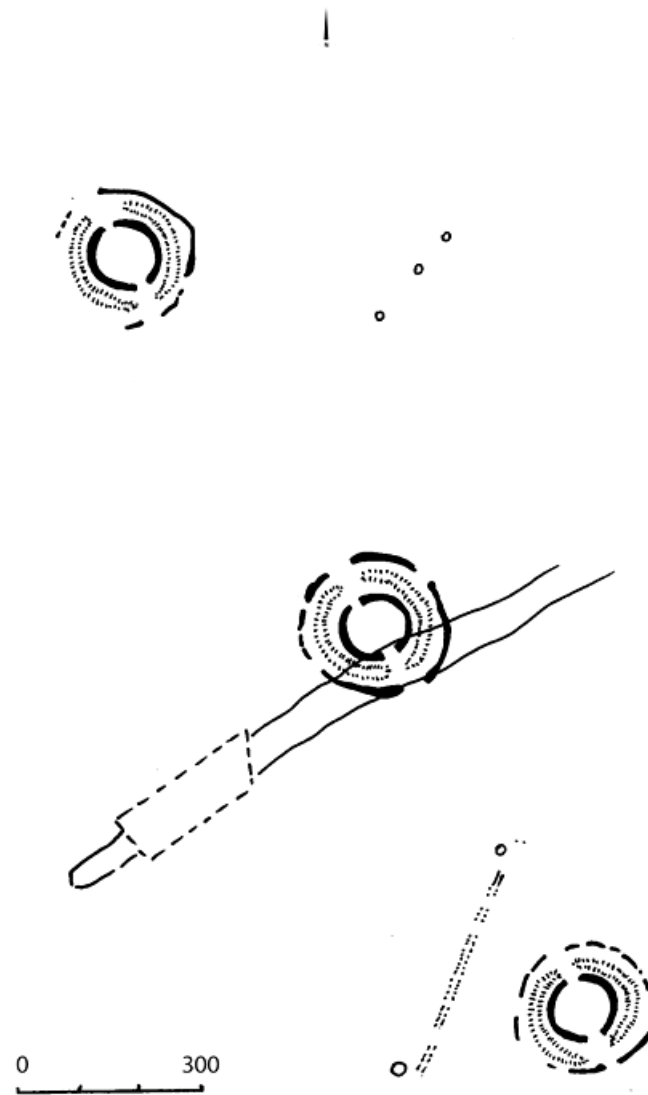
Fig. 5.3. Plan of the complex at Thornborough, after Harding 2013 (fig. 1.2, p. 3).

A degree of continuity can be observed in the evolution of prehistoric linear landscapes in England. Garnham has suggested that the line, as a significant element, appeared early in the Neolithic landscape.[99] Barclay *et al*. have

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[98] I thank Andrew Gardner and Lacey Wallace for drawing my attention to it and for sharing their observations.

[99] Garnham 2004, p. 215.

discussed the decline in construction of rectilinear enclosures and their replacement with circular ones in the later Neolithic, which suggests a decline of emphasis on the linear ordering of space. However, as Johnson has pointed out, the new circular monuments, such as barrows, soon began to be arranged in straight lines.[100] Thus, the significance of linearity seems to have been preserved despite the change in the form of its expression. This trend is evident also at Stonehenge and Drayton, where the later Bronze Age barrows pick up on the lines of the Neolithic cursuses. A similar continuity between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age landscape is seen in the dialogue between the long barrow and the Bronze Age barrows at Winterbourne Stoke near Stonehenge, where the axis of the long barrow built around 3,500 BC was supported by the line of barrows built 1,500 years later.[101]

Subsequently, in later Roman Britain, the barrows at Bartlow Hills and the Romano-British barrows by the Nailbourne continue the already well-established linear arrangements in the British landscape (fig. 5.4). The site of Bartlow Hills in Cambridgeshire is a particularly prominent example of the typically Bronze-Age language of barrow alignment, employed centuries later. A detailed study of Bartlow Hills has concluded that the barrows were a focus of local settlement and the display of power of the local elite.[102] 'The Six Hills' in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, is another example of axial alignment of Romano-British barrows.[103]

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[100] Johnson 2017, p. 4.

[101] Richards 2013, pp. 18, 26; see also Darvill 1996, pp. 255-257. Mary Braithwaite has argued for a very similar process happening in prehistoric Wessex between the early Beaker (c. 2200-1800 BC) and late Beaker/Urn (c. 1800-1400 BC) periods. - Braithwaite 1984, sp. p. 107.

[102] Eckardt et al 2009; elsewhere, Eckardt makes a further suggestion that Roman barrows directly inherited the forms of the Bronze Age ones – Eckardt 2000, pp. 15-16.

[103] Andrews 1906.
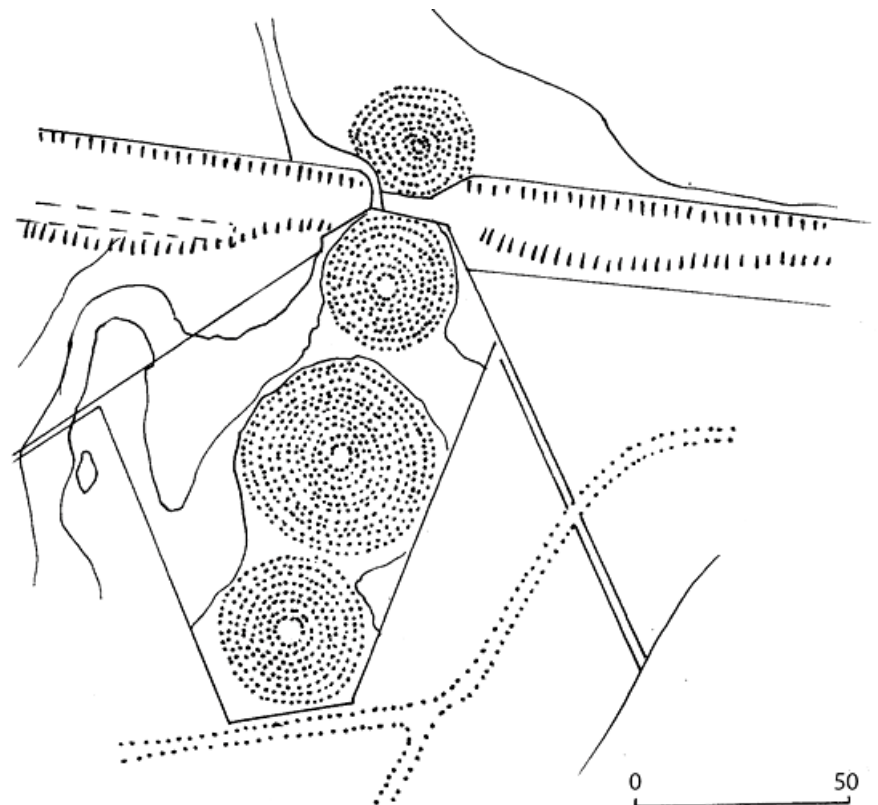
Fig. 5.4. Plan of barrows at Bartlow Hills, after Eckardt *et al* 2009 (fig. 1, p. 70).

Such continuity and consistency in the significance of linear landscapes, covering a period of ca 4000 years, I believe, suggests the possibility of further continuity into the early medieval period, particularly considering that the barrows themselves remained a popular type of burial as well as a source of cultural inspiration in the 6th-7th centuries.[104]

An examination of the possible origins of prehistoric alignments lies beyond the scope of this thesis; it is likely that they had their roots not only in cosmological models but also in the administrative division of land.[105] What is

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[104] See Blair 2018, pp. 114-115; Pollington 2008, sp. pp. 63-65; Higham and Ryan 2013, p. 128; Carver 2001. Carver interprets the surge of barrow-building in the 6th-7th centuries as a form of resistance to Christianity. – see Carver 2001, sp. pp. 7, 9-10, 12. I prefer to see Anglo-Saxon barrows as a parallel and complementary trend to that of church building, especially considering the close spatial associations between barrows and churches described by Semple. – Semple 2013, see appendix 3, pp. 253-260.
[105] Barnatt and Collis 1996, pp. 69-73.

important, however, is that by the Anglo-Saxon era linearity in the landscape was already ubiquitous and associated with both antiquity and natural powers. These sites were also widespread enough geographically to be seen by the Anglo-Saxon observers across the kingdoms and to be perceived as statements of significance and possible models for emulation.

It needs to be said that the distribution of prehistoric sites with alignment, and their correlation with the spread of the Anglo-Saxon sites, is a problematic area. The instances of alignment in the Anglo-Saxon period which are directly spatially related to prehistoric features, as at Bampton, Cowdery's Down, Drayton and Yeavering, are limited, and the majority of cases of prehistoric alignment exist in geographical detachment from the Anglo-Saxon examples. However, the widespread distribution of prehistoric cases of alignment across England, together with the number and the density of the sites, makes it likely that in the Anglo-Saxon period there was a strong awareness of ancient existing patterns of alignment (see map 5.1). It is also very likely that what we are seeing today is only a fraction of an even more articulate prehistoric landscape that would have still existed in the early medieval period.
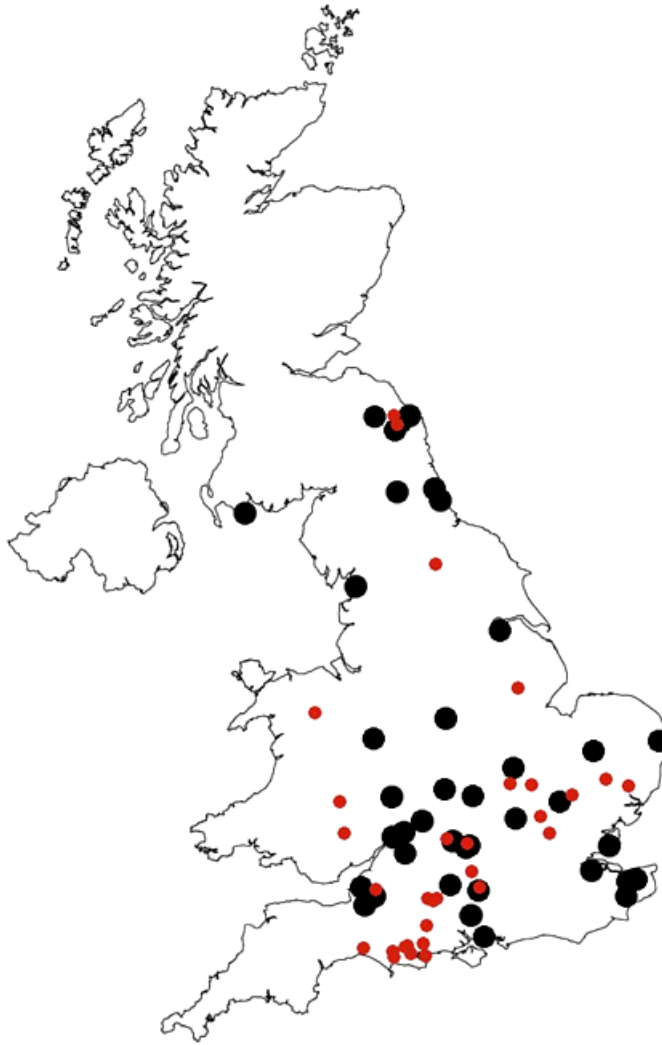
Map 5.1. Schematic map of distribution of Anglo-Saxon sites with alignment (black) and prehistoric barrow alignments (red).

The idea of axial alignment in the prehistoric era is not unique to England. Wales and Scotland are also rich in examples. A few Bronze-Age Welsh sites with alignments of barrows described by Johnson have already been noted above. There is a precise axial alignment of three barrows at Foeldrygarn, Eglwys Wen and Dyfed.[106] Stone alignments are known near Fishguard (Par-y-Meirw). Short rows of stones have been recorded in Ireland around Fermanagh.[107] The Neolithic Orkneys are also characterised by monumental alignments of standing stones and

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[106] Darvill 1996, pp. 168-169.
[107] Devereux 2003, p. 73.

other features. Also in Scotland, a number of sites with alignments of standing stones, cairns and pits have been discussed by Garnham, Thom, Devereux, Murray and Sheridan.[108]

In Ireland, the arrangement of significant features on certain axes also plays an important symbolic and ideological role, described by Patrick Gleeson, including the sites at Tara, Dubhcloy, Emain Macha and others.[109] On the Continent, Brittany offers ample evidence of stone alignments. The greatest concentration of stone rows has been observed in the Carnac-Violle region.[110] The island of Haedic (Morbihan, France) features Neolithic alignments of stones and burial mounds. The Douet alignment is among the most notable, featuring 8 granite upright blocks arranged in a 10-metre-long row and oriented north-east-south-west.[111] More alignments have been recorded in the Vendée region in the west of France.[112] Finally, unusual linear arrangements of 'stone ships' have been discovered in Scandinavia.[113]

These sites are numerous, but there is a key difference, namely that prehistoric alignments were observed and used in the early medieval period in England and southern Scotland under Northumbrian rule and, in a different way, in Ireland, but there is no evidence that this occurred in the same systematic way

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[108] Alignments of standing stones are found at Stenness, Maes Howe and Deepdale, as well as complex across-the-water alignments of standing stones on the bank of Loch Harray. - Garnham 2004, pp. 151-152, 177-178, figs. 82, 95. For alignment of monuments around Brodgar Ring, see Thom 1974, fig. 4. A linear sequence of Bronze Age cairns at Kilmartin Glen, Argyll, aligns to the distant rocky massifs at Dun na Nighinn and Dun Chonallaich. - Devereux 2000, p. 157. A Mesolithic pit alignment is known at Warren Field, Crathes, Aberdeenshire. - Murray *et al*, 2009.

[109] Gleeson has discussed the role of axes in the creation of central spaces to legitimise royal rule in early medieval Ireland. He has particularly highlighted the NE-SW axis, which pierces various elements of individual sites in order to create an ordered linear environment, mirroring the order of the Otherworld, to serve as a backdrop for ceremonial processions and as a widely recognised spatial ideological statement of kingship and power. – Gleeson 2012.

[110] The notable sites featuring stone alignments include Kerlescan, Kermario, Kerrerho and Menec. - Devereux 2003, p. 73.

[111] Large and Mens 2009.

[112] Bénéteau 2000.

[113] Skoglund 2008, pp. 392-3, 399, fig. 1.

on the Continent.[114] With this in mind, and considering the Insular character of Anglo-Saxon alignment put forward above, I am proposing a direct link between prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon axial alignments in England.

2.2. Anglo-Saxon alignment as a legacy of prehistoric beliefs

A number of factors indicate that the whole concept of prehistoric alignment may have influenced the planning of Anglo-Saxon sites. Firstly, there is a substantial overlap between the evidence of alignment and of prehistoric activity at a number of sites. As it is possible that alignment first appeared at Anglo-Saxon sites associated with halls and royal power, before being adopted at ecclesiastical sites, it could be explained as a strategy of demonstrative connection with the prehistoric landscape as a visual statement to legitimise present rule.

Furthermore, the wide distribution of prehistoric sites with alignment, many of which were not only visible but actively engaged with in the Anglo-Saxon period, suggests that exposure to existing axial alignments of varying monumentality and prominence was virtually inescapable.

Ample evidence of prehistoric occupation at the earliest sites with alignment suggests that the presence of prehistoric activity could have been an attractive factor in the selection of place for an Anglo-Saxon elite settlement. This may have been one of the indices of identity favoured by the Anglo-Saxon elite, referencing longevity and continuity of tradition and direct connection with the past alongside claims of connection with Woden or the Apostles, as was claimed for the *vetusta ecclesia* at Glastonbury, or Roman construction, indicated by Bede in the case of St Martin's and the cathedral at Canterbury (whether Bede's claim of antiquity was accurate or not).[115] In this model, ancient landscape would have

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[114] Gleeson 2012.

[115] See Gilchrist and Green 2015, pp. 57-8 for Glastonbury; HE i.26, p. 76, for St Martin's; HE i.33, p. 114, for Canterbury cathedral. The claim of antiquity, as in the case of Canterbury cathedral, reflects the idea of reclamation and re-appropriation of the past to legitimise and reinforce the present, with a variety of

been understood as an embodiment of antiquity, as well as a theatre of ceremonial significance. The cultural significance of the landscape was also informed by practical continuity in the use of the land. For example, Susan Oosthuizen has demonstrated that there was marked continuity in the management and layout of arable land and pasture from the Neolithic period up until the Norman Conquest, further suggesting that the Anglo-Saxons identified themselves in terms of their local landscape.[116] Peter Kidson has argued that measurement systems survived from the Roman period and were used in the early Middle Ages, as they still are today, suggesting that approaches to dividing and managing the land remained unchanged and were clearly adopted by the Anglo-Saxon incomers.[117]

Finally, like the prehistoric expressions of linearity, Anglo-Saxon alignment was associated with places of outstanding significance. In the 'secular' context, sites like Yeavering or Cowdery's Down have demonstrated the presence of belief and ritual, and, by analogy with the arguments put forward for Scandinavian sites, could also be considered ideological centres as well as places of administrative power.[118] It thus seems that the language of alignment was translated from prehistoric places of power to Anglo-Saxon high-status foundations as places of comparable status and significance. Then it was further translated into Christian

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elements of the past to choose from, perhaps following the precept 'the older the better'. Thus, Bede's claims for anything being Roman can be understood as claims of their *antiquity* rather than specifically their Roman-ness, in the same way Gregory the Great spoke of the 'great antiquity' of major processions shortly after their establishment. – Baldovin 1987, p. 159

[116] Oosthuizen 2013; Oosthuizen 2019, pp. 83, 115. Rippon has also argued for continuity between Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. – Rippon 2010. For an alternative view, see Hoskins 1955.

[117] Kidson 1990; Kidson argues that an English acre is 40x4 Roman perches of 17 Roman feet, that is a furlong by a chain. I thank Sandy Heslop for drawing my attention to this article.

[118] See Blair 2011, p. 729, and Renfrew 2007, p. 110, on presence of ritual in non-religious contexts. Bradley also points out that not all societies distinguish between 'ritual' and 'everyday'. – Bradley 1987, p. 3. For Scandinavian sites as 'central places', see Harrison 2013, sp. pp. 44-47; Hedeager 2002; Larsson 2011. On the theory of 'Central place' in Scandinavia, see Fabech and Ringtved 1999. The idea of 'central place' in an Anglo-Saxon context has more recently been applied by Scull *et al*. – Scull, Minter and Plouviez 2016. On central role of Anglo-Saxon halls, see Ware 2005 and Walker 2010.

foundations, which by definition were considered embodiments of divine power on earth and were also strongholds of royal authority.

Conclusion

When this research started, the concept of axial alignment was largely associated with churches. In addition, until now, the 'Romanness' of the Anglo-Saxon Church and the model of Continental influence on it have dominated the discourse around Anglo-Saxon churches and monastic sites.[1] It has been important to demonstrate that this need not be the case with respect to alignment: alignment applies equally to sites with halls as well as with churches. Continental influence, although undeniable, is not critical in the architectural formation of Anglo-Saxon sites, and Romanness as an expression of antiquity, in this aspect, could be secondary to the prehistoric landscape as a respected and desirable model of the past in the Anglo-Saxon society. More importantly, however, we have seen that alignment was a product of a very complex culture and should not be simplified or regarded as a mere planning tool.

Early Anglo-Saxon England witnessed the creation of a new identity with a hybrid cultural framework that sought to affirm legitimacy of settlement and a sense of belonging for a recently established migrant people. This framework developed on the basis of a range of influences on social formation, such as the survival of both Germanic and local pagan practices, the development of kingdoms, a degree of Continental cultural and political influence, and the continuity of local British traditions – particularly those associated with

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[1] This narrative of 'Romanitas' was largely shaped by Bede. - Gem 2015, pp. 17-19; Ó Carragáin 1994. On Anglo-Saxon England and Romanitas, see also Izzi 2010, ch.5; Hilliard 2018. In the architectural context, amongst others, Turner *et al* have discussed the abundant use of Roman stone at Jarrow and Wearmouth in the context of spolia. The famous Roman stone inserted upside-down in one of the windows at Escomb has also been seen in the light of an ideological reclamation of the pagan Roman past by the church. – Turner *et al* 2013. On Escomb, see Taylor and Taylor 1965, i, pp. 234-238; Hodges 1894. Further on spolia as an expression of Romanitas, see Cramp 1974; Stocker and Everson 1990; Bell 1998, 2005. 'Romanitas' in the use of stone has been discussed by Shapland (Shapland 2013); in sculpture, by Hawkes (Hawkes 2003); in art, by Henig (Henig 2004) and Pohl (Pohl 2014). On the Romanness of liturgy, see Cubitt 1996, Ó Carragáin 2011 and Billett 2011. On Anglo-Saxon kings as heirs of Rome, see Gerrard 2013, p. 195; Yorke 2013. On the Continental influences on the Anglo-Saxon Church, see above, p. 328, ft. 105; on Continental influence on church architecture, see Fernie 1983.

landscape. It is this range of influences that made alignment possible, while the anxiety of the elite over domination and belonging served as a catalyst and brought the idea to fruition, leading to the ubiquitous appearance of strongly expressed linearity in architecture across the wide territory of Anglo-Saxon England, encompassing a number of kingdoms, which in itself is remarkable. From then on, alignment became a recurring feature of elite planning and construction in the following centuries. There was a clear dip in the popularity of alignment in the 8th-9th centuries, contrasting with a greater interest in this phenomenon in the 7th century and in the Late Anglo-Saxon period. This could be explained quite simply by the poor preservation of archaeological evidence from this period as a result of the Viking invasion, but there could be other reasons which, unfortunately, we can only speculate on.

I would like to conclude by suggesting that alignment not only established itself as a recognisable feature of significant Anglo-Saxon sites but could have continued in use after the Norman Conquest. This thesis has demonstrated the continuity of alignment from prehistoric into Anglo-Saxon periods. It has also been argued that, having first appeared at sites with halls, alignment became an attribute of ecclesiastical sites, as power and authority increasingly became associated with the Church. From then on, with some variations but throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, alignment remained a feature of high-status secular and ecclesiastical sites. Such a consistency in the development of alignment invites a consideration of what happened next.

It is undeniable that the Norman Conquest brought dramatic changes to the way the elite established and promoted itself, especially architecturally. However, despite the new architectural vocabulary, strongly expressed axiality remained an attribute of significant sites. John Blair has explored the significance of axial alignment in the arrangement of kitchens, halls and chamber blocks in

some of the grandest sites, including Westminster Hall, Henry II's hall and Camera Regis at Clarendon and King John's hunting lodge at Writtle in Essex.[2]

It seems unlikely that alignment, which had existed for centuries and was prominent in the late Anglo-Saxon sites leading up to the Conquest, would have subsequently disappeared. Indeed, it would appear that its use continued and is found in later medieval sites of the highest status.

Axial composition in cathedrals – in particular the location of the Lady Chapel at the east end of the church – can be considered a direct successor of Anglo-Saxon alignment. The tendency to unite multiple aligned church buildings into a single major structure in the late Anglo-Saxon period has been noted in major cathedrals and abbeys and is particularly evident at Winchester, Gloucester, Rochester and Canterbury. However, the emphasis on a central axis and the place of the eastern chapel in the composition are still reminiscent of a grouping of formerly separate buildings. The frequent dedication of axial chapels to St Mary, as opposed to the more common dedication of a side altar to the Virgin in a parish church, is a possible homage to the sequence of formerly separate aligned churches, commonly dedicated to St Mary or one of the Apostles.[3]

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[2] Blair 1993, pp. 5-7. Blair also suggests that this planning convention developed from the late Anglo-Saxon halls. – Blair 1993, pp. 2-4.

[3] See above, p. 344, ft. 170.
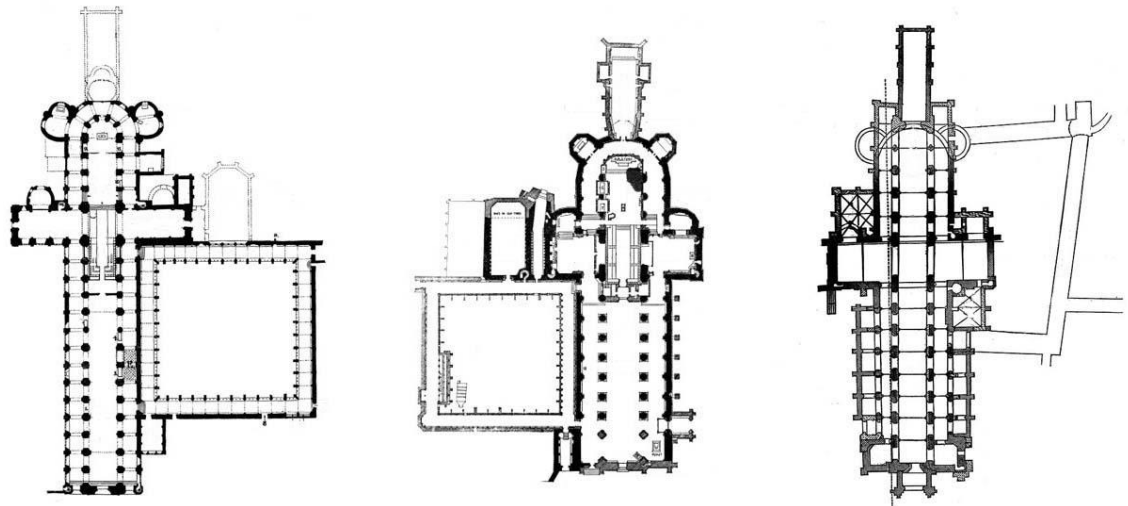
Fig. 6.1. Schematic plans of cathedrals at Norwich, Gloucester and Chichester, after *Our National Cathedrals* 1888.

These are only hypothetical suggestions for further exploration but, considering the marked continuity in the use of alignment in the previous periods, it is reasonable to suggest that the Norman Conquest did not break this tradition. Alignment once established, continued to make its mark, enjoying a long, if punctuated, afterlife.

Appendix 1. Classification and characteristics of sites.

place	kingdom/county	dates of alignment	evidence	prehistoric	Roman	end of occupation	status	burials	types of building	notable features
Atcham	Mercia/Shropshire	after 650?	cropmarks	poss?	?	abandoned?	high?	?	hall with annex	n
Bloodmoor Hill	East Anglia/Suffolk	500-700	excavated	y	n	abandoned	elite centre?	y, sw of 45	p-h, 1 p-in-t	cemetery
Chalton	Wessex/Bedfordshire	500-700	excavated	nearby	n	abandoned?	village?	n	p-in-t, A10&A12 w/ext p	groups
Cheddar	Wessex/Somerset	12th c	excavated	n	nearby	continued	royal palace	n	p-h, EH I - aisled	late; long hall
Cowage Farm	Wessex/Wiltshire	500-700	cropmarks/ex	?	nearby	abandoned?	high/monastery?	?	A and B - p-in-t? w/ext p	A- church?
Cowdery's Down	Wessex/Hampshire	550-670	excavated	y	n	abandoned?	high local	y, cow	A, B - p-h; C - p-in-t; ext p	C13/pit 6
Drayton/Sutton Court.	Wessex/Oxfordshire	550-700	part excav	y	n	abandoned?	royal centre	?	A - p-in-t, w/ext p	barrows
Faccombe Netherton	Wessex/Hampshire	980-1070	excavated	nearby	n	continued	thegn's manor	n	9 - p-in-t; others p-h	limited period of a
Hatton Rock/Hampton	Mercia/Warwickshire	700-800	crop/magv/ex	y	?	abandoned?	royal estate	n	?	finds sugg. paganism?
Long Wittenham	Wessex/Oxfordshire	550-700	crop/exc	y	nearby	abandoned?	royal centre?	?	?	ring ditch
Lyminge	Kent/Kent	600-650	part excav	n	n	turned monastic	royal vill	n (y in cemeteries)	p-in-t, p-h	abundance of finds
Portchester	Wessex/Hampshire	780-1000	excavated	n	y	?	freeman's manor?	y, n of S18	p-in-t, masonry	roman well, cemetery
Raunds	Mercia/Northamptonshire	800-1000?	excavated	?	?	continued	thegn's manor	n (y near church)	p-h, aisled	fortified, church outside
Sprouston	Northumbria/Northumberland	600-650	cropmarks	y	n	moved?	royal vill	? (y in cemeteries)	p-h, p-in-t	prehistoric hall, e-w building
Sulgrave	Mercia/Northamptonshire	970-1140	excavated	?	?	abandoned	manor?	n	p-in-t?, then masonry	dwelling q., 13 c church to e
Thirlings	Northumbria/Northumberland	410-681	excavated	y	n	abandoned	agricultural base?	n	p-in-t, p-h, trench	separate enclosed
Wicken Bonhunt	Essex/Essex	750-850	excavated	y	?	abandoned	royal hunting services?	n	p-h, p-in-t, mixed	mixed construction
Yeavering	Northumbria/Northumberland	605-655	excavated	y	n	abandoned	royal vill	y, axial	trench, w/ext p	axial graves, precision, temple
Borderline sites:										
Flixborough	Mercia/N Lincolnshire	600-900	excavated	nearby	nearby	abandoned?	high/monast in 800-850?	y, in 1a	p-in-t	1a - chapel?, continuity
Staunch Meadow	East Anglia/Suffolk	750-900	excavated	y	n	abandoned	high/monastery?	y (cem 1 and 2), horse	p-h	poss church, cemeteries

place	central halls (number)	size range	size ratios	slope	river	axis	parallels
Atcham	2	24x8, 14x8	3, 1.75	nw down to se, very gentle	to e	nnw - sse	Yeavering, Cheddar
Bloodmoor Hill	n, 1 p-in-t stands out	11.5x5.75, 4.7x3.3	2, 1.42	se to nw	to n-w	ene - wsw	SFBs - West Stow
Chalton	3?	11.4x6.3, 8.54x5.3	1.8, 1.61	away from excav. area, expressed!	?	nne - ssw	ext p - Yeav, Cowdery's, Whith; Flix
Cheddar	2	36x18, 18.3x8.5	2, 2.15	flat, very slight n to s	to s	almost e-w	struct X - Gaul; continuity - Flixborough
Cowage Farm	1	20x10, 18x9, 16x6?	2, 2, 2.67?	flat, slight s to n	to n-w	nnw - sse; ene - wsw	Yeavering, Cowdery's, Sprouston
Cowdery's Down	3 (2 poss agricultural)	22.1x8.8, 19.5x8	2.5, 2.4	slight s to n	to s	ene - wsw; almost ne-sw/nw-se	Yeavering, Maelmlin
Drayton/Sutton Court.	2?	30.9x10.8, 16x6	2.9, 2.7	flat	to n	almost n-s/e-w	size - Yeav, Lym, Cowdery's; over - Chalton
Faccombe Netherton	1	16x5.9, 10.4x5.6	2.7, 1.86	earthwork (otherwise slight to e)	to se	nnw - sse	Cheddar, Goltho
Hatton Rock/Hampton	3 (1 in phase 1)	24x6, 20x9	4, 2.2	slight ne to sw	to sw	ne - sw; e-w in phase 1	size - Cheddar and Yeavering
Long Wittenham	2	24x12, 18x12	2, 1.5	flat	to nw	nnw - sse	size - Sutton Courtenay
Lyminge	3?	21x8.5	2,5	nw to se, very gentle	to s	e-w	Yeavering, Cowdery's, Sutton
Portchester	1?	12.8x9.45, 10.97x4.27, 6.1x6.1	1.35, 2.57, 1	flat	sea to e	almost n-s/e-w	Sulgrave, Earl's Barton – tower
Raunds	1	18x10	1,8	earthwork (otherwise slight to e)	to se	nne - ssw	earlier hall - sim to Goltho
Sprouston	2	28x9, 20x7	3.1, 2.86	e to w, very gentle	to w	ne-sw; nw-se, F - e-w	Yeavering, Milfield
Sulgrave	1	16.76x5.49	,05	earthwork (otherwise slight to ne)	to sse	e-w	none
Thirlings	1 plus barn?	14.88x6.8, 8.84x5.16	2.19, 1.7	sw to ne, very gentle	to ne	ene - wsw	A, B, G - Cowdery's, C - Yeavering
Wicken Bonhunt	?	? (<20)	?	n to s	to s	ne - sw	mixed - Maxey and Catholme
Yeavering	2?	25.3x11.6,	2,18	flat, away from the area	to n	e-w, in C - nw - se	none
Borderline sites:							
Flixborough	?	13.5x7.5, 10x6	1.8, 1.66	ne to sw	to w	e - w	Brandon, Cowage Farm, Yeavering
Staunch Meadow	1	12x5.5, 9.15x5.5	2.18, 1.66	almost flat, away from excav. area	to n	almost ew	church - c12 at Cowdery's Down

Table 1. Summary of the key characteristics and features of the secular case studies.

Table 2. Summary of the key characteristics and features of the ecclesiastical case studies.

place	kingdom/county	dedications (w to e)	patronage	sequence of alignment	dates of alignment	evidence	prehistoric	Roman	status	notable burials	notable features	size range	number of buildings	parallels
Bampton	Mercia/Oxfordshire	Deanery, S M	K Eadwig	?	11-12th cc	part exc, part standing	y	n	church, belonged to Exeter	A-S date	barrows	18x17.5	2?	
Canterbury	Kent/Kent	SS P and P, S M, S Pancras	K Ethelbert, K Eadbald	sequential	c. 620	standing, part exc	?	y, material used	abbey	inside, w on axis	axial burial		2, + S Panc & S Martin further	
Canterbury cathedral	Kent/Kent	St Saviour's, S J B	Arch Cuthbert	sequential	740-760s	part exc, literary	n	poss	catheral	?	poss bi-focal		2	
Glastonbury	Wessex/Somerset	S M, Ss P and P, hypogeum	K Cenwealh, K Centwine, K Ine	sequential	c. 625- early 8th c	part exc, literary	?	y, material used	minster	?	Roman well		2 + hypogeum	
Gloucester St Peter's	Hwicce-Mercia/Gloucestershire	S M, S Peter	Osric of Hwicce, K Aethelred of M	sequential	poss Brit - 679	part exc, literary	?	y	minster	3 under S M	site of baths		2	
Gloucester St Oswald's	Mercia/Gloucestershire	S Peter , crypt	Q Aethelflaed, earl Aethelred	simultaneous	10th c	part exc, part standing	?	y	minster	B464	carved crosses		1 + crypt	Winchester - royal mausoleum
Hexham	Northumbria/Northumberland	S A, apsed chapel, also S M &S P?	Q Etheldreda, Bish Wilfrid, Acca	sequential	674	part exc, part st, literary	?	y, material used	abbey	to e of apsed build+Ac	crosses, poss Acca	9.1x4.7, 4x2.4	1 + crypt, +poss 2	Roman, also W and J
Heysham	Northumbria/Lancashire	S Patrick, S Peter	?	sequential	7-8th cc	part exc, part standing	?	?	church?	9 in chapel, rock-cut	rock-cut g, cross		2	Glast, Hexham
Jarrow	Northumbria/Tyne and Wear	S Paul, ?	K Ecgfrith, Ben Biscop	simultaneous	after 685	part exc, part standing	?	y, material used	monastery	Cuth on right of altar	crypt?	12.8x4.7; 20x5.5	2	wearmouth, Jumieges, Hamage
Lindisfarne	Northumbria/Northumberland	S M, S Peter	K Oswald, Bish Aidan, Finan, Cuth	sequential	634 - 8th c	part st, literary	?	n	monastery	70/1 in chancel	slight misalign	19.5x5.8?	2	
Monkwearmouth	Northumbria/Tyne and Wear	S Peter, S M?	K Ecgfrith, Ben Biscop	sequential	674 - 685	part standing, analogues	?	y, material used	monastery		n		2?	Jarrow
Prittlewell	Essex/Essex	S M, ?	?	sequential	10-12th cc	fabric, topography	?	?	minster?	Prittlewell prince	n		2	
Repton	Mercia/Derbyshire	S Wystan (not original), crypt	K Wystan?	sequential?	early 7th c	part exc, part st	?	n	monastery/royal vill?	to e of crypt, K Aethelbald?	halls, royal burials		1 + crypt	
Rochester	Kent/Kent	S A, poss S Nicholas?	K Aethelbert, August, Bish Justus	?	early 7th c	exc	?	y, also material	minster	Paulinus and Ythamar	Roman building	9.85x6.8	2?	
Wells	Wessex/Somerset	S A, S M	K Ine?	sequential	10-13th cc or earlier	exc	?	y	minster	inside chapel	wells		2?	
Whithorn	Northumbria/Dumfries and Galloway	unknown, chapel/mausoleum?	?	sequential	730-845	exc	?	?	monastreium	grave 72, in chapel	halls and posts		2	
Winchcombe	Mercia/Gloucestershire	S Peter, S Panc, SS M&Kenelm	Offa, Coenwulf, Oswald?	sequential?	around 800?	literary	?	?	abbey	royal - Coenwulf and Cynhelm	mound?, crypt?		3?	Repton
Winchester	Wessex/Hampshire	tower, Ss P and P	K Kynegils, K Kynewald, S Birinus	simultaneous?	648 - 9th c	exc	?	y	minster	S Swithun	tower	26.8x6.7	1 + tower	
Worcester cathedral	Mercia/Worcestershire	S Peter, S M?	Bish Oswald	sequential	680s - 10th c	literary	?	y	minster	n	n		2?	
Worcester	Mercia/Worcestershire	poss S Margaret,S Alban, S Helen	K Aethelwold?	?	poss 7th c or before	literary	?	y	church?	n	n		3?	

Appendix 2. Photographs.

Photo 1. Foundations of the chapel at Hexham, looking south-west (Author 2016)
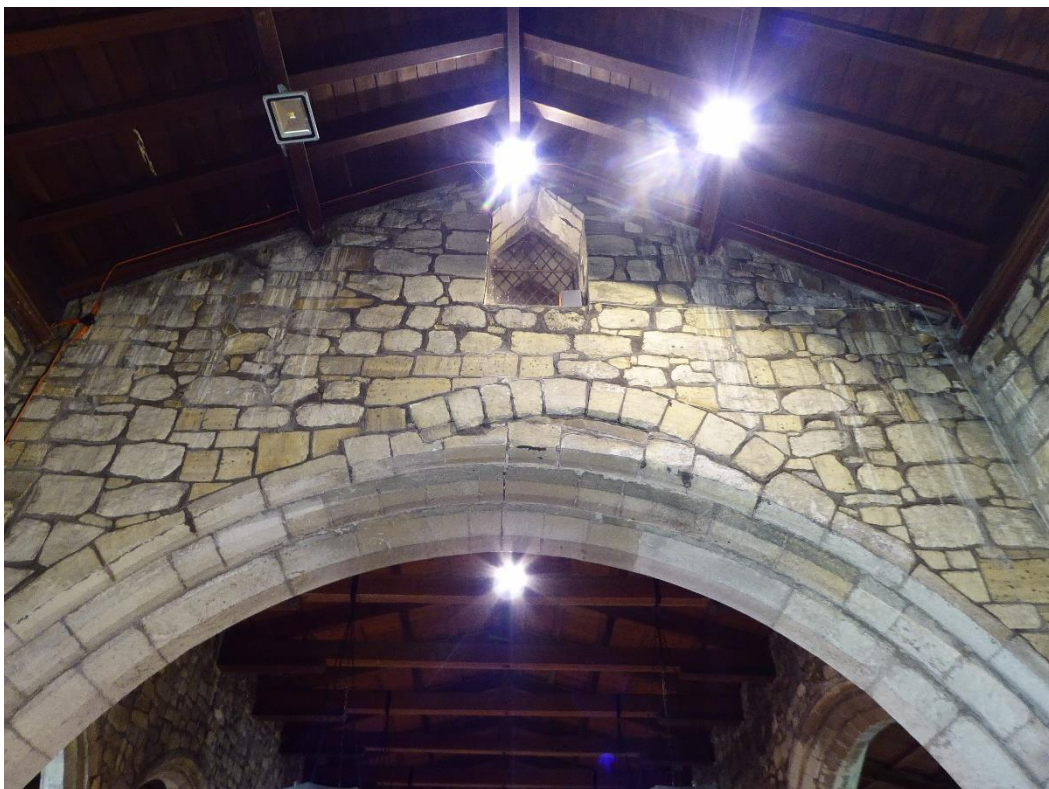
Photo 2. Chancel arch at St Mary's, Lindisfarne, looking east (Author 2016)

Photo 3. Cross-base on Lindisfarne, looking east (Author 2016)

Photo 4. Foundations of a church discovered on Lindisfarne in 2017 (Author 2017)

Photo 5. Rock-cut graves at Heysham, looking north (Author 2016)

Photo 6. Apse of the second church at Hippo Regius, looking east (Author 2017)

Photo 7. Panoramic view of the site at Yeavering (Author 2016)

Appendix 3. Alignment and elite status: problems and issues.

Axial alignment, as well as evidence of planning and zoning, have been connected with the elite status of secular settlements displaying these features.[1] A similar correlation between the elite and royal status of settlements and the large size of their key buildings has also been noted. Alignment and large size of the key structures indeed do overlap. Of the sites discussed in this thesis, 10 include halls over 20m in length and another 4 have structures exceeding 15m in length – all are fairly substantial buildings by Anglo-Saxon standards.[2]

Seven of the ten sites with halls exceeding 20m in length (see table 1 in Appendix 1 for details), have been dated to the period before 700AD, suggesting that a combination of alignment and large-scale structures is largely a 7th-century phenomenon. All these elite sites seem consistent with the development of kingdoms in the 7th century, which would have involved ostentatious display of power by ruling dynasties and their elites, particularly evident in architecture.[3] The sites that only meet one of two criteria, the presence of halls over 20m and a date before 700, are particularly interesting. These can be divided into two groups.

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[1] Reynolds 2002, p. 112; James, Marshall and Millet 1984, p. 185; Blair 2018, pp. 114-125.

[2] For types of halls and their dimensions, see James, Marshall and Millett 1984.

[3] For elite display in the 7th century, see Blair 2018, ch. 4.

Site	Presence of halls over 20m in length	Pre-700 date
Atcham	V	V
Bloodmoor Hill	-	V
Chalton	-	V
Cheddar	V	-
Cowage Farm	V	V
Cowdery's Down	V	V
Drayton/Sutton Courtenay	V	V
Faccombe Netherton	-	-
Flixborough	-	V
Hatton Rock	V	-
Long Wittenham	V	V
Lyminge	V	V
Portchester	-	-
Raunds	-	-
Sprouston	-	V
Staunch Meadow	-	-
Sulgrave	-	-
Thirlings	-	V
Wicken Bonhunt	-	-
Yeavering	V	V

Table 3. Observation of correlation between sizes of halls and dates of settlements.

The first group includes the four settlements – Bloodmoor Hill, Chalton, Flixborough and Sprouston – which date to the pre-700 period and feature buildings of relatively small size. The sequence including building 1a at Flixborough only develops in the 8th century, however, alignment becomes a prominent feature there before 700, putting it in the 7th-century context alongside other cases of this period. The case of Flixborough, with its debatable status, however, is an outstanding one and its problematic aspects have already been discussed. At Sprouston, which has been identified as a royal settlement, the relatively small size of the buildings appears surprising. Even though the length of building F, including annexes, would exceed 20m, building E, supposedly a hall, is still relatively small in comparison with other high-status sites. Equally interesting are the cases of Bloodmoor Hill and Thirlings, which, despite being interpreted as elite centres, feature rather small structures. Chalton, on the other hand, despite its interpretation as a village, demonstrates an outstanding and significant attention to grouping and planning, suggesting centralised control – perhaps that of a local lord.

These cases seem to suggest that despite the clear general trend, which suggests that alignment, increased size of structures and high status go hand-in-hand in the pre-700 period, there are grey areas in the identification of status from the size of structures and the presence of alignment. Despite the small size of the buildings, which could suggest a relatively low status for these settlements, the planning of sites like Chalton, Bloodmoor Hill and Sprouston in fact fits the patterns of higher-status settlements. It is possible that among the pre-700 sites, alignment and regularity of planning are stronger indicators of high status of a site than the size of the key buildings?

The second group comprises the post-700 sites, of which only two – Cheddar and Hatton Rock – include buildings over 20m in length.[4] Both have been

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[4] Problematically, however, the dating of Hatton Rock is based on the very idea that increased size is associated with high status, which this chapter is aiming to explore; the date is based entirely on the

identified as royal estates.[5] Alignment at Cheddar is very short-lived and possibly coincidental.[6] Although at the time of their co-existence, the two halls seem to have formed a coherent group, this was not the main objective of the builders; the intention would seem to have been to replace the hall in one location with a new hall nearby, which involved an intermediate phase in which the two halls coexisted, before the new one was finished and the old one demolished. Hatton Rock, on the other hand, in its spatial arrangement and clarity of alignment, with the strongly expressed, Yeavering-like string of halls (which are also of a substantial size), seems to gravitate towards earlier, pre-700, settlements. Typologically, this could perhaps push the commonly accepted mid-8th-century date of Hatton Rock back towards the 7th century.

With the exception of Hatton Rock, post-700 sites tend to focus on one single main building. Axial alignment at Raunds, Sulgrave and Faccombe Netherton seems to follow a fairly focussed 'one main hall plus bowers/subsidiary structures' type of plan. Such a nucleated arrangement contrasts with the earlier strings of buildings which seem equal in status, such as those at Yeavering, Atcham, Sprouston, Chalton and Flixborough. In addition, all the late sites had a church founded separately nearby, including Cheddar, which, however, also had a small chapel on the territory of the manor.[7] This, again, seems to contrast with the earlier sites, which, as has been noted, seem to incorporate the religious focus into the overall layout.

Although alignment is indeed a noticeable attribute of late Anglo-Saxon high-status sites, as discussed by Andrew Reynolds, the rhetoric of alignment at

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assumption that a settlement of this scale would have been built during Mercian supremacy under Offa. - Rahtz 1970, pp. 140, 142.

[5] On the changes in high-status settlement plans and their (much debated) late Saxon nucleation, see Reynolds 2002, Hamerow 2012, Blair 2018, ch. 9 and 10. It is worth noting too that 'manor' as a type probably did not evolve until after the conquest. – see Lewis 2012, sp. p. 128.

[6] Rahtz 1979, p. 62.

[7] John Blair, however, suggests that the church at Cheddar belonged to a monastic foundation and pre-dated the manor. – Blair 1996, p. 117.

post-700 sites is very different from that noted at earlier sites.[8] Perhaps it would be fair to observe that late alignment is more of a routine mode of organising a settlement within a confined territory, whereas earlier alignment, as has been demonstrated in some topographic observations above, seems to be laid out with greater deliberation, on a larger scale and with functional importance of axes, thus perhaps making linearity not just a tool to manage the available space but a pattern to make an ideological statement. This observation seems also to correlate with Helena Hamerow's statement that the earlier – 5th to 7th-century – buildings were more formal and regular than their later counterparts. This would seem to indicate a more careful and thought-through approach to construction and planning.[9]

It would appear that sites with alignment generally fit the pattern of close correlation between size of buildings and the status of settlement. However, it is clear that regularity of planning is primary in identifying a site as an elite, high-status settlement. Two possible outcomes of the foregoing analysis are, first, the possibility that Chalton enjoyed a higher status than it is usually credited with, one defined not by the size of its structures but instead by its planning principles and location, and second, an early date for Hatton Rock, which sits more comfortably alongside the earlier sites.

It is clear that the character of alignment at different sites varies greatly and is further problematized by the presence of numerous features, which makes the overall body of information far from homogenous, invites a more detailed consideration and, perhaps unhelpfully, makes interpretation rather difficult. In addition, it should be said that alignment is not an omnipresent signifier of wealth, power and royal control, as there is no alignment at other high-status hall

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[8] See Reynolds 2002 and 2003. Same applies to grid-planning, which changes and declines in the post-700 period. – see Blair 2018, p. 155, ch. 9.
[9] Hamerow 2012, p. 41.

sites like Rendlesham (a documented royal vill), Doon Hill, Dover, and Eynsford.[10] However, it is widespread enough to be regarded as characteristic of a degree of status in early Anglo-Saxon secular settlement.

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[10] For Dover and Eynsford, see Philp 2014, pp. 118-136; for Rendlesham, see Scull, Minter and Plouviez 2016; for Doon Hill, see Smith 1991. On the other hand, there is a yet another royal site which displays alignment of its key structures – at Milfield, where the Northumbrian royal seat was established after Yeavering was abandoned. Unfortunately, this site was brought to my attention too late to be included in this thesis, but it will be explored in the future. I thank David Petts for highlighting it. See also Blair 2018, pp. 115, 118, fig. 31.

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