Royal Administration in East Anglia, c. 917-1066

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Short Abstract

This thesis examines the administrative development of East Anglia between 917 and 1066, the period which saw the region integrated into a growing English kingdom. It explains how this process operated at a regional and local level by considering what claims underpinned it, how new administrative structures were introduced, and what gave royal officers power in the localities. In answering these questions for East Anglia, the thesis reinterprets the basis of English government in the tenth and eleventh centuries. What is conventionally viewed as an advanced 'Anglo-Saxon state' drew its strength not so much from military and bureaucratic organisation as from the widespread and direct relationship between the king and his subjects.

The first two chapters take the king's perspective to deal with royal claims. Territorial expansion by successive members of the West Saxon dynasty rested on sworn submissions and the resulting personal loyalties, rather than profound tenurial or ideological change. The privilege known as soke is reinterpreted as a device for manipulating the relationship between king and freemen for the king's fiscal and military convenience, with implications for both administration and land tenure. Two further chapters consider the origins of East Anglian hundreds and *burhs*. These institutions emerge as generally irregular adaptations of earlier structures, although they were forced into a uniform pattern. Both served as frames for organising freemen often subject to no one but the king. The fifth chapter shows that royal office-holders in East Anglia frequently owed their appointment to the private resources which they could mobilise in the king's interests, as the offices themselves long remained institutionally unstable.

This study brings evidence from a neglected region to bear on developments which were common to the whole realm. If tenth- and eleventh-century England was not as uniform and ordered a kingdom as has been imagined, unsuspected features in its governance ultimately make it appear scarcely less precocious.

Long Abstract

This thesis examines how the English kingdom absorbed East Anglia between 917 and 1066. Its purpose is to understand the processes by which a formerly independent polity was brought within developing administrative norms. In determining how these processes operated in East Anglia, the thesis reinterprets the basis of English government in the tenth and eleventh centuries, arguing that what is often termed the 'Anglo-Saxon state' was built less on military and bureaucratic power than on the relationship between king and subject. A close study of the material surviving from this particular region shows that royal prerogatives and local improvisation, rather than conquest and central planning, laid the foundations of the much-enlarged kingdom.

The unification of England in the tenth and eleventh centuries saw the West Saxon dynasty extend its control over most of lowland Britain, outwardly achieving a considerable degree of administrative uniformity. Few would dispute the general course and result of these developments, but neither all the regions affected nor all the processes at work have received equal attention. East Anglia barely features in most accounts of the English kingdom's creation. Across the kingdom as a whole, the original establishment of institutions which become fully visible in the eleventh century has attracted little detailed study. In both cases the beginning and final outcome—West Saxon conquest and the ordered *burhs* and hundreds of the Domesday kingdom—appear equally plain, discouraging close examination of the processes involved. This thesis addresses the local foundations of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom under three headings: royal claims, royal institutions, and royal officers. It seeks to determine, respectively, how West Saxon kingship took hold and what it meant for kings and subjects; how royal institutions originated and how far they adhered to their notional

templates; and how the king's authority was relayed on a regional and local scale. The introduction assembles an outline history of East Anglia during the period under discussion, providing a background to the thematic treatment of these questions in the following five chapters.

Chapter I addresses the basis of West Saxon kingship in East Anglia, asking how the fundamental claim was established and what powers the king drew from it. A preliminary section examines political vocabulary in prose sources to establish how the centre viewed the realm as a whole, finding that the supposedly incipient English 'nation-state' was not conceived in such unitary terms by its rulers. Examining the means by which it expanded north of the Thames casts doubt on widespread conquest. For the Midlands as well as East Anglia itself, a close reading of the relevant annals emphasises not so much a military conquest reinforced by fortress-building, as successive oath-swearings. Local loyalty rested less on wholesale land redistribution to southerners than on the acquiescence of local elites to West Saxon rule. Nor did the ability to cement loyalty through patronage depend on the dispossession of existing landholders, as is often supposed. Analysis of background information from recorded land transactions shows that kingship itself carried rights and powers which ensured a steady supply of disposable land. Apart from the 'common burdens' a king would expect to, and did receive forfeitures and gifts in pursuit of favour. Once acknowledged, kingship therefore provided the means for perpetuating itself. This chapter argues that the traditional rights of tenth-century and earlier kings provided the resources for maintaining and deepening control.

Chapter II pursues the theme of kingship into the eleventh century by considering the implications of the royal prerogative of soke. This term becomes common after c. 1000,

particularly in sources from eastern England, and most historians have viewed it as a judicial privilege. Its intrinsically royal nature has attracted little comment. This chapter reinterprets soke as a universal royal claim, with far-reaching implications for both society and administration. Previous scholars have largely built their arguments on the premise that soke concerned justice, but proceeding from first principles on contemporary evidence suggests that the king's soke was a conceptual frame encompassing those who stood in a tenurially immediate relationship to him. I argue that when the king alienated soke, this act was more concerned with the fiscal and military issues of land than with the profits of justice. This interpretation represents a departure but has the advantage of accounting for the landed inflections in which soke overwhelmingly appears without resorting to an untenable equation with bookland. Those who received soke had responsibilities as well as rights, which could mean answering to the king for what was due from the soke under them. The alienation of soke therefore conveyed an interest in the land itself, a characteristic which not only recommended it to the Normans as a basis for the legal fiction of antecession, but indeed rendered it difficult to distinguish from the new concept of tenure. This chapter shows that kings both retained and developed means for exercising their power outside institutional frames. The handling of soke in the eleventh century had the potential to shape administration and society in ways usually associated with post-Conquest practices, while the privilege itself drew upon an all-encompassing kingship rather than administrative structures.

Chapter III turns to royal institutions, seeking to establish what administrative structures the kings of Wessex may have found in place when they first gained power over East Anglia. Beginning from the accepted principle that early royal governance worked through estate centres, it traces settlements named in pre-Viking contexts to their first subsequent record, usually Domesday Book. Middle Saxon 'productive sites', which have been identified as

early economic centres from archaeological evidence, lend themselves to the same treatment, but neither class shows a convincing relationship with later institutions. Applying a retrogressive approach to tenth- and eleventh-century material, particularly Little Domesday Book's record of Norfolk and Suffolk, compensates to a degree for the unevenness of the early evidence. While retrogression carries risks if pushed to undue specificity, it proves informative in revealing patterns on a regional scale. Analysis of royal possessions in 1066 identifies a distinct group of royal estates which generally collected archaic-looking dues and exercised functions over surrounding territories. The 'territorial soke' has long been recognised as a characteristic feature of north-eastern England, and a related type of structure proves particularly distinctive in East Anglia. These territories bore a clear relationship to Domesday hundreds, but mapping their extent often suggests an even closer association with watersheds and watercourses. Soke-territories emerge as structures consisting not of specific parcels of land burdened with obligations, but in territorial superiority, the residues of which Little Domesday records using soke terminology. The evidence surveyed in this chapter suggests that a limited but distinctive royal demesne, consisting largely of estates with attached territories which closely matched later hundreds, probably fell into West Saxon hands by default.

Chapter IV considers institutions which demonstrably appeared under West Saxon rule, approaching *burhs* and hundreds on their own terms. It examines the origins of both institutions with reference to their uniformity and internal structure. A comparison of the East Anglian *burhs* with their better-studied Midland counterparts demonstrates that they were non-royal in origin. Burghal status became attached to settlements which fulfilled some of the appropriate functions and hosted a considerable free population. The East Anglian *burhs* stood apart in this respect, representing existing centres of trade and production which

accommodated themselves to West Saxon kingship. The hundreds of Norfolk and Suffolk have been considered uniform and therefore the work of a powerful administration capable of redrawing local units at will. To test the proposition, this chapter analyses a sample of ten hundreds distributed evenly across East Anglia. Reordering Little Domesday information on a geographical basis yields figures for acreage, population, and value which show the apparent regularity of the East Anglian hundreds to be an illusion. Their capacities varied widely on every measure, and their uniform treatment for geld purposes indicates an administration which was both inflexible and ultimately arbitrary. A consideration of the pence-in-the-pound system, a form of geld assessment specific to East Anglia, questions the sophistication and capacity for minute adjustment that have been imputed to it. Here too, the evidence suggests an overriding rigidity. Although the hundreds might be treated as uniform for fiscal purposes, their social dimension was much more flexible. Scattered information from East Anglian sources demonstrates that the hundred had an internal hierarchy. Its functions depended not so much on any institutional character as on the status of its leading members, which is capable of tentative definition. Both *burh* and hundred not only organised groups of men directly subject to the king for the enforcement of his wishes, but ultimately consisted in such people.

Chapter V examines the individuals who mediated royal power locally, beginning with the three main categories of office-holder: bishops, ealdormen, and reeves. It traces each of the three chronologically in order to identify changes in the origins and resources of incumbents. Bishops represent the comparatively best-attested group, and if many remain shadowy figures, this may in itself be a measure of their individual profile at court. It appears likely that most of the tenth-century bishops came from East Anglia, and that kings only began to appoint men who were clearly outsiders from around the year 1000. An analysis of episcopal

landholding reveals that the East Anglian bishopric was very weakly institutionalised, lacking a permanent cathedral community, although its relationship with Bury St Edmunds Abbey appears in an ambiguous light that contrasts with post-Conquest hostilities. Pragmatic and individual considerations shaped secular as well as episcopal appointments. East Anglia received its first ealdorman later than previously thought, and only Edward the Confessor began to fill a regional earldom as a matter of routine. Unlike the bishop, the ealdorman or earl could also be dispensed with entirely. Reeves were much less powerful figures, and the one example who wielded considerable influence did so on the strength of his private resources and proximity to the king. Reeves recorded in Little Domesday gained limited personal influence from their office. The three groups of office-holders present a consistent picture in which local power underpinned office rather than the reverse. Office-holders were chosen on an individual basis. In the light of this and earlier conclusions concerning the implications of soke-holding, the chapter closes by examining whom the king trusted with soke. The wealth of detail preserved in Little Domesday not only shows that soke-holders were a select group but gives an arresting view of the way in which they claimed their privileges.

The conclusion synthesises an account from the separate chapters, which converge in suggesting that East Anglia only acquired the characteristic trappings of West Saxon governance in the years after 950. These structures were themselves not so much institutions as frames within which an extensive free population organised itself. The authorities showed very limited regard for the differences between individual units, and it is this view from the centre that has led historians to envisage a highly uniform administrative system. Kings delegated their authority to a small number of office-holders who only became routine appointments towards the end of the period. Holding up these conclusions against a larger

backdrop, including the neighbouring Midlands and areas further afield, reveals various parallels which cast doubt on the existence of a uniform West Saxon administrative template. The introduction of common features such as the hundred may instead have proceeded through general directives, variously interpreted in the localities. Such acts of interpretation reflected a recurring theme of this thesis—the direct connection between kings and freemen—and a final section considers the broader implications of this interface for English statehood.

Close examination of one well-defined region offers a new perspective on the creation and governance of the English kingdom. It remedies past neglect of East Anglia in accounts of English unification, modifying a picture previously defined by evidence from Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria. The region's development yields little evidence for the processes of conquest and institution-building which are usually taken to have formed the basis of West Saxon power. By contrast, the claims inherent in recognised kingship went far beyond the ceremonial. It becomes clear that loyalty itself, and perhaps sworn loyalty in particular, gave a king powers which helped to strengthen his position. Royal institutions, meanwhile, were less artificial and uniform than they appear. Upon closer investigation, they emerge as the results of improvisation and co-option, their functions dependent on the loyalty of those who counted in local society. Royal officers in the localities did not draw their power from institutions but from their own resources and relationship to the monarch. Cumulatively, these arguments present the late Anglo-Saxon kingdom as a less bureaucratic entity has been supposed, and its structures as the result rather than the source of royal power. It was the relationship between king and subject that first brought East Anglia within the English fold and made increasingly intrusive governance practical.

In emphasising the local processes underlying what is historically visible, this thesis encourages further enquiry in several directions. Most immediately, it would be desirable to revisit other regions north of the Thames without presuppositions concerning the basis of West Saxon control. As administration is shown to have depended on the loyalty of local society, the need to define local actors has come into sharper focus. There seems to have been a threshold for active participation, and the nature of county and hundredal society, in East Anglia and beyond, requires closer study. This threshold may well have coincided with a status entailing a direct relationship to the king. The regulation of this from above, which this thesis has identified as the essence of soke, has considerable implications for landholding. It has been conventional to assume that any 'feudal revolution' made little headway in closely-governed England before the Norman Conquest, but the reinterpretation of soke suggests an indigenous development with similar effects. The delegation of public functions to magnates before the Conquest could usefully be revisited in this light.

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Abbreviations

Alecto DB [Shire]	*Great Domesday Book*, ed. A. Williams and R.W.H. Erskine (6 cases, London, 1986-92); *Little Domesday Book*, ed. A. Williams and G.H. Martin (6 vols in 3 cases, London, 2000).
ANS	*Anglo-Norman Studies*.
ASC	*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. If undifferentiated by MS: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. D. Whitelock, D.C. Douglas, and S.I. Tucker (London, 1961). MS A: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 3: MS A*, ed. J.M. Bately (Cambridge, 1986). MS C: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 5: MS C*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge, 2001). MS D: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 6: MS D*, ed. G.P. Cubbin (Cambridge, 1996). MS F: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 8: MS F*, ed. P.S. Baker (Cambridge, 2000).
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*.
ASSAH	*Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*.
Asser	Asser, *Life of Alfred*, ed. W.H. Stevenson and rev. D. Whitelock, *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford, 1959).
Blomefield	F. Blomefield and C. Parkin, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (11 vols, London, 1803-10).
BNJ	*British Numismatic Journal*.
Bosworth & Toller	T.N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth* (Oxford, 1882-1898).
BBen	Benefactor lists of Bury St Edmunds Abbey, ed. K.A. Lowe and S. Foot, *Charters of Bury St Edmunds* (Oxford, forthcoming).
CAR	*Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis: a saec. x. usque ad an. circiter 1200*, ed. W. Dunn Macray (London, 1886).

CDEPN	V. Watts, *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Cambridge, 2004).
DB [Shire]	*Domesday Book*, ed. J. Morris et al. (35 vols, Chichester, 1975-86).
DMLBS	R.E. Latham, D.R. Howlett, and R.K. Ashdowne (eds.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford, 1975-2013).
DOE A-H online	A. Cameron, A. Crandell Amos, A. diPaolo Healey, et al. (eds.), *Dictionary of Old English: A to H* online (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016), https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:3987/doe/ (6 May 2018).
EHR	*English Historical Review*.
GDB	Great Domesday Book.
GPA	William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum, volume I: text and translation*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2007).
Harmer, *Writs*	*Anglo-Saxon Writs*, ed. F.E. Harmer (2nd edn., Stamford, 1989).
HE	*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969).
Hudson, *OHLE2*	J. Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England, Volume II: 871-1216* (Oxford, 2012).
JEPNS	*Journal of the English Place-Name Society*.
KAS	*The Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds and Related Documents*, ed. R.H.C. Davis, Camden Society, 3rd series, 84 (London, 1954).
LDB	Little Domesday Book.
LE	*Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake, Camden Society, 3rd series, 92 (London, 1962).
Liebermann, *Gesetze*	F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, (3 vols, Halle, 1903-1916).

Maitland, *DBB*	F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1897; 1987 edn).
MS	Manuscript.
MStE	Herman, *Miracles of St Edmund*, ed. and trans. T. Licence, *Herman the Archdeacon and Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, Miracles of St Edmund* (Oxford, 2014).
Naismith, *MEC8*	R. Naismith, *Medieval European Coinage, Volume 8: Britain and Ireland c.400-1066* (Cambridge, 2017).
n.s.	new series.
ODNB	H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/ (16 April 2019).
OEB	*The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. T. Miller, Early English Text Society, 95-6, 110-11 (4 vols in 2, London, 1890-8)
PASE	*Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England*, http://www.pase.ac.uk (16 April 2019).
PASE DB	*PASE Domesday*, http://www.domesday.pase.ac.uk (16 April 2019).
PSIA[H]	*Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology [and History]*.
PStE	Abbo of Fleury, *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, ed. M. Winterbottom, *Three Lives of English Saints* (Toronto, 1972).
S [number]	Charters cited from P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968), rev. S.E. Kelly, *The Electronic Sawyer*, http://www.esawyer.org.uk/ (16 April 2019).
Stenton, *ASE*	F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (3rd edn., Oxford, 1971).
TRE	*tempore regis edwardi*.
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*.
TRW	*tempore regis willelmi*.

VCH [County]	*The Victoria History of the County of […]*.
WBEASE	M. Lapidge et al. (eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (2nd edn, Chichester, 2014).
Whitelock, *Wills*	*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930).
Wormald, *MEL*	P. Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Volume I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford, 1999).
Wormald, *Papers*	P. Wormald, *Papers Preparatory to the Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Volume II: From God's Law to Common Law*, ed. S. Baxter and J. Hudson (University of London, Early English Laws, 2014), http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/reference/wormald/ (16 April 2019).

Notes on references and translations

Laws are cited from Liebermann, *Gesetze*, using the abbreviations set out in volume I, p. xi.

Where references to charters incorporate statements on authenticity, these follow the comments compiled in P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968), rev. S.E. Kelly, *The Electronic Sawyer*, http://www.esawyer.org.uk/.

Translations from Domesday Book are based on those of the Phillimore edition but amended to more literal readings where appropriate: e.g. for *soca*, 'soke' instead of 'jurisdiction'; for *sochemannus*, 'sokeman' instead of 'freeman'.

Introduction

> King Edward sends friendly greetings to Bishop Æthelmær and Earl Ælfgar and all my thegns and sheriffs in Suffolk and Norfolk and wheresoever St Edmund has any land. And I inform you that I expressly command that the *inland* of St Edmund be exempt from payment of *heregeld* and from every other render.[1]

Around 1051, Edward the Confessor resolved to exempt all St Edmund's manorial demesnes from tax. His writ to this effect proclaimed a high privilege for Bury St Edmunds Abbey, although little about it would have looked familiar to the historical Edmund, a king of East Anglia who died at the hands of a Viking army in 869. Neither sheriffs nor the *heregeld* existed in the ninth century. Nor, probably, did the divisions of Norfolk and Suffolk. The historical Edmund might further have wondered in what setting this terse document itself—so different from the solemn diplomas which described privileges in his day—was to be presented. Most of all, he could hardly have failed to notice the assumption that his old realm now formed part of some larger whole. For while the East Anglian kingdom had not died with Edmund, its native dynasty had been extinguished, and the kingdom itself had eventually come under West Saxon rule in 917. This thesis explains how East Anglia developed from a recently independent province to become an integral part of a unitary English realm.

It reconstructs the growth of royal administration by examining the claims, institutions, and people that shaped the process. By doing so it seeks neither to produce a regional study for its

[1] S 1075: *Eadward cyningc gret Ægelmer biscop 7 Ælfgar eorl 7 ealle mine ðegenas 7 sciregerefan on Suthfolce 7 on Norðfolce 7 swa hwer swa Sancte Eadmund ænig land hafeþ freondlice. 7 ic cyða eou þæt hic gehate be fullan hæse þæt Sancte Eadmundes inland sy scotfreo fram heregelde. 7 fram eghwilc oðer gaful.* Text and translation: Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 158-9.

own sake nor to illuminate the politics of the period, but to understand the structural foundations of the growing English kingdom. A regional approach commends itself because any understanding of administrative development must take account of what preceded the period under discussion. In the case of East Anglia, as of Mercia and Northumbria, Scandinavian attack was swiftly followed by dynastic collapse, and cursory narratives of the late ninth and early tenth centuries speak of the destruction of these kingdoms. In fact, all three endured in some form and came under West Saxon control in the course of the tenth century. Alfred's descendants gained most of their new territories by absorbing long-established polities: East Anglia in 917, Mercia in 918, and Northumbria (for the last time) in 954. Only in the East Midlands was the West Saxon order imposed on widely fragmented political authority. Across most of what would become England, the regional units recognised by contemporaries therefore make natural points of departure.

East Anglia barely features in most accounts of the making of England. In part, this no doubt reflects the region's apparent lack of influence on the larger process. Of all the polities which came to make up the larger realm, East Anglia was the smallest, the first to be absorbed, and thereafter the least susceptible to instability. Whereas the political elites of Mercia and Northumbria made decisive interventions in the affairs of the kingdom, East Anglia never asserted itself at critical moments. A more fundamental difficulty, however, lies in the distribution of extant sources. The independent kingdom of East Anglia is so obscure that it is almost impossible to assess continuities between it and the tenth-century province. Unlike Mercia, where charters were preserved in some numbers, or Northumbria, which maintained a tradition of historical writing, East Anglia lost its early written heritage entirely. No religious community which might have preserved such material is known to have endured from the pre-Viking period, and it is surely no accident that the documentary record only

improves with the growth of Bury St Edmunds Abbey from c. 950. Even then, the political scene does not become much clearer until after the Conquest.

If East Anglia has been singularly absent from the national narrative, it has hardly received more attention its own right. Numerous regional studies have considered where English Mercia, Danish-settled Mercia, and Northumbria stood within the larger kingdom and what the local sources reveal about its expansion, but nothing of the kind has been attempted for East Anglia.[2] Historians have generally confined themselves to the subject for which the local source base appears most promising—the Scandinavian conversion to Christianity and subsequent ecclesiastical developments.[3] Individual works address other aspects of the region's development, such as aristocratic communities, local administration, and the division into Norfolk and Suffolk.[4] Most general studies arise from the county history tradition and

[2] For Mercia: P.H. Sawyer, 'The Charters of Burton Abbey and the Unification of England', *Northern History*, 10/1 (1975); N. Cumberledge, 'Reading between the Lines: The Place of Mercia within an Expanding Wessex', *Midland History*, 27/1 (2002); C.P. Lewis, 'Edgar, Chester, and the Kingdom of the Mercians, 957-9', in D. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975* (Woodbridge, 2008); C. Insley, 'Collapse, Reconfiguration or Renegotiation? The Strange End of the Mercian Kingdom, 850-924', *Reti Medievali Rivista*, 17/2 (2016), [doi: 10.6092/1593-2214/522]; L. Abrams, 'King Edgar and the Men of the Danelaw', in Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English*; D. Roffe, 'The Danes and the Making of the Kingdom of the English', in H. Tsurushima (ed.), *Nations in Medieval Britain* (Donington, 2010). For Northumbria: D. Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in P. Clemoes (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1959); D. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100* (Cambridge, 2003); W.M. Aird, 'Northumbria and the Making of the Kingdom of the English', in Tsurushima (ed.), *Nations in Medieval Britain*; D.A. Woodman, 'Charters, Northumbria and the Unification of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Northern History*, 52/1 (2015).

[3] D. Whitelock, 'The Conversion of the Eastern Danelaw', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 12 (1937-45); A. Gransden, 'The Legends and Traditions concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR*, 100/394 (1985); S.J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988); J. Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees before the Conquest', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000); T. Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c.650-1200* (Woodbridge, 2004); A. Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary at *Beodericisworth* and then in Bury St Edmunds Abbey to c. 1150', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55/4 (2004); T. Licence, 'The Norwich Narrative and the East Anglian Bishopric', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 45/2 (2007); T. Licence, 'Herbert Losinga's Trip to Rome and the Bishopric of Bury St Edmunds', *ANS*, 34 (2012).

[4] A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005); J. Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets: A Survey with Suggestions', in C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005); L. Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia: An Alternative Hypothesis', *Historical Research*, 81/ 211 (2008).

therefore invariably deal only with one half of the region.[5] In this context alone, a dedicated treatment of East Anglia's assimilation into the English kingdom would be worthwhile.[6]

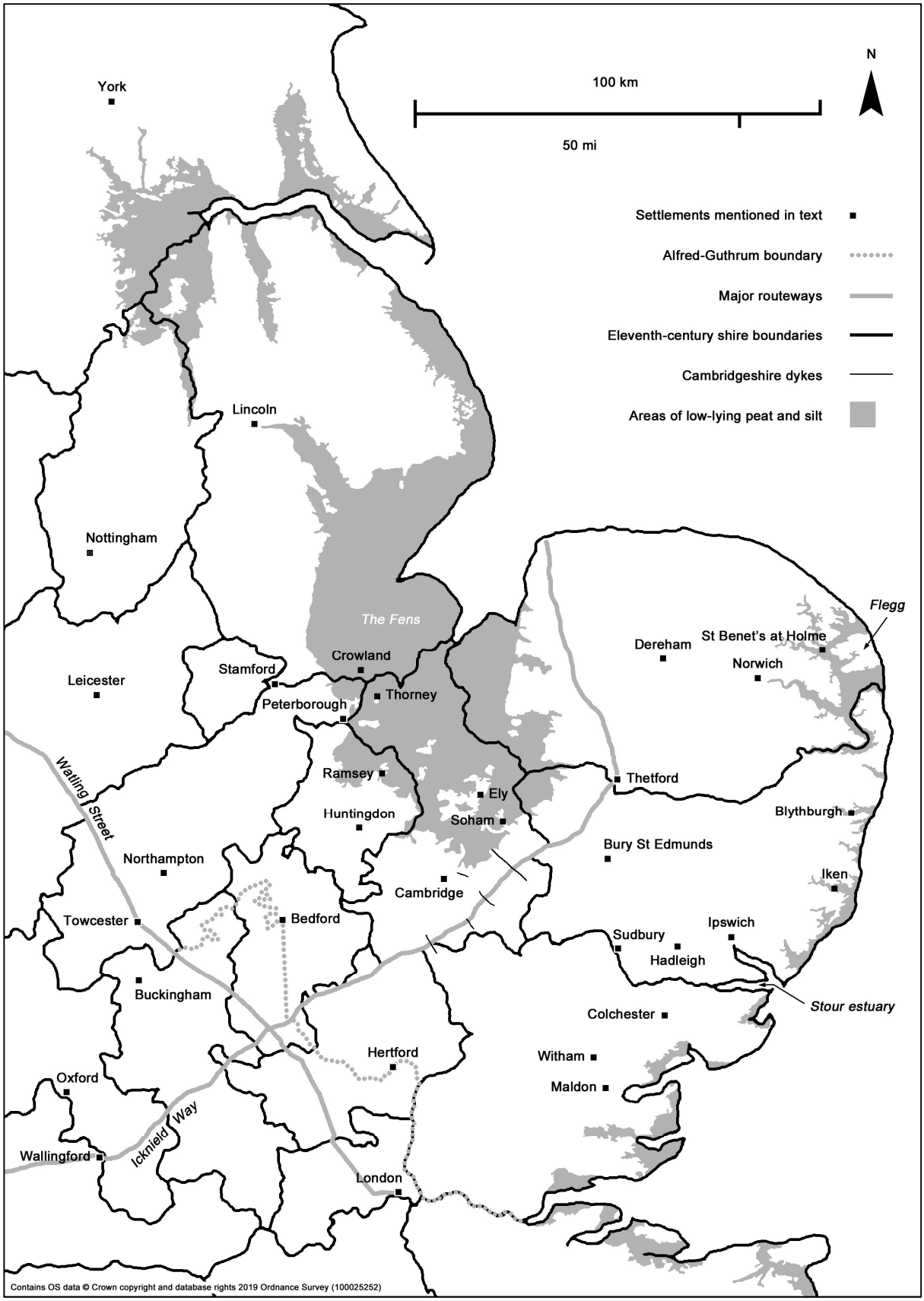
There are points of wider interest, however, which make such a study overdue. For a number of decades, work on the tenth- and eleventh-century English kingdom has emphasised its administrative sophistication. As they could maintain a closely regulated coinage, create uniform territorial institutions, and use them to levy almost improbably heavy taxes, the West Saxon kings have been regarded as builders of a precocious Anglo-Saxon 'state'.[7] In recent years, a series of monographs have qualified some elements of this picture while shedding a great deal of light on the inner workings of the kingdom.[8] But although it is now much clearer when individual institutions emerged, what role they played in the maintenance of order, and how they related to the power of magnate families, there has been less interest in how they were established in the first place. The origins and day-to-day functioning of the hundred, in particular, have attracted limited attention, no doubt largely because the surviving material is less than forthcoming.[9] As we shall see, evidence from East Anglia has much to reveal in this respect once it is noticed and brought to bear on larger questions. The lack of a conventional political narrative has directed attention away from the region, leading evidence which could

[5] T. Williamson, *The Origins of Norfolk* (Manchester, 1993); P.M. Warner, *The Origins of Suffolk* (Manchester, 1996); D.P. Dymond, *The Norfolk Landscape* (2nd edn, Bury St Edmunds, 1990); N. Scarfe, *The Suffolk Landscape* (3rd edn, Chichester, 2002).
[6] The only attempt, open to question in various respects, is C.R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), pp. 25-113.
[7] Most notably by James Campbell: 'Observations on English Government from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century', in J. Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte, 1986) and 'The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View', in J. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000).
[8] S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia* (Oxford, 2007); G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015); T. Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017).
[9] Historians often consider the relationship of hundredal assemblies to earlier gatherings, but not the undocumented process by which hundredal territories were defined: Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 298-301; H.R. Loyn, 'The Hundred in England in the Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries', in *idem*, *Society and Peoples* (London, 1992); Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 141-55. Most works which do face the problem, simply emphasise either territorial continuity or central planning: H.M. Cam, '*Manerium cum Hundredo*: The Hundred and the Hundredal Manor', *EHR*, 47/187 (1932); Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets'. A little-quoted exception is J.E.A. Jolliffe, 'The Origin of the Hundred in Kent', in J.G. Edwards, V.H. Galbraith, and E.F. Jacob (eds.), *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait* (Manchester, 1933).

shed light on its social and administrative structure to be neglected. Redressing that neglect is the broader aim of this thesis.

As this study considers East Anglia in its wider setting, it is less constrained by the unevenness of the local material than it might otherwise be. The lack of early evidence specific to East Anglia, particularly until c. 950, can to an extent be offset by approaching the region from the outside. Treating it as one of multiple territories coming under West Saxon rule in the early tenth century provides a framework for cautious interpolation. This will yield an understanding of how polities were brought into the West Saxon orbit and how kings viewed their new acquisitions. Conversely, from c. 950 onwards, East Anglia and immediately adjacent areas preserve some of the most detailed evidence for the local workings of the English kingdom. In a region which remained generally stable after coming under West Saxon rule, applying retrogressive methods to eleventh-century material holds out hope of tracing institutional growth. The thesis as a whole will therefore exploit an asymmetrical source base to reveal processes which most narratives of institutional development take for granted.

Before introducing sources and methods in detail, it will be helpful to compile an outline narrative of East Anglia's development between the advent of the Great Heathen Army and the Norman Conquest. This scattered collection of historical references, intermittently supplemented by onomastic and numismatic material, forms a backdrop without providing a sufficient framework for the thesis as a whole.



Map 1. East Anglia and the East Midlands.

East Anglia in the 860s was a long-established and compact kingdom. Although it may have extended further at its seventh-century zenith, its later boundaries were probably those long retained by the medieval diocese of Norwich, taking in the lands north of the Stour and east of the Cambridgeshire Devil's Dyke.[10] The Cambridgeshire dykes, of which the Devil's Dyke is the largest and most easterly, date from the immediate post-Roman period but the Old English name of the Fleam Dyke ('the fugitives' dyke') attests to their enduring significance.[11] Nor is there any reason to doubt the antiquity of the Stour boundary. The directional place-name Sudbury, which marked a place of some importance no later than 798, appears on the north bank and seems to reflect the vill's position relative to the kingdom as a whole.[12] In its limited extent, East Anglia could be seen as the last of the smaller English kingdoms. Both it and Kent had fallen under Mercian rule during the reigns of Offa and Cenwulf, but only East Anglia was able to reassert its independence in the ninth century.[13]

The Great Heathen Army first appeared in East Anglia in 865, overwintering in the kingdom and taking tribute and horses.[14] When it returned in 869, to pass the winter at Thetford, King Edmund moved against it but was defeated and killed.[15] Edmund soon came to be venerated as a saint and his tenth-century hagiographer, Abbo of Fleury, would recount a story that the king was captured and then put to death at a place called *Hægelisdun*.[16] But as Abbo's

[10] Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 115, n. 32.
[11] T. Malim, 'The Anglo-Saxon Dykes', in T. Kirby and S. Oosthuizen (eds.), *An Atlas of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire History* (Cambridge, 2000); O.S. Anderson, *English Hundred-Names* (Lund, 1934), pp. 100-101. All the dykes face westwards. *PStE*, ch. 2, pp. 69-70 suggests that they were still considered a regional boundary in the late tenth century.
[12] *ASC* MS F, *s.a.* 799; *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'Sudbury'.
[13] Two successive kings of Mercia were killed attempting to re-establish control (*ASC*, *s.a.* 825, 827). For further context see B.A.E. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990), p. 64.
[14] *ASC*, *s.a.* 866. The Chronicle annals for this period begin the year in September: Stenton, *ASE*, p. 246, n. 3.
[15] *ASC*, *s.a.* 870.
[16] *PStE*, ch. 6, p. 73 and ff.

account incorporates many hagiographical commonplaces and *Hægelisdun* has never been satisfactorily identified, it remains most likely that Edmund died in battle somewhere near Thetford.[17] The Army departed to attack Wessex in the next year and Edmund appears to have been succeeded by two further native kings, Æthelred and Oswald, who are known only from coins bearing their names. These pennies, some of which were struck by moneyers who had worked for Edmund, must date from the decade after that king's death, for a section of the Great Heathen Army settled in East Anglia in 880.[18] It was led by Guthrum, who may have joined the original force with the 'Great Summer Army' of 871. Having been defeated and baptised in Wessex in 878, Guthrum moved to Mercia in 879 and on to East Anglia in 880, where his army 'settled…and shared out the land'.[19] Coins were now struck for Guthrum under his baptismal name Æthelstan, signalling the end of native rule.[20]

Guthrum ruled as king in East Anglia from 880 until his death in 890.[21] Numismatic evidence suggests some organisational continuity in that coins were struck for Guthrum (as Æthelstan) in styles used by Æthelred and Oswald.[22] Even when his moneyers imitated Alfredian pennies, they struck to their accustomed 1.3-1.35g weight standard, rather than the 1.6g adopted in Wessex in c. 880.[23] The scale and uniform weight of Guthrum's coinage hints at

[17] On the historicity of Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, see A. Gransden, 'The Legends and Traditions concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR*, 100 (1985), pp. 2-8; P. Cavill, 'The Armour-Bearer in Abbo's *Passio sancti Eadmundi* and Anglo-Saxon England', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 36 (2005). Different locations for *Hægelisdun* are discussed by D. Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St Edmund', *PSIA*, 31/3 (1969); S.E. West, 'A New Site for the Martyrdom of St Edmund, with a note by D.P. Dymond', *PSIA*, 35/3 (1983); K. Briggs, 'Was *Haegelisdun* in Essex? A New Site for the Martyrdom of Edmund', *PSIAH*, 42/3 (2011).
[18] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Currency under the Vikings. Part 1: Guthrum and the Earliest Danelaw Coinages', *BNJ*, 75 (2005), pp. 23-5, 28-30; Naismith, *MEC8*, p. 164. Blackburn draws attention to features characteristic of 'Viking' coinages, suggesting that these kings may have been puppets.
[19] *ASC*, *s.a.* 880.
[20] Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 288-9, 806-7.
[21] *ASC*, *s.a.* 890.
[22] Blackburn, 'Guthrum and the Earliest Danelaw Coinages', p. 29.
[23] Ibid., pp. 33-4.

administrative capacities for which no other evidence survives.[24] Quite how extensive the kingdom was is uncertain, but the surviving 'Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum' reveals one of its frontiers. The Treaty was a settlement between kings and equals, one speaking for 'all the councillors of *Angelcynn*' and the other for 'all the people who dwell in East Anglia'.[25] As a preliminary to a series of regulations intended to ensure peaceful coexistence, it established a boundary which was to run up the Thames as far as the Lea, up the Lea to its source, thence straight to Bedford, and up the Ouse as far as Watling Street.[26] Some uncertainty surrounds the date of the Treaty. Arguments for dating it to c. 878 are undermined by the fact that Guthrum and his people are placed in East Anglia, where they only settled in 880.[27] On the other hand, the fact that London fell on Alfred's side of the boundary need not mean that the Treaty was established after 886, as it is now clear that the city was under West Saxon control some years before its 'restoration'.[28] A later date nonetheless seems preferable considering the events of 885, when the Danes of East Anglia gave support to a Viking army as it raided in Wessex.[29] Alfred responded by sending a naval force into the Stour estuary, where it achieved initial success but was defeated by reinforcements from elsewhere in East Anglia.[30] Had the Treaty been in place by this time, one might expect West Saxon sources to accuse Guthrum of breaking it, but he is not mentioned even though the naval engagement took place in what was almost certainly his territory. It is safest to place the Treaty in the late 880s, when continued conflict and the 'restoration' of London would have given Alfred reason to

[24] Blackburn, 'Guthrum and the Earliest Danelaw Coinages', pp. 30-34. Roy Hart's suggestion that the 'carucation' of East Anglia originated under Danish rule is unprovable: Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 75-6, 93-7.
[25] AGu prol. The significance of the term *Angelcynn* is discussed in Chapter 1.
[26] AGu 1. Subsequent clauses deal with wergelds, exculpation, the witnessing of trade, and movement between the kingdoms. D.N. Dumville, 'The Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum', in *idem*, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge, 1992) argues that Guthrum controlled territory to the west of this line, and Alfred to the east, but this view has not found general acceptance.
[27] Dumville, 'The Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum', p. 20 offers no conclusive answer to this objection.
[28] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'The London Mint in the Reign of Alfred', in M.A.S. Blackburn and D.N. Dumville (eds.), *Kings, Currency and Alliances* (Woodbridge, 1998).
[29] *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), *s.a.* 885, p. 44.
[30] *ASC*, *s.a.* 885; *Asser*, ch. 67, pp. 50-51.

seek a lasting peace with a ruler who was by then the established power in eastern England. How long the boundary lasted is unknown, but it must have been abandoned some years before West Saxon forces were obliged to capture Bedford in 915.[31] Even so, there is reason to think that it (and any later, unrecorded demarcation) functioned as a meaningful border rather than an amorphous frontier zone.[32]

Any hopes of a permanent settlement were frustrated by Guthrum's death, apparently at Hadleigh in Suffolk, in 890.[33] His epitaph in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle betrays no hostility, suggesting that relations were stable at the time.[34] There may have been an attempt to establish relations with his immediate successors, whose names are unknown, for in 893 Alfred is said to have received oaths and preliminary hostages from East Anglia.[35] In the event, however, the East Anglians made common cause with a large raiding army which had landed in Kent in 892. For the next three years, East Anglia provided a regular place of refuge and source of reinforcements as the army moved back and forth across southern Britain.[36] The region also proved capable of mobilising considerable naval forces which attacked the south coast on their own account.[37]

[31] R.H.C. Davis, 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *EHR*, 97/385 (1982), p. 803.
[32] P. Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty: Scripting Accommodation and Interaction in Viking Age England', in D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards (eds.), *Cultures in Contact* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 52-4 emphasises limited cross-border traffic and mutual suspicion. Different monetary and legal norms would have reinforced the distinctness of communities on either side: Blackburn, 'Guthrum and the Earliest Danelaw Coinages', pp. 33-4; T. Lambert, 'Frontier Law in Anglo-Saxon England', in S.M. Butler and K.J. Kesselring (eds.), *Crossing Borders: Boundaries and Margins in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* (Leiden, 2018).
[33] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 17: The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, ed. D.N. Dumville and M. Lapidge (Cambridge, 1984), *s.a.* 890.
[34] *ASC*, *s.a.* 890.
[35] *ASC*, *s.a.* 893.
[36] *ASC*, *s.a.* 893-6.
[37] *ASC*, *s.a.* 893, 896. In 893, the Danes of Northumbria and East Anglia are said to have assembled 'some hundred' ships. Analysis of both written and archaeological sources has suggested that such numbers should be taken seriously: N.P. Brooks, 'England in the Ninth Century: The Crucible of Defeat', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 29 (1979); D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards, 'The Winter Camp of the Viking Great Army, AD 872-3, Torksey, Lincolnshire', *Antiquaries Journal*, 96 (2016).

The internal affairs of East Anglia in the years after 890 are unrecorded, but it appears that central authority survived and Christian beliefs reasserted themselves. This much can be inferred from the St Edmund memorial coinage, which circulated in East Anglia and the East Midlands from c. 895 to 917. All St Edmund pennies bore or attempted an inscription reading +SCE EADMVNDE REX on the obverse, addressing the king directly in the vocative case.[38] It is clear that within two decades of his death, Edmund was not only considered a saint but had attracted a cult of such strength as to take the place of living kings on a widespread coinage. This attests not only to the vitality of Christian worship and (presumably) the rapid conversion of the Danish elite, but to a deliberate policy on the part of contemporary rulers. Again there were important elements of continuity: the St Edmund coinage shared at least one moneyer with that of Guthrum, maintained the 1.3g weight standard, and consciously recalled the style of coins struck for the historical Edmund.[39] Most striking is the complete absence from the coinage of the names of contemporary kings.[40] Invoking a local English saint must have carried considerable advantages—ideological, political, or economic—for these rulers to give up their natural place on local coin issues. The lack of named kings has been interpreted to mean that there was no unitary kingship in East Anglia during this period, but this argument not wholly persuasive.[41] In the first place, the St Edmund coinage continued to be minted in the early tenth century, when there are known to have been kings in East Anglia. Just as significantly, the coinage maintained a consistent weight over a long period, even though it was almost certainly struck at multiple mints, and saw a continuation of the policy (already in evidence under Guthrum) of recruiting continental moneyers. These

[38] C.E. Blunt, 'The St Edmund Memorial Coinage', *PSIA*, 31/3 (1969), p. 240; M.A.S. Blackburn and H. Pagan, 'The St Edmund Coinage in the Light of a Parcel from a Hoard of St Edmund Pennies', *BNJ*, 72 (2002), pp. 1-4; Naismith, *MEC8*, p. 290.
[39] Blunt, 'St Edmund Memorial Coinage', p. 242; Blackburn and Pagan, 'St Edmund Coinage', pp. 1, 8.
[40] The one, doubtful exception to this rule is a series of coins bearing variants of the inscription HEMNCXREXE, which could represent a Heming *rex*: Blunt, 'St Edmund Memorial Coinage', pp. 243-4.
[41] D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 36.

features are best explained by a single guiding authority.[42] This authority appears to have been centred on East Anglia and the East Midlands, although the lack of mint signatures (barring one possible reference to Norwich) makes it impossible to be certain.[43] One moneyer who struck St Edmund pennies also struck coins in the name of an Earl Sihtric with the mint-signature SCELDFOR (probably Shelford, south of Cambridge), hinting at some political fragmentation outside East Anglia itself.[44]

Hostilities between East Anglia and Wessex resumed in 902, when the East Anglian army supported Æthelwold *ætheling*, Edward the Elder's cousin, in his bid for the throne.[45] The combined forces of Æthelwold and King Eohric, who was evidently from East Anglia, were defeated at the Holme late in the year. The Chronicle annal describing the battle is the only known reference to Eohric, but it shows that East Anglia—like Northumbria—continued to be ruled by kings as opposed to earls. Eohric's unnamed successors, alongside the Northumbrians, concluded what seems to have been a favourable peace with Edward in 906.[46] Despite sustained West Saxon campaigning in the East Midlands from 912 onwards, East Anglia did not come into open conflict with Edward again until 917. There is therefore no good reason to regard the earldoms which submitted to Edward in the intervening years as 'satellite earldoms' formally subordinate to the eastern kingdom.[47] In 917, an unnamed East Anglian king rode out in support of an earl based at Huntingdon, but both were defeated and

[42] Blackburn and Pagan, 'St Edmund Coinage'; G. Williams, 'Coins and Currency in Viking England, AD 865-954', in R. Naismith, M.R. Allen, and E. Screen (eds.), *Early Medieval Monetary History* (Farnham, 2014), p. 28; Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 291-2.
[43] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Expansion and Control: Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian Minting South of the Humber', in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds.), *Vikings and the Danelaw* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 132-3. On the single coin bearing the inscription NORDVICO, see Blunt, 'St Edmund Memorial Coinage', pp. 245-6; V.J. Smart, 'The Moneyers of St. Edmund', *Hikuin*, 11 (1985), p. 86.
[44] Blackburn, 'Expansion and Control', pp. 132-3; Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 284-5, 289. Shelford in Nottinghamshire is another possibility.
[45] *ASC*, *s.a.* 903.
[46] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 905; cf. *ASC* MS E, *s.a.* 906. II Ew 5.2 suggests that this or similar agreements incorporated practical provisions of the kind set down in the Alfred-Guthrum treaty.
[47] Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 33-4. I discuss these submissions in Chapter I.

killed by West Saxon forces at Tempsford.[48] The army based in East Anglia swore allegiance to Edward at Colchester later in the year, making a military conquest unnecessary.[49] After 917, East Anglia would never again be considered a kingdom in its own right, and any questions about its status would concern its place within the larger English realm.

The extent of Scandinavian settlement experienced by East Anglia, or anywhere in eastern England, remains subject to debate. One school of thought has favoured large-scale peasant immigration in the wake of the initial settlements, while another has envisaged a relatively small elite exerting disproportionate cultural influence. Much turns on the onomastic evidence and its relation to a few explicit historical references to settlement.[50] For Northumbria, the Chronicle records that in 876 a portion of the Great Heathen Army 'shared out the land…and they proceeded to plough and to support themselves', a statement which seems to imply that the settlers were more than a small military elite.[51] Place-names ending in the Old Norse *-by*, which are very numerous in Yorkshire, are thought to have been coined in a predominantly Old Norse-speaking environment.[52] Recent archaeological discoveries, which suggest large-scale settlement disruption in the late ninth century, fit into an emerging picture.[53] It appears that southern Northumbria saw a significant influx of Scandinavian settlers either in or after 876. The evidence for East Anglia is not so simple. While Guthrum's settlement in 880 is recorded by the Chronicle in very similar terms, *by*-names are rare except on the island of Flegg in the far east of Norfolk.[54] This concentration of Old Norse-derived

[48] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.
[49] See Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia', pp. 2-5, and Chapter I below.
[50] Successive attempts to interpret the material are reviewed by L. Abrams and D.N. Parsons, 'Place-Names and the History of Scandinavian Settlement in England', in J. Hines, A. Lane, and M. Redknap (eds.), *Land, Sea and Home: Proceedings of a Conference on Viking-period Settlement* (Leeds, 2004), pp. 379-92.
[51] *ASC*, *s.a.* 876. On the size of the Scandinavian armies, see also above, p. 10 n. 37.
[52] Abrams and Parsons, 'Place-Names', pp. 392-403.
[53] J.D. Richards and D. Haldenby, 'The Scale and Impact of Viking Settlement in Northumbria', *Medieval Archaeology*, 62/2 (2018).
[54] *ASC*, *s.a.* 880; K.I. Sandred, 'The Scandinavians in Norfolk: Some Observations on the Place-Names in *–by*', *JEPNS*, 19 (1986-7).

place-names has been explained in different ways, but it can hardly reflect settlement by Guthrum's army.[55] Flegg was both small and isolated from its landward surroundings while Guthrum (if he was indeed buried at Hadleigh) may have favoured the heartland of the pre-Viking kingdom.[56] Where East Anglian place-names show Old Norse influence, it is most commonly by combining a Scandinavian personal name with the Old English *-tun*, which suggests that Old English remained the conventional name-forming language.[57] This need not mean that Scandinavian settlement was negligible: minor names recorded in later centuries indicate a strong influence on local vocabulary.[58] The lasting adoption of new terms for things as familiar as gorse (locally whin, from Old Norse *hvin*) and heather (ling, from *lyng*) could suggest that many of the incomers were people who worked the land.[59] If the vocabulary of later centuries stood in any consistent relationship to cultural penetration at the time of settlement, the personal names of Domesday landholders reveal a similar pattern. Old Norse accounted for 33% of the total name stock in Suffolk and 45% in Norfolk—significant but appreciably lower than the 70% calculated for Yorkshire.[60] On the evidence available, the process of land-taking in East Anglia was either less concentrated or involved fewer settlers than further north.

A related question concerns whether East Anglia should be considered part of the Danelaw. This term, which refers to the formerly Scandinavian-controlled areas of the English kingdom, tends to be used loosely. It has been taken to signify anywhere north-east of the

[55] J. Campbell, 'What is Not Known about the Reign of Edward the Elder', in N.J. Higham and D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder, 899-924* (London and New York, 2001), pp. 18-21; Abrams and Parsons, 'Place-Names', pp. 417-21.
[56] South-east Suffolk appears to have been a focal area, although this could be an accident of the sources: Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, pp. 69-70.
[57] See Abrams and Parsons, 'Place-Names', p. 416 for a map of Scandinavian-influenced names.
[58] K.I. Sandred, 'Scandinavian Place-Names and Appellatives in Norfolk: A Study of the Medieval Field-Names of Flitcham', *Namn och Bygd*, 67 (1979).
[59] In contrast to the well-known adoption, after the Norman Conquest, of French terms for consumable or high-value products, whereas English remained in use for production purposes and goods of lower value.
[60] D.N. Parsons, '*Anna*, *Dot*, *Thorir*… Counting Domesday Personal Names', *Nomina*, 25 (2002), pp. 45, 51.

Alfred-Guthrum boundary or simply anywhere showing a noticeable Scandinavian influence on local institutions.[61] As the name suggests, the Danelaw strictly denoted a zone in which Danish law applied, but this was itself not clearly defined. A distinction between 'Danish' and 'English' areas first appears in Edgar's *Wihtbordesstan* code, which permits adherence to local laws 'among the Danes'.[62] It is not certain which areas were meant, although a reference to the earldom of Oslac suggests that it may have been Northumbria.[63] In Æthelred II's reign the Woodstock code (I Æthelred) was directed at areas under English law but its 'Danelaw' counterpart, the Wantage code (III Æthelred), may have applied only to the district of the Five Boroughs.[64] The first direct references to *Dena lage* come in the first decade of the eleventh century.[65] A threefold division into Wessex, Mercia, and the Danelaw first occurs in Cnut's secular code, with reference to pleas reserved to the king.[66] It is not clear where East Anglia stood within this scheme. Two twelfth-century manuscripts of Symeon of Durham's *Historia Ecclesiae Dunelmensis* preserve partly conflicting lists of Danelaw shires, both of which include Norfolk and Suffolk.[67] Cnut's secular code, however, distinguishes clearly between heriots payable by king's thegns in East Anglia and 'among the Danes'.[68] When Edward the Confessor alienated reserved pleas within part of Suffolk to Bury St Edmunds Abbey, he duly gave the four franchises which the laws associate with Danish areas (*fihtwite*, *fyrdwite*, *griðbryce*, and *hamsocn*), but also one which was supposedly confined to Wessex and Mercia (*forsteal*).[69] In other respects too, East Anglia shared

[61] L. Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', in Higham and Hill, *Edward the Elder*, pp. 128-33; N.J. Higham, 'Danelaw', in *WBEASE*, pp. 139-40.
[62] IV Eg 2.1, 12.
[63] IV Eg 15.
[64] III Atr 1.1-2. The boroughs comprised Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln, and Stamford.
[65] EGu 7.2; VI Atr 37. The latter provision dates to 1008. For a chronology of late Anglo-Saxon legislation see Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 112-5.
[66] II Cn 12, 14, 15. It was invoked in a more formalised way after the Conquest, in the *Leis Willelme* and *Leges Henrici Primi*.
[67] Printed by Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', pp. 130-31.
[68] II Cn 71.2-3
[69] S 1078; cf. II Cn 12, 14, 15. A sixth franchise, *æbære þeof*, is otherwise unattested.

characteristics with both 'English' and 'Danish' England: its local divisions were known as hundreds rather than wapentakes, but by the mid-eleventh century land was assessed in carucates rather than hides. Such diversity should in fact occasion little surprise. Official references to laws 'among the Danes' merely recognise unspecified local custom; nothing suggests that this was understood or required to be uniform.[70] The only laws necessarily common to all 'Danish' areas were those upon which their common king chose to insist.[71] There was no unitary 'Danish law', and a Danelaw encompassing all of northern and eastern England is not a useful analytical category.[72]

The darkness covering East Anglia lifts only partly after 917. Numismatic evidence suggests that Edward the Elder's authority was undisputed but not as complete as elsewhere. Although the St Edmund coinage rapidly went out of circulation, it was replaced by another local issue, composed of imitative Edwardian coins struck to the traditional, lighter weight standard.[73] Minting in East Anglia was only regularised some years into the reign of Æthelstan, when mint-signed coins began to be struck to the West Saxon weight standard at Norwich.[74] From the reign of Edmund, evidence of ecclesiastical organisation begins to reappear. The St Edmund coinage shows that Christianity had endured throughout the period of Danish rule, but the East Anglian episcopal lists are blank between 869 and the beginning of West Saxon rule.[75] The will of Bishop Theodred of London, composed 942×951, shows that by this time his see extended into Suffolk at least.[76] Theodred also appears to have been instrumental in

[70] IV Eg 2.1, 12, 13.1; VI Atr 37; II Cn 62, 65.
[71] IV Eg 2.2, 12.1; II Cn 15, 15.1a, 15.3, 45.3, 46, 48, 71.3.
[72] On the uniformity or otherwise of 'Danish' legal arrangements, see also Hudson, *OHLE2*, pp. 162, 188 n. 198, 247-9; T. Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017), p. 169, n. 25; J. Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law* (2nd edn, London and New York, 2018), pp. 13, 72.
[73] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Currency under the Vikings. Part 2: The Two Scandinavian Kingdoms of the Danelaw, c.895-954', *BNJ*, 76 (2006), p. 208.
[74] C.E. Blunt, 'The Coinage of Athelstan, 924-939: A Survey', *BNJ*, 42 (1974), pp. 80-81.
[75] S. Keynes, 'Appendix II: Archbishops and Bishops, 597-1066', in *WBEASE*, pp. 553-5. It is possible that there were bishops not recognised by Canterbury and Wessex.
[76] S 1526, mentioning Theodred's *biscoprich* at Hoxne.

the translation of St Edmund's relics to, and the endowment of the religious community at, what would become Bury St Edmunds.[77] Scattered evidence nonetheless suggests that East Anglia remained a marginal territory into the mid-tenth century. Despite the region's wealth, Norwich would remain its only named mint until the reign of Edgar.[78] The murder of an Abbot Eadhelm at Thetford in 952 led to the ravaging of the borough on Eadred's orders.[79] In his will, the same king set aside large sums to buy off raiding armies that might attack Wessex or Mercia, but made no provision for East Anglia.[80]

The Benedictine reformation of Edgar's reign affected East Anglia only from a distance. It found notable expression in a cluster of new or re-founded houses located in or around the Fens: Ely, Ramsey, Peterborough, Thorney, and Crowland. Ely and Ramsey acquired lands in East Anglia, and Ely was soon favoured with franchisal rights over hundreds, which are attested in the region from this time onwards.[81] To local people, the most tangible change may have been the appropriation and removal of local cults to distant monasteries, a practice pioneered by Bishop Æthelwold's foundations. Relics of St Botwulf and St Athwulf were taken from Iken to Ely and Thorney.[82] The body of St Wihtburh was stolen from East Dereham and moved to Ely.[83] Other houses only followed suit in the eleventh century, when Ramsey Abbey would remove the relics of St Felix from Soham, and Bury St Edmunds those of St Hiurmine from Blythburgh.[84] For the duration of the tenth century, however, Bury St

[77] For his involvement with the cult see *PStE*, ch. 15, pp. 83-5; Ælfric, *St Edmund, King and Martyr*, ed. G.I. Needham, *Lives of Three English Saints* (Exeter, 1976), p. 54; S 1526.
[78] D.H. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1981), pp. 131-2; Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 352-7.
[79] *ASC* MS D, *s.a.* 952. The circumstances of this incident are unknown. It should be noted that Edgar would prove willing to punish Thanet, in Kent, in the same way (*ASC* MS D, *s.a.* 969).
[80] S 1515.
[81] S 779; *LE*, ii.37, p. 111 and ii.41, p. 114. The authenticity of S 779 in its extant form is uncertain.
[82] J. Blair, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints', in A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 513, 518.
[83] Ibid., p. 559.
[84] Ibid., pp. 534-5, 538.

Edmunds was conspicuous in remaining unreformed, and East Anglia may have been without a Benedictine foundation until the reign of Cnut.[85] The origins of St Benet's at Holme are opaque, although a community seems to have existed there from the late tenth century.[86]

East Anglia retained its peripheral character beyond the turn of the millennium. It had no ealdorman in the latter part of Æthelred II's reign, the associated responsibilities being discharged by Ulfketel, who was formally a king's thegn.[87] Ulfketel led local forces in battle and presided over the decision to offer tribute to a Danish raiding army.[88] There were major engagements at Thetford in 1004 and at Ringmere (south of Thetford) in 1010, both of which ended in defeat for the East Anglians.[89] These not only underscore Thetford's status as a regional centre and nodal point but suggest that East Anglia was largely expected to defend itself. Only Cambridgeshire is mentioned, in 1010, as fighting alongside local forces. It may be significant that Ulfketel's reputation as a warrior, despite his defeats, endured particularly in Scandinavia.[90]

Ulfketel was among the dead at *Assandun* in 1016, and Cnut's accession later that year heralded far-reaching changes. In a fourfold division of the kingdom, fleetingly echoing an earlier political geography, the new king installed Thorkel the Tall as earl in East Anglia.[91] Thorkel's only recorded act in the region before his exile, was to preside along with Bishop

[85] The circumstances of Bury's re-foundation are discussed in *Charters of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. K.A. Lowe and S. Foot (Oxford, forthcoming).
[86] Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation*, pp. 138-46; T. Licence, 'The Origins of the Monastic Communities of St Benedict at Holme and Bury St Edmunds', *Revue Bénédictine*, 116/1 (2006), pp. 42-8.
[87] R.P. Abels, 'Ulfcytel [Ulfcytel Snillingr] (*d.* 1016), soldier', in *ODNB*.
[88] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1004, 1010.
[89] K. Briggs, 'The Battle-Site and Place-Name Ringmere', *Notes and Queries*, 58/4 (2011) shows that Rymer Point in Suffolk is the likely battle-site, as opposed to Ringmere in Norfolk, north-east of Thetford.
[90] Abels, 'Ulfcytel'.
[91] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1017.

Ælfwine over the introduction of monks to Bury St Edmunds in 1020.[92] Already influential thanks to its uniquely vigorous saint's cult, the foundation would grow further in power under Benedictine control. It is possible that Cnut first created what would become the Liberty of St Edmund, whose eight-and-a-half hundreds were held by Queen Emma before ultimately passing to the abbey.[93] Cnut may also have been responsible for a more fundamental administrative development, namely the 'shiring' of East Anglia. Only recently has it been observed that all sources treat East Anglia as a single unit until 1017, and that the first reference to Norfolk and Suffolk appears as late as the 1040s.[94] Division notwithstanding, Norfolk and Suffolk would continue to share an earl for the remainder of the Anglo-Saxon period. By Edward the Confessor's reign the East Anglian earldom had become a junior office, but one which was reassigned as routinely as any amidst the shifting fortunes of the great comital families.[95]

Two absences from this narrative deserve special notice. Fragmentary though our historical references are, they give almost no indication of East Anglian separatism. The context of Abbot Eadhelm's murder in 952 is a matter for conjecture, but apart from this incident there seems to have been no unrest to concern the West Saxon kings. In both Mercia and Northumbria, by contrast, times of stress repeatedly led political communities to entertain separation from Wessex. East Anglia's very quiescence may account for the second absence—that of the kings themselves. No royal assemblies are known to have been held in

[92] On the regularisation of Bury St Edmunds see Licence, 'The Origins of the Monastic Communities of St Benedict at Holme and Bury St Edmunds', pp. 52-60; *Charters of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Lowe and Foot (forthcoming).
[93] A writ of Edward the Confessor (S 1069) names his mother, whom Cnut had married in 1017, as the previous holder of the hundreds.
[94] Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia', pp. 13-19. Marten quotes S 1531, which dates to 1043×1045, as the first document to name both shires. S 1068 does likewise and dates to 1042×1043, but the argument is unaffected.
[95] For the successive shapes of Edwardian earldoms, see S. Baxter, 'Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question', in R. Mortimer (ed.), *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend* (Woodbridge, 2009), maps 1-12.

Norfolk or Suffolk throughout the period. Indeed there is no record of any English king travelling beyond Colchester, Bury St Edmunds, or Ely before the Conquest.[96] Politically stable and, from a West Saxon perspective, on the way to nowhere, East Anglia probably saw little of its kings.

SOURCES AND METHODS

A threadbare narrative history presents no insuperable obstacle to a study of administrative development, which is more concerned with processes than with events. As our objective is to identify and explain organisational change—with or without precise dates—the available sources are far less constraining than might initially be feared. It is true that material bearing on East Anglia is not always strictly local or contemporary, nor can these disparate texts be treated in the same way. There are nonetheless four productive categories, each of which requires brief introduction. Numismatic evidence will feature only tangentially as the regional coinage would make a study of similar length on its own, while archaeology is only occasionally informative on institutional and administrative developments.

The texts collectively known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are neither local to East Anglia nor very often concerned with it. They are nonetheless valuable for their coverage, from a vantage-point at or very near the West Saxon court, of the formative period of the English kingdom. Seven manuscripts, conventionally identified by the letters A-G, survive. All ultimately derive from the so-called 'common stock', a lost chronicle from the vicinity of

[96] For royal itineraries see L. Roach, *Kingship and Consent in Anglo-Saxon England, 871-978* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 50, 55, 58, 61, 65; Hill, *Atlas*, pp. 85-95. Both Æthelstan and Edmund issued charters at Colchester (S 412, 472). Æthelred II stayed at Ely while still an *ætheling*, (*LE*, ii.11, p. 86). A visit to Bury St Edmunds by Edward the Confessor is described in *MStE*, ch. 23, p. 56.

Alfred's court whose annals ran to 890×892.[97] The 'common stock' gave rise to a number of copies and continuations, and much scholarship has been devoted to their descent and political orientations over time.[98] Rather less attention has been paid to the Chronicle's language, which has only been examined in detail for the vocabulary of English identity.[99] Political vocabulary employed in West Saxon sources can also reveal something of how the kingdom was conceptualised by its rulers. The task of situating East Anglia in the expanding realm is particularly helped by the fact that a uniform and detailed series of annals describes Edward the Elder's campaigns of 912-920.[100] Here, and in other coherent texts such as the earlier 'common stock', the contexts appropriate to individual words can be identified with some confidence. This material can be supplemented by recourse to other contemporary examples of political prose, notably the Old English version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Once the shades of meaning that attached to choices of political vocabulary are identified, it becomes possible to deduce what place East Anglia may have occupied in the minds of its new kings.

A later but local body of sources survives from Bury St Edmunds Abbey. This well-preserved archive is remarkable for its large proportion of vernacular documents and comparative lack

[97] Keynes, 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *WBEASE*, pp. 37-9; S. Irvine, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in N.G. Discenza and P.E. Szarmach (eds.), *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 349-352.
[98] On the extant manuscripts see *ASC*, pp. xi-xviii, and for their descent, S. Keynes, 'Manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*', in R. Gameson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume I: c.400-1100* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 542. Recent considerations of political allegiance include Cumberledge, 'Reading between the Lines'; S. Baxter, 'MS C of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Politics of Mid-Eleventh-Century England', *EHR*, 122/499 (2007); P. Stafford, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Identity and the Making of England', *HSJ*, 19 (2007); P. Stafford, 'The Making of Chronicles and the Making of England: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles after Alfred', *TRHS*, 6th series, 27 (2017).
[99] S. Foot, 'The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest', *TRHS*, 6th series, 6 (1996); J.A. Stodnick, 'The Interests of Compounding: *Angelcynn* to *Engla land* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*', in H. Magennis and J. Wilcox (eds.), *The Power of Words* (Morgantown, 2006).
[100] *ASC*, *s.a.* 912-20. This continuation is unique to MS A between 915 and 920. It is isolated and discussed by D.A.E. Pelteret, 'An Anonymous Historian of Edward the Elder's Reign', in S. Baxter et al. (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham, 2009).

of Latin royal diplomas.[101] Two series, one of wills beginning in 942×951 and another of royal writs beginning in 1042×1043, make up the majority of the abbey's pre-Conquest documentation, while royal diplomas, benefactor lists, and memoranda survive in smaller numbers. Most of these documents have long been accessible in print.[102] However, it is only in the forthcoming Bury St Edmunds volume of the British Academy's Anglo-Saxon Charters series that all, including benefactor lists, are gathered and edited to modern standards.[103] These records are usually examined in the immediate context of the abbey's growth and endowment, but they also have much to reveal about the landed resources of kings and office-holders. Remembering past benefactors was an essential function of the archive, and in keeping a careful record of their identities and gifts, successive copyists unwittingly preserved rare information about lay landholding.[104] The Bury material is the most important single body of evidence for East Anglia in this respect, but further references survive from other houses (notably Ely and Ramsey) as well as more scattered sources. While royal and elite landholding cannot be reconstructed at any point before 1066, it is possible to approach it to a degree by aggregating the recorded provenances of ecclesiastical and other estates. Similarly, the extensive series of royal writs in the Bury archive can be studied not only as evidence of the abbey's rights, but also as witnesses to the prerogatives of eleventh-century kings themselves and the means of their alienation.[105]

Other houses preserved material of similar date in different form. The Benedictine abbeys of Ely and Ramsey both stood geographically outside East Anglia, and their main interests lay

[101] S. Foot, 'Internal and External Audiences: Reflections on the Anglo-Saxon Archive of Bury St Edmunds Abbey in Suffolk', *HSJ*, 24 (2012); S. Foot, 'The Abbey's Armoury of Charters', in T. Licence (ed.), *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 2014).
[102] See Whitelock, *Wills*; Harmer, *Writs*; *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. A.J. Robertson (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1956); *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, ed. C.R. Hart (Leicester, 1966).
[103] *Charters of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Lowe and Foot (Oxford, forthcoming).
[104] Foot, 'Internal and External Audiences', pp. 175-7, and 'The Abbey's Armoury of Charters', pp. 41-2.
[105] See notably R. Sharpe, 'The Use of Writs in the Eleventh Century', *ASE*, 32 (2003).

in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire respectively. Their archives fell far short of Bury St Edmunds in individual documents. Both, however, preserved narrative accounts of their endowment, incorporating an abundance of contextual information, in their house chronicles. Ely Abbey had a vernacular register of tenth-century land transactions which was translated into Latin in the period 1109×1131 as the *Libellus Æthelwoldi Episcopi*.[106] By the late twelfth century this was in turn incorporated, over long stretches unaltered, into Book II of the chronicle now known as the *Liber Eliensis*.[107] At Ramsey, a house chronicle was compiled in the years 1167×1170.[108] Although printed as the *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis*, it describes itself as a 'book of benefactors' and combines domestic history, national events, and documents and narratives concerning the abbey's endowment. Both houses had significant landholdings in East Anglia, and their chronicles consequently record numerous estate provenances as well as prosopographical detail concerning office-holding. Their most important material, however, consists in descriptive accounts of land transactions and assemblies around the Fens and in East Anglia. For no other region does evidence concerning local administrative and legal procedure survive on this scale.[109] When combined with the testimony of other sources, notably Domesday Book, the chronicles of the Fenland houses make it possible to approach the realities of local administration and social hierarchy at a level where the two blended into one another.

By far the most important source is Domesday Book in its two volumes, of which Little Domesday (LDB) covers Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, and Great Domesday (GDB) all other

[106] *LE*, p. xxxiv. This text will be edited and translated in *Charters of Ely Abbey*, ed. S. Keynes and A. Kennedy (Oxford, forthcoming).
[107] *LE*, ii.1-49b, pp. 72-117. A complete translation is available in *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely*, trans. J. Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005).
[108] *CAR*, p. xxii. A partial translation, covering the abbey's pre-history and growth to 992, is available in *Ramsey Abbey's Book of Benefactors, Part One: The Abbey's Foundation*, trans. S.B. Edgington et al. (Huntingdon, 1998) and *Ramsey Abbey's Book of Benefactors, Part Two: The Early Years*, trans. S.B. Edgington et al. (Huntingdon, 2001).
[109] See e.g. A. Kennedy, 'Law and Litigation in the *Libellus Aethelwoldi Episcopi*', *ASE*, 24 (1995).

shires south of the Tees and Ribble. A self-styled *descriptio* or survey, Domesday records landholding and resources, ordering them by shire, then fee, then hundred and vill.[110] It was produced on the basis of a survey conducted in the seven months after Christmas 1085, which sought to establish 'what or how much everybody had who was occupying land in England…and how much money it was worth' as well as the state of the king's own resources and the geld.[111] The main survey was conducted by seven groups of commissioners, each responsible for a particular group of shires or 'circuit', who asked landholders a series of questions and subsequently verified or amplified the answers from the sworn testimonies of local people from each vill.[112] The returns from this stage of the process were organised geographically but subsequently rearranged by fee, and it was from these 'feudal' returns that GDB was subsequently written up.[113] Much information was jettisoned in the writing-up of GDB, whereas LDB, which appears to represent the previous stage of production, escaped similar abridgement. Thus the commissioners sought information on holdings for 1086, for the date when the king had given the land, and for 1066, but the intermediate date was generally omitted and data for 1066 survives more fully in LDB than in GDB. Despite the scale of editorial intervention in the making of GDB, the final record is far from uniform, for the recording conventions devised in individual circuits led to marked differences in vocabulary and content. LDB, which covered Circuit VII and never underwent final editing, has internal variations of its own (Essex being notably distinct) and retains much incidental information.

[110] *Descriptio* is the term used by a colophon at the end of Little Domesday: LDB f. 450a.
[111] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1085. No one account of the Domesday survey and the subsequent making of Domesday Book currently commands universal agreement. A summary is provided by A. Williams, 'Domesday Book', in *WBEASE*, pp. 147-8. For a recent and more detailed treatment of the process see S. Baxter, 'The Domesday Controversy: A Review and a New Interpretation', *HSJ*, 29 (2017), pp. 278-88. Previous scholarship is surveyed on pp. 227-78.
[112] The *Inquisitio Eliensis*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* (London, 1876), p. 97 appears to describe the questions and procedure employed in the East Midland circuit (III).
[113] Baxter, 'Domesday Controversy', pp. 283-7.

The particular value of Domesday Book in the context of otherwise fragmentary sources is that it provides—within its parameters—a relatively complete record against which other material can be measured. It has long been recognised as presenting a secure point of departure for retrogression, an approach which seeks to proceed 'from the known to the unknown'.[114] No approach could be better suited to East Anglia, which emerges in incomparable detail from LDB but preserves comparatively little information from any time before 1066. While the following chapters generally present their material in chronological order, it is LDB, standing at the end of the period, that lends context to what would otherwise be scattered or ambiguous references. This type of comparison is most obviously important where royal, official, or episcopal landholding is concerned. The study of local institutions is even more dependent on LDB which, despite the occasionally disorderly appearance of its entries, is thorough in its hundredal rubrication. Only these headings reveal the shape of the hundreds in the eleventh century. Domesday as a whole can also be brought to bear on conceptions of royal power, and their development since the tenth century, by examining its treatment of royal privileges. The most widely recorded of these was the franchise known as soke, which is omnipresent in LDB and merits special attention.

Each question asked of Domesday Book demands its own method, although there is a fundamental choice of approach to be made at the outset. One the one hand, the regular way in which information is presented invites a type of textual analysis which seeks to identify and explain standard formulae. This approach is particularly appropriate to studies seeking to understand the making of Domesday, but attempts to apply it to historical questions are

[114] Maitland, *DBB* is the most notable example, avowedly taking Domesday Book itself as a mere starting point (p. xix). See pp. 509-10 for Maitland's approach in epitome.

hampered by the very nature of the formulae.[115] The alternative, which will be adopted here, is to concentrate not on the conventional but the discursive. Where something in their information forced commissioners or scribes to abandon or qualify their usual phrases, things can become apparent which contemporaries took for granted. LDB lends itself to this mode of enquiry, being less formulaic and more given to explanatory digressions than GDB, but the more abbreviated record can also usefully be read in this way. The assumptions behind anomalous statements, rather than their immediate content, provide a key to contemporary understandings of royal privileges. Resources and institutions can be examined by the more familiar means of aggregating specific categories of information, but even here the results will be materially affected by qualitative judgements on the relevance of individual examples. In this respect, extracting information from Domesday resembles the work of the commissioners and scribes themselves, who compressed their material into categories deemed of interest without always having means of verifying doubtful cases.

QUESTIONS AND OUTLINE

The available evidence offers multiple perspectives on the overriding concern—how royal administration originated and operated within East Anglia. Following the sources is an approach that cannot pretend to offer a complete picture chronologically or thematically, but it promises answerable questions in a region where many necessarily remain moot. It will be clear that the material at hand has little to reveal on feelings of East Anglian identity, on regional politics more generally, or on the prosopography of local power. While source bases

[115] See e.g. D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 28-46; cf. S. Baxter, 'Review of *Domesday: the Inquest and the Book*', *Reviews in History* (2001), https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/216 (16 April 2019).

for other regions allow, for instance, the structure of thegnly society to be examined in some detail, a corresponding study of East Anglia would reach few meaningful conclusions.[116] The region comes into its own where conceptions and institutions are concerned, for these can be reconstructed in some detail and indeed in a way next to impossible anywhere else. Three broad headings suggest themselves, each representing an important dimension of the late Anglo-Saxon 'state': royal claims, royal institutions, and royal officers. The individual chapters form a series of complementary studies, collectively reconsidering the workings of both region and realm.

To situate East Anglia within the kingdom as a whole, the first two chapters address the claims which kings made on subject regions, drawing extensively on evidence from further afield. Chapter I explores the initial process, first asking how West Saxon kings themselves envisaged the scope of their realm before considering the mechanisms by which new territories were subjected and what powers the kings would therefore have assumed by right. Chapter II moves forward to the eleventh century, when kingship was locally secure. It reassesses the royal privilege of soke, which is usually treated as a franchisal right conferred upon subjects rather than the general claim that it represented when in the king's hand. By approaching soke from a royal perspective, this chapter seeks to establish how the king-subject relationship was conceived and manipulated in the years before the Conquest.

The next two chapters, on royal institutions, focus more particularly on East Anglia to consider the structures which kings had at their disposal to enforce their will. Chapter III asks what centres or territories Edward the Elder may have found in place upon his recognition in

[116] The few traceable kindreds invariably came from the margins of East Anglia: see Wareham, *Lords and Communities*; L. Marten, 'Meet the Swarts: Tracing a Thegnly Family in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in D. Roffe (ed.), *The English and their Legacy, 900-1200* (Woodbridge, 2012).

917. Historical references and structures discernible in LDB are weighed as evidence of early organisation and for their imprint on later administrative units. Chapter IV addresses a later period, when institutions associated with the West Saxon dynasty were in place. *Burhs* and hundreds were among the central innovations of the tenth-century kingdom, and have come to symbolise its apparent bureaucratic precocity. This chapter tests arguments which have emphasised their artificiality and regularity. East Anglian *burhs* are compared with their better-studied east Midland counterparts, while quantitative information from a sample of LDB hundreds is held up against claims for uniformity based on more general observations.

Chapter V considers royal officers, tracing the presence of bishops, ealdormen, and reeves across the period under discussion. It seeks to establish when different kinds of office-holder first appeared and what underpinned their power, drawing together scattered early references before turning to the systematic record of LDB. Another kind of royal subordinate, the trusted follower without conventional office, is identified in the same source with the aid of the soke franchise and placed in the context of more formal administrative structures.

Between them, these chapters seek to understand what sustained West Saxon rule in East Anglia. In reconstructing the workings of royal power at a regional and local level, they raise the larger question of how formal and bureaucratic its structures were, or whether structures should rather be understood in terms of social relationships. By 1066, East Anglia had come a long way from the kind of polity which St Edmund might have recognised; whether this was a simple matter of administrative intensification remains to be seen.

Chapter I

Kings and provinces

As West Saxon kings extended their control north of the Thames in the early tenth century, they entered uncharted territory. Unlike Cornwall to the west or Kent to the east, areas beyond the Thames had no history of rule from Wessex, contested or otherwise.[1] Nor did the new territories conform to ninth-century political norms, in which a recognised set of kingdoms had fluctuated relative to one another without differing fundamentally in structure or outlook. Alfred's descendants often faced groupings and polities of a more elusive kind, and absorbing these necessarily brought about changes in the internal workings of the kingdom. Most obviously, the geographical area over which the West Saxon kings came to hold sway precluded the kind of intensive itineration which their ancestral realm had experienced, even as local elites from ever further afield had to be kept within the royal orbit. Many and sustained individual acts, most of which are lost to us, must have gone towards cementing the loyalty of this much-expanded aristocracy. This chapter seeks to understand the underlying forces at work, examining what bound the kingdom together as West Saxon kingship established itself in new territories.

A fundamental question concerns how contemporaries viewed the expanding kingdom in the decades during which it absorbed most of Germanic-settled Britain. Political expansion laid the foundations for administrative change and the result, by the early eleventh century, was a

[1] Ecgberht's fleeting conquest of Mercia (*ASC*, *s.a.* 829) is discounted.

polity uniform enough to attract the modern label of 'nation state'.[2] The ultimate root of this development has often been sought in a strong sense of English national identity, first articulated by Bede but only harnessed to political ends by Alfred's dynasty.[3] But it is far from clear that early tenth-century kings were working towards a predetermined goal, much less that they had an ethnically and administratively uniform kingdom in mind. The language employed in contemporary prose sources suggests that contemporaries did not think in terms of a kingdom expanding to a definite plan, and that national identity was harnessed in an all-encompassing rather than unitary sense.

The second section addresses the practical means by which the kingdom was extended. It is now conventional to note that the 're-conquest of the Danelaw' was more akin to a simple conquest, given that the areas in question had never been part of the West Saxon kingdom.[4] Accounts envisaging a conquest gain credence chiefly from the eventual depth of West Saxon control. Administrative change on the scale seen in midland England could not, according to this view, have been achieved without the large-scale confiscation and redistribution of land to loyal southern thegns.[5] Against this, contemporary accounts indicate that expansion usually involved various shades of submission rather than military engagements. It is essential to understand what happened on the occasions when territories fell under West Saxon rule, if subsequent developments are to be reconstructed.

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[2] Notably by J. Campbell, 'The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000), p. 10. For a critical discussion, see S. Foot, 'The Historiography of the Anglo-Saxon "Nation-State"', in L. Scales and O. Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005).

[3] P. Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in P. Wormald, D.A. Bullough, and R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 121-9; *idem*, '*Engla Lond*: the Making of an Allegiance', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7/1 (1994), pp. 14-16.

[4] Wormald, '*Engla Lond*', p. 6.

[5] D.N. Dumville, 'Between Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peacemaker: Æthelstan, First King of England', in *idem*, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 151-3; C.R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), pp. 134, 226-7; L. Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', in N.J. Higham and D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder, 899-924* (London and New York, 2001), p. 139.

Limited though royal control may have been at first, it hardened with time. Apart from sworn loyalty, this process must have hinged on the exercise of royal patronage, which lends urgency to the question of how the necessary lands could have been acquired. If outright conquest can no longer be invoked as an answer, we must consider what kings gained from submissions. There is little controversy about the core royal perquisites, and they must have been claimed from new areas in the course of political expansion. Even so, their role in the process has been neglected. If kingship was understood to carry with it a set of rights and opportunities, these can hardly have gone untapped, and enough evidence survives to suggest that kings exploited them. Taken together, the day-to-day proceeds of kingship can account for the disposable property which was essential to maintaining its social and political functions.

Pursuing these questions is a matter of likelihoods rather than certain answers. In the absence of contemporary material from East Anglia, or indeed most areas beyond Watling Street, they can only be approached from a West Saxon perspective. But while local detail usually cannot be recovered, contemporary royal claims can, and with them, the background to which integration proceeded. The nature of the kingdom into which East Anglia was drawn, the way in which the union occurred, and the processes which made it permanent can all usefully be reconstructed.

How contemporaries envisaged the kingdom is difficult to retrieve with any precision, as most relevant statements can be assigned no more closely than to the literate elite. It is therefore appropriate to begin with the one recorded view which was arguably both personal and determinative: that of the king, as preserved in charter styles. Regnal styles in royal charters represent the best available guide to how kings saw their own kingdom.[6] In the early ninth century, they conventionally proclaimed rule over a single people identified with a long-standing kingdom: *rex Merciorum* for Mercia or *rex Occidentalium Saxonum* for Wessex. Kingship appears to have been attached to a recognised set of peoples: the Mercians, West Saxons, and Kentings, as well as the Northumbrians and East Angles (rule over whom carried the same dignity, as contemporary coins demonstrate).[7] If the king of one people subjected another to his rule, this fact was either ignored or marked with the adoption of a second style. Thus Cenwulf, having subjugated East Anglia and Kent, remained *rex Merciorum*. When Mercian or West Saxon kings issued charters in the politically sensitive province of Kent, they might supplement their usual style with *vel etiam*/*necnon et Cantuariorum*.[8] Ecgberht of Wessex's brief reign in Mercia was marked by a London coin issue styling him *rex Merciorum*.[9] Conquest or overlordship do not seem to have moved powerful kings to recast themselves as rulers over a unified kingdom.[10] The peoples making

[6] It remains uncertain whether royal styles were originally constitutive or reflective. But the apparent existence of a centralised writing agency in ninth-century Wessex suggests that West Saxon charters, at least, projected royal claims: S. Keynes, 'The West Saxon Charters of King Æthelwulf and his Sons', *EHR*, 109/434 (1994). How directly kings specified their styles is an open question: G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 206-9.
[7] Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 119-20, 163-4.
[8] S. Keynes, 'The Control of Kent in the Ninth Century', *Early Medieval Europe*, 2/2 (1993), pp. 119-21.
[9] Stenton, *ASE*, p. 232; Naismith, *MEC8*, p. 156.
[10] Four surviving charters (S 89, 94, 101, 103) associate Æthelbald of Mercia with kingship over the 'South Angles', but this style was plainly descriptive. All were written by Worcester scribes. On these charters see N.P. Brooks, 'English Identity from Bede to the Millennium', *HSJ*, 14 (2003), p. 43. Several charters in Offa's name style him *rex Anglorum* (or variations thereon), but their authenticity in received form is no longer accepted: Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', pp. 110-11.

up kingdoms seem to have been regarded as immutable, although they were capable of absorbing smaller units such as the Hwicce. This no longer held true from the middle of Alfred's reign. Once Mercia was joined to Wessex, its ruler Æthelred taking the non-royal title of *hlaford*, styles based on *rex Angulsaxonum* supplanted the usual *rex Saxonum* or *rex Occidentalium Saxonum*. For the first time, a king redefined the people to which his title related.

The significance of the style *rex Angulsaxonum* is elusive. At first sight, *Angul* seems to modify *Saxones*, making Alfred king of the English Saxons, as opposed to their Continental cousins. The compound was used in this sense on the Continent, but in Alfredian usage seems to have signified an amalgam of 'Anglian' Mercians with Alfred's ancestral 'Saxon' kingdom.[11] It is generally assumed that the neologism was intended to spare Mercian sensibilities regarding Alfred's kingship, but it was ambiguous, for unlike the East Angles or the West, East, and South Saxons, the Mercians had never been defined with reference to an ethnic grouping. If Alfred's kingdom of the 'Anglo-Saxons' was so named in order to acknowledge the Mercian stake in it, the reference was oblique. Earlier precedent would have suggested a style such as *rex Occidentalium Saxonum necnon et Merciorum*, paralleling Kentish charters issued under West Saxon rule. While unwieldy, this would have been a familiar way of accommodating separate identities under one king. It would, indeed, have been singularly appropriate given that the Mercian counsellors, like their Kentish counterparts some decades earlier, seem to have remained distinct from the West Saxon court.[12] Significant considerations must have prompted the decision to invent an entirely new

[11] S. Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in D.N. Dumville and M.A.S. Blackburn (eds.), *Kings, Currency, and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 34-9; S. Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', in Higham and Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder*, p. 45.
[12] S. Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume III: c.900-c.1024* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 463; *idem*, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 52-5.

style. They may have related to the status of Mercia as a recognised kingdom in the ninth-century political scheme. In referring to 'Anglo-Saxons' Alfred was perhaps less concerned to foster a unified identity than to remove the implicit possibility of other kingdoms re-emerging. There is little doubt that the 'Anglo-Saxons' were conceived as a wider people arrayed behind Alfred and his family, but the thinking behind the term may well have been dynastic rather than national.

Alfred's 'Anglo-Saxon' polity passed down intact to Edward the Elder and then Æthelstan, under whom *rex Anglorum* became the preferred royal style from 927 onwards.[13] This has been taken to reflect an increasingly conscious unity, and to articulate a claim to rule all the English.[14] But the *Angli* invoked in the charters were not necessarily envisaged as an 'English people'. During Eadred's reign, with frontiers in constant flux, charter styles could distinguish between the Anglo-Saxons or English on the one hand, and the Northumbrians on the other.[15] The West Welsh of Cornwall never received any mention in royal styles despite representing an ethnically distinct former kingdom and falling firmly under West Saxon rule. In the north, the renunciation of claims to English-settled Lothian would not prevent kings from calling themselves *rex Anglorum*.[16] The unifying feature of the *Angli* was not English ethnicity but direct rule by the House of Wessex. Contemporary political norms associated kings with unitary peoples. When Alfred's descendants adopted 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'English' styles, they need not have been seeking to harness national identity, but merely to assert that the areas under their rule formed a kingdom in the sense familiar to contemporaries.

[13] Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 60-62.
[14] Ibid., pp. 60-61; Brooks, 'English Identity', pp. 46-50.
[15] S 520, 548, 549, 550, 569, 572.
[16] On the passing of Lothian into Scottish hands, see G.W.S. Barrow, 'The Anglo-Scottish Border', in *idem*, *The Kingdom of the Scots* (2nd edn, Edinburgh, 2003), pp. 119-24 and D. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 275-81.

Prose sources offer a less formulaic perspective on how contemporaries imagined the polity. The chief source for descriptions of the kingdom as an institution, are the texts collectively known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. All expand on a 'common stock' of annals, stretching up to 890×892, which was compiled in a court environment during Alfred's reign.[17] Subsequent continuations entered into different manuscripts at various major churches retained the 'common stock's' worldly and royal preoccupations.[18] This, along with the linear and repetitive conventions of the annalistic form, suggests that the treatment of common concepts remained orthodox across the various manuscripts.[19] The Chronicle's terms can be set alongside the more discursive vernacular political prose of the 'Old English Bede', the late ninth-century translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[20] Between them, the Chronicle manuscripts and Old English Bede can shed further light on how the kingdom and its people were understood by the contemporary elite.

Compared with charters and their conscious modifications of the royal style, the Chronicle shows little inclination to describe the tenth-century kingdom. In the 'common stock' annals running up to Alfred's reign, the traditional peoples once again form the frame of reference for kingdoms. These are generally mentioned only in connection with accessions to the throne, in formulaic statements that a named individual 'feng to rice'. Thus it is recorded under 655 that Peada 'feng to Mercna rice' and under 871 that Alfred 'feng to Wesseaxna rice'.[21] But usage appears to have shifted in Alfred's reign, and the succession of his son Edward to the putative 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' in 900 is recorded with an unqualified

[17] See above, pp. 20-21.
[18] N.P. Brooks, 'Why is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* about Kings?', *ASE*, 39 (2010).
[19] S. Foot, 'Finding the Meaning of Form: Narrative in Annals and Chronicles', in N. Partner (ed.), *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), pp. 97-102 argues that annals could create powerful narratives through the imposition of a rigid, sequential framework on carefully selected material.
[20] M. Lapidge, 'Bede, OE', in *WBEASE*, p. 62.
[21] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 655, 871.

'feng to rice'.[22] Subsequent accessions use the same wording without mentioning the people concerned.[23] If projecting a unified identity had been considered important in court circles, it would be hard to explain why Chronicle manuscripts ceased to define the kingdom in the one setting where they had routinely done so in earlier annals.

It would, in any case, be a mistake to read these passages as references to kingdoms in an institutional sense. The Old English *ric* is usually treated as denoting a political unit (cognate to e.g. German *Reich*) and rendered as 'kingdom', but its inflection in contemporary material was rather different. It is defined with reference to peoples but never said to have been 'of' a people, still less of a geographical area. In 959, when Edgar '[feng to rice] in Wessex and in Mercia and in Northumbria', the Chronicle's statement describes only where he succeeded.[24] In this context, *ric* cannot mean 'kingdom', but only 'kingship'. On a different occasion, the Chronicle uses 'feng to þam rice' to record the accession of Wulfgar to the abbacy of Abingdon.[25] *Ric* on its own denoted a dignity—royal, abbatial, or otherwise—rather than an institution. This is corroborated in the more varied settings of the Old English Bede. Of Æthelberht of Kent it is said that 'he had [rice] up to the boundary of the River Humber'.[26] This *ric* was plainly something like 'authority'. The translation of the famous passage listing kings with *imperium* states that Edwin 'had [rice] over all Britain except Kent alone'.[27] The term could even be used in the temporal sense of 'reign': Bishop Eata of Hexham died early in Aldfrith's *ric*.[28] It is clear that the *ric* to which tenth-century kings succeeded can only be understood as 'kingship'. Multiple chroniclers, for whatever reason, declined to specify to

[22] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 900.
[23] The single exception occurs at the division of the kingdom between Eadwig and Edgar, who initially succeeded to 'Myrcna rice' in 957: *ASC* MS C, *s.a.* 957.
[24] *ASC* MS C, *s.a.* 959: *Her forðferde Eadwig cing, 7 Eadgar his broþor feng to rice ægðer ge on Wessexum ge on Myrcum ge on Norðhymbrum. 7 he wæs þa .xvi. wintre.*
[25] *ASC* MS C, *s.a.* 990.
[26] *OEB*, i.14, p. 56.
[27] *OEB*, ii.5, p. 108.
[28] *OEB*, v.2, p. 386.

which people or peoples it related. It may be that, whereas charter scribes composed their documents at particular moments in time, chroniclers found it difficult to encompass shifts in a king's power with a single statement.[29] Setting the hedging of the Chronicle manuscripts against the ostensible precision of the charter styles suggests that the extent of his kingship was for each king to establish anew.

The Chronicle's lack of concern to associate tenth-century kingship with a people is striking not least because 'English' vocabulary was gaining general currency. Words implying 'Englishness' have been taken to express or promote a growing sense of national identity.[30] That some such consciousness had existed since the settlements seems certain, although it may have reflected little more than the common language that distinguished Germanic peoples from Britons.[31] How or whether Alfred and his descendants promoted a unified identity has been the subject of considerable debate. One view holds that Gregory the Great's vision of one *gens Anglorum* united under God had been kept alive at Canterbury, eventually to provide a ready-made foundation for the unifying activities of Alfred's dynasty.[32] Particularly enduring influence has been attributed to a Bedan conception of the English as God's chosen people, whose moral decline was punished by pagan attack, and whose subsequent salvation rested on obedience to the godly regime of Alfred's dynasty.[33] According to a related argument, the unity necessary to this end was actively fostered. This

[29] On the responsiveness of tenth-century royal styles to political realities see Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', p. 473 and G. Molyneaux, 'Why Were Some Tenth-Century English Kings Presented as Rulers of Britain?', *TRHS*, 6th series, 21 (2011), pp. 59-60.
[30] Brooks, 'English Identity' is a comprehensive survey.
[31] Bede listed a *lingua Anglorum* among the five languages spoken in Britain: *HE*, i.1, p. 16.
[32] Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', pp. 121-9. Nicholas Brooks argued that unity and a direct link to Rome played a unifying role much earlier, in reconciling a residual British Christian population to Germanic rule: N.P. Brooks, 'Canterbury, Rome and the Construction of English Identity', in J.M.H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West* (Leiden, 2000).
[33] Wormald, '*Engla Lond*', pp. 14-16. Wormald's interpretation is questioned by G. Molyneaux, 'Did the English Really Think They Were God's Elect in the Anglo-Saxon Period?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 65/4 (2014).

involved the promotion of *Angelcynn* (variously rendered as 'Englishkind' or 'the English people') as a new 'imagined community'. The word was in use before the reign of Alfred but acquired a strong political overtone from his reign onwards.[34] It was through the Chronicle and Old English Bede, in particular, that a unitary *Angelcynn* or *Angelþeod* was implanted in people's consciousness.[35] An alternative interpretation would prefer an 'Anglo-Saxon' identity paralleling the charter styles as the focus for Alfred's efforts at nation-building, while acknowledging that *Angelcynn* was a 'buzz word' at his court.[36] Most recently, general questions have been raised as to whether *Angelcynn* or *Angelþeod* were Alfredian inventions promoting national consciousness.[37] But a long-standing preoccupation with identity has led historians to neglect the contextual settings in which 'English' terminology appears. These reveal the political inflections with which different words were invested and give a closer indication of how unified the people of the kingdom were thought to be.

The mere appearance of various 'English' terms has been considered reflective or constitutive of unitary thought. *Angelcynn* has received the most attention because its adoption seems to coincide with the rise of Alfred's compound 'Anglo-Saxon' kingdom. It is usually interpreted as conveying a unitary message, subsuming Saxons into a body defined as Anglian.[38] On this view, *Angelcynn* stands for Bede's *gens Anglorum* and is translated as 'the English people'.[39]

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[34] S. Foot, 'The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest', *TRHS*, 6th series, 6 (1996), pp. 29-30; *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'angel-cynn'.
[35] Foot, 'Making of *Angelcynn*', pp. 35-7.
[36] Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 60-62; *idem*, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', p. 25.
[37] G. Molyneaux, 'The *Old English Bede*: English Ideology or Christian Instruction?', *EHR*, 124/511 (2009), pp. 1316-8.
[38] Foot, 'Making of *Angelcynn*', pp. 29-30; Brooks, 'English Identity', pp. 46-8; J.A. Stodnick, 'The Interests of Compounding: *Angelcynn* to *Engla land* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*', in H. Magennis and J. Wilcox (eds.), *The Power of Words: Anglo-Saxon Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg on his Seventieth Birthday* (Morgantown, 2006), pp. 345-6. Molyneaux, '*Old English Bede*', p. 1317 argues that the limited survival of earlier Old English makes this point uncertain.
[39] *ASC*, *passim*; Foot, 'Making of *Angelcynn*', p. 26; Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', p. 60; Brooks, 'English Identity', pp. 47-7; P. Wormald, 'Living with King Alfred', *HSJ*, 15 (2004), p. 3.

While *Angelcynn* could indeed be used as a demonym, this was not its only sense.[40] Nor was it a conventional demonym. A scribe wishing to describe a unitary people could simply call it by its uncompounded name: *Mierce*, *Westseaxe* or, for the English as a whole, *Engle*. A more explicitly political nation could be implied by calling the people a *þeod*, which was the standard Germanic term for such a unit.[41] Why scribes turned to an unconventional compound based on *cynn*—which denoted a family or category of things—is not immediately obvious.[42] But it is nonetheless clear that *Angelcynn* was for some reason systematically preferred. The term *Engle* was known in Alfredian circles but the 'common stock' used it only twice.[43] *Angelþeod*, which modern scholars have considered interchangeable with *Angelcynn*, was almost confined to the Old English Bede.[44] *Angelcynn*, by contrast, occurs throughout the Alfredian corpus and beyond.[45] In choosing between closely related words, contemporaries cannot have been concerned with the element *Angel-*/*Engle*, for this was common to all relevant terms. It follows that the political, rather than ethnic component carried the expressive power which authors wished to harness.

Political usage is generally consistent between the Chronicle and Old English Bede: neither uses *cynn* when referring to a unitary people. Only *þeod* seems to have been appropriate to this meaning. The Chronicle uses *þeod* to describe the East Angles under 823, the Northumbrians under 867, the West Saxons under 876, and the Mercians under 919.[46]

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[40] *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'angel-cynn'.
[41] P. Wormald, 'Germanic Power Structures: The Early English Experience', in L. Scales and O. Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 113-6; D.H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 124-7.
[42] *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'cynn noun'.
[43] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 473, 595.
[44] Molyneaux, '*Old English Bede*', p. 1317; S.M. Rowley, '*Gentes* Names and the Question of "National" Identity in the *OEHE*', in *eadem*, *The Old English Version of Bede's* Historia Ecclesiastica (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 67-9. See *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'angel-þēod'. The only known occurrence outside the Old English Bede is in S 914, a forged charter of Æthelred II.
[45] Foot, 'Making of *Angelcynn*', p. 30.
[46] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 823, 867, 876, 919.

Examples could be multiplied and although its scope varies, a *þeod* is always conceived as a single body. The Old English Bede confirms the connotations attached to *þeod*. In Bede's mind, an independent king ruled over a *gens*, and a *gens* inhabited a *provincia*.[47] His translator recognised the idea and rendered it consistently: a king ruled over a *þeod*, and a *þeod* inhabited a *mægð*.[48] Thus Mellitus preached to the East Saxons while Sæberht was king of that *þeod*.[49] Fursa was received with honour by King Sigeberht when he came to the *mægð* of the East Angles.[50] The *mægð* and *þeod* of the Northumbrians, meanwhile, subsumed the two *mægða* of the Bernicians and Deirans, each of which had once been an independent kingdom.[51] With this pattern in mind, the unique prominence of *Angelþeod* in the Old English Bede is readily explicable: it was simply the direct translation of *gens Anglorum*, no matter how far from political reality such a body might be. Accordingly, the Old English text is notably consistent in using *Angelþeod* in the account of the Gregorian mission.[52] All Chronicle manuscripts avoid *Angelþeod* and describe the *Engle* as a *þeod* on only two climactic occasions: once in context of the Gregorian mission and once at the battle of *Assandun*.[53] If Bede's *gens Anglorum* was to be invoked in the vernacular, *Angelþeod* or *Engla þeod* were plainly the words for the task.

Compounds with *cynn* appear in different and more varied contexts. Nearly all relate to the English, in the form of *Angelcynn*. Unlike *Angelþeod*, *Angelcynn* was not necessarily a

[47] J. Campbell, 'Bede's *Reges* and *Principes*', in *idem*, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte, 1986), pp. 86-7.
[48] The of the translation is emphasised by D. Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 48 (1962), p. 74 and n. 144.
[49] *OEB*, ii.3, p. 104.
[50] *OEB*, iii.14, p. 210.
[51] *OEB*, ii.11, p. 140; ii.16, p. 148.
[52] *OEB*, i.13-16, pp. 54-70.
[53] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 595; *ASC* MS C, *s.a.* 1016. MS A's annal for 595 is an addition in a hand of c. 1100, replacing an erased entry for 596. However, a copy of MS A made before the alteration (MS G) shows that the same phrase was used originally: A. Lutz, *Die Version G der Angelsächsischen Chronik: Rekonstruktion und Edition* (Munich, 1981), *s.a.* 596 and pp. 133-5.

demonym and could also be used in a geographical sense. In 986, according to MS C of the Chronicle, 'the great murrain first occurred in [Angelcyn]'.[54] When Bede's translator came to the heading of the last narrative chapter, he saw no tautology in rendering *gens Anglorum* as *Angelcynnes þeod*.[55] Alfred's lament on the standard of literacy throughout *Angelcynn* was defined with reference to the Humber.[56] In a political sense it comes as no surprise that *cynn*, with its familial connotations, encompassed rather than erased diversity.[57] This can be observed in the Chronicle's treatment of the North Welsh (meaning the Welsh, as opposed to the 'West Welsh' of Cornwall). The *Norðwealcynn* first appear under 893, when 'some part' joined Alfred's ealdormen to besiege a Danish army at Buttington.[58] In 918 'the kings [on Norþwealum], Hywel, Clydog, and Idwal, and [eall Norþweallcyn]' submitted to Edward the Elder.[59] The Welsh were plainly recognised as sharing a common identity without being politically unified. *Þeod* would therefore have been an inappropriate term, whereas *cynn* could encompass multiple kingdoms. Similarly, the 'common stock' records that the first Danish ships came to 'Angelcynnes lond' in 787, when there were several major kingdoms.[60] The word *Angelcynn* filled a specific gap: orthodox political vocabulary could not describe a people without implying political unity. The use of *cynn* made it possible to group multiple polities with reference to a common culture or perceived ethnicity. *Angelcynn* signified not a unitary 'English people', but either 'the English peoples' or the sum of their territory.

In view of the markedly different inflections that attached to related words, the prevalence of *Angelcynn* cannot reflect a simple promotion of unity. Had Alfredian or later scribes wished

[54] *ASC* MS C, *s.a.* 986. Murrain (*yrfcwealm*) denotes an affliction specific to livestock.
[55] *HE*, v (chapter headings), p. 452; cf. *OEB*, preface, p. 24.
[56] In the preface to the Old English version of Gregory's the Great's 'Pastoral Care': *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, rev. D. Whitelock (15th edn, Oxford, 1967), p. 5.
[57] *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'cynn noun'.
[58] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 893. The Welsh are the only ethnicity besides the English to be compounded with *cynn*.
[59] *ASC s.a.* 918; *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 918.
[60] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 787.

to promote a unitary 'English people' analogous to Bede's *gens Anglorum*, they could have done so by using *Angelþeod*. Instead, they uniformly shunned the term, choosing rather to invoke a (by comparison) plural *Angelcynn*. The Chronicle annal for 886 illustrates the choices involved. Its statement concerning Alfred's 'restoration' of London has been credited with revealing the king's wider political aspirations:

> 'That same year King Alfred occupied London; and all [Angelcynn] not under subjection to the Danes submitted to him. And he then entrusted to the borough to the control of Ealdorman Æthelred.'[61]

The ideological thrust seems to concern submission rather than unity. Had *Angelþeod* been used, the statement would have carried an unequivocally unitary message; the submission of *Angelcynn* implied nothing about the internal structure of areas which accepted Alfred's authority. The prologue to the Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum, concluded at a similar time, conveys a similar impression:

> 'These are the terms of peace which King Alfred and King Guthrum, and the [witan] of all [Angelcynn], and all the [þeod] that dwells in East Anglia, have all agreed upon…'[62]

Guthrum's notional position is clear in that he was a king ruling a *þeod*. Alfred is associated with counsellors drawn from an aggregate unit. Had he represented a unitary people such as the West Saxons, these *witan* could be understood as his usual courtiers, but the use of *Angelcynn* suggests that Alfred considered himself the spokesman for English leaders of any background, among whom he would naturally have taken precedence as the last native king. Again, an assertion of political authority was preferred to one of national unity.

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[61] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 886: *Þy ilcan geare gesette Ęlfred cyning Lundenburg, 7 him all Angelcyn to cirde þæt buton deniscra monna hæftniede was; 7 hie þa befæste þa burg Ęþerede aldormen to haldonne*. Translation: *ASC*, *s.a.* 886. See also *Asser*, ch. 83, p. 69. On the significance of this event see S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser's* Life of King Alfred *and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth, 1983), p. 266, nn. 199-200; S. Keynes, 'England, 700-900', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume II: c.700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 42; Foot, 'Making of *Angelcynn*', pp. 26-7; A. Vince, 'London', in *WBEASE*, pp. 300-301.

[62] AGu, prol: *Ðis is ðæt frið, ðæt Ælfred cyninc 7 Gyðrum cyning 7 ealles Angelcynnes witan 7 eal seo ðeod ðe on Eastænglum beoð ealle gecweden habbað…* Text: Liebermann, *Gesetze*, i, p. 126 (MS B); translation adapted from *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), p. 99.

Vocabulary which has been construed as promoting a unitary English consciousness turns out, on closer examination, to have accommodated local diversity. Indeed, demonyms with more forcefully unitary implications seem to have been avoided. This is particularly significant because kingship was traditionally conceived in terms of unitary peoples—a corollary which West Saxon kings might have been expected to maintain and exploit. It may be that an 'English people' was felt to be an implausible concept, or that West Saxon rule over all the English was recognised as an implausible claim. As we have seen, even the *Angli* of the royal charter styles did not necessarily signify one English people in its entirety. This apparently counterintuitive conclusion receives support from usage in the Old English Bede: 30 out of 50 instances of *Angelcynn* in the Old English Bede translate *Angli* in the original, as against only 9 out of 51 examples of *Angelþeod*.[63] However unitary the *Angli* may sound to modern ears, this was not a sense which contemporaries inevitably attached to the term. In the late ninth an early tenth centuries, *Angli* and *Angelcynn* may have reflected 'imperial' rather than national aspirations, rather like subsequent claims to rule over all Britain.[64] Semantically, a *cynn* encompassed more local autonomy than a king might traditionally have admitted. The submission of *Angelcynn* in 886 did not mean that Alfred or his son exercised full royal power even in Mercia. Claiming kingship with reference to an explicitly conglomerate body was unprecedented, but Alfred's reign had seen the unmaking of traditional certainties. In the broken political landscape of the early tenth century, it was perhaps easier to define a people by allegiance to a king, than to associate kingship with a given people. If so, the overriding concern would have been to assert simply that there was a king, and preferably only one, within *Angelcynn*.

[63] By contrast, *gens Anglorum* accounts for 38 out of 51 uses of *Angelþeod*. Molyneaux, '*Old English Bede*', p. 1317, n. 158, counts 52 instances of *Angelþeod*.
[64] On imperial claims, see S. Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven and London, 2011), pp. 212-26.

CONQUEST AND SUBMISSION

The evidence surveyed so far suggests that kingdom rather than nation was the organising principle behind West Saxon expansion. Hindsight can convey the impression of an inexorable process: while Alfred's realm ended at the Thames and Watling Street, his son Edward won authority over most of the East Midlands, and his grandson Æthelstan established control over Northumbria. By the third generation, Edgar exercised uncontested control over lowland Britain. There were pauses and fluctuations in the West Saxon advance, for gains beyond Watling Street were temporarily reversed early in Edmund's reign and the will of Eadred shows that raiding armies were still considered a threat beyond mid-century.[65] But while contemporaries must have harboured doubts, the direction of travel is plain. It is less clear by what means ever more of *Angelcynn* was brought under West Saxon kingship. Mechanisms usually rendered as 'conquest' or 'submission' materially influenced the shape of the resulting polity and must therefore be identified as precisely as possible.

It was once customary to describe the advances of the early to mid-tenth century as the 're-conquest of the Danelaw'.[66] Recent scholarship has shifted the assumptions, if not the main emphasis of this interpretation. There is, for instance, no evidence that the Danelaw was a recognised concept in the early tenth century.[67] More seriously, the idea of 're-conquest' absorbs a teleology of English unification. Areas which had never previously been under West Saxon rule would not necessarily have experienced the campaigns of Alfred's descendants as a liberation from Scandinavian control. Recent works therefore prefer to

[65] Eadred's will (S 1515) was composed 951×955 and set aside money to buy off invading forces.
[66] See e.g. Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 13-16.
[67] Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', pp. 128-33; Molyneaux, *Formation*, p. 21.

frame expansion in terms of a West Saxon 'conquest'.[68] This applies particularly to the activities of Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd, which tend to be viewed as a concerted scheme of conquest and fortification directed at one Danish territory after another. By Edward's death in 924, on this view, England south of Manchester and Nottingham had been unified 'by brute force'.[69]

The chief source for these developments is a series of annals in MS A of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, unique to that manuscript for the years 915 to 920, concentrating heavily on the deeds of Edward. The 'Mercian Register', an independent set of annals for the years 902-24 preserved in MSS B, C, and D, describes the activities of Æthelflæd. These accounts are usually noted as expressions of a West Saxon or Mercian point of view.[70] However, their value is not limited to providing outline narratives and revealing official manipulations of history. Like the texts examined for concepts national unity, the annals of the Chronicle preserve contextual information and political terminology. They are therefore likely to preserve contemporary or near-contemporary understandings of what the Edwardian 'conquests' involved.

Territorial conquest was certainly a familiar concept to contemporary writers, and appears at various points in the 'common stock' of the Chronicle. It was expressed with the verbs *gan* ('to go', employed in a transitive sense) and *winnan* ('to win'). The description of Ecgberht's campaign of 829 states that he '[geeode] the kingdom of the Mercians, and everything south

[68] P. Stafford, *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester, 1985), p. 115; Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', p. 460; J. Campbell, 'The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, p. 40.
[69] Campbell, 'The United Kingdom of England', p. 40.
[70] Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', p. 43; P. Stafford, 'The Annals of Æthelflæd: Annals, History and Politics in Early Tenth-Century England', in J. Barrow and A. Wareham (eds.), *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 102-3; D.A.E. Pelteret, 'An Anonymous Historian of Edward the Elder's Reign', in S. Baxter et al. (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham, 2009), p. 320.

of the Humber'.[71] When Edmund of East Anglia met the Great Heathen Army in 869, the Chronicler recorded that 'the Danes had the victory, and killed the king, and [geeodon] all the land'.[72] The same term appears under 874, when the Army drove Burgred of Mercia into exile and wintered at Repton, and under 875, when Healfdene took part of it to Northumbria.[73] A laconic description of the events of 1066, in MS A, records that 'in this year William came and [gewann] England'.[74] Although chronologically dispersed, these episodes shared certain features. All involved military victory which resulted in control (however brief) over a defined area, and the displacement or death of the previous king. Perhaps significantly, formal 'conquest' precedes each of the Chronicle's three notices of settlement and land-sharing by Danish armies.[75] However, neither *gan* nor *winnan* are used in connection with the campaigns of Edward and Æthelflæd. Their chroniclers employed the vocabulary of agreement rather than conquest.

Agreements fell into three distinct categories, which can be summarised as 'peace', 'cooperation', and 'submission'. The first was described as *frið*. As well as denoting a general state of peace, *frið* could mean specific terms of protection, treaty, or safeguard.[76] Statements that a given people 'made peace' (*namon friþ*) are the Chronicle's conventional euphemism for the payment of protection money to the Great Heathen Army.[77] The same word is used for the terms under which an army swore to leave Alfred's realm in 877, and the peace which Edward the Elder concluded with the East Anglian and Northumbrian armies at

[71] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 827.
[72] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 870.
[73] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 874-5.
[74] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 1066.
[75] East Anglia was 'conquered' in 869 and 'shared out' in 880 (*ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 870, 880); Mercia in 874 and 877 (*ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 874, 877); Northumbria in 875 and 876 (*ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 875, 876).
[76] Liebermann, *Gesetze*, ii, *s.v.* 'frið'; C.E. Fell, 'Unfrið: An Approach to a Definition', *Saga-book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 21 (1982-5), pp. 92-9.
[77] E.g. *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 866-8, 871-3.

Tiddingford in 906.[78] The treaty of Alfred and Guthrum describes itself as a *frið*.[79] It is clear that a *frið* was concluded between polities which would remain separate and in itself implied nothing more amicable than an agreement to stop fighting.

Relationships defined by cooperation were described more literally. Various insular rulers came to accommodations with English kings that amounted to more than a mere *frið*. In 945 Edmund ravaged Cumbria and then gave it to Malcolm king of Scots on condition that 'he should be his [midwyrhta] both on sea and on land'.[80] When Eadred succeeded to the throne the following year, the Scots gave him oaths 'that they would agree to all that he wanted'.[81] In 973, the six kings who met Edgar at Chester pledged that 'that they would be his [efenwyrhtan] on sea and on land'.[82] *Midwyrhta* and *efenwyrhta* were terms denoting collaborators or 'fellow-workers'.[83] A collaboration agreement would have constituted a *frið*, but the implication was more constructive without denying either side its independence. It is clear why the dealings of English kings with Welsh and Scottish rulers tended to be cast in these terms, which recognised the royal status of each party. A similar accommodation probably lies behind the annal for 920, which records that all Scots, Northumbrians, and Strathclyde Welsh chose Edward the Elder 'as father and lord'.[84] These polities demonstrably remained independent. At Eamont in 927, the rulers of the West Welsh, Scots, Gwent, and Bamburgh met with Æthelstan and 'established peace with pledge and oaths'.[85] Æthelstan's

[78] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 905. Agreements including or like the one at Tiddingford are referred to as *friðgewritu* in Edward's laws: II Ew 5:2.
[79] AGu, prol.
[80] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 945.
[81] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 946. Literally: 'that they would all that he would'.
[82] *ASC* MS D, *s.a.* 972.
[83] *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'efen-wyrhta, emn-wyrhta'. The term is rendered as 'fellow-worker; associate'.
[84] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 920. On the significance of the 920 'submission' see F.T. Wainwright, 'The Submission to Edward the Elder', in *idem*, *Scandinavian England*, ed. H.P.R. Finberg (Chichester, 1975) and M.R. Davidson, 'The (Non)submission of the Northern Kings in 920', in Higham and Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder*. Davidson shows that the gathering was in all likelihood a cooperative one rather than a submission.
[85] *ASC* MS D, *s.a.* 926.

claim to overlordship over other kings had more substance than his father's, incorporating tribute and subordinate charter attestations.[86] Nonetheless, there was no question of Æthelstan's territorial kingship extending into other realms.

Edward the Elder's East Midland acquisitions were defined by the third kind of arrangement: outright submission which recognised Edward as king. This is described by the Chronicle with the verbs *cierran* ('to turn') and *bugan* ('to bow'); context suggests no meaningful distinction between the two.[87] Formal submissions, recorded in the Chronicle, seem to have been associated with Edward's acquisition of part of Essex, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, and the Stamford region.[88] A similar process can be inferred at Nottingham.[89] Such relationships, which cast Edward as lord and those who submitted as his men in a conventional sense, were evidently incompatible with continued independence. In affirming the personal acceptance of Edward's kingship by the local elite, submission laid the foundations for practical control over a given area.

A critical question therefore concerns what led people to submit. Most accounts would point to the construction and capture of *burhs*.[90] While these types of event appear in close proximity in the narrative sources, a careful reading cautions against assuming a direct causal relationship and shows that military action was seldom the deciding factor. The great set-piece engagements of Edward's reign took place at the Holme in 902 and at Tettenhall in 910, and in neither case did a submission ensue. Hardly any battles in the conventional sense

[86] Davidson, 'The (Non)submission of the Northern Kings in 920', pp. 206-7; Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 160-7, 212-26.
[87] For instance, part of the local population previously under Danish rule 'bowed to' Edward (*him beag…to*) at Maldon in 912 and 'turned to' him (*him cirde…to*) at Colchester in 917: *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 912, 917.
[88] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 912, 915, 917, 918.
[89] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 918.
[90] Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 324-9; F.T. Wainwright, 'Aethelflaed Lady of the Mercians', in *idem*, *Scandinavian England*, p. 311; Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 13-5; Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', pp. 464-5; Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', p. 138; D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 57.

are recorded for the period during which Edward was actively expanding his kingdom. Indeed, a conspicuous feature of most submissions is the lack of associated military action. It is true that those of late 917 were preceded by months of campaigning earlier in the year, during which Scandinavian forces attacked several *burhs* and appear to have been defeated at each attempt.[91] But if the Chronicle's sequence of events is accurate, these reverses did not immediately precipitate submission. Edward's adversaries seem to have drawn back to take stock before deciding against further resistance. Military defeat was persuasive but did not itself trigger submission to Edward.

The building of *burhs* was similarly influential, but not as directly as is sometimes implied. All submissions which Edward received, except that at Tamworth in 918, were made in a context of burghal fortification. However, the construction of a *burh*, the submission of an army, and control of the surrounding country did not follow neatly from one another. For instance, when Earl Thurcytel and the leading men of Bedford submitted in 914, Edward was building a *burh* not there but at Buckingham, 25 miles (40km) away. Whether this act gave the king any territorial control is doubtful; it certainly did not give him the fortress at Bedford, which he had to 'obtain' separately the following year.[92] Edward may only have gained practical control over the equivalent of Bedfordshire in 916, when Thurcytel departed overseas.[93] The submission of Earl Thurferth and the army of Northampton, at Passenham in 917, took place while the *burh* at Towcester, 8 miles (13km) south-west of Northampton, was being strengthened.[94] Northampton was not yet in Edward's hands, although Towcester presented a challenge to the resident army. The East Anglian army reached its accommodation with Edward at Colchester in 917. Although the West Saxons had captured

[91] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.
[92] *ASC*, *s.a.* 915.
[93] *ASC*, *s.a.* 914-6.
[94] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.

Colchester earlier in the year, it seems to have been no more than an outpost of the eastern army.[95] Edward probably never entered East Anglia in arms, nor is there any suggestion that he established *burhs* in the region.[96] The overtures which the people of York made to Æthelflæd in 918 seem to have followed her peaceful acquisition of Leicester, some distance from any territory controlled by York.[97] On this evidence it appears that submission proceeded one step ahead of *burh*-building and did not itself translate into control of land or fortresses. *Burhs* consolidated gains already made while threatening further ones.

While *burh*-building formed a constant backdrop, the only essential prerequisite for submission was the personal presence of the king. Obvious though the point may seem, it deserves closer attention. Every submission recorded in Edward the Elder's reign was made to him in person. In 912, while a *burh* was being constructed at Witham in Essex, Edward observed from nearby Maldon. It was there that the local population submitted to him.[98] When the walls of Towcester were reinforced in 917, Edward's presence at Passenham discouraged interference and provided an opportunity for Thurferth of Northampton to submit. At Hertford (912) and Towcester and *Wigingamere* (917) the king ordered *burhs* to be built but the Chronicle does not specify his whereabouts.[99] The immediate reaction to the appearance of the latter two fortresses was attack rather than submission. It is similarly uncertain whether Edward was present at the storming of Tempsford, the capture of

[95] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.
[96] *ASC*, *s.a.* 903, states that Edward pursued the East Anglian army 'and harried all their land between the Dykes and the Ouse, all as far north as the fens'. The critical phrase reads '*betwuh dicum 7 Wusan*' (*ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 904). The dykes undoubtedly refer to the Fleam Dyke and Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire, but E. Ekwall, *English River-Names* (Oxford, 1928), pp. 315-6 (followed by Stenton, *ASE*, p. 321) argues that the river was the Wissey in Norfolk, in which case Edward would have penetrated some distance into East Anglia. However, P.H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely* (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 12-13 shows that although Ouse and Wissey are of identical derivation, the form in the annal must refer to the Great Ouse. Edward therefore ravaged in what would become Cambridgeshire (see Map 1).
[97] *ASC*, *s.a.* 918.
[98] *ASC*, *s.a.* 912.
[99] *ASC*, *s.a.* 912, 917.

Colchester, or the repulse of an attack on Maldon in the same year, all of which the Chronicle credits to hosts collected from West Saxon territory. Only in the autumn, when Edward embarked on a progress taking in Passenham, Huntingdon, and Colchester, were submissions made. Although *burhs* were difficult to capture and a threat to independent interests, they were not on their own capable of dominating wide areas. Nor did any royal officers within them, or the king's subordinates in the field, provide a suitable focus for submission. A submission was addressed to the king alone, and therefore a personal rather than an institutional act. It signified not the transfer of territory to a state but the transfer of local notables' allegiance to a ruler.

Recognising submission as a personal act draws attention to the initial limitations of Edward's advances. Submissions were voluntary, albeit precipitated by royal action, and it is therefore important to ask who made them. Once again, the repetitive format of the Chronicle has encouraged summary accounts of successive Danish armies submitting with their *burhs*.[100] But an attentive reading does not support a regular process. Not all submissions, for instance, were made by Danish armies. At Maldon in 912, apparently under the impression of the new *burh* taking shape at Witham, some numbers of local people 'who had been under the rule of the Danish men' submitted.[101] Following the capture of Huntingdon in 917, it was 'all the people of that district who had survived' who bowed to Edward. Soon after, at Colchester, he received the submission of people from East Anglia and Essex who had been 'under the rule of the Danes'.[102] West Saxons therefore seem to have distinguished between armies and the local population. The submission, in 918, of 'all the people who had settled in

[100] E.g. Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 325-9; Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 13-15; M. Innes, 'Danelaw Identities: Ethnicity, Regionalism, and Political Allegiance', in D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards (eds.), *Cultures in Contact* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 80-81; Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', pp. 138-9.
[101] *ASC*, *s.a.* 912.
[102] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.

Mercia, both English and Danish' suggests that the distinction may have been between *here* and *folc* rather than along strict ethnic lines.[103] Not all submissions were of military significance, although they were plainly still worth recording.

Even where local people are not mentioned, it is clear that the groups submitting to Edward were not necessarily uniform. Because Danish armies are associated with *burhs* by the Chronicle, and most of these *burhs* subsequently emerged as shire towns, scholars have often assumed a fundamental link between town and settled hinterland.[104] There would have been clear economic sense in such arrangements.[105] However, it is surprisingly difficult to match presumed economic and social relationships with political groupings. When Earl Thurcytel and the *holds* submitted, they were accompanied by the 'leading men' of Bedford—it is unclear whether Bedford was under Thurcytel's authority.[106] Despite the submission, the town was only 'obtained' when Edward appeared at the gates with an army the following year.[107] It is not certain that there was a unitary 'army of Bedford' to subjugate. When Earl Thurferth and another group of *holds* submitted along with the army belonging to Northampton, one can only guess what was the relationship of the earl to the army, whether the 'leading men' of Northampton had any say in the matter, or whether they in fact comprised the 'army belonging to Northampton'.[108] Conversely, no earl is mentioned in connection with the army of Cambridge.[109] At Stamford in 918, where the construction of a

[103] *ASC*, *s.a.* 918. Hadley, *Vikings in England*, p. 57 points out that the armies faced by Edward probably included many men of English descent by this date.
[104] Stenton, *ASE*, p. 338; Stafford, *East Midlands*, pp. 112-15; Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 10-13; Innes, 'Danelaw Identities', pp. 80-2; G. Williams, 'Towns and Identities in Viking England', in D.M. Hadley and L. ten Harkel (eds.), *Everyday Life in Viking-Age Towns* (Oxford and Oakville, 2013), pp. 19-22. Molyneaux, *Formation*, p. 162 is more cautious.
[105] Williams, 'Towns and Identities in Viking England', pp. 19-22, 30.
[106] A *hold* was a Scandinavian aristocrat and military commander ranking beneath the *jarl* (Old English *eorl*, earl): *DOE A-H* online, *s.v.* 'hold noun2'
[107] *ASC*, *s.a.* 915.
[108] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.
[109] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917. For the possibility of an earl in the Cambridge region in the 890s see above, p. 12.

burh on the south bank of the Welland precipitated the submission of 'all the people who belonged to' the existing fortress, similar questions arise. Was there an earl with authority over the area? Was the chronicler referring to an army or merely townsmen? It would, of course, be dangerous to rely on the presence or absence of specific information in Chronicle annals. Nonetheless there is only one case—Huntingdon—in which the template of a unit comprising fortress, earl, army, and territory can arguably be filled.[110]

A further, generally unremarked limitation on submissions was that they were often incomplete. The separate submissions in the Bedford area have already been discussed: Bedford itself evidently did not feel bound by the submission of the local earl or its (perhaps self-proclaimed) 'leading men'. One can infer that the inhabitants were divided about how to respond to the West Saxon advance. When Edward gained control of the town in 915, 'almost all the citizens, who dwelt there before, submitted to him'.[111] The clear implication is that some did not, and presumably departed. Earl Thurcytel certainly did, if somewhat later, heading for Francia the following year with a body of followers.[112] Although Earl Thurferth, a number of *holds*, and the army of Northampton submitted in 917, many of the leading men of Northampton had apparently come in with Thurcytel three years earlier.[113] In 918 Æthelflæd 'peacefully obtained control of the borough of Leicester'—evidently by negotiation—and 'the greater part of the army which belonged to it was subjected'.[114] Once again, not all had accepted the arrangement. It would be unlike the 'A' Chronicle to put anything but a positive gloss on the king's achievements, and the same can be assumed of the

[110] The Chronicle (*ASC*, *s.a.* 917) associates an army led by Earl Toglos with the fortress of Huntingdon. This is corroborated by *LE*, ii.25, pp. 98-9, which shows that, some decades later, an 'Earl Toli' was still remembered as having held the 'province of Huntingdon' against Edward the Elder. The death of the earl in battle, and the subsequent submission of the local population, were seen to have led to the acquisition of the 'province'.
[111] *ASC*, *s.a.* 915.
[112] *ASC*, *s.a.* 916.
[113] *ASC*, *s.a.* 914.
[114] *ASC*, *s.a.* 918.

more laconic Mercian Register concerning Æthelflæd. If the authors saw fit to qualify recorded submissions, the limitations of the resulting agreements were no doubt real. Scandinavian armies, and indeed burghal populations, were not necessarily stable units.[115]

If the evidence surveyed here is representative, submissions did not deliver coherent territories into Edward the Elder's hands. The language of 'turning' or 'bowing' to the king was uniform, but it was applied to all manner of groupings: the English population in part of Essex, the army of Northampton, the *burh*-dwellers of Stamford, and even the polity of English Mercia after Æthelflæd's death. Specific terms were no doubt agreed in each individual case, but the only certain constant was acknowledgement of Edward's kingship. The treatment of ethnicity and kingdom in contemporary usage suggests that kingship was the West Saxons' main concern, and perhaps carried a stronger unifying appeal than 'Englishness'. This was perhaps equally so from the perspective those who submitted. The act was voluntary and not mediated by stable institutions, and therefore produced an essentially personal bond. Importantly, this kind of accommodation must have involved recognition of landholding, without which there would have been every incentive to resist. Protection was certainly implicit in 'bowing' to the king and was sometimes explicitly sought as *mundbyrd*.[116] Amidst chronic instability, it is likely that local potentates often stood to gain from attaching themselves to Edward. While not everyone can have submitted in person, and fortification was still found necessary, the king exerted a strong gravitational force.

[115] Scandinavian bands commonly split up and relocated when prospects were bad (e.g. *ASC*, *s.a.* 896), and the East Anglian army drew upon a pool of itinerant Vikings (*ASC*, *s.a.* 917). R.P. Abels, 'Alfred the Great, the *Micel Hæðen Here* and the Viking Threat', in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great* (Aldershot, 2003) shows that the great raiding armies of the Chronicle were probably composed of many smaller bands which split up and combined according to their fortunes. The 'burghal' armies faced by Edward the Elder may not have been too different from their predecessors of earlier decades.

[116] E.g. *ASC*, *s.a.* 917. Bosworth & Toller, *s.v.* 'mund-byrd', define the term as 'protection, patronage, aid'. It could also denote the fine for breaching the king's protection.

Two outliers emerge from this pattern. One was Huntingdonshire, where the local experience was closest to 'conquest' in the conventional sense. Unlike the other Scandinavian armies active in the East Midlands, that of Huntingdon was defeated on home territory with the loss of its leader, Earl Toglos [Toli]. Tenth-century litigation preserved in the *Liber Eliensis* seems to suggest that land tenure had to be confirmed in the aftermath of these events, presumably at the time when the local population submitted.[117] If so, any lands previously held by the earl or the army would no doubt have fallen to the king by default. A cluster of significant royal estates around Huntingdon was still evident in 1066, which suggests that their sparseness elsewhere in eastern England was the result of more peaceful processes.[118]

The other anomaly was East Anglia, whose position differed from that of the other areas which accepted Edward's kingship. Unlike the East Midland territories, East Anglia neither experienced any fighting nor saw *burhs* constructed after coming to terms. It seems to have been considered a kingdom throughout the period between 869 and 917, when a king who was probably from East Anglia was killed at Tempsford.[119] Again unlike other territories, it produced a distinctive coinage, which bore the name of St Edmund and was widely current in the East Midlands.[120] Surprisingly, the dealings of the East Anglian army with Edward in 917 have attracted little attention. The Chronicle records the accommodation as follows:

> '…and all the army in East Anglia swore agreement with him, that they would [agree to] all that he would, and would keep peace with all with whom the king wished to keep peace, both on sea and on land.'[121]

[117] D. Whitelock, 'Foreword', in *LE*, p. xi; ibid., ii.25, pp. 98-9. See also Innes, 'Danelaw Identities', pp. 82-3.
[118] This concentration was first noticed by Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 226-7.
[119] See above, pp. 7-13.
[120] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Expansion and Control: Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian Minting South of the Humber', in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 156-7; Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 290-2.
[121] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 917: *…7 eal se here on Eastenglum him swor annesse þæt hie eal þæt woldon þæt he wolde, 7 eall þæt friþian woldon þæt se cyng friþian wolde, ægþer ge on sæ ge on lande*. Translation: *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.

Only recently has Lucy Marten observed that this was closer to a treaty than a submission, let alone a conquest. The undertaking also resembles closely an oath from the text known as *Swerian*, now dated to Edward's reign.[122] East Anglia appears to have submitted on special terms and retained its territorial integrity. The old kingdom may only have been 'shired' into Norfolk and Suffolk in the eleventh century.[123] A further parallel reinforces its special status. Apart from sharing characteristics with *Swerian*, the oath of 917 particularly resembles the agreements of Edward's successors with northern kings. When Edmund left Cumbria to Malcolm king of Scots in 945, it was on condition that he should be his ally 'both on sea and on land'.[124] A year later, the Scots swore to Eadred that they 'would all that he would'.[125] In 973, the six kings who met Edgar at Chester pledged to be 'his allies on sea and on land'.[126] Elements of the East Anglian population are said to have submitted to Edward in 917, but the undertakings given by the army suggest something more like a personal union. Nonetheless, there would henceforth be no more East Anglian kings, and however remote his rule may initially have been, Edward stepped into their shoes by default.

On this evidence we might begin to question whether Edward the Elder gained any meaningful power at all over East Anglia. There is, in fact, evidence that Edward laid claim to certain powers from the outset. Minting was a traditional royal perquisite in which East Anglia had maintained a continuous tradition since the days of Edmund.[127] The martyred king's immediate successors retained some of the same moneyers, while Guthrum-Æthelstan experimented with their 'Temple' type before adopting a style that imitated Alfred's 'Two-

[122] L. Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia: An Alternative Hypothesis', *Historical Research*, 81/ 211 (2008), pp. 3-5.
[123] Ibid., 13-17.
[124] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 945.
[125] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 946.
[126] *ASC* MS D, *s.a.* 972.
[127] See above, pp. 8-11.

line' coins.[128] At least one of Guthrum's moneyers also seems to have struck the subsequent St Edmund coinage, which itself revived stylistic devices from Edmund's own issues.[129] After 917, Edward the Elder seems to have ensured that the St Edmund coins were rapidly replaced with his own, although continuity was not entirely broken: East Anglian moneyers began to imitate the 'Bust Diademed' type at the traditional East Anglian weight standard (c. 1.3g).[130] It seems that Edward expected there to be 'one coinage' throughout his realm, and that the East Anglian imitative issue was struck in recognition of this.[131] Numismatic evidence shows that formal accommodations must have encompassed practical requirements which have not survived.

RIGHTS OF KINGSHIP

So far, this chapter has put forward two main arguments. The first is that rather than claim to rule a uniform 'English' people, Alfred's dynasty chose to emphasise the royal status which inevitably made them paramount within the English-speaking lands. Secondly, territorial expansion was based less on conquest than on shows of strength which encouraged voluntary acceptance of West Saxon kingship. By contrast, previous accounts have depicted West

[128] Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 164, 288-9.
[129] C.E. Blunt, 'The St Edmund Memorial Coinage', *PSIA*, 31/3 (1969), p. 242; Naismith, *MEC8*, p. 290.
[130] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Currency Under the Vikings, Part 2: The Two Scandinavian Kingdoms of the Danelaw, c.895-954', *BNJ*, 76 (2006), pp. 207-8; Naismith, *MEC8*, p. 200. It has been noted (Blunt, 'St Edmund Memorial Coinage', p. 253) that no St Edmund moneyers are represented in this imitative issue, but this need not indicate that they ceased to strike. The 'Bust Diademed' coins sometimes imitate London prototypes down to moneyers' names, while St Edmund moneyers apparently based in the east Midlands reappear on standard Edwardian 'Two-line' coins.
[131] The stipulation that there should be one coinage throughout the realm appears under Æthelstan (II As 14), but may well date from Edward's reign: M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Mints, Burhs, and the Grately Code, cap. 14.2', in D.H. Hill and A.R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex* (Manchester and New York, 1996), pp. 167-72.

Saxon kings as advancing by means of outright conquest, impelled at least partly by an ideological commitment to political unification of the English peoples.[132]

The interpretation proposed here raises a new question. If West Saxon expansion did not proceed by means of successive conquests, how did kings acquire the resources to support ever more active government? Traditional accounts do not face this problem, for the ability to reorganise and reallocate is implicit in conquest. But rejecting an Edwardian conquest removes the only moment at which the localities could have been reorganised from the ground up. If kingship itself was all that the king gained in many areas, how was his rule to be secured in the long term? To suggest an answer, we must examine what rights went with kingship and how they could work to secure control over new territories.

Kingship was established by pledges of loyalty, some couched as submissions and some in terms of alliance. The Chronicle account of Edward the Elder's reign shows that these undertakings were sealed with oaths. Evidence for the use of oaths to conclude agreements is thin before Alfred's reign, when such procedures seem to have become more common.[133] Attempts to hold Scandinavian forces to their word in this way met with mixed success, but oaths also started to become prominent in domestic settings.[134] Alfred referred to all men's 'oath and pledge' and a general oath of loyalty to the king, perhaps to be taken by all males over the age of twelve, is first attested under Edmund.[135] During Edward the Elder's campaigns, only a minority of Midland and East Anglian landholders can have pledged

[132] Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', p. 460; Campbell, 'The United Kingdom of England', p. 40; Wormald, '*Engla Lond*'.
[133] P. Wormald, 'Oaths', in *WBEASE*, pp. 345-6.
[134] See for instance the oaths sworn by the Great Heathen Army: *ASC*, *s.a.* 876-7.
[135] III Em 1. However, Patrick Wormald's contention that the general loyalty oath went back to Alfred's reign, and that breach of loyalty became implicit in theft (set out in detail in Wormald, *Papers*, pp. 112-29) has now been challenged: see M. Ammon, '"Ge mid wedde ge mid aðe": The Functions of Oath and Pledge in Anglo-Saxon Legal Culture', *Historical Research*, 86/233 (2013) and, particularly, I. Beaudoin, 'Keeping Faith with Anglo-Saxon Kings, c. 871-1016' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, forthcoming).

allegiance personally, and the nature of the oaths must have varied.[136] It is unlikely that the free population at large routinely swore loyalty before the late tenth century, considering that the first evidence for the regular maintenance of tithings—the incipient sheriff's tourn—dates from the reign of Cnut.[137] Nonetheless, the act of submitting or acquiescing to the rule of Alfred's successors acquired a novel, irrevocable dimension. The freedom of blameless individuals to seek new lords did not apply when it came to kings.

West Saxon rule need not have weighed heavily on local aristocracies as long as oaths were kept. Short of military action, the king's coercive powers were limited, particularly in the earlier tenth century. Even so, the standard perquisites of mid-late Saxon kingship were no doubt insisted upon: a king worthy of the style would expect to mint coins, book land, proclaim law, and command the 'common burdens'. But if the natural prerogatives of kings were presumably recognised, they did not necessarily reinforce kingship itself. Most represented demands which could arouse discontent rather than loyalty if pressed too strongly, and only coinage offered kings a reliable means of proclaiming their status. Consolidating royal control, let alone implementing an increasingly intrusive form of government, depended upon acquiring landed resources. Only then could the promise of patronage be held out to local thegns and loyal men appropriately favoured. It is therefore essential to consider how kings acquired land. Current scholarship usually assumes that whatever was gained (by conquest or otherwise) was alienated quickly in order to establish a loyal aristocracy, leaving kings with little.[138] Even in the absence of direct evidence, how lands outside Wessex first came into royal hands is a surprisingly neglected problem.

[136] The likely scale of oath-swearing is discussed by Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 63-5.
[137] II Cn 20.
[138] Dumville, 'Between Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peacemaker', pp. 151-3; Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', p. 139; Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 51-2.

Direct gains from Scandinavian settlers or warlords were probably the exception. As we have seen, military 'conquest' with its corollary of expropriation played a minor part except in Huntingdonshire. Surviving documents show that lands beyond the frontiers of the kingdom were sometimes acquired by purchase. Two charters of Æthelstan confirm estates in Bedfordshire and Derbyshire which had been bought 'from the pagans' at the behest of Edward the Elder and Ealdorman Æthelred.[139] Æthelstan himself purchased the district of Amounderness in Lancashire for the Archbishop of York.[140] The name of the later medieval barony of Copeland ('purchased land'), in Cumberland, may recall a similar transaction.[141] Such acquisitions have been taken to represent an active royal policy, perhaps using purchase as an alternative to alienating royal demesne or as a means of political infiltration.[142] However, it would be unwise to read too much strategy into three charters. There is no way of knowing how common such purchases were or what local circumstances attended them.[143] Kings themselves may have been willing to pay for locations of particular interest, but the practice is unlikely to have been the rule. Nonetheless, these cases incidentally reinforce a larger point. Had Edward the Elder always faced organised, hostile polities on his frontiers, their rulers would surely have prevented his men from acquiring land locally. The mere possibility of buying footholds suggests unstable conditions in which not all elements were disposed to resist West Saxon expansion.

[139] S 396; S 397. The involvement of Æthelred dates the transactions to before 911, a time when both regions were outside Edward's control.
[140] S 407.
[141] D. Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in P. Clemoes (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins* (London, 1959), p. 72, n. 2; *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'Copeland'.
[142] Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 322-3; Dumville, 'Between Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peacemaker', p. 152; Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', p. 464; Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 55-6; Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', p. 136.
[143] P.H. Sawyer, 'The Charters of Burton Abbey and the Unification of England', *Northern History*, 10/1 (1975) suggested that kings may have left it to the beneficiary to take possession.

A more obvious explanation for royal holdings beyond the West Saxon heartlands is that the demesnes of other kingdoms had been taken over in the course of expansion. Scholars have occasionally assumed as much.[144] The proposition can only be tested by comparing pre-Viking references to royal estates with the royal demesne recorded for 1066 in Domesday Book. No more than an impression can be gained from this exercise due to the thinness of the pre-Domesday record, but a handlist of putative Anglo-Saxon royal estates compiled by Peter Sawyer provides a starting-point.[145] From this we can extract the estates recorded in pre-Viking contexts and establish whether they were in royal hands in 1066. Kent and Mercia, the two best-documented kingdoms absorbed by Wessex, may provide an indication of developments elsewhere.

For Mercia, Sawyer's list yields 13 locations mentioned in connection with Mercian kings between 672×674 and 862. In 1066 Edward the Confessor was the major landowner in three of these (Tamworth and Willenhall, Staffordshire; Wellesbourne, Warwickshire), major churches in three (Cropthorne, Worcestershire; Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire; Thame, Oxfordshire), laymen in four (Chelsea, Middlesex; Gumley, Leicestershire; Seckington, Warwickshire; Wychbold, Worcestershire), and unknown parties in three (Brentford, Middlesex; Croft and Glenn, Leicestershire). It would hard to argue for wholesale descent of royal demesne on this basis, but the distribution of the recorded locations leaves room for doubt. Nine out of 13 fall within the Mercian heartlands, spread between Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. Other traditionally Mercian areas record no

[144] P.H. Sawyer, 'The Royal *Tun* in Pre-Conquest England', in Wormald, Bullough, and Collins (eds), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 284-5; P. Stafford, 'The "Farm of One Night" and the Organization of King Edward's Estates in Domesday', *EcHR*, 33/4 (1980), p. 497.
[145] Sawyer, 'The Royal *Tun*', pp. 289-99: Appendix: Royal Vills in pre-Conquest England. Only a few of these estates are explicitly named as *villae regiae* or an equivalent. Others were locations where assemblies were held, battles were fought, or kings died. Sawyer argued that such places would usually have been royal estates, although some may have been minsters or residences of lay magnates: Sawyer, 'The Royal *Tun*', pp. 276-7.

putative royal estates. Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Derbyshire yield no references—even though Derbyshire, for instance, contained the important minster and royal mausoleum of Repton.[146] Domesday Book shows that Edward the Confessor held networks of royal manors in all these shires. Even where putative Mercian demesne was in the king's hand TRE, the estates in question were far from his most important in the relevant shires. Most royal manors recorded in Mercia by Domesday become historically visible only in 1066. Whether the lands of the Mercian kings remained royal by default is, on this evidence, uncertain.

The descent of known Kentish royal estates presents a clearer picture. Sawyer's list records four from pre-Viking contexts: Bapchild, Faversham, Mereworth, and Wye. Three of these appear to have been royal demesne under Edward the Confessor. Faversham and Wye were significant royal manors in 1066, and Bapchild was apparently reckoned within one (Milton).[147] Mereworth was only held 'from King Edward'.[148] Small and densely documented Kent therefore preserves clear evidence for the direct descent of royal demesne. Moreover, the Kentish estates can be held up against a framework for royal organisation. This is hardly possible in Mercia, where uniform administrative arrangements seem to have been lacking.[149] Kent was traditionally divided into lathes: extensive and long-lasting territories each centred upon a royal vill.[150] If identifications of the capital estates are correct, they were all held by

[146] H. Mayr-Harting, 'Guthlac [St Guthlac] (674–715)', in *ODNB*; S.E. Kelly, 'Æthelbald (*d.* 757)', in *ODNB*.
[147] On Bapchild, see Sawyer, 'The Royal *Tun*', p. 290.
[148] *DB Kent*, 12.3 (GDB f. 14b). On this formula see below, pp 121-22.
[149] S. Keynes, 'Mercia and Wessex in the Ninth Century', in M.P. Brown and C.A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia: an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London, 2001), pp. 322-6. However, see now J.T. Baker, 'Old English *Sǣte* and the Historical Significance of "Folk" Names', *Early Medieval Europe*, 25/4 (2017).
[150] N.P. Brooks, 'The Creation and Early Structure of the Kingdom of Kent', in S. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London, 1989), pp. 69-73; S. Brookes, 'The Lathes of Kent: A Review of the Evidence', in S. Brookes, S. Harrington, and A. Reynolds (eds.), *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 2011).

the king or by the Canterbury houses, who had acquired theirs from earlier monarchs, even in 1066.[151]

Material from Mercia and Kent suggests that Alfred's successors probably did inherit recognised royal demesne from other dynasties, but that documented centres are a poor guide to the scope of these gains. Mercian royal estates which had territorial functions TRE are virtually absent from the early documentary record, even though their status may in some cases have pre-dated Mercia itself.[152] Of the Kentish lathe capitals, only Wye features in pre-Alfredian references. It is likely that core administrative centres remain obscure because they were seldom granted away. Apart from alienation, the only reason for an estate to enter the documentary record was that it hosted some important event. The sources mined by Sawyer are therefore inherently biased towards centres conveniently situated for certain purposes. Thus Brentford and Chelsea, far from the Mercian heartlands but near London, lent themselves to synodal gatherings. Administrative importance, even in the eleventh century, may be a better guide to long-term royal status than documentary visibility. In northern and eastern areas, disruption between the fall of the old kingdoms and the imposition of West Saxon control may have complicated the descent of lands. But even where their immediate predecessors were Scandinavian, it is likely that the West Saxon kings would have laid claim to recognisable demesne estates.

[151] Brooks, 'The Creation and Early Structure of the Kingdom of Kent', p. 73, table 4.1. See *DB Kent*, 3.17 (GDB f. 5b) for Eastry; 7.7 (GDB f. 12a) for Sturry; 2.26 (GDB f. 4a) for Lyminge; 6.1 (GDB f. 11d) for Wye; 1.2-3 (GDB ff. 2c-d) for Milton and Aylesford; 1.1 (GDB f. 2c) for the unrecorded Sutton-at-Hone, which probably lay within Dartford.

[152] See for instance a proposed identification of Pengwern, an ancient royal seat of Powys, with Wrockwardine in Shropshire, which in 1066 was a hundredal manor held in demesne: G.R.J. Jones, 'Continuity Despite Calamity: the Heritage of Celtic Territorial Organization in England', *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 3/1 (1981), 22-8; *DB Shrops.*, 4:1.1 (GDB f. 253b).

Some evidence suggests that other categories of estate besides old royal demesne were claimed for the king's use. It has long been recognised that the kings of Wessex benefited from the landed resources of monasteries which were either weakened or had ceased to function in the aftermath of Scandinavian attacks.[153] Æthelwold's acquisitions from Edgar show how many former ecclesiastical sites had come into royal hands in eastern England. Ely is described as having been destroyed, abandoned, and added to the royal treasury.[154] A subsequent passage suggests that some kind of church had survived, but it was the king's to grant and evidently retained no meaningful endowment.[155] Ely answered for 20 hides when Æthelwold purchased it and had land for 20 ploughs (assessed at 10 hides) TRE.[156] What Edgar had, and sold, was apparently the church with its immediate vill. *Medeshamstede* (Peterborough) and Barrow upon Humber were also in royal hands before Æthelwold acquired them.[157] The bishop's Life describes *Medeshamstede* as having been 'purchased …from the king and noblemen of the land'.[158] The subsequent passage describes the purchase of Thorney, implying that this too was bought from Edgar.[159] A later tradition held that an anchorites' settlement at Thorney had been destroyed by the Danes.[160] The early history of Crowland is similarly obscure but according to one account, a cleric named Thurcytel acquired it from Eadred.[161] All these had been, or would become major houses, but the same pattern is evident at a lower level. The Ely material records a minster 'of royal rank' at Horningsea, which survived the Danish wars with a reduced community and had since

[153] R. Fleming, 'Monastic Lands and England's Defence in the Viking Age', *EHR*, 100/395 (1985), pp. 251-7. See D.N. Dumville, 'Ecclesiastical Lands and the Defence of Wessex in the First Viking-Age', in *idem*, *Wessex and England*, for qualifications.
[154] *LE*, ii.1, pp. 72-3; Wulfstan of Winchester, *The Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and trans. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991), ch. 23, p. 38.
[155] *LE*, ii.18, pp. 93-4.
[156] *LE*, ii.4, pp. 75-6; *DB Cambs.*, 5.57 (GDB f. 192a).
[157] Fleming, 'Monastic Lands', 251.
[158] Wulfstan of Winchester, *Life of St Æthelwold*, ch. 24, p. 40.
[159] Ibid.
[160] D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London, 1971), p. 78.
[161] Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 1969-80), ii, p. 340 and n. 2; Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 63.

acquired a small endowment. This, too, Edgar sold to Æthelwold.[162] At Dereham, where a pre-Viking minster founded by St Wihtburh was still active, the bishop is said to have obtained the whole vill from Edgar.[163] Yet another former church may have remained in royal hands. St Felix's burial-place at Soham, where a ruined church was apparently still visible in William of Malmesbury's day, was a royal manor TRE.[164]

These accounts suggest that the king claimed a right to dispose of many churches. At Ely, Horningsea, and Dereham, abandonment seems to have been a Benedictine metaphor for communities deemed unworthy. Nonetheless, these as well as abandoned places like *Medeshamstede* came under royal control. A common theme across eastern England is that royal confiscation affected not endowments but churches themselves. Outlying holdings are attested at Horningsea alone, and these were recent gifts from local people.[165] Ely, *Medeshamstede*, and Dereham were all sold or given explicitly as single vills. Some old churches may have sat on large individual estates, but distant properties had probably been lost. It therefore seems as though kings asserted a general claim to churches deemed waste or lordless. Such a claim was not necessarily a new invention. Something like it was current as early as the 660s, when the kings of Northumbria granted Bishop Wilfrid control of 'consecrated places' abandoned by fleeing British clergy.[166] In Kent, the displacement of the native dynasty in the eighth century led to a dispute between the archbishops of Canterbury and kings of Mercia over the 'Kentish royal minsters'.[167] These comprised Hoo, Minster-in-Sheppey, Reculver, Minster-in-Thanet, St Augustine's, Dover, Folkestone, Lyminge, and

[162] *LE*, ii.32, pp. 105-7.
[163] *ASC* MS F, *s.a.* 799; *LE*, ii.40, pp. 113-4 and ii.53, pp. 120-3.
[164] *DB Cambs.*, 1.1 (GDB f. 189b-c); *GPA*, ii.74.2, p. 234.
[165] *LE*, ii.32, pp. 106.
[166] Stephen of Ripon, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), ch. 17, p. 36.
[167] N.P. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (Leicester, 1984), pp. 175-206.

possibly a further house at Lympne.[168] The kings were able to make good their claims, even acquiring papal privileges that confirmed their right to minsters inherited from kinsfolk or acquired 'justly and reasonably'.[169] After the West Saxon annexation of Kent after 825, the new rulers asserted lordship of the royal minsters in their turn.[170] Religious houses in newly-acquired territories, particularly those with royal connections, seem to have been treated as extensions of the royal demesne. If most of the documented examples did eventually come back into ecclesiastical hands, this outcome largely reflected Bishop Æthelwold's preference for such sites. The treatment of Ely before its refoundation suggests that it was no foregone conclusion.[171]

Traditional claims may have provided West Saxon kings with a foothold in the localities, but cannot have satisfied demand for royal land. If royal centres were as stable as suggested, lay patronage and ecclesiastical endowment must have drawn on other resources. The territories attached to some royal estates may have undergone a familiar process of fission, but inherited demesne was a limited resource.[172] To suggest that Anglo-Saxon rulers were unconcerned by this would be to do them a disservice: finite lands were a problem recognised by Bede in his letter to Ecgberht, by Alfred with his stipulation that land should descend on the spear side, and possibly by Edward the Elder during the mysterious 'Edwardian charter gap'.[173] Even

[168] Brooks, *Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, pp. 183, 202 fig. 7; S.E. Kelly, 'Lyminge Minster and its Early Charters', in S. Keynes and A.P. Smyth (eds.), *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart* (Dublin, 2006), p. 111.
[169] Brooks, *Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, pp. 183-6.
[170] Ibid., pp. 197-206.
[171] Eadwig granted 40 hides at Ely to Archbishop Oda in 957, treating the estate as a conventional *rus* without reference to any religious foundation (S 646). Subsequently, a Greek bishop called Sigewold and a Dane called Thurstan both nurtured hopes of acquiring Ely from Edgar (*LE*, ii.2, p. 73).
[172] On the breakup of extensive territories see R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1997), pp. 154-5.
[173] Bede, *Letter to Ecgberht*, ed. C. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* (2 vols, Oxford, 1896), i, pp. 405-23; S 1507; Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 55-6.

Eadwig's open-handed policy may have been redistributive rather than merely reckless.[174] Independent sources must have fed the steady turnover of lands that successful royal patronage required.

There is reason to think that a significant supply of disposable land accrued to tenth-century kings in the ordinary course of peacetime rule.[175] Both formal and informal mechanisms which tended to feed the royal fisc can be identified, most vividly in the portion of the *Liber Eliensis* based upon the *Libellus Æthelwoldi Episcopi*, which records the complex transactions in the East Midlands and East Anglia by which Bishop Æthelwold endowed the abbey. Not only the nature but also the provenance of estates is often recorded in detail. As Æthelwold and Ely regularly benefited from royal grants, this material sheds much, albeit incidental light on the processes through which kings acquired and disposed of land.

One of these was aristocratic bequest. Hatfield, a 40-hide estate which would become one of Ely's most important properties, was bequeathed to Edgar by 'a certain powerful man called Ordmær and his wife Ealde'.[176] Similarly, Hauxton was left to the king by Eadric the Tall of Essex and subsequently purchased by Æthelwold.[177] Edgar was further bequeathed land at Marsworth by Ælfgifu, and gave this too to Ely.[178] Bequests of land were not heriots, which seem to have been paid in coin and chattels only.[179] However, it was probably considered wise to give lands in addition to the heriot, so as to encourage a king to enforce the will's

[174] S. Keynes, 'Eadwig [Edwy] (c. 940–959)', in *ODNB*; *idem*, 'England, 900-1016', p. 477; R. Lavelle, 'Royal Control and the Disposition of Estates in Tenth-Century England: Reflections on the Charters of King Eadwig (955-959)', *HSJ*, 23 (2011).
[175] Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', p. 55; *idem*, 'England, 900-1016', pp. 465-6.
[176] *LE*, ii.7, p. 79.
[177] *LE*, ii.27, pp. 100-1.
[178] *LE*, ii.47, p. 116; see also Ælfgifu's will, S 1484.
[179] *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. and trans. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), p. 100; R.P. Abels, 'Heriot', in *WBEASE*, pp. 240-41. There is one reference to *heregeatland* in S 1536; see Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 157-8.

other provisions. This much is strongly implied in the will of Ælfflæd.[180] The role of land bequests to the king as a kind of supplementary death duty is further indicated by the fact that the right to make a will often had to be solicited.[181] One cannot expect even individuals as wealthy as Ælfgifu or Ealdorman Ælfheah, who left Edgar six and seven estates respectively as well as money, to have done so out of mere affection.[182] Although some apparent bequests may have been reversions, the anxiety of major subjects to control their legacy was a potentially lucrative source of land wherever the king's authority was recognised.

Large bequests gave the king considerable leverage. An estate on the scale of Hatfield, which was worth £25 per year TRE, was bound to be sought by multiple parties.[183] Upon Edgar's death, its status was disputed by Ealdorman Æthelwine and his brothers, who claimed that their father, Æthelstan 'Half-king', had been forcibly deprived of it by the king.[184] The monks were obliged to re-purchase Hatfield from Æthelwine with 41 hides elsewhere. Although the background to the brothers' claim is unclear, competition for royal largesse was plainly intense. More suggestive still are the events which followed Eadric the Tall's bequest of Hauxton. As soon as Eadric was dead, many people petitioned Edgar for the land, but Bishop Æthelwold came first among them. The rush to the king's door and Æthelwold's purchase of the property occurred before Eadric's family had even paid the heriots.[185]

A more regular source of disposable land was forfeiture, by which serious offences such as desertion were punished.[186] It features repeatedly in the account of Ely's endowment. A

[180] S 1486.
[181] See e.g. S 1484; S 1485: S 1511.
[182] S 1484; S 1485.
[183] *DB Herts.*, 8.1 (GDB f. 135a).
[184] *LE*, ii.7, pp. 79-80.
[185] *LE*, ii.27, pp. 100-1.
[186] Wormald, *Papers*, pp. 123-5; see e.g. the forfeiture of the *dux* Wulfhere (S 362).

certain Oslac was 'accused before King Edgar', who ordered his land and possessions confiscated. Oslac was allowed to buy back his property through the intercession of Æthelwold, but the king gained either way.[187] Forfeited lands acquired by Ely included five hides at Yelling, lost by Wulfwine the Cook and his wife 'for criminal behaviour of many kinds', and half a hide at Armingford which had become forfeit 'for fighting and theft'.[188] One of the most revealing passages in the *Liber Eliensis* concerns Northwold and Pulham.[189] These Norfolk estates were forfeited by one Waldchist in Edmund's reign. They remained in royal hands into that of Eadred, who granted them to queen mother Eadgifu. Both reverted to King Edgar after Eadgifu's death and were acquired by Wulfstan (probably of Dalham), but were then separately exchanged and bought from the king by Bishop Æthelwold. These were valuable acquisitions, each yielding £8 per year in 1066.[190] Pulham alone cost Æthelwold £40. Although Eadgifu and Wulfstan had both added to the value of the manors, the fact that they had been granted to a queen dowager suggests that it had always been significant. Northwold and Pulham represented a windfall gain which was put to a variety of uses—as an endowment on the spindle side of the royal family, as a temporary grant to one of the king's most important lay associates, and finally as an outright sale to a trusted bishop. One forfeiture enabled three kings to favour important magnates at no net cost to themselves.

The Ely material provides a unique window onto the workings of law and bequest, if only insofar as the cases were of concern to the abbey. The king's part is mostly incidental but nonetheless shows how he might gain lands from day to day, how valuable these could be, and how they might be used to further royal interests. Across the kingdom as a whole, these

[187] *LE*, ii.19, p. 95.
[188] *LE*, ii.7, p. 79; ii.49b, p. 117.
[189] *LE*, ii.42-3, pp. 114-5.
[190] *DB Norfolk*, 15.8 (LDB f. 213b); 15.24 (LDB f. 214b).

processes must have provided a steady stream of resources.[191] Bequests and forfeitures came to the king as a function of his status, and would have arisen wherever he had undisputed power and a direct relationship with the local aristocracy. Recognised kingship and local stability were all that Edward the Elder and his successors needed in order to reap these benefits. Their position was potentially self-reinforcing.

CONCLUSIONS

West Saxon expansion in lowland Britain was defined by dynasty and loyalty, rather than nation and conquest. The gains ultimately achieved were out of proportion to the extent of military action, and were not accompanied by an overt commitment to recasting identities. To the extent that a shared identity was articulated, it provided a common denominator without denying the possibility of other groupings within it. This represented an innovation in that kings had traditionally defined their power with reference to unitary peoples. From Alfred's day onwards they explicitly ruled over a conglomerate body, which was not self-evidently united, but united rather in its allegiance to them. As the only surviving native dynasty, the West Saxon kings enjoyed a strong position by default. The ways in which they defined—and sometimes omitted to define—the nature of their kingdom suggest that they exploited this deliberately. Their success in maintaining and extending their realm certainly had the potential to create a new and unified consciousness, but this was an effect rather than a cause.

[191] It has been suggested that the many references to kings in charter bounds and minor place-names, which cannot all represent established royal demesne or commemorate specific monarchs, mark small landholdings which had been forfeited: C.A. Hough, 'Naming and Royal Authority in Anglo-Saxon Law', in G.R. Owen-Crocker and B.W. Schneider (eds.), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 208-16.

With the king as its focus, the new polity expanded along personal bonds. Submissions, the chief mechanism of expansion, provided little basis for a rapid imposition of bureaucratic government. They were nonetheless more than ceremonial affairs, for numismatic evidence suggests that they involved recognition of the most fundamental royal powers. From this starting point kings gradually acquired the means to interfere more actively in local society. Royal status carried not only a set of traditional prerogatives but also disposable resources, and in the absence of challenges, these could be employed foster loyalty just as surely as the fruits of mass confiscation. Oaths were the feature which held this structure together, and seem to have grown in parallel with royal power. Whereas the initial acknowledgement of Edward the Elder's kingship was usually a matter for such 'leading men' as came to him, a general oath of loyalty was demanded by the middle of the tenth century. It affirmed the direct relationship between king and freemen, with minimal institutional mediation and entirely without reference to national identity.

Chapter II

The franchise of soke

The previous chapter argued that traditional royal claims were essential to expanding and maintaining the tenth-century English kingdom. Early in the eleventh century, kings began to make additional demands, establishing or formalising rights to land taxation and various judicial dues which might be granted to subjects as franchises. These included rights such as 'toll and team' (profits arising from tolls and vouching to warranty) and *infangenepeof* (to execute and take the chattels of thieves caught on one's own property), but by far the most conspicuous franchise was soke. The term is usually taken to mean a right to receive judicial fines in the king's stead or even to exercise 'jurisdiction', but has resisted conclusive explanation.[1] This chapter reconsiders the meaning of soke, suggesting that its main function was not to do with justice but rather with regulating status relative to the king.

'Soke' is a modernisation of Old English *socn*, the literal meaning of which was 'a seeking' (the noun form of *secan*, 'to seek').[2] It was a generic term that could denote almost any act of seeking. In one specialised sense, as protection or asylum, it could be glossed as *refugium*.[3] Elsewhere, however, it was compounded or otherwise contextualised in order to make clear what kind of seeking or attendance was meant, as in *hamsocn* (assault on a house), *ciricsocn*

[1] Hudson, *OHLE2*, pp. 59-61. Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 101-2 long ago pointed out that 'jurisdiction' is an unsatisfactory term for soke. On jurisdiction, see now T. Lambert, 'Jurisdiction as Property in England, 900-1100', in G. Kantor, T. Lambert, and H. Skoda (eds.), *Legalism: Property and Ownership* (Oxford, 2017).
[2] Bosworth & Toller, *s.v.* 'sécan', 'sócn'. Its meanings are surveyed by C.A. Joy, 'Sokeright' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1975), pp. 29-62.
[3] Ælfric, *Glossary*, ed. J. Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar: Text und Varianten* (Berlin, 1880), p. 179.

(church attendance or asylum), or *reliquiasocn* (visiting relics).[4] In its undifferentiated form, *socn* is usually given a judicial meaning, either as 'suit of court' or as a more abstract fine-collecting right. Writs announcing franchisal grants typically paired it with *sacu* in the alliterative formula *sacu 7 socn* (sake and soke), which is conventionally interpreted as meaning 'cause and suit'.[5]

The unmodified term 'soke' entered documentary usage in the second half of the tenth century.[6] It then appears to have gained general currency with the rise of the sealed writ, probably in the reign of Æthelred II and certainly by the early decades of the eleventh century.[7] This type of document was commonly used to inform an assembly that the king had granted someone soke over their land or over some another unit or category. How ubiquitous the concept was only becomes apparent in Domesday Book, which often records it as a matter of course, depending on circuit and shire. The distribution of references to soke and sokemen in Domesday Book, alongside its appearance in northern charters and Æthelred II's Wantage code, has in the past lent the term strong 'Danelaw' associations.[8] But however it entered the lexicon of royal government, it is clear that soke was by the eleventh century a matter of great concern to those who governed England. Its use as a commonplace shorthand across a significant part of the Domesday kingdom suggests that it conveyed essential

[4] Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 79-80; J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 430-32, 486.
[5] Bosworth & Toller, *s.v.* 'sacu'; Joy, 'Sokeright', pp. 56-60.
[6] S 659 (958), S 681 (959), S 1453 (975×992). Another document, S 779 (970), also contains the term, but its authenticity in current form is uncertain. S 659 and 681, although considered fundamentally authentic, only survive in York and Peterborough manuscripts of the fourteenth and twelfth centuries respectively. Both use the 'sake and soke' formula in an unusual, territorial context and are hardly unimpeachable witnesses to tenth-century usage. S 1453, a memorandum by Archbishop Oswald of York in an early eleventh-century manuscript, is the first reference to inspire real confidence. Earlier examples of the term, although generally translated with different inflections, survive in the laws of Æthelstan and Edmund: IV As 6.2; II Em 4.
[7] S. Keynes, 'The Use of Seals in Anglo-Saxon England', in J. Cherry et al. (eds.), *Seals and Status: The Power of Objects* (London, 2018), pp. 76-7. Æthelred's Wantage code employs the term in what would become a familiar sense (III Atr 11) and the earliest purported franchisal grants claim to date from Æthelred's reign (S 945, 946).
[8] F.M. Stenton, 'The Danes in England', in D.M. Stenton (ed.), *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 145-6; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 515-19; but see Joy, 'Sokeright', pp. 60-61 and G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Old English *Socn* "Soke" and the Parish in Scandinavia', *Namn och Bygd*, 88 (2000).

information. What this may have been has remained unclear, because no pre-Conquest document goes out of its way to explain what soke meant to those who dealt with it.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE PROBLEM

The foundational treatment of soke remains F.W. Maitland's *Domesday Book and Beyond* of 1897. More thoroughly than anyone before or since, Maitland elucidated the social background and judicial implications of soke through Domesday material. His conclusions concerning 'public' and 'private' justice would define the course of the debate. From the legal associations of the word in twelfth-century texts, above all the *Leges Henrici Primi*, Maitland inferred that soke was to be understood as 'justice' or 'justiciary rights'.[9] These he understood as follows:

> On the whole, we take it that the lord who enjoyed soke had the right to keep a court if he chose to do so, and that generally he did this, though he would be far from keeping a separate court for each of his little manors; but if his possessions were small he may have contented himself with attending the hundred court and claiming the fines incurred by his men.[10]

Twelfth-century evidence had set the treatment of soke on a legal path. When Frank Stenton examined 'territorial sokes'—groups of outlying holdings owing soke to a central manor—in eastern England, he was certain that 'the essential feature of sokeland consists in its subjection to the justiciary power of its lord'.[11] While Stenton left open the precise nature of this power and turned to social and economic bonds, Maitland's argument for private courts

[9] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 80-87, 258-9. Maitland was not the first to associate soke with justice. Henry Adams had already drawn the connection and indeed had an eleventh-century reference: H. Adams, 'The Anglo-Saxon Courts of Law', in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law* (Boston, 1876), pp. 42-4, quoting the earliest recension of II Cnut, which repeatedly names one 'who has his soke' as a person entitled to collect judicial profits. This is recension 'G', on which see Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 224-8, 349-52. Its readings of II Cnut are the earliest references to associate soke with legal profits.
[10] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 86-7, 97.
[11] F.M. Stenton, *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw* (Oxford, 1910), p. 21.

was rejected by Julius Goebel, who maintained that soke conferred no more than a right to receive the profits of justice.[12] Essays by Naomi Hurnard and Patrick Wormald would further damage the case for judicial 'immunities'.[13] It is now accepted that that a grant of soke conferred only the right to collect certain fines arising from justice done in public courts.[14]

A parallel, initially less prominent, strand of thought gives soke a wider definition. Paul Vinogradoff first proposed that soke could encompass *feorm*, thus extending its scope to the king's non-judicial rights.[15] A more forcible and detailed statement to this effect was made by R.H.C. Davis, working from the late twelfth-century Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds. The dues claimed by the abbey led Davis to argue that a grant of soke conferred not only judicial rights, but also miscellaneous customs such as cartage, which would otherwise have been performed for the king by the free population.[16] This interpretation was further emphasised in a doctoral thesis by Christine Joy, whose discussion of soke has served as a point of reference for all subsequent work.[17] The wider definition of soke has attracted a degree of consensus in recent scholarship, which tends to view the franchise as an amalgam of judicial profits and various customary dues.[18]

Few have attempted to place soke in its social context. In 1920 Rachel Reid noted the close correspondence between pre-Conquest thegnage and post-Conquest baronage, both of which,

[12] J. Goebel, *Felony and Misdemeanor: A Study in the History of Criminal Law* (Philadelphia, 1976; originally New York, 1937), pp. 339-61.
[13] N.D. Hurnard, 'The Anglo-Norman Franchises', *EHR*, 64/252-3 (1949), pp. 289-327, 433-60. P. Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice in the Early English Kingdom: Oswaldslow Revisited', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre (eds.), *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995).
[14] S. Baxter, 'Lordship and Labour', in J.C. Crick and E.M.C. van Houts (eds.), *A Social History of England, 900-1200* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 103-4.
[15] P. Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century* (Oxford, 1908), p. 122.
[16] R.H.C. Davis, *The Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds and Related Documents* (London, 1954), pp. xl-xli.
[17] Joy, 'Sokeright' (1975), pp. 22-6, 223-55.
[18] Articulated notably by S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 210-11.

she argued, came with with soke as a matter of status.[19] More recently, Richard Abels has shown the close link between possession of 'sake and soke', and the performance of military service.[20] David Roffe has argued that possession of 'sake and soke' signified bookright, and that the holder was therefore a king's thegn, in a special relationship with the ruler.[21] Abels and Roffe fall back on the purely judicial and wider customary definitions, respectively, as regards undifferentiated soke.[22]

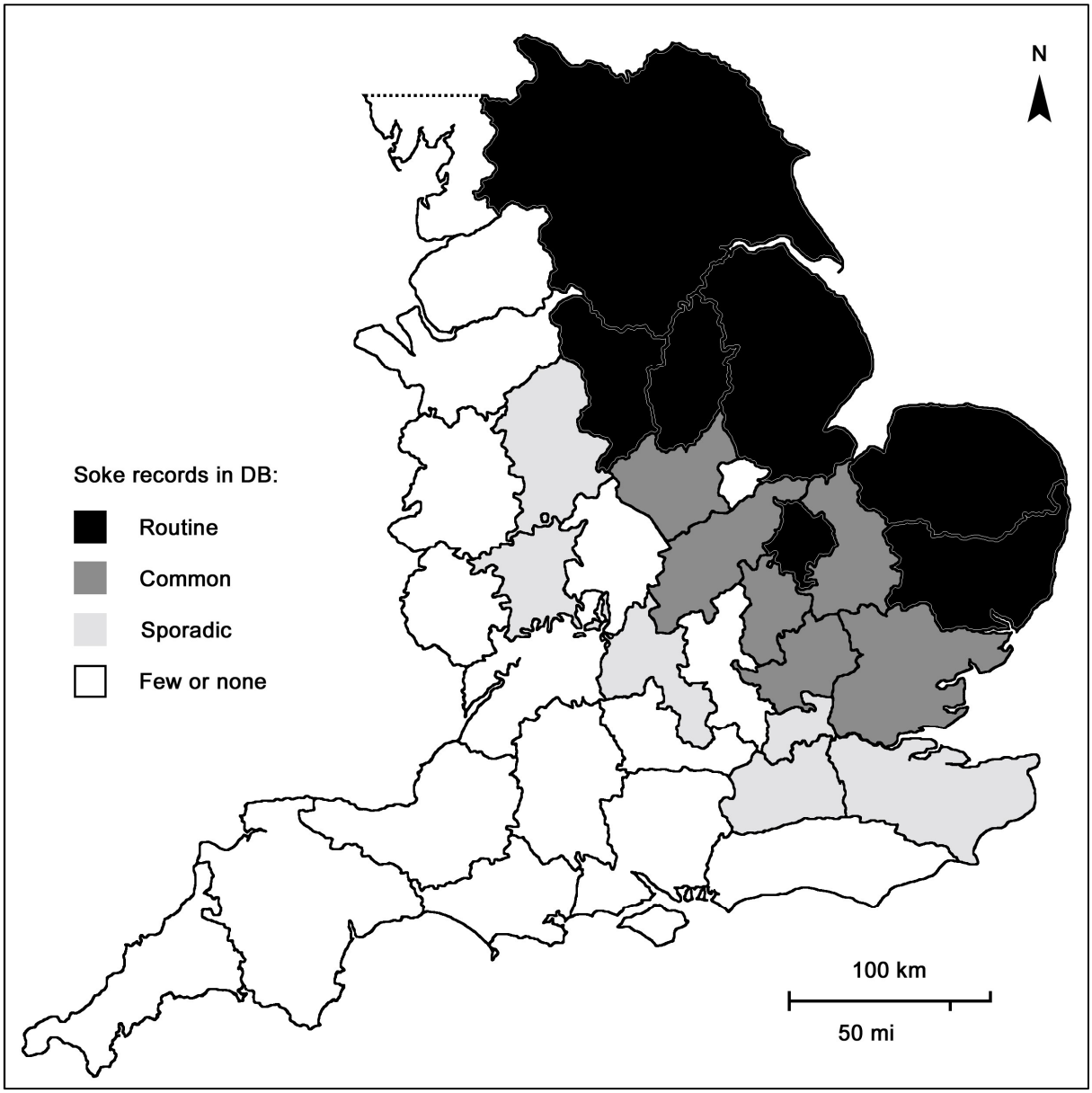
Both main approaches are open to serious objections. The broad definition of soke, as judicial profits plus customary dues, gathers rights of very different origins into a single franchise. I argue separately that evidence for the customary dimension of soke is slight and that this complication can be discounted.[23] But even an understanding of soke as judicial profits alone faces difficulties. The first of these relates to terminology, for unlike other Old English legal terms, the word does not describe the circumstances to which it applied.[24] Any suggestion that the primary meaning of *socn* might not relate to courts has been dismissed as a 'red herring'.[25] Law-codes, however, first use the term in the sense of 'asylum'.[26] They refer to *ciricsocn* ('asylum in a church') and *hamsocn* ('assault upon a house') before ever treating *socn* itself as a term of art.[27] It would be difficult to account for these compounds if *socn* carried a specifically judicial meaning from the outset. The sole pre-Conquest source to connect possession of soke with judicial profits is Cnut's secular code, and most codes do not

[19] R.R. Reid, 'Barony and Thanage', *EHR*, 35/138 (1920); see, however, Hudson, *OHLE2*, pp. 417-8.
[20] R.P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), ch. 6.
[21] D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 28-46; *idem*, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 150-55. See however S. Baxter, 'Review of *Domesday: the Inquest and the Book*', *Reviews in History* (2001), https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/216 (16 April 2019).
[22] Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 121-4; Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 152, 314-5.
[23] R. Purkiss, 'Early Royal Rights in the Liberty of St Edmund', *ANS*, 41 (2019), pp. 159-62.
[24] Franchises such as *team*, *infangenepeof*, or *foresteal* have a literal quality which *socn* conspicuously lacks.
[25] Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice', p. 129.
[26] Af Rb 2; IV As 6.2.
[27] *Ciricsocn*: Ine Rb 5. *Hamsocn*: II Em 6. *Socn* (term of art): III Atr 11, II Cn 71.3. For other compounds see Adams, 'Anglo-Saxon Courts', pp. 40-41.

mention soke at all, even when dealing with the allocation of such profits.[28] Where Domesday Book describes court proceedings and profits in detail, it does not use the language of soke but of *placitare* and *forisfacere*.[29] Domesday routinely records soke in a number of shires, but across much of the country references are few and incidental (Map 2). If the survey had been concerned with judicial profits, and if soke represented these, one might expect a more consistent record. Shires which do not record soke fail to mention the proceeds of justice in any other guise. Nor does Domesday as a whole show any particular interest in other profitable franchises, such as toll and team, except in isolated cases. On this evidence it is far from clear that a right to collect fines was the essence of soke.

The alternative conception differentiates between soke and formulaic 'sake and soke'. By this token, Domesday references to simple soke denote a general entitlement to judicial rights and assorted royal customs.[30] Land held with 'sake and soke', by contrast, is equated with bookland.[31] Attempting to invest the 'sake and soke' formula with a technical meaning encounters problems both inside and outside Domesday Book.[32] In Norfolk, two entries state that 'the sake and soke [of a holding] is in the hundred'.[33] As the hundred cannot have been a booklord, it is unclear where bookright could have lain, if 'sake and soke' is to be interpreted as such. Elsewhere, one reads that Bury St Edmunds Abbey 'had sake and soke' over holdings which free men 'could sell and grant'.[34] Such statements of freedom to alienate have

[28] For early legal references see above, p. 74, nn. 6-7.
[29] For proceedings and profits respectively, see for instance *DB Worcs.*, X.3 (GDB f. 178a); C.2 (GDB f. 172a). For an alternative formulation, *DB Cambs.*, 22.6 (GDB f. 197b).
[30] Roffe, *Domesday*, pp. 30-32.
[31] Ibid., pp. 32-3.
[32] Maitland, *DBB*, p. 84; Joy, 'Sokeright', pp. 56-7.
[33] *DB Norfolk*, 9.55 (LDB f. 177a); 24.6 (LDB f. 240a).
[34] *DB Suffolk*, 14.94 (LDB f. 367a): 7 free men in Langham, Blackbourn hundred, 'could grant and sell their land, however the sake and soke, and commendation, remained to the Saint [Edmund].' The abbey had no demesne in Langham.



Map 2. The relative frequency of soke records by Domesday shire.

been taken as '[records] of subordination to a booklord'.[35] But here the abbey's sake and soke derived from a writ alienating eight-and-a-half hundreds covering a full third of Suffolk.[36] St Edmund's hundreds cannot be treated as bookland in the same sense as five hides granted by diploma to a king's thegn. As for the distinction between 'soke' and 'sake and soke', other entries in the Bury hundreds cast doubt on its validity. The abbey might have 'soke' over one holding and 'sake and soke, and commendation' over another, but collect identical dues from both.[37] Domesday soke terminology is too flexible to permit the identification of bookland.

Bookright itself resists equation with 'sake and soke'. The latter might be granted to magnates as a free-standing franchise over their lands, even though much of these would have consisted of bookland already.[38] More essentially, the defining feature of bookright—beyond even freedom of alienation—was that it was perpetual. Richard Sharpe has shown that writ grants of 'sake and soke' were doubly limited, to the lifespans of the original grantor and grantee.[39] While the grant of such a privilege to a lay beneficiary could conceivably be interpreted as the conversion of folkland to bookland, the same explanation cannot cover similar writs in favour of major churches, whose lands were bookland by definition. It is these churches that furnish the strongest objection. Their 'sake and soke' required renewal upon the death of king or incumbent bishop or abbot. The regrant of 'sake and soke' to a newly appointed churchman might be explained by the king's right to confer the office with

[35] Roffe, *Domesday*, p. 34. A contrary view holds that bookland and other freely disposable lay property had become hard to distinguish by c. 1000: S. Reynolds, 'Bookland, Folkland and Fiefs', *ANS*, 14 (1992), pp. 219-20.
[36] S 1069.
[37] St Edmund had 'soke' over ½ carucate, held by 1 free man, yielding 10s in Rattlesden (Thedwestry hundred): *DB Suffolk*, 14.61 (LDB f. 363a). It had 'sake and soke, and commendation' over 1 carucate, held by 2 free men, yielding 20s in Great Fakenham (Blackbourn hundred): *DB Suffolk*, 14.96 (LDB f. 367b). The abbey held no demesne in either vill. In both cases, all that it collected was a basic rent called *hidagium*, at 1d per acre. The identity of *hidagium* and freemen's 'value' in the Bury hundreds was demonstrated by D.C. Douglas: *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. D.C. Douglas (Oxford, 1932), pp. cxxii-cxxxi.
[38] E.g. S 1099. See also D. Pratt, 'Charters and Exemption from Geld in Anglo-Saxon England', in R. Naismith and D.A. Woodman (eds.), *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2018), p. 198.
[39] R. Sharpe, 'The Use of Writs in the Eleventh Century', *ASE*, 32 (2003), pp. 283-9.

its appurtenances. The regrant of 'sake and soke' to an incumbent churchman by a new king, however, excludes any equation with bookland. Under such a definition, bookright would have become meaningless, and the great estates of Canterbury, Winchester, or Worcester subject to the whim of each successive ruler. The introduction of any such principle, no matter how theoretical, would have been an unprecedented assault on ecclesiastical privilege, and one for which there is no evidence whatsoever. While kings could and did exert pressure on churches, they maintained the principle of bookland alongside soke.[40]

The difficulties of these interpretations share a common root. Neither adopts soke itself as a starting-point and both take its essential nature for granted, for scholars have invariably viewed soke as a set of rights. The problem, as conceived hitherto, has been to identify the rights involved. But while it is clear that soke carried certain rights, it is not clear that it consisted in them. This has not been appreciated and consequently it has not been found necessary to ask, in so many words, what soke was. By assuming that soke consisted in rights, scholars have unconsciously adopted the perspective of the grantee, concerned only with the resulting benefits. Viewing the problem from a royal perspective will provide a clearer idea of the purpose of a soke grant.

Once one asks what the king expected to gain, the suspicion grows that he must have had larger concerns in mind than mere 'patronage' or encouragement of lordly policing. There is no particular evidence that eleventh-century kings suddenly found themselves short of disposable lands, which were the traditional stuff of patronage and continued to accrue by the mechanisms discussed in the previous chapter. The formative period of local law-

[40] S 985 shows Cnut, faced with complaints by Archbishop Lyfing, first offering a new charter and finally ordering that old privileges be better obeyed.

enforcement in the mid-to-late tenth century, meanwhile, had passed with barely a reference to soke. But from the early eleventh century a new diplomatic form—the sealed writ—seems to have provided kings with a mechanism for alienating something not previously alienated. We should not pre-judge what soke was or what it did, but rather follow the surest surviving evidence: its documentary handling and the assumptions underlying it.

THE DISPOSAL OF SOKE

The conferral of soke rested on the king's writ, authenticated by seal and generally addressed to the shire assembly.[41] A writ of this kind was a notification that a grant had been made, rather than a dispositive document. No other instrument appears to have been appropriate, for no genuine Latin diploma confers soke as a free-standing privilege.[42] Although sealed notifications are explicitly attested from Alfred's reign, the earliest apparently genuine text is a writ in favour of Archbishop Æthelnoth dating from 1020.[43] Two writs purporting to date from Æthelred II's reign are of uncertain authenticity.[44] There is no evidence for similar grants earlier than this. In the absence even of forgeries attributed to other tenth-century kings, it seems certain that soke was not conferred in a regular way before the reign of Æthelred.

[41] On the development of this procedure, see Keynes, 'The Use of Seals in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 78-80.
[42] The two tenth-century charters which mention soke (S 659, 681) treat it as an appurtenance of the estates which they convey, and the only diploma which grants soke separately (S 779) may be later than its purported date. S. Keynes, 'Earl Harold and the Foundation of Waltham Holy Cross (1062)', *ANS*, 39 (2017), pp. 90-92, 99-100, is open to the possibility of franchises having been granted in diplomas.
[43] The Alfredian translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies* mentions in passing that a lord's 'letter and seal' might be sent to a follower: S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser's* Life of King Alfred *and Other Contemporary Sources* (London, 1983), p. 141. The writ is S 986, a grant of sake and soke as well as other privileges.
[44] S 945, 946.

A standard writ would announce that the beneficiary was to be 'worthy of his sake and soke'. Some added the franchises of 'toll and team' and *infangeneþeof*, and a few, the 'reserved pleas' of *griðbryce*/*mundbryce*, *hamsocn*, *foresteall*, *flymenafyrmð*, *fyrdwite*, or *fihtwite*.[45] Where several franchises are mentioned, 'sake and soke' always appears in first place. This kind of multiple grant is usually treated as a list, and the position of soke as a sign that it was not a very exclusive privilege. Many writs are indeed worded as lists.[46] Others, however, separate 'sake and soke' from subsequent franchises by defining its scope immediately, only then turning to 'toll and team' and *infangeneþeof*, or other pleas.[47] Such cases seem to imply that soke had a different quality to the other terms. The impression is strengthened by the fact that soke was often granted on its own, while no individual grants of the other franchises survive.[48]

Writs invariably specified the parameters within which soke had been conferred. All known grants of free-standing soke adopt one of three definitions: over the beneficiary's land, over the beneficiary's men, or over a specified territory (usually a hundred). A different type gives a particular estate 'with sake and soke'. Only magnates, lay or ecclesiastical, seem to have received soke as a free-standing franchise. Although all extant writs of this type were issued in favour of churchmen, Domesday Book shows that earls, stallers, and important thegns acquired the franchise in the same way. Writs explain that the soke of eight-and-a-half hundreds in Suffolk had been held by Queen Emma before it passed to Bury St Edmunds, while Coventry Abbey received soke over its lands and men 'as fully and completely as Earl Leofric had'.[49] Soke was always given to a named beneficiary. Where outlying lands owed

[45] On the meanings of these terms, see Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 76-82.
[46] E.g. S 986 from Christ Church, S 1125 from Westminster, or S 1156 from Worcester.
[47] E.g. S 1087 from Cirencester, S 1163 from Wells, or S 1159 from York.
[48] S 1100 from Ely does not mention 'sake and soke' but grants other privileges as a group. Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 222-4 suggested that 'sake and soke' may have been conveyed separately.
[49] S 1069, 1078, 1084 (Bury St Edmunds); S 1099 (Coventry).

soke to a central manor, forming a so-called 'territorial soke', the arrangement seems to have reflected older arrangements or private initiative, for no case is known of kings deliberately attaching soke to manors.

Grants of land 'with sake and soke' were less exclusive than blanket writs, and apparently accessible to individuals of more modest standing.[50] In this kind of writ, soke was granted with and over a specific estate only. Sometimes the recipient subsequently gave the land, again 'with sake and soke', to a third party. Transactions of this type have been used as evidence that soke was alienable by those who received it from the king.[51] The argument draws upon two land grants to Bury St Edmunds and the Gospatric writ, in all of which a lay grantor included the 'sake and soke' which he enjoyed.[52] The last document is a unique survival from Cumbria, a region far from integrated into the kingdom in the eleventh century, and can hardly be taken as evidence of conventional practice.[53] The former two were in favour of an abbey which not only had blanket soke over all its lands, but possessed a writ assuring it of soke over any bequests 'as fully and as completely' as the former owner.[54] A need for royal consent to any transfer of soke seems to be implicit in this formulation. Other, similar lay grants survive, but from houses which probably had soke in a manner similar to Bury.[55] Significantly too, none of these documents proves that soke itself could be handed on separately from the estates in question. Soke on its own was confirmed to Coventry Abbey by Edward the Confessor, within the same parameters as Earl Leofric had held it, which suggests that the earl had not been entitled to dispose of this privilege as freely as of his lands.[56] On

[50] See for instance S 1131, in which Edward the Confessor grants land at Shepperton with 'sake and soke' to Teinfrith, his churchwright.
[51] Hudson, *OHLE2*, p. 59.
[52] Ibid., n. 110: S 1219, 1225, 1243.
[53] *Charters of Northern Houses*, ed. D.A. Woodman (Oxford, 2012), pp. 361-78.
[54] S 1072.
[55] S 1241 (to Wells), 1661 (to Durham).
[56] S 1099.

the surviving evidence, soke obtained from the king could not be granted or sold by itself, and remained a franchise.

The documentary handling of soke reveals a critical assumption: soke was something that the king had over everything within his kingdom unless he chose to alienate it. Although the point has previously escaped notice, nothing else will account for the ways in which soke grants were delimited and the individuals who received them. If even an archbishop required renewal of privileges over his church's lands, there was plainly no escape from the king's soke. This qualifies the Danelaw associations often ascribed to the term. It is true that the vast majority of Domesday references to soke and sokemen were recorded beyond Watling Street.[57] But the concept plainly came to be applied universally because soke existed, awaiting the king's writ, in Kent or Somerset as much as in Yorkshire.

Once identified as a universal royal claim, soke must be considered alongside a famous passage from the laws of Cnut. Concerning the 'reserved pleas' already discussed, it is said that 'these are the [gerihta] which the king has over all men in Wessex…unless he wishes to honour anyone further'.[58] Soke, as we have seen, was likewise something which the king had over all men unless he desired to honour someone with it. Had it been, as is usually assumed, a basic privilege which might be augmented with the 'reserved pleas', it should have headed that list.[59] The relevant passage of Cnut's code, however, does not mention soke at all.[60] It seems that soke was not a right of the same kind as the *gerihta*. It sat apart from explicitly judicial dues, while representing a similarly overarching royal prerogative.

[57] H.C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), fig. 19.
[58] See above, p. 83; II Cn 12, 14, 15.
[59] E.g. Hudson, *OHLE2*, p. 59; T. Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 323-5.
[60] Cnut's secular code only mentions soke once, much later: II Cn 71.3.

THE KING'S SOKE

If soke was a universal royal claim, the best guide to its character must be its appearance when in the king's hand. Rather than attempt to identify the benefits accruing to the recipients of soke, we shall therefore begin by examining the reservoir from which it was granted. Domesday's recording of soke is more useful in this than writs, particularly because jurors and scribes intermittently expanded statements where the standard formulae were felt to be inadequate. Every so often, an anomalous entry briefly illuminates the principles behind phrases which would otherwise remain opaque to modern eyes. Domesday's handling of the king's soke will allow us to infer the original meaning of the term and trace its practical implications. Soke was not recorded evenly across the social strata and seems to have been of particular interest where small, independent landholders were concerned. Accordingly, the first point to determine is what was distinctive about those whom Domesday places in the *soca regis*.

Most entries mentioning soke describe the people concerned as *sochemanni* or *liberi homines*. In the case of the former, their name suggests that being under someone's soke was their defining characteristic. Some shires—notably Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex—record both categories in parallel. Here, *liberi homines* were freer or more independent than *sochemanni*.[61] But while there is no reason to doubt that independent freemen existed everywhere, not every shire records *liberi homines*. For instance, LDB's account of Suffolk has been found to contain 7,753; GDB's of neighbouring Cambridgeshire, not a single one.[62] Unless we postulate an implausibly sharp contrast in social organisation, it seems certain that

[61] R. Welldon Finn, *Domesday Studies: The Eastern Counties* (London, 1967), pp. 126-9.
[62] Darby, *Domesday England*, p. 338.

there were independent freemen in both shires. Cambridgeshire refers only to *sochemanni* and must therefore have subsumed both groups into this category without differentiating. It follows that the East Anglian *liber homo* was a superior sort of sokeman. What set him apart? East Anglian *sochemanni* generally owed soke to the manors in which they were valued, and were often unable to dispose freely of their land. The soke of *liberi homines*, who generally could sell their land, was often unattached. LDB has different ways of expressing this. In North Erpingham hundred it notes that, 'Super omnes liberos istius Hundred habet rex sacam 7 socam'.[63] In North Greenhoe, the king and the earl had sake and soke over the hundred 'whoever held there'.[64] Wherever soke is ascribed to the king, or to someone else in a manner indicating a writ grant, it invariably concerns *liberi homines*. The East Anglian *liber homo* was an individual whose soke was the king's by default unless alienated.

In the East Midland shires of Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, and Huntingdonshire, the equivalent of the *liber homo* was the unattached *sochemannus*.[65] More about his situation is revealed by the different ways in which various entries describe it. Cumulatively they show that someone over whom the king had soke was a 'king's sokeman', whose soke was 'in the hundred', and whose land was held to be 'in the king's soke'. Two Huntingdonshire entries reveal the first two points of this triangle:

> In Stilton the King's sokemen of Normancross have 3 virgates of land to the geld. Land for 2 ploughs; 5 ploughing oxen.[66]
>
> In Orton 8 hides and 1 virgate to the geld. Land for 5 ploughs and 3 oxen. King's soke in Normancross; there were 7 sokemen. Now John has 3 oxen

[63] *DB Norfolk*, 9.156 (LDB f. 185a).
[64] *DB Norfolk*, 1.42 (LDB f. 113b).
[65] These shires were divided between Circuit III (Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire) and VI (Huntingdonshire) but agree in using only *sochemannus*.
[66] *DB Hunts*., 1.3 (GDB f. 203c): *In Stichiltone habent sochemanni regis de Normanecros III uirgatas terre ad geldum. Terra II carucis. 7 V boues arantes.*

> in a plough and 9 acres of meadow from Eustace. Value TRE, 40s; now 20s.[67]

Normancross was neither a vill nor a manor, but the name of the crossroads where the eponymous hundred assembled.[68] Just like the East Anglian *liberi homines*, these 'king's sokemen' were therefore defined by their hundred. The third point is best observed in Cambridgeshire:

> Ælfmær, a sokeman of King Edward's, held it [½ hide in Abington]; he could grant or sell to whom he would TRE. Aubrey de Vere annexed this land from the King's soke…[69]

> 14 sokemen held this land [5½ hides 16 acres in Kingston]. 10 of them had 2 hides and 1½ virgates of the king's soke; they found 7 cartages and 3 guards.[70]

Here it becomes plain that being a *sochemannus regis* placed one's land 'in' the king's soke by definition. The hundred was the organising frame for king's sokemen, who had freely disposable lands, which were held to be in the king's soke.

The principle is no illusion created by throwing together disparate entries. A statement from Bedfordshire shows that its elements were understood as corollaries to one another:

> The same [20] sokemen who hold this manor [5 hides in Tilbrook] held it. They were so far of the king's soke and sake that they could grant and sell their land to whom they might wish. They could withdraw to another lord without the permission of the one they were under.[71]

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[67] *DB Hunts.*, 19.4 (GDB f. 206a): *In Ouretune VIII hide 7 I uirgata terre ad geldum. Terra V carucis 7 III bobus. SOCA regis in Normanecros. Ibi fuerunt VII sochemanni. Ibi Johannes de Eustachio habet III boues in caruca 7 IX acras prati. Tempore regis Edwardi ualuit XL solidos modo XX solidos*.
[68] O.S. Anderson, *English Hundred-Names* (Lund, 1934), pp. 112-13.
[69] *DB Cambs.*, 29.12 (GDB f. 199d): *Hanc tenuit Elmær sochemannus regis Edwardi 7 potuit dare uel uendere cui uoluit tempore regis Edwardi. Albericus de ver inuasit hanc terram de soca regis*.
[70] *DB Cambs.*, 32.21 (GDB f. 200d): *Hanc terram tenuerunt XIIII sochemanni. Horum X habuerunt II hidas 7 I uirgata 7 dimidia de soca regis. 7 VII Aueras 7 III jnewardos inuenerunt*.
[71] *DB Beds.*, 17.2 (GDB f. 211d): *Hoc manerium idem ipsi sochemanni qui tenent tenuerunt. 7 ita de soca et saca regis fuerunt quod dare 7 uendere terram suam cui uoluissent potuerunt. 7 recedere ad alium dominum sine licentia ejus sub quo fuerunt*.

The implication is that to be 'in the king's soke' was to have free disposition of one's land. No logical connection would exist between the king's judicial profits and the holder's ability to sell. The passage assumes that soke was not a statement of what the men owed the king, but of their relative proximity to him. A man in a position to dispose freely of his own land and seek a new lord at will, enjoyed the greatest freedom that late Anglo-Saxon society knew, and this seems to have put him in the king's soke. To be *in soca regis* was to stand in an immediate relationship to the king. Notices of soke regarding the smallest independent landholders may have been necessary because their status in this respect would not necessarily have been obvious.

An understanding of soke as immediate royal lordship accounts for its absence from Domesday shires in Wessex and western Mercia. If the essence of soke lay in a direct relationship to the king, the question is not why soke vocabulary was not used in some areas, but simply how these areas expressed the concept instead. Maitland long ago recognised the *alodiarius* of the south-eastern circuit as someone who would, elsewhere, have answered to *liber homo*.[72] As we have seen, in yet other shires this would have made him a *sochemannus regis*. It is certain that such people existed in the remainder of England, but the principle which identifies them has not been appreciated: shires that do not call the small independent landholder a *sochemannus*, *liber homo*, or *alodiarius*, generally assume that he was a thegn.[73] The rule is mostly hidden because such individuals tend to be named individually, but sporadic statements make clear that they were considered *taini*. The assumption is more or

[72] Maitland, *DBB*, p. 153. The *alodium* of Circuit I has been interpreted as a Norman expression for English *bocland*—see Reynolds, 'Bookland, Folkland and Fiefs', pp. 226-7; G.S. Garnett, *Conquered England* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 28-9—but it is doubtful whether all those associated with it had charters. Maitland's general equivalence remains preferable.

[73] That this has not been observed seems to be due to the summary table of population categories compiled by Darby, *Domesday England*, pp. 338-45. Although the convention of naming many thegns precludes an exact count, Darby's total of nine is inexplicable and misleading (as e.g. in Faith, *English Peasantry*, p. 124). The *taini* certainly numbered many hundreds.

less explicit in 14 shires, and less consistent in seven others.[74] The south-western circuit uses *tainus* much as the East Midland shires use *sochemannus*, for an all-encompassing category of freemen. In Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, the *tainus* replaces the East Anglian *liber homo*, often holding a manor and standing above the *sochemanni*.

The reason why the Domesday *taini* have not been recognised for what they were, is probably that attention has been confined to the survivors of the Conquest. The TRW *taini regis* appear among the king's men at the end of Domesday shire accounts. They have attracted interest because they included people with specialist skills, whose holdings sometimes evolved into serjeanties.[75] It has consequently been assumed that they were called thegns because they had 'served' Edward the Confessor as hunters or goldsmiths. This overlooks the much greater numbers of *taini* scattered across the same shires twenty years earlier. Many of these would have been subject immediately to the king and hence *taini regis* in their day. Even the TRW survivors were probably not so called because of their services to the king. A new term (*serviens*) was introduced alongside *tainus*, specifically designating royal servants, many of them newcomers. More conclusively, the LDB shires do not record *taini regis* at the end of their accounts but list *liberi homines regis* instead.[76] In other words, the East Anglian and Essex equivalents of the TRW *taini regis* were defined not by service but by freedom. It

[74] Named people generally seem to be considered thegns in Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire. *Tainus* is used less consistently, generally in parallel with *liber homo*, in Buckinghamshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Bedfordshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire.
[75] J. Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 214-15; A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 109-17; R. Lavelle, 'All the King's Men? Land and Royal Service in Eleventh-Century Wessex', *Southern History*, 26 (2004).
[76] LDB reserves *tainus regis* for 'king's thegns' in the aristocratic, charter-attesting sense. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 115, notes that the *liberi homines* who in LDB take the place of *taini regis* held less land by comparison. This does not weaken the equivalence of their status and may reflect generally smaller landholdings in the east. It has been shown that many south-western *taini* were also men of very modest landholdings: M. Costen, 'Anonymous Thegns in the Landscape of Wessex 900-1066', in *idem* (ed.), *People and Places: Essays in Honour of Michael Aston* (Oxford, 2007).

seems that the TRW *taini regis* were not a distinct species but those free landholders who had managed to retain their independence. They were *taini* as a matter of status, not service. Their specialist services were simply the means by which they had retained their old status immediately under the king. The end of the Dorset list notes that, 'all the holders of these lands TRE could go to which lord they would', a statement which suggests freemen rather than servants in tied accommodation.[77]

Soke should be understood in a quite literal sense. What distinguished those over whom the king had soke, was that they 'sought the king'. They stood in an immediate relationship to him, and therefore approached him through no lord. The act of doing so may have been glossed as *secan* in the north and east, and as *þegnian* in the south and west. The underlying meaning was no doubt identical, because one generally sought a king in order to serve him. It is of some interest that an early use of *socn* occurs in the laws of Edmund, who declared that no man who had shed blood without making amends should have *socn* to his court.[78] Here was soke as access to the king. To understand its practical significance, we must determine what the king was concerned with when he regulated this 'seeking'.

THE RECKONING OF SOKE

There can be no doubt that seeking was metaphorical. Eleventh-century England was too large, and kingship too formalised, for kings to be local or familiar figures. A passage from Cnut's secular code shows how judicial appeals were filtered through the hundred. For an

[77] *DB Dorset*, 56.66 (GDB f. 84d).
[78] II Em 4.

overwhelming majority of the free population, seeking the king had become an abstract concept mediated by institutions, even in the literal sense of pursuing redress:

> And no one shall seek the king, unless he is unable to obtain justice within his hundred.
> Everyone shall seek his hundred: Everyone shall seek the hundred assembly, under pain of fine, whenever he is required to seek it.[79]

To ask how soke was reckoned, and through what institutions it was regulated, provides a means of narrowing its potential properties. Writs seem to suggest that the king's universal soke dealt in both land and men, as he might grant it over either.[80] This is not particularly satisfactory: how did a grant of soke over land affect the men on it, and how did one over men affect their land? The earlier discussion of the king's soke shows no clear distinction between soke over land and men, suggesting that they may have meant the same thing.

Writ grants of soke, although organised according to different parameters, can be shown to have had identical concerns. Domesday Book refers countless times to soke over both land and men but the two are never obviously contrasted; wherever an entry elaborates, soke appears in a tenurial setting. Anyone encountering 'soke' for the first time in the Domesday folios would unhesitatingly conclude that it related to land. Notices of soke take many different forms, varying both between and within shires, but the principle hardly ever falters.

In some cases, soke is explicitly related to land. A Cambridgeshire sokeman held 2 hides and 1 virgate of land, within which 'Ely Abbey had sake and soke over the virgate'.[81] The same

[79] II Cn 17-17.1: *Ne geséce nan man ðonne cyng, buton he ne mote beon nanes rihtes wurðe innan his hundrede. Sece man his hundred. Séce man hundredes gemót be wíte, ealswa hit riht is to secanne*. Text: Liebermann, *Gesetze*, i, p. 320 (MS B). The standard translation in *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I*, ed. and trans. A.J. Robertson (Cambridge, 1925) is amended for a literal reading free of introduced legal inflections.
[80] Two otherwise very similar writs of Edward the Confessor in favour of Bury St Edmunds grant Abbot Leofstan and the brethren 'their sake and their soke over all their own men' (S 1071) and 'their sake and their soke over the lands which are bequeathed to the monastery' (S 1072).
[81] *DB Cambs.*, 14.59 (GDB f. 195b).

connection is often implied with reference to a holder's power of alienation: a man of the abbot's 'could sell his land without the soke'.[82] According to a third formula, yet another sokeman held a virgate 'of the abbot's soke'.[83] The soke which the king had granted to Ely Abbey was plainly an interest relating to the land, irrespective of who held it. The three wordings merely represent different ways of describing this interest.

Soke reckoned explicitly as land is most commonly associated with the northern shires, where Stenton identified a pattern of central manors collecting obligations from the scattered 'sokelands' of the free peasantry.[84] 'Sokelands' are again described in different ways. In the Yorkshire Domesday (and elsewhere in Circuit VI) the most common device is to mark entries with a marginal 'M', for *manerium*, or 'S' for *soca*. Where a profusion of sokelands makes this impracticable, entries may resort to description followed by a list. Thus to the manor of Easingwold 'pertinet soca harum terrarum'.[85] Most notices of soke are less explicit. A minimalist example reads, 'In [Hotham] vii bouatae ad geldum. Soca in [Welton].'[86] Lacking articles, the Latin could be translated as 'the soke is in Welton' or 'it is soke[land] in Welton'.[87] Ambiguity notwithstanding, it is clear that soke was conceived as being over land. A similarly terse passage states:

> To this manor [Nafferton] belongs soke in Pockthorpe. 5 carucates to the geld, where 2½ ploughs are possible.[88]

Pockthorpe is not otherwise recorded in Domesday and is therefore ascribed no population. Only the five carucates, located three miles from the parent manor across Nafferton Wold,

[82] *DB Cambs.*, 32.27 (GDB f. 201a).
[83] *DB Cambs.*, 32.21 (GDB f. 200d).
[84] Stenton, *Types of Manorial Structure*, pp. 4-14 introduces the distinction between *inland* and sokeland.
[85] *DB Yorks.*, 1Y.1 (GDB f. 299a).
[86] *DB Yorks.*, 5E.16 (GDB f. 306c).
[87] Most translations feel obliged to interpolate meanings of this kind, rather than confine themselves to a literal 'soke in Welton'.
[88] *DB Yorks.*, 13E.16 (GDB f. 322d): *Ad hoc manerium adiacet soca in Pochetorp V carucatae ad geldum ubi possunt esse II carucae et dimidia*.

were deemed relevant to the notice of soke. Large estates with numerous sokelands give the same impression. The account of Harold's great manor of Conisbrough opens with a conventional description of the demesne and capital vill, before stating that 'to this manor belongs this soke'. There follows a list of the 28 vills, giving the number of carucates in each and concluding with a total figure of 86 carucates and 15 acres.[89] The population and resources of these individual sokelands are then described in separate entries, culminating in the total manorial value.[90] In the Northern Danelaw, soke was a matter of carucates and bovates. Further south, it was one of hides and virgates.

It is less common to find an entry describing soke over a given number of men. This type of formulation is characteristic of LDB's account of Norfolk and Suffolk, but otherwise rare. Closer examination reveals that soke 'over men' and 'over land' were interchangeable concepts. Both could lie in a specific manor, arise from the grant of a hundred, or be held by a particular lord. As already shown, the territorial sokes of Yorkshire or Lincolnshire are described in relation to land. While LDB records apparently similar structures in East Anglia, it does not list sokelands under their head manors, and speaks in terms of both land and men. For instance, a total of 14 entries scattered through the Norfolk folios ascribe soke to Foulsham, in Eynsford hundred.[91] The first two of these expose the uniformity behind scribal idioms. Attached to a manor in Sall were nine-and-a-half sokemen who had 46 acres and 1½ ploughs. According to this particular entry, 'the soke of these sokemen is in [the] King's [manor of] Foulsham'. The manor of Thurning, meanwhile, included six sokemen with 16 acres. This entry elaborates, 'always 1½ ploughs upon the soke. The soke is in [the] King's

[89] *DB Yorks.*, 12W.1 (GDB f. 321b).
[90] *DB Yorks.*, 12W.2-28 (GDB f. 321a-b).
[91] *DB Norfolk*, 1.185 (LDB f. 131a-b); 1.186 (f. 131b); 4.28 (f. 147a); 5.4 (f. 151b); 17.20 (f. 217b); 19.32 (f. 225a); 25.1 (f. 240b); 25.2 (f. 241a); 25.4 (f. 241a); 25.6 (f. 241a); 25.8 (f. 241b); 32.1 (f. 254a); 34.20 (f. 258b); 39.2 (f. 262b).

[manor of] Foulsham.' Here, two successive entries describe identical manorial structures, but only the anomalous reading provided for Thurning reveals that 'the soke of these sokemen' refers to land. Although it differed in various respects from the territorial sokes of the north, the soke of Foulsham was similarly reckoned in land.[92]

Descriptive passages elsewhere in LDB strengthen the conclusion that land was always at issue, no matter how the soke claim was described. An entry from Diss half-hundred in Norfolk again describes soke over men:

> In Fersfield TRE lay the soke and sake of all those who had less than 30 acres. Of those who had 30 acres and of Winfarthing the soke and sake lay in the Hundred…[93]

While the landholders were the vehicle, land was the criterion by which soke was organised. The suggestion is that a given group of landholders was simply another frame—an alternative to a geographical hundred, for instance—within which the royal soke claim could be alienated. Soke over men meant soke over their land. The case of some Ipswich burgesses drives home their place in this scheme:

> In the Borough [of Ipswich] Robert [fitz Wymarc] had 41 burgesses TRE with soke and sake and commendation, and the King had the other customs. Of these, he has lost the commendation of 15 [who] are dead but he has soke and sake, and the same with the others; the King has the other customs.[94]

The commendatory bond was broken at death but Robert, or his son and successor Swein, did not thereby lose their whole interest. They kept the soke even beyond the death of the men

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[92] East Anglian soke-territories are discussed in Chapter III.

[93] *DB Norfolk*, 1.181 (LDB f. 130b): *In Feruella jacuit soca et saca tempore regis Edwardi de omnibus qui minus habuerunt quam XXX acras. De illis qui habuerunt XXX acras jacuit soca 7 saca in hundredo 7 de Wineferthinc…*

[94] *DB Suffolk*, 27.8 (LDB f. 402a): *In burgo habuit Robertus tempore regis Edwardi XLI burgenses cum soca 7 saca 7 commendatio. 7 rex habebat alias consuetudines. Ex illis mortui sunt XV amisit commendationem sed socam 7 sacam habet et de aliis similiter. Et rex alias consuetudines habet.*

with whom they had acquired it, for this interest derived from a royal act rather than anything within the power of the burgesses concerned.

The importance of associating soke firmly with land is more than semantic. One could object that, as Maitland remarked in connection with taxes, any obligation on land was ultimately met by people.[95] But the exercise draws a closer line around what soke may have involved. Both current conceptions—of soke as judicial profits and as comprehensive royal customs—should be judged with land in mind. Both are compatible with a land-based definition of soke, but neither can explain it.

Pure judicial rights could easily have been reckoned over land, and there is evidence that they were. As is commonly observed, when the laws describe a lord entitled to forfeitures, they tend to call him the *landrica* or *landhlaford*.[96] One could infer a distinction between the personal *hlaford* and the lord in respect of land. It is a persuasive scheme, but for the fact that some laws call a fine-taking lord merely *hlaford*.[97] In any case, judicial fines can have been apportioned by only one criterion. Otherwise, who should have got the *wite* from a slaying, if one lord had soke over the location but another over the assailant? Anglo-Norman legal texts, which are more forthcoming than pre-Conquest codes on the subject, suggest that *wites* went the holder of soke over land. Several clauses of the *Leges Henrici Primi* imply as much.[98] The *Leges Edwardi Confessoris* explicitly define soke in this way:

[95] Maitland, *DBB*, p. 121.
[96] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 286-8; P. Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century* (Oxford, 1908), p. 345; A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 73-4; Roffe, *Domesday*, p. 33.
[97] S. Baxter, 'Lordship and Justice in Late Anglo-Saxon England: The Judicial Functions of Soke and Commendation Revisited', in S. Baxter et al., *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 404-6.
[98] Hn 9.4a, 20.2, 24.4, 80.6-6a, 82.2, 83.6a.

> Soke: That if someone seeks something, even a stolen thing, in his own land, his is the justice, whether or not it is found.[99]

The Anglo-Norman texts are particularly concerned with the judicial rights conferred by soke, but it does not follow that these were its most important aspect. The scheme described by the post-Conquest compilations was not necessarily a convenient one. It would have been serviceable where soke had been granted over an entire hundred, or a collection of single-manor vills, but less so where landholding was complex. In Brafield-on-the-Green in Northamptonshire, there was in 1086 a house with five acres, belonging to Ramsey Abbey. Countess Judith had soke over half an acre of the five.[100] In an open field, this might have approximated to one selion, c. 200m long by c. 5m broad. One can only guess at the scope for dispute if a body was found lying across the furrow between it and the next selion, or if someone who offended there was detained elsewhere in the field. We may also ask whether it is plausible that soke should have been so minutely recorded on the mere chance that a profitable offence might be committed on a given piece of land. Judicial fines—an occasional incident—were surely secondary to some other matter, which was more conveniently reckoned in acres.

A definition of soke as comprehensive royal customs relates it more directly to land. Although miscellaneous practical customs can be discounted, a common acre-rent does show a connection with soke. Its origins are obscure but it likely derived from an older obligation to render *gafol* (tribute), to an overlord.[101] Eleventh-century documents from Bury St Edmunds show that a render of 1d per acre, locally known as *hidagium*, accounted for the

[99] ECf 22: *'Socha': quod si aliquis querit aliquid in terra sua, etiam furtum, sua est iusticia, si inuentum fuerit an non.* Text and translation: *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, version 2 (39-chapter text) (ECf2), ed. and trans. B. O'Brien, *Early English Laws*, http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/ECf2/ (28 November 2016).
[100] *DB Northants.*, 9.6 (GDB f. 222c).
[101] Faith, *English Peasantry*, pp. 105-6.

Domesday values of many freemen's holdings over which the abbey had soke.[102] As the abbey had no other right over these lands, the right to collect *hidagium* must have derived from soke, yielding a sum which had previously gone to the king. Ratios of value to acreage elsewhere suggest that such rents were very widespread, and that ½d, 1d, or 2d per acre could be levied depending on the locality. From such observations, David Roffe has argued that soke rights were reflected in the values ascribed to Domesday landholdings.[103] That acre-rents were transferred from king to subject by a grant of soke seems beyond doubt, but it does not follow that they constituted the essence of soke. While soke was universal, it is not clear that acre-rents were.[104] Nor did the two always coincide: sometimes, the soke might be attached to one place and the value to another.[105] A simple equation of soke with alienated customs also fails, once again, to take account of its disposal. Churches and lay kindreds had often been collecting alienated tribute from their bookland for generations. New soke grants might alienate more tribute, but granting an abbot soke over his land would have been pointless if tribute had been all. The core purpose of soke must be sought elsewhere.

SOKE, MANOR, AND HUNDRED

So far, we have seen that soke was a royal concern in all land, and that judicial profits and acre-rents were conveyed by it without being its essence. An institution that consistently defined soke was the hundred. The hundred represented a frame for organising the mass of

[102] *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Douglas, pp. cxxii-cxxxi; Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 245-6. See above, p. 80, n. 37.
[103] Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 243-8.
[104] In some places, for instance, the abbot of Bury St Edmunds received less than 1d per acre from freemen's holdings, without meeting any convenient fraction: e.g. *DB Suffolk*, 14.62-3 (LDB f. 363a).
[105] In a type of unit common in East Anglia (discussed in the next chapter), sokemen might be valued within their immediate manor, even though their soke lay in the head manor: e.g. *DB Norfolk*, 5.4 (LDB f. 151b).

independent freemen, who were entitled to serve the king directly, and this made it the natural unit of account for the king's all-embracing soke. Various Domesday entries refer to the soke of so many hundreds, generally attaching it to a manor.[106] In Norfolk and Suffolk, individual hundreds seem to have recorded soke in different ways. Within some, 'soke in the hundred' is the standard formulation while elsewhere, soke is ascribed to 'the king and the earl'.[107] Either of these seems to show un-alienated soke in its original repository. Elsewhere still, soke is ascribed to an individual who had been granted the hundred.[108] There is no escaping the conclusion that soke was organised through the hundred.

The scheme was not disturbed by the manors which every hundred contained. It seems to have been in the nature of a manor to gather the soke of those subordinated to it.[109] LDB illuminates the fine gradations involved. It seems that the manorial lord was understood to have soke over his hall and demesne as a matter of course. Similarly, *villani* and *bordarii* appear to have owed soke in the manor by definition. A small number of entries note that this was not the case, as though it were cause for comment.[110] Overall, the evidence that the soke of the manor encompassed *villani* and *bordarii* is overwhelming. The Suffolk double-hundred of Babergh makes a habit of recording that 'x held y [pro manerio], z carucates of land with

[106] *DB Kent*, 6.1 (GDB f. 11d); *DB Hants.*, 1.47 (GDB f. 39c); *DB Oxon.*, 1.1-7a (GDB f. 154c-d); *DB Notts.*, S.5 and 6.1 (GDB ff. 280c and 283d). Further examples are found in LDB.
[107] 'Soke in the hundred' is characteristic of Henstead, Loddon, and Walsham (Norfolk). 'Soke of the king and the earl' is conventional in Blofield, Depwade, South Erpingham, East Flegg, Happing, Humbleyard, and Taverham (Norfolk), and Blything, Bosmere, Claydon, and Hartismere (Suffolk). Usage is not absolutely consistent, and Stow (Suffolk) does not settle on a formula, ascribing soke variously to 'the king', 'the king and the earl', and 'the hundred'.
[108] In Suffolk, the grant of eight-and-a-half hundreds Suffolk to Bury St Edmunds is reflected in soke over free holdings, and the same is true in the five-and-a-half hundreds held by Ely.
[109] David Roffe has termed the manor a 'soke nexus': D. Roffe, 'Domesday Now: A View from the Stage', in D. Roffe and K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (eds.), *Domesday Now* (Woodbridge, 2016), p. 40.
[110] *DB Suffolk*, 1.77 (LDB f. 285b) seems to reveal the usual rule, stating that Burgheard of Mendlesham had soke over some freemen in Cotton 'just as over his [villani]'. Leofwine Croc's manor of Buxhall likewise entailed soke over the hall and the four resident *bordarii*: *DB Suffolk*, 8.49 (LDB f. 350a-b). Conversely, Guthmund held his manor of Haughley with sake and soke 'super dominium hallae tantum'; the position of the *villani* is left undefined, while the soke of the sokemen was in the hundred: *DB Suffolk*, 31.42 (LDB f. 408b). The only case in which the soke of *villani* is explicitly placed somewhere else is *DB Suffolk*, 40.3 (LDB f. 425b).

soke'. Even where it does not, the same thing may be implied. In Milden, Leofwine of Bacton held two carucates *pro manerio*, with no soke specified. But the same entry accords St Edmund, who held the hundred, soke only over ten acres held by an unattached freeman; soke over the manor itself is implicitly left to Leofwine.[111] None of this meant that the holder of a manor was of equivalent rank to the hundred: he remained firmly subject to it. Here again, a universal assumption is hardly ever spelled out. But LDB says of the two Suffolk manors of Combs and Onehouse that they 'rendered no custom in the hundred' after Count Brian held.[112] Onehouse as a whole was explicitly 'in the king's soke' TRE. Elsewhere, both in East Anglia and in the north, whole manors may be said to owe soke to a superior manor as though they were mere sokelands. The manor itself therefore owed soke in the hundred as surely as an independent landholder did. *Villani* and *bordarii* were not removed from the hundred but had a lord interposed between them and it. If the hundred is imagined as a pound, the independent freeman was a penny counted towards it directly, while the *villanus* was included as part of a shilling.[113]

In its original state, soke was plainly administered through the hundred. Whether it went directly from free holdings or was mediated through a manor, this was the forum in which it came together. This conclusion allows the defining functions of soke to be narrowed down further, for they must have fallen within the hundred's remit. In other words, soke related to the hundred's concerns in land. The reckoning of soke in hides, carucates, and acres presses inexorably for a fiscal answer. It is helpful to revisit the arrangements already quoted from Diss half-hundred with this in mind. Here, the soke of all who had 30 acres was in the

[111] *DB Suffolk*, 41.10 (LDB f. 427a).
[112] *DB Suffolk*, 2.6-7 (LDB f. 291a).
[113] The metaphor would, of course, have been less satisfactory to Anglo-Saxons because pound and shilling were only issued as coins from the reign of Henry VII.

hundred while that of people with less was bundled with a manor.[114] This orderly scheme can only represent an administrative expedient, and offers a key to the problem. What was it that the king's representatives found tedious to collect from holdings under 30 acres? It can hardly have been acre-rents, which were always a matter of pennies. Few hundredal matters remain to choose from. A solitary entry from Huntingdonshire lapses into description and connects these explicitly with soke:

> The men of the county testify that King Edward gave Swineshead to Earl Siward, with sake and soke, and so Earl Harold had it; except that [its men] gelded in the hundred, and went with them against the enemy.[115]

While this passage has attracted attention before, its implications for soke are profound and appear to have gone unnoticed.[116] It implies that geld and *fyrd*-service, which were rendered through the hundred, were usually rendered through Harold where he had soke. The suggestion is that, although soke certainly dealt in fines and acre-rents, it was really a mechanism for handling the king's more fundamental needs. What is more, a grant of soke may have licensed a magnate such as Harold to bypass the hundredal machinery altogether.

SOKE AND MILITARY SERVICE

We must examine the proposed fiscal concerns of soke one by one. The idea that soke was connected with *fyrd*-service is not wholly original. Richard Abels argues that holders of sake and soke acquitted their lands of military service, but does so on the assumption that 'sake

[114] See above, p. 95.
[115] *DB Hunts.*, D.14 (GDB f. 208b): *Testantur homines de comitatu quod rex Edwardus dedit Suineshefet Siuuardo comiti soccam 7 sacam 7 sic habuit Haroldus comes praeter quod geldabant in Hundredo 7 in hostem cum eis ibant*.
[116] Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 182-4, notes the implications for military service, but I have found no discussion of the passage's significance for geld.

and soke' equalled bookland.[117] Whether universal soke, such as might be granted over a hundred or someone's men, involved 'defending' land in this way remains to be seen. The same evidence from which Abels argues, would seem to suggest that it did. The statement of shire customs in the Worcestershire Domesday lays down that,

> Whenever the King marches against the enemy, if anyone when called up by his proclamation has stayed behind, if he is a free man so that he has his soke and sake and can go where he will with his land, he is in the King's mercy with all his land. But if the free man of another lord has stayed away from the enemy and his lord has taken another man in his place, the man who was [first] called up shall pay a 40s fine to his lord. But if no one at all has gone in his place, he shall give 40s himself to his lord, and his lord will pay a fine of as many shillings to the King.[118]

Being so free as to have sake and soke and free disposal of one's land, that is to say a king's man, made one responsible for the military service due from it. This would usually have been performed in the hundred.[119] A free man subject to someone other than the king, acquitted his land in that lord's contingent. This second relationship is identified by Abels with commendation.[120] But the 40s payment for default of military service went to the lord rather than the king, and if this was indeed the royal fine of *fyrdwite*, the lord could only have claimed it through a privilege carrying judicial profits. In other words, the lord in question was probably one who had been granted soke over his men.

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[117] Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 129-30.
[118] *DB Worcs.*, C.5 (GDB f. 172a): *Quando rex in hostem pergit, siquis edictu eius uocatus remanserit, si ita liber homo est ut habeat socam suam 7 sacam 7 cum terra sua possit ire quo uoluerit, de omni terra sua est in misericordia regis. Cuiuscunque uero alterius domini liber homo si de hoste remanserit, et dominus eius pro eo alium hominem duxerit, XL solidos domino suo qui uocatus fuit emendabit. Quod si ex toto nullus pro eo abierit, ipse quidem domino suo XL solidos dabit. Dominus autem eius totidem solidos regi emendabit*.
[119] Abels, drawing on the bishop of Worcester's statement of liberties, takes the reference to holders of sake and soke to mean lords of hundreds: the churches of Worcester, Evesham, Pershore, and Westminster (*Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 122). But on this definition, only these four could 'go where they would with their land' in all of Worcestershire. This is hardly plausible, and notices of freedom to alienate were characteristic of unattached freemen rather than great churches. If the shire customs are considered without attempting to reconcile the anomalous claims advanced by Worcester, they become a straightforward provision concerning the implications of royal immediacy (or otherwise) for military service.
[120] Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 122.

A scatter of other entries draw the connection between soke and military service. At Bushley in the bishop of Worcester's triple-hundred of Oswaldslow, Beorhtric son of Ælfgar held a hide and 'rendered to the bishop's soke whatever he owed in the king's service'.[121] The landholders of Oswaldslow were anomalous in that they all held as tenants of the bishop, out of whose booklands the hundred had been created.[122] Nonetheless, this entry clearly shows soke being used to denote an organising frame for military exactions. In Lincolnshire, a manor in Swaton was held by two brothers, and a third brother 'had soke over them in Haceby but only in the king's service'. Here, the content of the soke relationship was evidently confined to military service.[123] Similarly, in Old Somerby on Ermine Street lay six bovates of land held by Æthelgyth, and 'this soke was such that it rendered nothing, but helped the king's army on land and on sea.'[124]

Both the Worcester material and the Swineshead entry imply that soke-holders could raise their own forces in the king's service. The proposition is potentially unsettling, as such forces would have reflected not magnate retinues but selective delegation of the public and fiscal system for raising the *fyrd*. They could fairly be called licensed private armies in the king's service. Such an idea may not be as fanciful as it would once have seemed. Nicholas Brooks suggested that the archbishop of Canterbury's post-Conquest *servitium debitum* of 60 knights was not a novel imposition by William I, but instead went back to the set number of thegns which pre-Conquest writs permitted the archbishop to have.[125] The concept of knight-service, in other words, was not a Norman invention. It may have been possible for Anglo-Saxon

[121] *DB Worcs.*, 2.30 (GDB f. 173b)
[122] C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 35-6.
[123] *DB Lincs.*, 26.45 (GDB f. 357c). What may have been a similar arrangement is described in Covenham: *DB Lincs.*, 22.26 (GDB f. 354a).
[124] *DB Lincs.*, 57.43 (GDB f. 368a).
[125] N.P. Brooks, 'The Archbishopric of Canterbury and the So-Called Introduction of Knight-Service into England', *ANS*, 34 (2012), pp. 52-4. The writs are S 986 and S 1088.

magnates to acquit their lands of military service with an agreed number of at least semi-professional warriors. Brooks did not directly connect the agreed number of thegns with the 'sake and soke' granted in the same writs, preferring to see them as the armed following of men who were exalted enough to enjoy judicial rights. The evidence already surveyed introduces the possibility that a military quota was an intrinsic function of a soke grant.

Once the possibility is entertained, further possible examples suggest themselves. Alongside *taini* in the sense of 'independent landholders' discussed above, and the familiar 'king's thegns', Domesday sporadically records others. Various individuals are designated as thegns of Earl Harold, Stigand, or Queen Edith, all of whom had soke. Could these have been members of military contingents rather than household followers? Something like this may be behind a note concerning Glastonbury Abbey's holdings: four manors which had been the church's 'thegnland' had been lost to Geoffrey of Coutances, and Glastonbury had thereby lost 'service from them'.[126] At Ingham in Suffolk, what seems to have been a demesne manor of Bury St Edmunds was held by a man named Wulfwig TRE. He is described as 'quidam miles sancti eadmundi' and held the manor 'from' the saint.[127] By 1086, the manor had reverted to the abbey and nothing more was said of Wulfwig. An individual specifically described as *miles* in a pre-Conquest setting, who held four hides in dependent tenure, suggests someone who held for a service. His disappearance invites speculation that he may have been one of the abbey's men at Hastings, whose lands Abbot Baldwin was fortunate to redeem from the king.[128] Among the customs owed by no fewer than 14 vills to the Bishop of Winchester's manor of Taunton, was 'setting out to the army with the bishop's men'.[129] Two

[126] *DB Somerset*, 8.38 (GDB f. 91a). Costen, 'Anonymous Thegns', p. 74 identifies a particular tendency for religious houses to lease out lands to *taini*.
[127] *DB Suffolk*, 14.69 (LDB f. 364a).
[128] Douglas, *Feudal Documents*, pp. xcvi-xcviii; charter no. 1.
[129] *DB Somerset*, 2.2-3 (GDB f. 87c).

of these vills 'could not be separated from Taunton TRE'; the holders of the others could, by implication, do as they wished with their lands.[130] Even so, these lords were expected to perform *fyrd*-service with an episcopal contingent. Whoever the 'bishop's men' were, the holders of lands connected with Taunton were not counted among them, but their service was still organised around a magnate. For service at sea, meanwhile, the St Paul's ship-list of c. 1000 treats the landholdings of the bishop of London as a unit for manning a ship, irrespective of shire.[131]

Nor did one have to be a bishop or abbot to come to an arrangement with the king. The burgesses of Dover, who possessed maritime resources, were in a position to do likewise:

> The burgesses gave 20 ships to the king once a year for 15 days. In each ship were 21 men. They did this for him because he had given over to them sake and soke.[132]

Here, an individual settlement between soke-holders and the king appears explicit. The resources necessary to build and man a fleet no doubt made such agreements particularly attractive where service at sea was needed. It is of some interest that 300-hide units assigned to provide one ship would come to be known as 'shipsokes'. No purpose beside fiscal-military exactions has ever been ascribed to these districts, some of which were created by throwing together three hundreds, but 'soke' was nonetheless deemed the appropriate term.[133]

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[130] *DB Somerset*, 2.5 (GDB f. 87c).
[131] *Charters of St Paul's, London*, ed. S.E. Kelly (Oxford, 2004), no. 25. See also P. Taylor, 'The Endowment and Military Obligations of the See of London: A Reassessment of Three Sources', *ANS*, 14 (1992), pp. 299-301.
[132] *DB Kent*, D.2 (GDB f. 1a): *Burgenses dederunt XXti naues regi una uice in anno ad XV dies. 7 in una quaque naui erant homines XXti 7 unus. Hoc faciebant pro eo quod eis perdonauerat saccam 7 socam*.
[133] The, *Leges Henrici Primi*, compiled 1108x1118, describe *centuriae* and *sipessocna* as subdivisions of the shire: Hn 6.1b. On shipsokes, see N. Hooper, 'Some Observations on the Navy in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in M. Strickland (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Warfare* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 22-7.

Less suspected, and of equal significance, is the possibility of a link between soke and geld. The Swineshead entry implies that geld, like military service, was usually taken in the hundred but that a soke-holder might collect it separately. From the geld accounts bound up in the *Liber Exoniensis*, it is clear that the hundred was indeed the basic unit for geld collection.[134] Several GDB entries confirm the rule incidentally, as with the statement that the *burh* of Huntingdon answered for one quarter of Hurstingstone hundred TRE, but no longer gelded 'in that hundred' TRW.[135] In Kemerton and Boddington in Gloucestershire, a combined 11 hides 'always gelded and performed other services in Deerhurst hundred' until the Norman tenant arrived.[136] In Martley and Suckley in Worcestershire lay a combined 18 hides which contributed to the Herefordshire farm, but which were nonetheless entered under Doddingtree hundred because they pled and gelded there.[137] Once again, it is the exception that causes the rule to be articulated.

The point at issue is whether soke-holders could be held responsible for geld from their soke. By extension, it is a question whether lords can be shown to have bypassed the hundreds to render consolidated sums. One piece of evidence—the reckoning of the northern sokelands in carucates—has already been touched upon. These *carucatae ad geldum* represented the base unit of soke.[138] Most relevant entries are marked with a marginal 'S', but some are more direct. One Nottinghamshire entry reads, 'In Chilwell 5 bovates [de soca ad geldum], in

[134] R.P. Cohen, 'Danegeld: The Land Tax in England, 991-1162' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), pp. 158-64.
[135] *DB Hunts.*, B.15 (GDB f. 203b).
[136] *DB Gloucs.*, 19.2 (GDB f. 166b).
[137] *DB Worcs.*, X.3 (GDB f. 178a); cf. *DB Heref.*, 1.39 (GDB f. 180c) and 1.47 (f. 180d).
[138] To revisit a previous example, the 28 sokelands of Conisbrough are ascribed a total of 86 carucates and 15 acres 'to the geld' before their population and value are even mentioned: *DB Yorks.*, 12W.1 (GDB f. 321b).

Toton.'[139] This particular holding is ascribed no population, and one is left to infer that it was acquitted of geld by Healfdene, who held Toton.[140] In the shires which record soke in 'carucates to the geld', these are invariably said to have been held by *taini* (or attached to manors held by them). The sokemen, for all their freedom, had ploughs but not the geld carucates that they cultivated.[141] It is not implausible to suspect that geld was paid by people who held 'carucates to the geld'. How they collected the contributions of those who worked the land, need not have concerned the king.

Away from Swineshead, explicit references to geld in connection with soke are confined to burghal settings. Thus in Huntingdon, Ulf Fenisc and the abbot of Ely had 18 burgesses and a toft respectively, both 'cum sacam 7 socam praeter geldum regis'.[142] The 12 lawmen of Stamford had 'sake and soke within their houses and over their men, except geld, heriot, forfeiture of their bodies at 40 *ora* of silver, and except robbery'.[143] Most detailed is a statement from Lincoln:

> Bishop Remigius has 1 small manor with 1 carucate adjacent to the city of Lincoln, with sake and soke and with toll and team; likewise in respect of 3 residences, 2 churches, and 78 residences, except for the King's geld, which they give with the burgesses. Of these, 20 residences are waste. Of the 3 residences above, 1 is quit of all things, but 2 are in geld with the burgesses.[144]

Each example describes a case in which soke was exclusive of geld. The obvious implication is that it was not always qualified in this way. An element of doubt remains because all three

[139] *DB Notts.*, 13.5 (GDB f. 289c).
[140] *DB Notts.*, 10.25 (GDB f. 287c).
[141] *DB Notts.*, 9.26 (GDB f. 284d) provides a concise example of this formula. *Taini* are usually named individually.
[142] *DB Hunts.*, B.2-3 (GDB f. 203a).
[143] *DB Lincs.*, S.5 (GDB f. 336d).
[144] *DB Lincs.*, C.11 (GDB f. 336a): *Remigius episcopus habet I maneriolum cum I carucata contiguum in ciuitati Lincoliæ cum saca 7 soca 7 cum Thol 7 Theim, 7 super III mansiones similiter 7 super II æcclesias 7 super LXXVIII mansiones similiter præter geldum regis quod dant cum burgensibus. Ex his sunt XX mansiones Wastæ. De tribus superioribus mansiones est I quieta ab omnibus rebus, duæ uero sunt in geldo cum burgensibus*.

examples are negative, but this can be explained by their burghal contexts. The Lincoln entry makes clear that, where soke was circumscribed so as to exclude geld, the relevant properties gelded with the burgesses. *Burhs* were institutionally equipped to collect dues from large numbers of free individuals, and large soke-holders may not always have found it worthwhile to exercise their privileges to the full.[145] It was plainly necessary to specify that Remigius's 80 geldable *mansiones* paid with the burgesses, but no similar qualification was attached to his soke over the carucate outside the city.

A scheme in which major landholders could defend their holdings outside the hundred deserves serious consideration, and further references tell in its favour. In Kent, St Martin's of Dover had 400½ acres or 2½ sulungs which had never rendered any customs or scots 'because 24 sulungs acquit the whole'.[146] The canons' holdings added up to fewer than 24 sulungs but perhaps their lucrative non-landed resources, which included 10½ mills, made it convenient to settle for an agreed figure. Sussex yields an example of a different kind. Within Earl Gyrth's 59-hide manor of Washington, a certain Leofwine held ½ hide. As he 'could withdraw with his land', one might expect him to have gelded in the hundred; however, 'he gave geld to his lord and his lord gave nothing'.[147] In Cornwall, St Petroc's of Bodmin was wholly exempt: 'This saint's lands never rendered geld, save to this church.'[148] Rather than imagine that the church went to the trouble of reclaiming its share from the hundred, it is simpler to assume that its officers collected geld themselves. The church of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire acquitted its 24½ hides of land for 20 hides.[149] While all seven individual holdings lay in the same hundred, the arrangement shows that geld was not necessarily

[145] Although TRW information from Stafford implies that they sometimes did so, even in *burhs*: *DB Staffs.*, B.2-11 (GDB f. 246a).
[146] *DB Kent*, P.16 (GDB f. 2b).
[147] *DB Sussex*, 13.9 (GDB f. 28a).
[148] *DB Corn.*, 4.22 (GDB f. 121b).
[149] *DB Gloucs.*, 1.26-33 (GDB f. 163c).

collected from individual estates. Of Bibury in the same county, it is said that 'Bishop Wulfstan [of Worcester] holds and gelds.'[150] The note would seem superfluous if the bishop's reeve had simply taken the manor's contribution to the hundred; it reads as though Wulfstan came to terms with the sheriff directly. That he did so on behalf of his own triple-hundred of Oswaldslow is certain: from five hides which the abbot of Evesham held at Hampton, the bishop had 'only the geld to his hundred'.[151] In Herefordshire, meanwhile, lands in four vills spread across two hundreds 'gelded with Bishop W[alter] TRE'.[152] Walter, who is known to have had soke, apparently gelded outside these hundreds.[153]

A different system of geld assessment, less germane to lordly manipulation, operated in East Anglia. While land was measured in carucates and acres, the geld was taken vill by vill. LDB gives each vill a set of physical dimensions before noting how many pence it contributed towards every pound charged on the hundred.[154] Here, there is no record of *carucatae ad geldum*, and the territorial inflection of soke bears no discernible relationship to geld. The geld organisation of the *burhs* is left largely undescribed and the most visible effect of soke is generally to govern acre-rents. It may be that highly fragmented land tenure, characterised by small freemen, made a system based on fiscal carucates and acres impractical. The 30-acre threshold for soke in Diss half-hundred looks like an attempt to tame landholding for fiscal purposes. LDB's recording of the pence-in-the pound system makes a rigidly geographical impression, although there is some evidence for manipulation at a local level.[155] Evidence

[150] *DB Gloucs.*, 3.4 (GDB f. 164d).
[151] *DB Worcs.*, 2.74 (GDB f. 174a). All else (such as, by implication, *fyrd*-service) was 'quit to the church of Evesham'.
[152] *DB Heref.*, 2.3 (GDB f. 181c).
[153] The text of the relevant writ survives: S 1102.
[154] J.H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1895; 1964 edn), pp. 88-91.
[155] Vills were grouped geographically into letes, each of which contributed a set fraction of the hundred's pound, but more of these have been inferred than positively identified. This system is discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

from outside the region indicates that those who had soke over entire hundreds would ultimately have been responsible for the geld from them.

The East Anglian system would have permitted magnates to compound their geld up to a hundredal level. Outside East Anglia, there was more scope for great lords to compound their geld directly to the shire, where the hundredal totals were collated.[156] The present suggestion is that possession of soke marked out a landholder as one entitled to do so. It is all too easy, once obligations such as *fyrd*-service and geld have been located in the hundred, to think of them as diffuse and intrinsically dependent on public institutions for their collection—all the more so because the power of the late Anglo-Saxon 'state' is often sought in the machinery of shire and hundred. But it is well to remember that the estates of the great churches, running to tens and hundreds of hides, were much older than these institutions. They had long been subject to military service, at least, through the common burdens. Great lay kindreds also commanded very great resources at any given time. Meanwhile, early royal administration seems to have depended largely on the reeves of royal manors. Whether their role extended over other manors in the uniform and territorial sense of the later hundred is doubtful. Magnates had similar estates and similar reeves. Probability suggests that the largest landholders would have gone to the king with the product of their own arrangements. There is little to indicate that kings had the capacity for administrative duplication before the tenth century, or the inclination to pursue it even once they had developed the means.[157]

[156] Cohen, 'Danegeld', pp. 165-7.
[157] Lambert, 'Jurisdiction as Property', p. 136 identifies the appearance of the sheriff as a move in this direction.

THE SOKE-HOLDER AS 'IMMUNIST'

Alienated soke becomes more intelligible when viewed in terms of exemption from the 'public' system. The grant of a hundred, as a unit of soke, by this token represented a simple delegation of responsibility. Grants of soke over a beneficiary's lands were a mechanism that could be used to bypass hundred (and conceivably even shire) by harnessing a landholder's own administration to public ends. No doubt this was an easy way of mobilising resources quickly. Grants of soke over a beneficiary's men were, as already shown, just as much concerned with land. Such a grant would have placed a lord's commended men in that lord's soke, meaning that the king could co-opt his magnates' commendatory as well as manorial networks for fiscal purposes.[158] The scheme offers an explanation for the lists recorded in some Domesday shires of people who held 'sake and soke'. These are provided for East and West Kent, Nottinghamshire with Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire.[159] To claim that those listed were individuals who received judicial profits is difficult because the information was of no obvious interest to the commissioners; to argue that they were holders of bookland is unsatisfactory because there were plainly many others. A simpler explanation is that these were the individuals whom the king would notify directly when *fyrd* or geld were to be levied. Perhaps their bulk contributions enabled them to negotiate terms, but their main benefits from sake and soke are well-known: judicial profits and acre-rents. The reasons why a king might grant soke in the first place become clearer in this context: he did not do so for

[158] Maitland's observation (albeit made in connection with manors) retains its force: 'Of course the state will endeavour to collect the geld in big sums. It will endeavour to make the great folk answer for the geld which lies on any land that is in any way subject to their power; thus the cost of collecting petty sums will be saved and the tax will be charged on men who are solvent.' (Maitland, *DBB*, p. 121).
[159] *DB Kent*, D. 17 (GDB f. 1b) and D.24 (f. 1c); *DB Notts.*, S.5 (GDB f. 280c); *DB Yorks.*, C.36 (GDB f. 298c); *DB Lincs.*, T.5 (GDB f. 337a). The Shropshire customs and list of landholders may mask parts of another such list: *DB Shrops.*, C.13 (GDB f. 252a).

vague reasons of patronage, but because he could afford to give away some resources in return for ready access to more important ones.

The argument put forward here—that soke grants entitled the beneficiary to bypass public administration—raises the question of 'immunity'. If soke-holders no longer answered in the hundred, royal officers would no longer have had much cause to touch their soke. While Domesday implies as much, even admitting the possibility represents a considerable departure which requires further support. Discussions of immunity in England have long turned on the bishop of Worcester's triple-hundred of Oswaldslow. As hitherto conceived, the problem has been to establish whether pre-Conquest sheriffs were barred from holding its court. If so, the result would be England's only certain pre-Conquest example of a private court. Patrick Wormald showed that Wulfstan's right to exclude the sheriff from Oswaldslow was almost certainly a post-Conquest invention, and found no evidence that his soke over the hundred gave him anything more than judicial profits.[160] However, he assumed that justice was the matter at issue. The dispute which Wormald used to show that lordship of the hundred was of paramount importance to Wulfstan, demonstrates that the resulting soke was at least as much concerned with geld and military service as with the hundred 'court'.[161] According to the final agreement,

> …the abbot has recognised…that those fifteen hides justly belong to the bishop's hundred of Oswaldslow and must pay the king's geld with the bishop and all other services that belong to the king and depend on it for their pleas, and similarly as far as the aforesaid four hides in Bengeworth are concerned.[162]

[160] Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice', pp. 120-30. See further S. Baxter, 'The Representation of Lordship and Land Tenure in Domesday Book', in E.M. Hallam and D. Bates (eds.), *Domesday Book* (Stroud, 2001), pp. 82-92.
[161] Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice', p. 123.
[162] *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I*, ed. R.C. van Caenegem (2 vols, London, 1990-91), i, no. 15E, p. 40: *…abbas recognovit…quod ille XV hide juste pertinent ad Oswaldes lawe hundredum episcopi, et debent cum ipso episcopo censum regis solvere et omnia alia servitia ad regem pertinentia et inde idem requirere ad placitandum et de IIII hidis predictis in Bennincwyrthe similiter.*

More explicit still is the writ by which Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances notified the Domesday commissioners of Wulfstan's claim:

> Know that I bear witness that when I held at the king's command the plea between Bishop Wulfstan and the Abbot of Evesham, the bishop deraigned that the four hides at Bengeworth and the houses in the city are of his fee so that the abbot owes services for them to him like his other feudal tenants. And he deraigned *that the soke and sake of Hampton belong to his hundred of Oswaldslow so that they must plead there and must pay geld and perform military expedition and other lawful services for these fifteen hides* and must render church-scot and burial to his vill of Cropthorn.[163]

Not only pleas went to the bishop and thus eluded the sheriff's grasp, but fyrdmen and geld too. Maitland famously observed that 'no one in the middle ages does justice for nothing', arguing that wherever the sheriff had no profit, there he had no reason to go.[164] The point retains its intuitive force, although it is not beyond objection. Might royal officers not have wished to maintain a visible presence even without direct financial incentive, and might the holders of judicial profits not have seen advantages in having an ostensibly impartial figure to chair proceedings? As Wormald established, the pre-Conquest evidence for private courts (let alone outright exclusion of royal officers) is too thin to bear weight.[165] But it is not clear that the same applied to the fiscal-military business of the hundred. The figure of Eadric, Wulfstan's military commander, would seem to constitute strong evidence for an 'immunity' in this respect.[166]

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[163] van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, i, no. 15D, p. 39 (my italics): *Sciatis quod ego testimonium fero quia, dum ex precepto regis placitum tenui inter episcopum Wlfstanum et abbatem d'Evesham, quod episcopus diraciocinavit IIII hidas ad Bennincwyrthe et domos in civitate de suo feudo esse, ita quod abbas sibi debet inde servire, sicut alii sui feudati. Et deraciocinavit socam et sacam de Hamtona ad suum hundred Oswaldeslawe, quod ibi debent placitare et geldum et expeditionem et cetera legis servitia de illis XV hidis secum debent persolvere, et ciricsceat et sepulturam ad suam villam Croppethorn debent reddere*. Maitland quoted both accounts but chose to lay stress on a literal 'seeking' of the court: *DBB*, p. 85, n. 3.
[164] Maitland, *DBB*, p. 277.
[165] Although Joy, 'Sokeright', p. 209 alludes to the difficulty of proving the opposite.
[166] Eadric acted as 'steersman of the bishop's ship…and the leader of that bishop's army in the king's service': *English Lawsuits*, ed. van Caenegem, i, no. 15B, p. 38.

To accept this at face value, one would have to depend on Maitland's logic, that royal officers would 'exclude' themselves by default. Another possible objection is that in Oswaldslow, soke derived from possession of the hundred itself, which was a standard (if, in this case, heavily tailored) administrative unit.[167] In the final instance therefore, although everyone in Oswaldslow 'gelded with the bishop', the example does not prove that soke-holders could bypass public institutions. Proof is, of course, unobtainable but for stronger evidence we must turn to soke grants made without reference to the hundredal structure. Some such writs, over land or men, contain early examples of exclusion clauses.

The earliest authentic writ text to survive, concerning a grant of Cnut in favour of Archbishop Æthelnoth of Canterbury, contains an example. The main clause reads,

> And I inform you that I have granted to [Æthelnoth] that he be entitled to his sake and soke; and to *griðbryce*, and *hamsocn*, and *forsteal*, and *infangene þeof*, and *flymena fyrmð* over his own men within borough and without, and over Christ Church, and over as many thegns as I have granted him to have. And I forbid anyone to take anything therefrom except himself and his officers, because I have given these rights to Christ for the eternal redemption of my soul.[168]

Wormald, taking exclusion clauses to refer to justice, was suspicious and argued against their authenticity (the sole admitted exception being the writ above).[169] He characterised Florence Harmer's edition and commentary as having 'very little respect for most other writs where the formula appears', referring to S 1086, 1088, 1089 (all from Christ Church, Canterbury), S 989 (from St Augustine's) and, with qualification, S 1153 (from the Old Minster, Winchester). This may be true of the quoted documents, but Harmer's doubts did not concern

[167] Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, p. 44.
[168] S 986: *7 ic cyðe eow þæt ic hæbbe geunnen him þæt he beo his saca 7 socne wyrðe 7 griðbryces 7 hamsocne 7 forstealles 7 infangenes þeofes 7 flymena fyrmðe ofer his agene menn binnan byrig 7 butan 7 ofer Cristes cyrcean 7 ofer swa feala þegna swa ic him to lætan hæbbe. 7 ic nelle þæt ænig mann aht þær on teo buton he 7 his wicneras for þam ic hæbbe Criste þas gerihta forgyfen minre sawle to ecere alysendnesse*. Text and translation: Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 183-4.
[169] Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice', p. 128, n. 33 and p. 129, n. 35.

references to the king's officers.[170] More importantly, Wormald missed several authentic writs which make similar provisions. One of these, by Edward the Confessor in favour of St Augustine's, Canterbury, grants the same privileges as the quoted example and excludes royal officers (*wicneras*) with a near-identical formula.[171] Another writ of Edward's, for Archbishop Ealdred concerning the lands of Beverley Minster, stipulates that 'no one but he shall take anything from it'.[172] Two apparently authentic texts from Westminster grant the abbey sake and soke, toll and team, and forfeitures. Both close with the provision, 'and I will not permit that anyone have any authority [onsting] over his land or over his men…except the abbot for the needs of the monastery'.[173] That this privilege derived from soke appears likely in view of three other writs granting the abbot individual estates 'with sake and soke', and again reserving *onsting* solely to him and the brethren.[174] The same connection emerges from the Old Minster writ adduced by Wormald. King Edward confirms his mother's bequest of a messuage and declares that 'none of my [wicnera] shall have any soke over those who dwell therein'; nor shall anyone but the brethren and their officers.[175] Finally, a writ of Edward for Bromfield Minster announces a grant of sake and soke and further privileges, warning that, 'I will not suffer anyone to take anything therefrom, neither bishop nor any other person, save whomsoever [the canons] may themselves desire'.[176]

Ten writs from six archives, all expressing the same idea, cannot easily be dismissed. Major landholders could plainly aspire to control functions otherwise discharged by the king's

[170] Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 172-81, 190-97, 382-5. Her discussion of writ formulae found nothing intrinsically suspicious about clauses constraining royal officials (pp. 66-7).
[171] S 1091.
[172] S 1067.
[173] S 1125, 1127.
[174] S 1139 (Launton), 1141 (Windsor and Staines), 1143 (Pershore and Deerhurst).
[175] S 1153. Wormald was keen to note that the text has been tampered with, but suspicion has fallen only on the final, unrelated clause: Wormald, 'Lordship and Justice', p. 129, n. 35; cf. the commentary in Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 382-5.
[176] S 1162. See F.E. Harmer, 'A Bromfield and a Coventry Writ of King Edward the Confessor', in P. Clemoes (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1959).

officers. There is some evidence that a grant of soke signalled such an act of delegation. A scatter of more individual writs bear on this argument. One, of Edward the Confessor, directs that 'Bishop Giso [of Wells] shall discharge the obligations on his land at Chew just as his predecessor did before him'.[177] Although the wording is inconclusive by itself, it could be read to mean that a major landholder was answering directly rather than in the hundred. Chew would later be reckoned in Chew hundred, but it is of some interest that the Somerset geld account in the *Liber Exoniensis* treats the holdings of Bishop Giso as a hundred unto themselves.[178] Edward's writ for his churchwright reads more strikingly: Teinfrith is granted 'the land at Shepperton with sake and soke, free of scot and tribute in hundred and in shire'.[179] While it could be read as a geld exemption, it is addressed to Abbot Edwin of Westminster as well as the sheriff, and Westminster Abbey held Shepperton in 1086. Teinfrith may have been freed from hundred and shire so as to meet his obligations through the abbot.[180] A writ of Cnut appears explicit about bulk acquittal, ordering that 'Archbishop Æthelnoth shall discharge the obligations on his lands belonging to his bishopric just as he did before Æthelric was reeve'.[181] Æthelnoth's obligations were seemingly compounded at shire level, as he had to deal with the sheriff about them.

It is impossible to know how often soke-holders availed themselves of their full privilege. They can scarcely have answered for *fyrd*-service, geld payment, and all else in every case, which would have been inconvenient. If LDB is any guide, they did not even uniformly enforce writs granting them soke over their own men, for many individuals were commended

[177] S 1113.
[178] *Libri Censualis, vocati Domesday Book, Additamenta ex Codic. Antiquiss. Exon Domesday; Inquisitio Eliensis; Liber Winton; Boldon Book*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1816), pp. 70-71 (Exon f. 78b).
[179] S 1131.
[180] Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 319-20; *DB Middx.*, 4.7 (GDB f. 128c).
[181] S 987. On Æthelric, see *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury*, ed. N.P. Brooks and S.E. Kelly (2 vols, Oxford, 2013), ii, p. 1125.

to magnates yet not under their soke. This too, may have been more trouble than it was worth. But even commendation, perhaps the most irregular vehicle for delegated public authority, could be used to advantage when the circumstances were right. The Suffolk hundred of Stow remained in the king's hand, but the abbot of Bury St Edmunds claimed soke over his men:

> TRE sake and soke and commendation over them all belonged to St Edmund, by King Edward's gift, as the writs and seal which the Abbot has, show. Later King William granted [it]; but the King's reeve has 4s from one of them, on account of soke, be it justly or unjustly, without the knowledge of the Abbot or his *ministri*…[182]

In Stow, adjacent to the hundreds controlled by Bury St Edmunds, it was evidently worthwhile for the abbot to submit his men to his own officers. Abbot Baldwin clearly did not expect the king's reeve to take anything from them, even though no Bury writ mentions royal officers. In this context it becomes possible to wonder whether the seemingly anodyne stipulation that 'no wrong be done' to a beneficiary did not convey an exclusionary meaning to contemporaries.[183]

References to courts are conspicuous by their absence from the writ record. Fiscal matters are addressed while judicial ones pass unmentioned. If the argument that soke licenced a kind of fiscal immunity is accepted, Wormald's concern to reject the exclusion clauses in early writs becomes unnecessary. Stipulations as to whose officers were to 'take' from lands, in any case sit uneasily with a judicial interpretation. 'Taking from lands' evokes fiscal activities. These were surely what soke-holders were most anxious to control, as long as they received the profits of justice for their trouble.

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[182] *DB Suffolk*, 14.37 (LDB f. 360b): *Tempore Edwardi fuit soca 7 soca 7 commendatio de istis omnibus Sancti Edmundi ex dono regis Edwardi sicut breuia 7 sigillum demonstrant que abbas habet. Postea concessit Willelmus Rex sed prepositus regis habuit propter socam de I istorum IIII solidos esset iuste uel iniuste 7 nesciente abbate neque ministris suis*.

[183] This kind of formula seems specific to grants of 'sake and soke'. Of the Bury writs, only S 1071 and 1072 use it; writs granting the abbey its hundreds, or new estates, do not.

When William the Conqueror faced the task of distributing vast acreages in England among his followers, his regime devised the convenient mechanism of 'antecession'. This presupposed that each new tenant-in-chief had one or more English *antecessores* whose lands they had ostensibly inherited. The scheme was a framework rather than a rule: it has become clear that most honors did not simply replicate pre-Conquest tenurial patterns but divided or aggregated the estates of various English landholders and their men.[184] Nonetheless, antecession was a recognised means of legitimating tenure in the aftermath of the Conquest. It was not confined to demesne holdings but extended to the lands of a given English lord's followers. This wider antecession was once thought to follow commendation bonds, but has more recently been associated with soke.[185] Circumstantial support for this theory comes from the post-Conquest association of people who were considered barons with possession of sake and soke.[186] An attentive reading of Domesday leaves little doubt that soke provided the best basis for antecession apart from demesne. Why this should have been, has not been satisfactorily explained. There would have been no obvious reason to choose judicial rights as the decisive indicator in determining title to land, while bookland (if 'sake and soke' were taken to denote it) would not account for all the soke 'inherited' in bulk by William's men. The meaning given to soke here would explain antecession more satisfactorily.

Of particular importance, if accepted, is the connection between soke and geld. A famous passage in Hemming's Cartulary outlines the effect of geld on land tenure. Hemming

[184] S. Baxter and C.P. Lewis, 'Domesday Book and the Transformation of English Landed Society, 1066–86', *ASE*, 46 (2017), pp. 380-84.
[185] P.H. Sawyer, '1066-1086: A Tenurial Revolution?', in *idem* (ed.), *Domesday Book: A Reassessment* (London, 1985), pp. 77-80. But see more recently R. Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 133; Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 170-74; *idem*, 'Domesday Now', pp. 38-9.
[186] J. Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law* (2nd edn, London and New York, 2018), pp. 34-5.

describes how landholders who were unable to meet the king's geld demands during Cnut's reign, lost their land to anyone who could pay.[187] While such blunt procedures may reflect unusual circumstances, the principle was significant. In the last resort, the king's right to receive geld from the land outweighed the landholder's right to possess it. Not only could individuals with disposable silver acquire land cheaply, but the hand of any solvent lord was strengthened in relation to his men. Anyone who gathered the pence of smaller people into sums worth collecting, would have been well placed to assert to the sheriff that their land was his.[188] A sokelord who rendered lump sums would have acquired a more tangible claim on the lands of free tenants subject to him. *Villani* and sokemen might be personally responsible for paying geld on their holdings, but to whom they gave it is a neglected question of some importance.[189] Certainty is impossible without detailed accounts of how geld was collected, but if soke shaped geld liability in any way, this equalled influence over landholding.

Whether or not the Normans understood the precise relationship of soke to landholding, its general significance cannot have escaped them. As we have seen, soke was a claim which the king made over all land in his kingdom. He received the issues of that claim from those who stood in an immediate relationship to him. Such people could be magnates who answered to the king for their own demesne and much more besides, or independent cultivators who were held to be 'in the king's soke' because they answered to no one else for their acres.[190] The

[187] *Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiæ Wigorniensis*, ed. T. Hearne (2vols, Oxford, 1723), i, pp. 277-8. Further instances of this principle at work are collected by M.K. Lawson, 'The Collection of Danegeld and Heregeld in the Reigns of Aethelred II and Cnut', *EHR*, 99/393 (1984), pp. 723-5, although cf. Cohen, 'Danegeld', pp, 48-59. Pratt, 'Charters and Exemption from Geld' shows how the universality of the geld overrode centuries of bookland immunity clauses.
[188] As observed long ago by Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 121-2.
[189] T.H. Aston, 'The Ancestry of English Feudalism' in R. Evans (ed.), *Lordship and Learning* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 90-91 was conscious of it, but no one appears to have pursued his comments further. In twelfth-century Suffolk, geld liability was divided between the sokemen and 'the hall' (Douglas, *Feudal Documents*, pp. cxxviii-cxxix). A passage in LDB suggests that a similar division between sokemen's land and the rest of the manor was made in the eleventh century; by elimination, the *villani* would seem to have fallen under 'the hall' (*DB Norfolk*, 15.17 (LDB f. 214a-b)).
[190] E.g. *DB Beds.*, 17.2 (GDB f. 211d).

king's universal claim to dues assessed on land, certainly where it concerned geld or *fyrd*-service, was strong enough to affect landholding. On this evidence the imposition of the Anglo-Norman tenurial scheme was a jarring step, but perhaps not as great a conceptual leap as has been supposed.[191] That the king had an interest in all land, and that he could determine who should answer to him for it and how, were ideas not unknown to the English. Of course, soke was quite distinct from post-Conquest tenure. Anglo-Saxon kings made no proprietary claim to the kingdom in a territorial sense, nor was land conceived as the direct corollary of homage and service (although it might still be lost if it was not 'defended'). Such principles were not available to kings who had to deal with established landholders in the territories they inherited and acquired. Normandy itself provides a revealing parallel: here the dukes faced exactly the same constraints, and tenurial assumptions developed gradually, at about the same time as soke was gaining currency across the Channel.[192] Soke lacked the absolute quality of post-Conquest tenure because it built on existing arrangements and never had lawyers to define it.

The workings of soke suggest that some features of the Anglo-Norman tenurial principle existed before 1066. It is of corresponding interest that the compilers of Domesday themselves found *soca* and *tenere* to be very similar concepts.[193] Caution is necessary because *tenere* on its own was not used in a technical sense implying tenancy: even the king

[191] The size of the leap must depend significantly on how precarious Anglo-Norman land tenure was: compare Garnett, *Conquered England*, ch. 2; Hudson, *OHLE2*, pp. 372-5; S. Reynolds, 'Tenure and Property in Medieval England', *Historical Research*, 88 (2015).
[192] E.Z. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 95-112; Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. 46-7.
[193] David Roffe's argument that [*tenuit* = 'sake and soke' = bookland] cannot be accepted, but 'tenuit' was used regularly in TRE settings. On the introduction of novel vocabulary, including tenure, see J. Hudson, 'Imposing Feudalism on Anglo-Saxon England: Norman and Angevin Presentation of Pre-Conquest Lordship and Landholding', in S. Bagge et al. (eds), *Feudalism: New Landscapes of Debate* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 115-34. The lack of tenurial vocabulary before the Conquest can be judged from e.g. Liebermann, *Gesetze*, ii, *s.v.* 'healdan' and 'tenere'.

was said to 'hold' his demesne.[194] Nonetheless, *tenere* signals a hierarchy where it is specified with reference to another individual, and soke terminology can take on the same function. Two related statements in LDB's long and unorganised description of Norwich illustrate this when taken together:

> The King and the Earl had the soke and sake and custom of 1,238 [burgesses], Stigand had the soke and sake and commendation over 50, and Harold had the soke and sake and commendation over 32.[195]

> Also on the land which Stigand held TRE, 39 of the above-mentioned burgesses now dwell, and on the same there are 9 empty dwellings. Also on the land of which Harold had the soke, there are 15 burgesses and 17 empty dwellings which are in the occupation of the castle.[196]

Stigand's 'sake and soke' over his burgesses meant that he 'held' the land that they occupied.[197] This, in turn, meant 'holding from the king', as is clear from other entries. In Lincoln in 1086, one finds Earnwine the priest in possession of 'one dwelling of Earl Morcar's with sake and soke', which he '[de rege tenet] in the same way as Earl Morcar had it'.[198] Among the *taini regis* holding in chief in Hertfordshire, the survey found a priest and his sister who 'hold 3 virgates [de rege]', just as they 'held it themselves TRE [de soca ejus]' with the right to sell.[199] References to free holdings 'of the king's soke' could be multiplied. William's men plainly encountered a tenurial hierarchy that they thought they recognised.

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[194] Reynolds, 'Bookland, Folkland and Fiefs', p. 226.
[195] *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB f. 116a): *De MCCXXXVIII habebant Rex 7 comes socam 7 sacam 7 consuetudinem, 7 super L habebat Stigandus socam 7 sacam 7 commendationem, et super XXXII habebat Heroldus socam 7 sacam 7 commendationem*.
[196] *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB f. 116b): *Et in illa terra quam tenebat Stigandus tempore regis Edwardi manent modo ex illis superioribus XXXVIIII burgenses et in eadem sunt IX mansure uacuæ. Et in illa terra de qua Heroldus habebat socam sunt XV burgenses 7 XVII mansure uacue que sunt in occupatione castelli*.
[197] A rural example relates to the soke-territory attached to Stigand's manor of Mileham in Launditch hundred. A woman named Olova 'held' Sutton *pro manerio*. But in the place where similar entries note 'soke in Mileham', this one states, 'Stigand held this in Mileham': *DB Norfolk*, 21.19 (LDB f. 232b). That two could 'hold' simultaneously, also undermines any intrinsic connection of 'tenuit' with bookland.
[198] *DB Lincs.*, C.6 (GDB f. 336a).
[199] *DB Herts.*, 42.9 (GDB f. 142b).

This conclusion may suggest an answer to a further problem. The apparent rarity of soke in shires south of Watling Street has turned out to be a documentary artefact, but why it should have been thus neglected remains to be explained. In the south-eastern circuit at least, a multitude of entries describe land held 'of King Edward', 'of Earl Harold', or 'of Queen Edith' TRE.[200] If these were references to dependent tenure, most of Surrey would once have been royal demesne; if they referred to commendation, they would suggest that people only commended themselves to the greatest magnates. A possible explanation would be that this was the circuit's way of recording soke.[201] Some observers may have seen very little distinction at all between having soke and holding land.

There remains the question why the pre-Conquest functions of soke were so quickly forgotten. The *Leges Henrici Primi* discuss soke at length, always in relation to judicial rights. In the case of the *Leges*, the likely answer is that judicial rights were their main concern. Much like the Anglo-Saxon codes upon which they were modelled and which they often copied, they were barely interested in the *fyrd* or geld. From the king's point of view, it would have been inconvenient to remember the full implications of soke. Apart from demesne, soke was the obvious foundation for antecessorial title, but acknowledging too close an equivalence between it and tenure would have caused difficulties. Holders of fees carved out by private enterprise or defined by other criteria could hardly have felt secure, had the full consequences of pre-Conquest soke arrangements been recognised alongside the antecessory principle. William found the fiction of inheritance useful but had no wish to be

[200] A pattern noted in Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, p. 214; see also *idem*, 'Representation of Lordship and Land Tenure', table 4.
[201] After using the term in the Kent folios, Circuit I largely ceases to refer to soke. It must be emphasised that Domesday terminology is too inconsistent to endow phrases such as 'holding of' or 'holding under' with a single meaning. LDB is particularly chequered in this respect. It is only the consistency of usage within Circuit I that invites a strictly regional suggestion.

constrained by the tenurial order of the old regime.[202] For the new lords themselves, it was naturally more urgent to record the rights conferred by the privilege than the obligations attached to it. More broadly, one may guess that soke was superseded by the new system that in some ways resembled it. As *fyrd* and geld were levied less frequently, and replaced by knight-service and newer forms of taxation, the responsibilities of the soke-holder would have fallen into abeyance. His rights remained undiminished (and indeed usefully vague), but they were a relic of what had once been a reciprocal relationship with the king.[203] Kings continued to grant 'sake and soke' but justice became its sole tangible concern.

CONCLUSIONS: FREEDOM UNDER SOKE

The status that went with answering to the king was much older than soke itself. Kings had always levied military and financial claims—*wara* in older parlance—on land. Lands liable for these public obligations have come to be termed 'warland' and were often held by various shades of free peasantry.[204] Its ultimate expression were surely men like the *liberi homines* of Essex who had no obligations except public ones, so that the hundred was the only unit that encompassed them.[205] It will be apparent that obligations covered by *wara* have also been found within 'soke'. Holding hides, by their nature defensible to a king, is convincingly identified as a mark of freedom.[206] No leap is necessary to conclude that holding hides in the

[202] Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. 15-16, 24-33; Hudson, 'Imposing Feudalism', p. 131.
[203] As in the scene quoted by H.R. Loyn, 'The King and the Structure of Society in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *idem*, *Society and Peoples: Studies in the History of England and Wales, c.600-1200* (London, 1992), pp. 78-9.
[204] The term seems to signal direct performance of obligations from smaller holdings, for it has been pointed out that all assessed land, including demesne, was technically warland: Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, p. 198.
[205] Some are assigned no location apart from their hundred: *DB Essex*, 1.1 (LDB f. 1b) in Barstable; 1.13a (f. 4a) in Hinckford; 1.17a (f. 4b) in *Wibertsherne*; 9.5 (f. 17b) in Barstable, although the vill is specified as an afterthought; 17.2 (f. 22a) in Winstree; 30.21 (f. 59b) in Barstable; 90.67 (f. 102b) in Lexden, where the vill is specified but the freeman still explicitly placed in the hundred.
[206] Faith, *English Peasantry*, pp. 91-2.

king's soke was the highest form of freedom that the eleventh century knew. People in this position probably account for those few whom Domesday describes as being able to sell their land 'with the soke'.[207] To hold land *de soca regis* was generally to have free disposition; the king's interest was unaffected by any transaction because his soke could not be escaped. The holder of delegated soke, on the other hand, had an interest in constraining the land in question to safeguard his benefits.

For all its historical association with freedom, soke had insidious effects upon it. The initial extent of freedom can easily be overstated. If true freemen were those who held hides, then the freemen of Lincolnshire were the *taini* who held geld carucates, rather than its ten thousand sokemen. But even hides were not safe. While people in the king's soke enjoyed freedom from lordly exactions, they were not protected from the king himself. Soke, which encapsulated their immediate relationship to him, was subject to royal pleasure. Not only could it be granted away by blind category, over land or men, but individuals could be plucked out of their lordless state and submitted to someone. Edward the Confessor granted Eversley in Hampshire to Westminster Abbey with sake and soke, specifically instructing that 'my free sokemen' who held it were to be subject to St Peter's. Domesday duly records that 'four free men held it from King Edward in alod' TRE; in 1086, it was abbey demesne.[208] Payn, Wulfnoth, Ælfric Hort, and Frebeorn to all appearances held as freely as anyone could, but it was King Edward's prerogative to alter their relationship to him. Domesday juries knew of other cases. Five hides in Broughton in Huntingdonshire were *terra sochemannorum* TRE, but King Edward 'gave the land and soke of them' to the abbot of

[207] Neither fines nor service were saleable commodities, and so 'selling the soke with the land' probably implied no more than freedom to choose where to discharge obligations. Several references in Lincolnshire to *frisoca* suggest the same.
[208] S 1129, cf. *DB Hants.*, 8.1 (GDB f. 43c).

Ramsey as a favour for a personal service.[209] The land of a certain Leofric was in the king's soke TRE, but Bishop Remigius had a writ by which Edward 'gave Leofric, with all his land, to the bishopric of Lincoln, with sake and soke'.[210] A Lincolnshire *tainus* was given away to Mærleswein the sheriff.[211] Four Norfolk sokemen were made over to Bury St Edmunds.[212] While freedom consisted in a soke relationship to the king, this could be severed at a stroke if he chose effectively to farm out his subjects to a third party. That party's soke could harden into a more proprietary claim, because it precluded the honour of serving the king.

If soke hardening into dependent tenure was a possibility before 1066, the Conquest must have accelerated the process. Major churches still holding soke after the Conquest found themselves promoted to tenants-in-chief. Even if the principle was not alien, the new scheme undoubtedly carried a more explicit claim to land. A case from Suffolk seems to show the resourceful Abbot Baldwin of Bury St Edmunds exploiting this:[213]

> In the same [Ixworth Thorpe] Robert also holds from the Abbot 1 free man; 60 acres. 1 bordar. Always 1 plough. Meadow, 4 acres. Value 10s. The Abbot put this land in pledge to the King's barons, namely Bishop W[illiam], Engelric, and Ralph the Staller, for 100s. This [free man] could grant and sell his land, but the soke and sake would remain to the Saint.[214]

The TRE holder could freely dispose of his holding except that the abbey kept the soke. He acquitted his land in the abbot's hundred of Blackbourn, but this would hardly have entitled Baldwin to pledge his half-carucate for a debt.[215] As shown previously, it was possible for

[209] *DB Hunts.*, D.4 (GDB f. 208a).
[210] *DB Hunts.*, D.29 (GDB f. 208c).
[211] *DB Lincs.*, 35.12 (GDB f. 362d).
[212] *DB Norfolk*, 14.15 (LDB f. 210a); cf. the 'Feudal Book' of Abbot Baldwin: *Feudal Documents*, ed. Douglas, p. 12.
[213] Hudson, 'Imposing Feudalism', p. 132 points out that apart from being close to William, Baldwin was almost uniquely qualified to grasp the significance of the changes afoot.
[214] *DB Suffolk*, 14.101 (LDB f. 367b): *In eadem idem Rodbertus tenet de abbate I liberum hominem. LX acrae 7 I bordarius semper I caruca et IIII acrae prati. Et ualet X solidos. Hanc terram inuadiauit abbas contra barones regis scilicet Willelmum episcopum, Engelricum 7 Radulfum Stalram pro C solidis. Hic potuit uendere et dare terram suam sed soca et saca remanerent sancto*.
[215] In the case of one man over whom St Edmund had 'sake and soke', it is made clear that the abbey only acquired his land by agreement, after his death: *DB Suffolk*, 14.49 (LDB f. 361b).

one soke-holder to favour another by transferring soke with royal permission.[216] At Coltishall and Belaugh in Norfolk, sokemen of Earl Ralph and Stigand held land, and the earl 'gave his part of the soke' to the abbey of St Benet at Holme.[217] Here an interest in the land was disposed of, but not the land itself.

Some time around the turn of the first millennium, royal administration hit upon a novel way of mobilising the kingdom's resources. The idea of universal public obligations was ancient even then, but the writ provided a new instrument for their control and the term *socn* came to represent their eleventh-century incarnation. More significantly, *fyrd*-service and geld were deemed so essential that default could jeopardise landholding. The king was acquiring a conditional interest in all land. One may guess that the cause of this highly significant change lay in a quest for resources, driven by the fiscal and military stresses of Æthelred II's reign. Measures such as bypassing the part-time institutions of local government in favour of magnate contributions, and concentrating minds by bringing landholding into play, suggest desperate circumstances. Even so, the handling of soke indicates that the king retained firm control over it until the Conquest intervened. For the moment, the effect was probably to increase the power of lords over men rather than decrease the power of kings over lords. But if any English institution carried within it the makings of a home-grown 'feudal transformation', it was soke.[218]

In seeking to find the practical meaning of soke, this chapter has sought to argue with the grain of the sources as they survive. It takes the view that a word which came suddenly into

[216] See above, p. 84-5.
[217] *DB Norfolk*, 8.8 (LDB f. 158a); 20.31 (LDB f. 229b).
[218] The application of this concept to England is discussed, with a stress on gradual change, by D. Bates, 'England and the "Feudal Revolution"', in *Il Feudalesimo nell'Alto Medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 47 (2 vols, Spoleto, 2000).

wide use around the year 1000 must signal something substantively new. Such an approach differs from Maitland and subsequent scholars in that it declines to project meanings later attached to soke backwards in time. Whereas previous work has painstakingly analysed early judicial arrangements in order to uncover a pre-history of soke, the alternative adopted here has been to begin where the term itself begins. Reading the material in this way indicates that soke is to be taken literally, as defining men's relationship to the king. 'Royal immediacy' comes nearest to describing soke, and it was about who answered for assessed land. Herein lay its universality and its potential to shape landholding, and thus the seeds of a tenurial principle. The argument is a patchwork, and no example articulates what is proposed from beginning to end. All that can be done is to recommend the successive links: that soke was royal and universal, that it was reckoned in land, that it concerned *fyrd* and geld, and that magnates who had it could aspire to bypass communal procedures.

Such ideas are not unprecedented, although they present a contrast to the scholarship of the 'Anglo-Saxon state'.[219] This chapter and the previous one have dealt with the fundamental relationship of the kingdom, between king and subject. Soke was a new and particularly flexible mechanism for manipulating this interface, but it was not the only one. The institutions more usually associated with royal authority in late Anglo-Saxon England were the first, and enduring, means devised to this end.

[219] Trevor Aston drew attention to similar patterns, although he did not explicitly discuss soke: 'The Ancestry of English Feudalism', pp. 90-93. See also Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 39-44.

Chapter III

The administrative legacy

Over the course of the tenth century, West Saxon kings expanded their realm by gaining the allegiance of local elites who had not previously answered to them. It is far from certain that these new subjects saw their oaths as acts permanently incorporating them into a territorial kingdom, and they may not immediately have given away much by swearing them. Alfred's descendants, on the other hand, no doubt considered the process irreversible but could not regulate society on the strength of loyalty oaths alone. If they wished to enact tangible changes, whether in suppressing theft or imposing taxation, kings needed structures to mediate their authority at a local level. The following two chapters examine the institutions which served this purpose in East Anglia.

To trace their development, we must cast back to the first assertion of West Saxon influence in East Anglia, in late 917. In the autumn of that year Edward the Elder received an oath from the East Anglian *here*, whose king had been killed some months earlier.[1] Henceforth the region appears to have been considered (at least by West Saxons) an integral part of the kingdom. How soon Edward or his successors began to make their rule felt in local society is unknown, but by the 970s Edgar could order the dissemination of his *Wihtbordesstan* code (IV Edgar) in a way that suggests established structures.[2] Accounts of land transactions preserved in the *Liber Eliensis* show hundreds operating in a routine manner in East Anglia

[1] *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.
[2] The code does not mention East Anglia but the region fell under the authority of Ealdorman Æthelwine who, amongst others, was tasked with distributing copies. On its date see Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 441-2.

around the same time.[3] It is, so far, unclear how far this system was built on earlier arrangements. If it could be shown that the framework was essentially new, interpretations which see an Anglo-Saxon 'state' imposing a uniform order from above would be strengthened. If significant indications of continuity with older structures were to emerge, these would favour a more gradual and less bureaucratic process.

Various individual territories have been put forward as survivals of pre-hundredal organisation. In Suffolk, early units have been thought to underlie Blything hundred and (collectively) the five-and-a-half hundreds of Wicklaw, while the territory of the eight-and-a-half hundreds attached to Bury St Edmunds has been identified as a pre-Viking 'miniature shire'.[4] Some authorities take the Old Norse-derived names of several Norfolk hundreds to suggest that the system may have been laid out under Scandinavian rule.[5] Others would treat the apparent regularity of the same hundreds as eloquent testimony to the organisational power of Edward the Elder or his successors.[6]

Systemic continuity, as opposed to individual survival, is difficult to measure. LDB provides a comprehensive and relatively uniform record for comparative purposes but earlier material is scarce and uneven. Sources pre-dating Domesday reveal very little about territories, generally referring to particular places. An initial line of enquiry therefore asks whether places mentioned in pre-Viking contexts reappear as centres of authority in the eleventh

[3] *LE*, ii.35, p. 110; ii.38, p. 111; ii.41, p. 114; ii.48, p. 116.
[4] P.M. Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization in East Suffolk', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 32-4; *KAS*, pp. xliv-xlvii.
[5] O.K. Schram, 'The Place-Names of Norfolk' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1926), quoted without endorsement by K.I. Sandred, 'Viking Administration in the Danelaw: A Look at Scandinavian and English Hundred-Names in Norfolk', in B. Ambrosiani and H. Clarke (eds.), *The Twelfth Viking Congress* (Stockholm, 1994), p. 269; see also G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian Settlement Names in East Anglia: Some Problems', *Nomina*, 22 (1999), p. 59.
[6] C.R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), p. 76; J. Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets: A Survey with Suggestions', in C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 153-6.

century. The same test can be applied to sites identified as important Middle Saxon centres on archaeological evidence. A more retrogressive approach takes known royal demesne of the tenth and eleventh centuries as its starting point, and assesses the administrative roles and possible antiquity of the estates concerned. Territories can only be examined in a systematic way using LDB, which records spatial relationships. Its treatment of the 'territorial soke', an institution often considered typical of eastern England, is of particular interest.

EARLY CENTRES OF AUTHORITY

It is unknown where the main centres of the East Anglian kingdom lay during the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. As no written material survives from it, all references to the kingdom were recorded elsewhere, or after it had ceased to exist, or both. The available evidence consists of place-names mentioned in East Anglian settings. While the sources provide only limited contextual information, they generally refer to places in connection with the doings of important individuals, and it is therefore possible that the references reveal part of an early network of 'central places'.[7] This is impossible to prove, but if the locations were to emerge as places of importance under West Saxon rule, continuity would appear likely. There are twenty-one place-names to be considered: *Dommoc*, *Cnobheresburg*, Rendlesham, Ely, Elmham, Iken, Thetford, *Hægelisdun*, Bury St Edmunds, *Suthtun*, Sudbury, Dereham, Exning, *Seham*, *Redham*, Blythburgh, *Burna*, Hadleigh, Loddon, Babingley, and Mendham. Several cannot be identified with any certainty and the authorities for all require brief discussion.

[7] The functions associated with schematic 'central places' are outlined by D. Austin, 'Central Place Theory and the Middle Ages', in E. Grant (ed.), *Central Places, Archaeology and History* (Sheffield, 1986). Because peripatetic courts provided a focus for certain kinds of activity wherever they stopped, not all such centres need have been royal.



Map 3. Identifiable locations named in the context of the East Anglian kingdom by written sources.

Dommoc, *Cnobheresburg*, Rendlesham, and Ely are named in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, completed in Northumbria in 731.[8] Bede derived his information on East Anglia from two correspondents at Canterbury (Abbot Albinus and Nothhelm the priest), an otherwise unknown Abbot Esi, the extant life of St Fursa, and other 'writings or…traditions of men of the past'.[9] Neither *Dommoc* nor *Cnobheresburg* can be identified.[10]

The place-name 'Elmham' occurs in the proceedings of the Council of *Clofesho* (803). The signatories include Alhheard, bishop of Elmham, which was the second see in East Anglia after *Dommoc*.[11] It is generally, but not conclusively, identified with North Elmham in Norfolk.[12]

Iken and Thetford appear in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is a ninth-century witness, for both places appear in the original 'common stock' annals compiled in Wessex by 890×892.[13] The 'common stock' recorded the foundation of Botwulf's minster at *Icanho* (securely identified as Iken) under 654, and the Danes wintering at Thetford under 870.[14] The sources behind the 654 annal are unknown, while 870 annal presumably drew upon contemporary knowledge.

[8] *Dommoc*: *HE*, ii.15, p. 190; *Cnobheresburg*: *HE*, iii.19, p. 270; Rendlesham: *HE*, iii.22, p. 284; Ely: *HE*, iv.19, p. 392.
[9] *HE*, preface, pp. 4-6.
[10] J. Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees before the Conquest', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York), pp. 108-10, 114.
[11] *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. A.W. Haddan and W. Stubbs (3 vols, Oxford, 1869-73), iii, p. 547.
[12] T. Williamson, *The Origins of Norfolk* (Manchester, 1993), p. 83; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', pp. 110-12.
[13] See above, pp. 20-21.
[14] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 654 (*Icanho*), *s.a.* 870 (Thetford). On the identification of *Icanho*, see S.E. West, N. Scarfe, and R. Cramp, 'Iken, St Botolph and the Coming of East Anglian Christianity', *PSIA*, 35 (1984), p. 296.

All subsequent sources date from a time when East Anglia was no longer a kingdom. The names *Hægelisdun* and *Bedricesgueord* occur in the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, which honours the martyred Edmund of East Anglia (d. 869).[15] The *Passio* was composed by Abbo of Fleury, a continental scholar who stayed at Ramsey Abbey 985-7. It gives *Hægelisdun* as the place where Edmund died and was first buried, and *Bedricesgueord* (i.e. *Beaduricesworth*, later Bury St Edmunds) as the royal vill where a minster was dedicated to him.[16] Abbo supposedly had the story of the martyrdom from Archbishop Dunstan, who is said to have heard it recounted in his youth by Edmund's aged armour-bearer.[17] The *Miracula Sancti Eadmundi*, compiled at Bury St Edmunds in the late eleventh century by Herman the Archdeacon, place Edmund's initial interment at an unidentified place called *Suthtun*.[18] Neither *Hægelisdun* nor *Suthtun* can now be identified.[19]

Sudbury and Dereham occur in an early-twelfth century version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the bilingual MS F from Canterbury, which records the death of Bishop Ælfhun of *Dommoc* at Sudbury and the discovery of St Wihtburh's incorrupt body at Dereham under the year 799.[20] It is unclear where this material came from. The reference to Dereham (generally taken to mean East Dereham) is paralleled in John of Worcester's chronicle, but the information concerning Sudbury is not recorded elsewhere.[21]

[15] *Hægelisdun*: *PStE*, ch. 7, p. 73; *Beaduricesworth*: *PStE*, ch. 13, p. 82.
[16] A late interlineation in the *Liber Eliensis* identifies *Betrichesworde* as the monastery which King Sigeberht entered in the seventh century: *LE*, i.1, p. 11.
[17] On the historicity of this account see above, pp. 7-8.
[18] *MStE*, ch. 2, p. 4.
[19] See references at p. 8, n. 17.
[20] *ASC* MS F, *s.a.* 799.
[21] John of Worcester, *Chronicle*, ed. and trans. R.R. Darlington, P. McGurk, and J. Bray (2 vols published, Oxford, 1995-), ii, *s.a.* 798, p. 228.

Exning, *Seham*, *Redham*, and Blythburgh are named in the *Liber Eliensis*, a chronicle compiled at Ely in the twelfth century from a wide variety of sources.[22] Ely had been re-founded in 970 by Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester and the monks seem to have had little first-hand information about the early monastery apparently destroyed by the Vikings. The passages identifying Exning as the birth-place of St Æthelthryth, Blythburgh as the burial-place of King Anna, and *Seham* and *Redham* as churches established by St Felix (the former with a Lutting *clito*) may draw on local tradition, although they could simply have been invented to fill gaps in the historical record. *Seham* is identified with Soham in Cambridgeshire, and *Redham* with Reedham in Norfolk.[23]

Burna and Hadleigh feature in the *Annals of St Neots*, another twelfth-century composite chronicle, from Bury St Edmunds.[24] The *Annals* locate Edmund's coronation at *Burna* (supposedly Bures) under 856 and the burial of King Guthrum, Alfred's godson, at the 'royal vill' of Hadleigh under 890.[25] The compiler built around borrowings from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Asser's Life of King Alfred, Norman annals, and Bede, but took a marked interest in East Anglian affairs.[26] The source of his information concerning Edmund and Guthrum is unknown.

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[22] *LE*, i.3, p. 13 (Exning); *LE*, i.6, p. 17 (*Seham*, *Redham*); *LE*, i.7, p. 18 (Blythburgh).
[23] The reference to Soham is supported by William of Malmesbury: *GPA*, ii.74.2, p. 234. Reedham is not otherwise attested before DB, but early churches often re-used Roman sites, and the present parish church of St John the Baptist stands on the foundations of a Roman fortlet: 'Foundations of Roman Fortlet Discovered beneath Reedham Church', *Great Yarmouth Mercury* (13 July 2017), http://www.greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk/news/foundations-of-roman-fortlet-discovered-beneath-reedham-church-1-5104304 (30 October 2018); 'Dig Confirms "Beyond any Doubt" Reedham Church Built on Site of Roman Fortlet', *Great Yarmouth Mercury* (25 April 2018), http://www.greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk/news/reading-archaeologists-find-st-john-baptist-church-built-on-fortlet-1-5490859 (30 October 2018).
[24] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 17: The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, ed. D.N. Dumville and M. Lapidge (Cambridge, 1984), *s.a.* 856 (*Burna*), *s.a.*, 890 (Hadleigh).
[25] The identification of *Burna* with Bures, which would appear etymologically unlikely, is made by the chronicler in a marginal note: 'uel Buran' (ibid., *s.a.* 856, n. 2). Bures means 'the cottages' (*CDEPN*, *s.v.*), and it is never otherwise recorded in the form *Burna*, which indicates a stream.
[26] *Annals of St Neots*, ed. Dumville and Lapidge, pp. lxii-lxiii.

Loddon, Babingley, and Mendham are mentioned only in the thirteenth-fourteenth century *Liber Albus* of Bury St Edmunds.[27] The relevant passage connects St Felix and Luthing *ætheling* with the foundation of churches at Loddon, Reedham, and Babingley, and states that the coffin of a 'Bishop Edmund' had been found at Mendham. Although the reference to Reedham finds independent support, the other three do not. Nothing connects Babingley with St Felix except its late parish church dedication, which may itself draw on the *Liber Albus* tradition.[28] Nor does any bishop called Edmund appear in the episcopal lists for East Anglia.[29]

Even if all these references could be proved reliable, they represent no more than a list of names, compressing information from three centuries and taking no account of the kingdom's changing fortunes. Thus East Anglia was conventionally taken to include part of what is now eastern Cambridgeshire as far as the Devil's Dyke (a frontier long preserved by the diocese of Norwich), but this area was eventually separated from it.[30] The distribution of locations identified with the independent East Anglian kingdom (Map 3) plainly reflects historical accident rather than any recoverable system. Nonetheless, these places are our most obvious guide to where the early centres of authority may have been, and must be examined for their importance in 1066.

The day of Edward the Confessor's death is the first date at which the locations in question can be examined side-by-side. Their state in 1066 supplies an initial measure of

[27] Quoted by Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, p. 144. On the manuscript involved see T. Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c.650-1200* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 97, n. 163.
[28] Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation*, p. 97; N. Batcock, *The Ruined and Disused Churches of Norfolk* (Gressenhall, 1991), p. 88.
[29] *Anglo-Saxon Episcopal Lists*, ed. R.I. Page, 'Anglo-Saxon Episcopal Lists, III', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 10 (1966), pp. 5, 11, 16.
[30] *PStE*, ch. 2, pp. 69-70; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 115, n. 32.

administrative continuity over the preceding two centuries. Four unidentified locations (*Dommoc*, *Cnobheresburg*, *Hægelisdun*, and *Suthtun*) must be excluded for this exercise. The remainder are tabulated below. Continuity of tenure is assessed as far as the material allows, the number of manorial centres recorded TRE acting as a measure of tenurial fragmentation. Where centres are known to have been associated with territories, this provides another possible indication of long-term administrative importance.

Table 1. TRE land tenure in early centres recorded by written sources.

Vill *(DB entry for main TRE holding)*	**Individuals named in connection with first reference**	**Main TRE landholder by area**	**Total manorial centres within vill**	**Territorial role**
Babingley *DB Norfolk, 29.3 (LDB f. 245b)*	St Felix; Luthing *ætheling*	Skule	2	—
Blythburgh *DB Suffolk, 1.12 (LDB f. 282a)*	King Anna	King Edward	1	Hundredal manor for Blything hundred.
Bures *DB Suffolk, 55.1 (LDB f. 435b)*	King Edmund	Wulfric son of Beorhtric	3	—
Bury St Edmunds *DB Suffolk, 14.167 (LDB f. 372a)*	King Sigeberht	Bury St Edmunds Abbey	—	—
East Dereham *DB Norfolk, 15.16 (LDB f. 214a)*	St Wihtburh	Ely Abbey	2	Hundredal manor for Mitford hundred-and-a-half.
North Elmham *DB Norfolk, 10.5 (LDB f. 191b)*	Bishop Alhheard	Bishop Æthelmær	1	—
Ely *DB Cambs., 5.57 (GDB f. 192a)*	St Æthelthryth	Ely Abbey	1	Hundredal manor for the two hundreds of the Isle of Ely.
Exning *DB Cambs., 1.12 (GDB f. 189d)*	St Æthelthryth	Eadgifu the Fair	2	—
Hadleigh *DB Suffolk, 15.2 (LDB f. 372b)*	King Guthrum	Christ Church, Canterbury	1	—
Iken *[not separately recorded in DB]*	St Botwulf	—	—	—
Loddon *DB Norfolk, 14.35 (LDB f. 211b)*	St Felix; Luthing *ætheling*	Bury St Edmunds Abbey	3	Lent its name to Loddon hundred, but not a hundredal manor.[31]

[31] O.S. Anderson, *English Hundred-Names* (Lund, 1934), p. 82.

Mendham *DB Suffolk, 14.106* *(LDB f. 368a-b)*	'Bishop Edmund'	Bury St Edmunds Abbey	3	Possibly once head of a more extensive territory.[32]
Reedham *DB Norfolk, 19.24* *(LDB f. 224a)*	St Felix; Luthing *ætheling*	Beorhtric	2	—
Rendlesham *DB Suffolk, 6.272* *(LDB f. 326a)*	King Æthelwald	Ulfkil	2	—
Soham *DB Cambs., 1.1* *(GDB f. 189b-c)*	St Felix; Lutting *clito*	King Edward	3	—
Sudbury *DB Suffolk, 1.97* *(LDB f. 286b)*	Bishop Ælfhun	Earl Morcar's mother	1	—
Thetford *DB Norfolk, 1.70* *(LDB ff. 118b-119a)*	Danish army	King Edward	—	Reckoned as a hundred in its own right in 1066.

The information available seems to suggest that the places examined often stayed in (or returned to) influential hands. Tenurial fragmentation was in most cases limited, indicating that centres tended to endure as going concerns. Even so, it would be unsafe to conclude that continuity was the rule. Not all the early references inspire confidence, and the contrary fates of two royal vills illustrate the dangers of drawing conclusions from evidence as thin as this.

Blythburgh, named in connection with a seventh-century king, resurfaces as a royal manor TRE. In the eleventh century it was the head of Blything hundred—a unit bearing a characteristically early folk-name and bounded on its inland side by a watershed, and therefore almost certainly much older than the hundredal system itself.[33] Both Blythburgh and Blything hundred took their names from the river Blyth, which flows past Blythburgh and whose catchment helped to define the territory.[34] This suggests that Blythburgh was a long-standing territorial centre, and the royal manor's judicial and monetary privileges over

[32] P.M. Warner, *The Origins of Suffolk* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 132-3.
[33] Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization', pp. 23-6.
[34] *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'River Blyth', 'Blythburgh'.

the nearby commercial centre of Dunwich only reinforce the impression.[35] In short, Blythburgh probably saw both tenurial and territorial continuity. Rendlesham, described as a *vicus regius* by Bede, has rather better credentials as an early royal centre than Blythburgh. The proximity of the Sutton Hoo ship burial, and the recent discovery of high-status metalwork in the parish, offer further support for a royal presence.[36] Rendlesham has come to be seen as a focal point for the East Anglian dynasty's putative heartland in southeast Suffolk.[37] Attempts have consequently been made to reconstruct administrative territories around it.[38] But by 1066 Rendlesham was divided into unremarkable holdings, the largest of which was a layman's carucate, and had lost all its former importance.[39]

Although the evidence concerning early centres of authority is ambiguous so far, the sample can be expanded on archaeological evidence. Discoveries in recent decades hold out hope of identifying more of East Anglia's high-status settlements. Extensive field-walking and metal detecting in the region have contributed to the identification of a class of sites characterised by high-status metalwork, *sceatta* coinage, and Ipswich Ware (a distinctive wheel-thrown ceramic produced around Ipswich, datable to c. 720-850). These locations have come to be termed 'productive sites', a term loosely denoting sites 'productive' in Middle Saxon coinage or material culture.[40] 'Productive sites' are not confined to East Anglia, but a significant number have come to light in Norfolk and Suffolk. Some evidence suggests that this kind of

[35] *DB Suffolk*, 6.89 (LDB ff. 312a-b).
[36] J. Plouviez, 'Nighthawks at Rendlesham', *Saxon: Newsletter of the Sutton Hoo Society*, 49 (2009), http://suttonhoo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Saxon49.pdf (31 October 2018), pp. 1-2; C. Scull, F. Minter, and J. Plouviez, 'Social and Economic Complexity in Early Medieval England: A Central Place Complex of the East Anglian Kingdom at Rendlesham, Suffolk', *Antiquity*, 90/354 (2016).
[37] Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 69; T. Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c. 650-1200* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 225; T. Williamson, *Sutton Hoo and its Landscape: The Context of Monuments* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 17-21.
[38] Warner, *Origins of Suffolk*, pp. 115-8; 164.
[39] *DB Suffolk*, 6.272 (LDB f. 326a).
[40] T. Pestell, 'Markets, Emporia, *Wics*, and "Productive" Sites: Pre-Viking Trade Centres in Anglo-Saxon England', in H. Hamerow et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 562-3.

elite settlement may have been distinct from secular centres and associated particularly with ecclesiastical foundations.[41] The table below summarises LDB information for vills associated with known 'productive sites'.[42]

Table 2. TRE land tenure in early centres indicated by 'productive sites'.

Productive site *(DB entry for main TRE holding)*	**No. of landholders TRE (of which thegns, freemen, sokemen)**	**Largest holding by area and then value (holder TRE)**	**Manorial centres**	**Territorial role**
Barham *DB Suffolk, 21.26 (LDB f. 383b)*	17 (16)	4 carucates (Ely Abbey)	3	—
Bawsey *DB Norfolk, 7.1 (LDB f. 153b)*	2 (2)	1 carucate (Godwine)	1	—
Brandon *DB Suffolk, 21.5 (LDB ff. 381b-382a)*	1 (0)	5 carucates (Ely Abbey)	1	—
Burgh Castle *DB Suffolk, 69.1 (LDB f. 445a)*	1 (0)	4 carucates (Bishop Stigand)	1	—
The Burnhams *DB Norfolk, 1.147 (LDB f. 128a)*	11 (10)	3 carucates (Ulf)	7	—
Burrow Hill (in Butley, Suffolk) *(Uncertain)*	18 (18)	Uncertain	0	—
Caister *DB Norfolk, 17.63 (LDB f. 221a)*	81 (80)	1 carucate (St Benet's at Holme)	1	—
Caistor St Edmund *DB Norfolk, 14.15 (LDB f. 210a)*	6.5 (5.5)	3 carucates (Bury St Edmunds Abbey)	1	—
Coddenham *DB Suffolk, 7.67 (LDB f. 338a)*	91 (89)	76 acres (Wighulf)	7	—
Congham *DB Norfolk, 8.26 (LDB f. 161a)*	3 (2)	1 carucate (unnamed freeman)	2	—
Hindringham *DB Norfolk, 10.10 (LDB f. 192a)*	15 (13)	4 carucates (Bishop of Thetford)	1	—
Lynn *DB Norfolk, 22.19 (LDB f. 236a)*	9 (9)	Uncertain	0	—

[41] J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 204-12, 258-9; A. Tester et al., *Staunch Meadow, Brandon, Suffolk: A High Status Middle Saxon Settlement on the Fen Edge* (Gressenhall, 2014), pp. 380-83, 392-3.

[42] The locations are taken from Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation*, p. 35, fig. 8, and Pestell, 'Markets, Emporia, *Wics*, and "Productive" Sites', p. 558, fig. 29.1.

Outwell *DB Norfolk, 16.2* *(LDB f. 215b)*	2 (?)	Uncertain (Ramsey Abbey)	0	—
Rudham *DB Norfolk, 8.107* *(LDB f. 169a)*	4 (4)	3 carucates (Toki)	4	—
Walton Castle *DB Suffolk, 7.76* *(LDB f. 339b)*	18 (17)	2 carucates (Northmann)	1	Has been proposed as the location of *Dommoc*, the first East Anglian see.[43]
West Walton *DB Norfolk, 8.21* *(LDB f. 160a-b)*	6 (5)	4 carucates (Toki)	3	—
Wisbech *DB Cambs., 5.55* *(GDB f. 192a)*	1 (0)	10 hides (Ely Abbey)	1	—
Wormegay *DB Norfolk, 13.4* *(LDB f. 206a)*	3 (3)	1 carucate; (Thorkil)	1	—

This approach is not altogether new. Tim Pestell has employed it to investigate an apparent coincidence between 'productive sites' and later monastic foundations, concluding that tenurial stability and religious importance tended to reinforce one another.[44] But there is no evidence of corresponding administrative continuity. The territories identified around Rudham and Coddenham were mere shadows even in 1066.[45] No known 'productive site' was held by the king in 1066, although at least one had passed through royal hands.[46] None bore any convincing relationship to a hundred. By contrast, in seven cases the largest landholder was a substantial freeman. In a further six, it was one of the great Benedictine abbeys. As Bishop Æthelwold is known to have purchased lands for Ely from laypeople on the open market, it may be that more 'productive sites' had once been in lay hands. The overall impression is that these middle-Saxon centres had mostly fallen out of elite control.

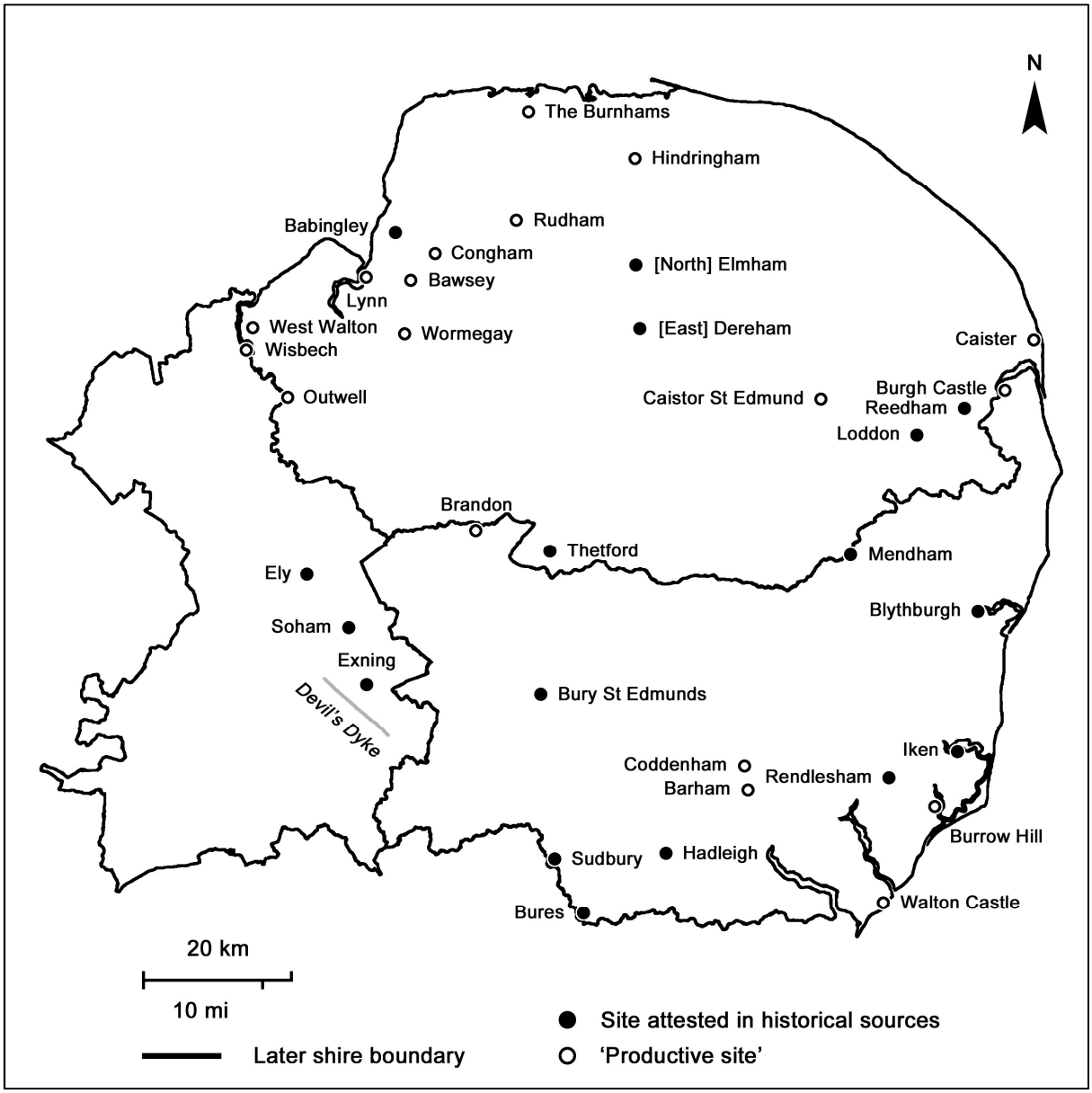
[43] S.E. Rigold, 'The Supposed See of Dunwich', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series, 24 (1961); *idem*, 'Further Evidence about the Site of "Dommoc"', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series, 37 (1974); A. Breeze, 'Bede's *Civitas Domnoc* and Dunwich, Suffolk', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 36 (2005).
[44] T. Pestell, 'The Afterlife of "Productive" Sites in East Anglia', in T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (eds.), *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850* (Bollington, 2003), pp. 122, 137.
[45] Reconstructed in Pestell, 'The Afterlife', pp. 128-9, 136-7.
[46] Bury St Edmunds Abbey acquired Caistor St Edmund from Edward the Confessor: *BBen*, B, C, D, E.

Although many of the relevant vills retained large estates, most were somewhat fragmented, and Burnham and Coddenham were distinctly broken-up. No former 'productive site' was an outstandingly large, let alone hundredal, manor TRE.

A conspicuous feature of the 'productive sites' is their concentration in north-west Norfolk, south-east Suffolk, and around the Great Estuary, where navigable rivers were conducive to long-distance trade. This agrees with their essentially economic definition: while 'productive sites' were probably under elite control, not all elite sites were 'productive'. The suspicion that they differed from other centres may find support in Domesday. Despite ceasing to be active in high-status trade, some 'productive sites' seem to have remained economically important. Fisheries were prominent in Wisbech, with 20 recorded fishermen.[47] Salt production was important in Caister, where 80 free men maintained 39 salt-houses.[48] Perhaps for related reasons, the great abbeys of the tenth and eleventh centuries seem to have favoured former 'productive sites' on navigable waterways, rather than those inland.

The 'productive sites' are valuable in providing strong, if general, evidence for where the heartlands of the East Anglian kingdom lay (Map 4). One cluster matches historical evidence and previous archaeological discoveries in pointing to the Gipping and Deben catchments of south-east Suffolk. An even larger group suggests undocumented wealth and trading activity in north-west Norfolk. These concentrations align suggestively with reconstructed *sceatta* minting areas.[49] As regards organisation, however, the 'productive sites' are even less helpful than documented centres.

[47] *DB Cambs.*, 5.56 (GDB f. 192a); 6.2 (GDB f. 192b); 7.12 (GDB f. 192d); 9.4 (GDB f. 193a); 18.9 (GDB f. 196c).
[48] *DB Norfolk*, 1.201 (LDB f. 134a).
[49] D.M. Metcalf, 'Determining the Mint-Attribution of East Anglian Sceattas through Regression Analysis', *BNJ*, 70 (2001).



Map 4. 'Productive sites' alongside places attested in written sources.

It would be impossible to argue for widespread continuity on the evidence considered so far. Sites attested in written sources probably represent no more than accidents of historical survival. The more uniform 'productive sites' sometimes remained important in the local economy, but not in the administrative framework. Neither category provides a likely guide to any system which the West Saxons might have encountered in 917.

ROYAL DEMESNE IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES

If there was an administrative legacy from independent East Anglia, it can only be identified by retrogressive means. As material relating to the early kingdom has proved inconclusive, our only recourse is to the still threadbare evidence from the period 917×1066 or the detailed but even later information of LDB. Royal demesne recorded in sources from this period offers a further sample to examine for signs of long-term continuity. Evidence from other regions, discussed in Chapter I, suggests that West Saxon kings may have expected to inherit anything recognisable as royal demesne at the time when they asserted their kingship.[50] Where there is evidence to associate royal manors with control over wider areas, the arrangement may therefore reflect organisational structures reaching further back in time. Features of interest in this respect include food-renders and appendant hundreds.

The extent of the royal demesne in East Anglia at any time before 1066 is unknown, and an attempt to reconstruct it necessarily involves conflating information from different sources and dates. Such an exercise yields a list of places where there was royal demesne at one time

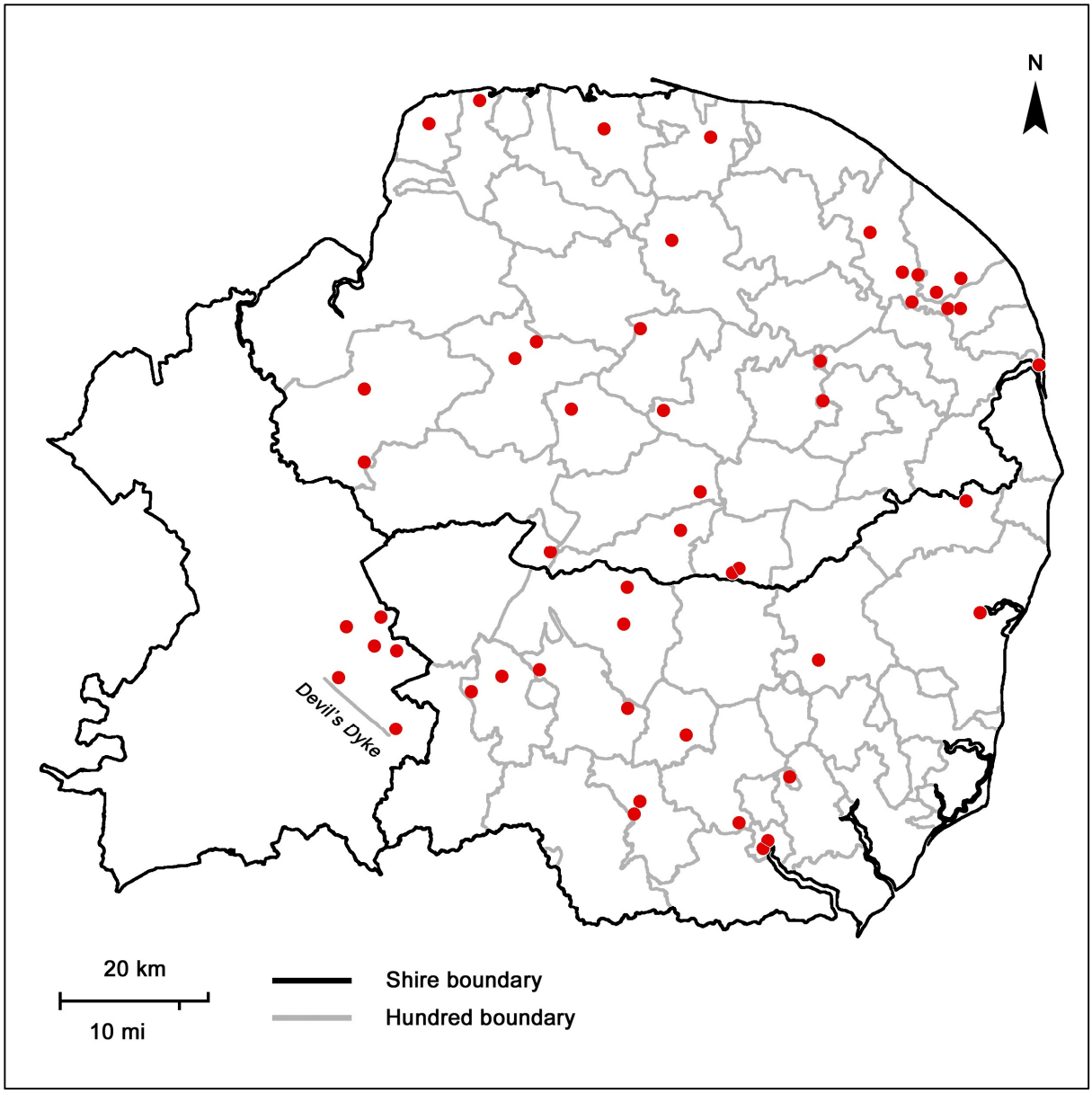
[50] See pp. 61-3.

or another between 917 and 1066. It is, of course, impossible to be sure whether this body of estates was inherited intact at the beginning of the period. To exclude later acquisitions as far as possible, the estates listed here are those identifiable as royal at, or before, their first mention. For example, Brancaster is included because it is described as a *regia villa* at its first appearance, even though the context is its donation to Ramsey Abbey by an ealdorman's wife.[51] Mildenhall, first mentioned in a writ of Edward the Confessor granting it to Bury St Edmunds, is not included because it had previously been held by the king's mother.[52] Places north of the Stour and east of the Devil's Dyke which match these criteria, are listed below and plotted in Map 5.

Five estates first appear in documents recording their alienation by a king. Southery was granted by Edmund to Bishop Theodred of London in 942.[53] Edgar was responsible for the grants of Chelsworth to Æthelflæd *matrona* in 962, and of Stoke by Ipswich to Ely Abbey in 970.[54] Cnut gave Woodditton to Ely, as part of an exchange, in 1022.[55] A further apparent grant of Cnut, by which Worlingworth passed to Bishop Ælfric II of Elmham, is mentioned in that bishop's will.[56] Edward the Confessor conveyed Coney Weston to Bury St Edmunds in the 1050s.[57]

Other royal gifts, for which no documentation survives, are recorded in narrative accounts or benefactor lists from the region's four chief monastic houses. Ely Abbey supplies one further reference, noting Edgar's gift of East Dereham to Bishop Æthelwold in the *Liber Eliensis*.[58]

[51] *CAR*, ch. 30-31, pp. 57-8.
[52] S 1069.
[53] S 483.
[54] S 703, 781.
[55] S 958.
[56] S 1489.
[57] S 1080.
[58] *LE*, ii.40, pp. 113-14.



Map 5. Royal demesne in East Anglia recorded for the period 917×1066.

At Bury St Edmunds, lists of benefactors trace several of the abbey's estates to otherwise undocumented royal gifts. A grant by Edmund in 945 accounts for Fornham St Martin, and one by Eadwig in 956 for Beccles.[59] Caistor St Edmund, Risby, Stanton, and part of Woolpit are said to have been given to Bury by Edward the Confessor.[60] Ramsey Abbey's domestic chronicle records various acquisitions, including Burwell, which it traces to a grant of Edgar.[61] Brancaster was given by Wulfgifu, widow of Ealdorman Æthelwine, at some time between 995 and 1001. However, it is described as a *regia villa*, implying that it had been royal demesne before passing into the hands of Æthelwine or his wife.[62] A further two gifts, Ringstead and Wimbotsham, are ascribed to Edward the Confessor.[63]

St Benet's at Holme produced at least three overlapping lists of benefactors, two of which attribute significant gifts to Cnut. A charter of Cnut granting some of the estates in question, is generally held to be a forgery.[64] The spurious general confirmation of the abbey's lands by Edward the Confessor (S 1055) names grantors for individual possessions, and has therefore been thought to preserve an authentic list of benefactors.[65] Closely related to this is another list, incorporating most of the same names, which appears in the Chronicle of John of Oxnead.[66] A third list names benefactors admitted into confraternity with the monks, again with the location of their gifts.[67] Both S 1055 and the Oxnead list attribute multiple gifts to an 'Egelwinus alderman'. Suggested identifications of this name with historical figures,

[59] *BBen* A, C, E (Fornham St Martin); A, E (Beccles).
[60] *BBen* B, C, D, E (Caistor St Edmund); A, C, E (Risby, Stanton, Woolpit).
[61] *CAR*, ch. 24, p. 47.
[62] *CAR*, ch. 30-31, pp. 57-8.
[63] *CAR*, ch. 95, p. 160.
[64] S 984.
[65] *Early Charters of Eastern England*, ed. C.R. Hart (Leicester, 1966), no. 134, pp. 92-4.
[66] *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1859), pp. 291-2.
[67] *St Benet of Holme, 1020-1210: the 11th and 12th Century Sections of Cott. MS. Galba E.ii*, ed. J.R. West, Norfolk Record Society, 2-3 (2 vols, Fakenham, 1932), i, no. 62, p. 33.

Ealdorman Æthelwine (d. 992) or Æthelwig of Thetford (fl. 1066), are unconvincing.[68] It seems more likely that the name of Æthelwine, a well-known supporter of monasticism, was applied indiscriminately to possessions of forgotten provenance. The dubious figure of 'Egelwinus' does not feature in the confraternity list, which attributes some of his supposed donations to Cnut. The confraternity list inspires a measure of confidence with its generally more obscure names, two of which find support in LDB.[69] In the absence of clear grounds for discounting them, the following estates traced to Cnut in the confraternity list—Ashby, Potter Heigham, Horning, Irstead, Ludham, Neatishead, Thurne, and Worstead—are therefore included here.

LDB represents firmer ground, giving an apparently comprehensive account of the royal demesne as it stood in 1066. It makes clear that the urbanised burghal centres, which will be examined in the next chapter, all counted as royal possessions: King Edward held Norwich, Yarmouth, and Thetford, while Ipswich was a possession of the Queen. In Norfolk, Edward held Foulsham, Hingham, Holt, Kenninghall, Saham Toney, *Watlingeseta* (lost in Diss), and Wighton.[70] Two further manors—Sporle and Swaffham—had only recently been given to Earl Ralph.[71] The same can be inferred for [Old] Buckenham.[72] In Suffolk, the king held

[68] *Early Charters*, ed. Hart, pp. 93-4; Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 555-6. It is unclear whether St Benet's existed as a monastic foundation in Æthelwine's time and whether he had a significant presence so far east (see Chapter V). Æthelwig appears an unlikely benefactor, considering that both he and his son Stanheard despoiled the abbey of lands: *St Benet of Holme*, ed. West, i, Appendix A, pp. 169-70.
[69] Its reference to 'Edwinus et Ingreda' as the donors of [Little] Melton is supported by Edwin's will (S 1516) and *DB Norfolk*, 12.32 (LDB f. 204b). 'Leffwaldus', the donor of Tibenham (as opposed to 'Egelwinus' in S 1055 and Oxnead), seems likely to be the thegn bearing the uncommon name Leofweald who still held land not far off TRE: *DB Norfolk*, 13.24 (LDB f. 208a-b); 35.2 (LDB f. 258b). See 'Leofweald 25' in *PASE DB*.
[70] Foulsham: *DB Norfolk*, 1.52 (LDB f. 114a-b); Hingham: 1.11 (ff. 110b-111a); Holt: 1.19-28 (ff. 111b-112b); Kenninghall: 1.143 (f. 127a-b); Saham Toney: 1.3 (f. 110a); *Watlingeseta*: 1.50 (f. 114a); Wighton: 1.32 (ff. 112b-113a).
[71] Sporle: *DB Norfolk*, 1.71 (LDB ff. 119b-120a); Swaffham: 4.1 (f. 144a). The entry for Sporle states that the manor 'fuit de regno' TRE, and that for Swaffham that it 'pertinuit ad regionem'. G.S. Garnett, 'The Origins of the Crown', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 89 (1996), p. 186 notes the distinction between these two phrases; however, the context appears to be the same.
[72] *DB Norfolk*, 1.139 (LDB ff. 126b-127a); cf. 6.1 (f. 152a). The manor was held by Earl Ralph TRE but is also named (likewise TRE) as a centre of the king's soke.

Barrow, Blythburgh, Bramford, Diss, and Thorney TRE.[73] Queen Edith held only Bildeston and Swilland.[74] In the portion of Cambridgeshire historically reckoned within East Anglia, King Edward's manors were Chippenham, Fordham, Isleham, and Soham.[75] An element of doubt arises from the Norman denial of Harold's reign, which leaves open the possibility that some manors listed under his name may have been royal demesne.[76] However, none of the relevant entries in Norfolk or Suffolk give strong reason to think so.

This list permits some general observations. Much as elsewhere, royal possessions were confined to a limited number of large manors, although they could not compare with the ancestral West Saxon estates in value. The king held more in Norfolk than in Suffolk, while lands held by the queen in 1066 were insignificant on a regional scale. Geographically, royal lands were concentrated in areas west of and astride the central watershed. Excepting the cluster of estates in the far north-east, which St Benet's at Holme claimed to have acquired from Cnut, royal landholding was much thinner in the river basins draining eastwards.

More significant patterns emerge once the relevant manors are considered individually. One of these is a recurring association between royal estates and political units: ten of the twenty manors in Norfolk and Suffolk which Edward the Confessor is recorded to have held during his reign, had appendant hundreds at this time. If one counts only those manors which stayed in royal hands until 1066, the proportion rises to eight out of twelve. This may suggest that Edward preferred to retain manors with attached hundreds, and give away more compact

[73] Barrow: *DB Suffolk*, 1.120 (LDB f. 289b); Blythburgh: 1.12 (f. 282a); Bramford: 1.2 (f. 281b); Diss: 1.8 (f. 282a); Thorney: 1.1 (f. 281b).
[74] Bildeston: *DB Suffolk*, 41.1 (LDB f. 426a); Swilland: 41.2 (f. 426a-b).
[75] Chippenham: *DB Cambs.*, 22.6 (GDB f. 197b); Fordham: 1.2 (f. 189c); Isleham: 1.3 (f. 189c); Soham: 1.1 (f. 189b-c).
[76] This was almost certainly the case in Essex: J.H. Round, 'Introduction to the Essex Domesday', in *VCH Essex* (11 vols, London, 1903–), i, pp. 336-7.

ones. Across Norfolk and Suffolk, LDB connects fifteen manors with their own hundred. King Edward held eight of these, the remainder being divided between Stigand, the bishop of Thetford, Ely Abbey, Ramsey Abbey, Earl Harold, and Ralph the Staller. Those held by Ramsey Abbey and Ralph the Staller are recorded as alienations of Edward's reign and, unless some examples were tied to a particular office (as the manor of Hoxne, with Bishop's hundred, certainly was), it seems likely that Stigand and Harold had also acquired their hundredal manors recently. Moreover, only the grants to major abbeys need have been permanent. The bedrock of royal landholding in the region seems to have consisted of manors with territorial associations. These were kept, if not within the royal demesne, then well within the king's reach.

A more obviously archaic feature of some manors were customary food-renders. Whereas hundreds (appendant or otherwise) can hardly pre-date the tenth century as institutions, the need to raise *feorm* had influenced territorial organisation for much longer.[77] GDB shows that various large demesne manors in Wessex were burdened with the *firma unius noctis* rather than a hidage assessment. By the eleventh century these food-rents were gradually being commuted, but they seem to have marked long-standing and stable royal possessions.[78] LDB references to *firma* are not informative in this respect. A farm of so many nights or days is only mentioned twice TRE, in connection with non-royal estates: Earl Harold's manor of Necton and a Bury St Edmunds holding at Broome.[79] Royal manors, however, sometimes owed renders of honey reckoned in 'days', 'nights' or sextars. These obligations might be

[77] J. Campbell, 'Bede's *Reges* and *Principes*', in *idem*, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte, 1986), pp. 95-6; 'The Significance of the Anglo-Norman State in the Administrative History of Western Europe', in *Essays*, pp. 172-3.
[78] Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 482-3; P. Stafford, 'The "Farm of One Night" and the Organization of King Edward's Estates in Domesday', *EcHR*, 33/4 (1980), pp. 497-8; B.A.E. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995), pp. 243-4; R. Faith, '*Feorm*', in *WBEASE*, pp. 186-7.
[79] Necton: *DB Norfolk*, 22.1-8; 22.10-23 (LDB ff. 235a-236b); Broome: *DB Norfolk*, 14.35 (LDB f. 211b).

recorded as part of the manorial value or as an additional *consuetudo*, depending on the individual entry, but the principle was evidently the same. Only manors which had been in King Edward's hands until very recently, and had appendant hundreds, owed honey TRE. Honey was typical of early royal dues, being difficult to obtain, easily transported, and amenable to various uses.[80] The laws of Ine specify a honey render from every ten hides, and Alfred's code mentions that stealing bees had once been an offence on a level with stealing gold or horses.[81] As the only non-monetary payments recorded for East Anglian royal manors TRE, the honey renders of LDB appear incongruous as well as limited in value, and may well have been a survival from earlier centuries.

For all the apparent archaism of some dues, it is clear that the royal farm was not static. Pauline Stafford has argued that the West Saxon royal estates were actively managed with the farm of one night in mind.[82] The monetary value assigned to one night, as well as the precise renders involved, differed between shires. Cambridgeshire royal manors were organised to provide uniform monetary payments and renders of honey, grain, and malt. Stafford interprets the honey renders of Norfolk and Suffolk as part of a similar system, common to both shires, connecting this with the fact that they shared a sheriff.[83] The extent of active farm organisation is best examined through a tabular representation of Edward the Confessor's recorded demesne.

[80] P. Blinkhorn, 'Of Cabbages and Kings: Production, Trade, and Consumption in Middle-Saxon England', in M. Anderton (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: Beyond the Emporia* (Glasgow, 1999), p. 16.
[81] Ine 70.1; Af 9.2.
[82] Stafford, 'The "Farm of One Night"'. More, but not total stability is detected by R. Lavelle, 'The "Farm of One Night" and the Organisation of Royal Estates in Late Anglo-Saxon Wessex', *HSJ*, 14 (2003).
[83] Stafford, 'The "Farm of One Night"', pp. 496-7.

Table 3. Royal demesne in East Anglia under Edward the Confessor.

NORFOLK				
Manors held by Edward the Confessor in the course of his reign	**TRE value**	**Alienated 1042×1066?**	**Hundredal manor?**	**Hundred**
Buckenham *DB Norfolk, 1.139 (LDB ff. 126b-127a)*	£6 13s 4d; 2 sextars of honey	X	X	Shropham
Caistor St Edmund *DB Norfolk, 14.15 (LDB f. 210a)*	40s	X		Henstead
Foulsham *DB Norfolk, 1.52 (LDB f. 114a-b)*	£13 at face value; 13 sextars of honey with customary dues		X	Eynsford
Hingham *DB Norfolk, 1.11 (LDB ff. 110b-111a)*	£7½ blanched; 30s and 3 sextars of honey in customary dues		X	Forehoe
Holt *DB Norfolk, 1.19-28 (LDB ff. 111b-112b)*	£20; 1 night's honey; 100s in customary dues		X	Holt
Kenninghall *DB Norfolk, 1.143 (LDB f. 127a-b)*	£10; 5 sextars of honey		X	Guiltcross
Ringstead *DB Norfolk, 16.5 (LDB f. 215b)*	£6	X		Smethdon
Saham Toney *DB Norfolk, 1.3-5 (LDB f. 110a)*	£12; ½ day's honey; customary honey dues		X	Wayland
Sporle *DB Norfolk, 1.71 (LDB ff. 119b-120a)*	£10	X		South Greenhoe
Swaffham *DB Norfolk, 4.1 (LDB f. 144a)*	£8; 20s besides (?)	X		South Greenhoe
Watlingeseta *DB Norfolk, 1.50 (LDB f. 114a)*	valued as part of Diss, Suffolk			Diss
Wighton *DB Norfolk, 1.32 (LDB ff. 112b-113a)*	£10; 6½ sextars of honey; 41s of customary dues		X	North Greenhoe
Wimbotsham *DB Norfolk, 16.1 (LDB f. 215b)*	£4	X	X	Clackclose

SUFFOLK				
Manors held by Edward the Confessor in the course of his reign	**TRE value**	**Alienated 1042×1066?**	**Hundredal manor?**	**Hundred**
Barrow *DB Suffolk, 1.120 (LDB f. 289b)*	£10			Thingoe
Blythburgh *DB Suffolk, 1.12 (LDB f. 282a)*	£30 at face value; 1 day's honey (with whole customary due)		X	Blything
Bramford *DB Suffolk, 1.2 (LDB f. 281b)*	£[?] TRE [£15 by weight TRW]			Bosmere
Diss *DB Suffolk, 1.8 (LDB f. 282a)*	£15 with soke of 1½ hundreds and ½ day's honey with customary dues		X	Hartismere
Risby *DB Suffolk, 14.1 (LDB f. 356b)*	£4	X		Thingoe
Stanton *DB Suffolk, 14.72 (LDB f. 364a-b)*	£6	X		Blackbourn
Thorney *DB Suffolk, 1.1 (LDB f. 281b)*	£15 at face value			Stow
Woolpit *DB Suffolk, 14.55 (LDB f. 362b)*	£3	X		Thedwestry

Considered as a whole, Edward the Confessor's East Anglian demesne does not suggest farm organisation on a regional scale. Revenues arising from the Norfolk manors were notably irregular and give the impression of following individual custom rather than administrative order. Their monetary components were governed by no common formula. Honey renders were reckoned variously in days, nights, or sextars, and described as values, customs, or both, depending on the manor. Nor did the amounts of honey involved conform to any obvious pattern. While it is unclear what volume a 'day' or 'night' represented, renders expressed in sextars were hardly very large: all cases except one bear comparison with the five sextars

which a single unfree, part-time beekeeper might be expected to produce.[84] Stafford's analysis is coloured by the fact that she considers only those Norfolk manors where honey was labelled a *consuetudo* (as opposed to part of the value), missing the full diversity of the renders.[85] When all are taken into account, payments suggest local custom rather than shrieval planning.

In Suffolk, meanwhile, there are signs that the authorities did attempt to regularise demesne payments. Although only two Suffolk manors rendered honey, the formula seems to have called for each manor to pay £15 and (perhaps) half a day's honey. This was the value ascribed to Diss, and the larger manor of Blythburgh paid exactly twice as much. Bramford and Thorney were valued at £15 each, with no mention of honey, leaving Barrow (£10) as the only anomaly. Royal farm management therefore seems to explain the Domesday anomaly that is the entry of Diss, in Norfolk, under the Suffolk hundred of Hartismere. At some point it evidently became necessary to bundle the soke of Hartismere hundred, the manors of Diss and *Watlingeseta* across the Waveney, and the soke of the Norfolk half-hundred attached to Diss, in order to make up the sum of £15 and half a day's honey. Nor was this the only case in which the scheme extended into Norfolk, for once it is recognised, the values ascribed to the East Anglian *burhs* appear similarly deliberate. Norwich paid £30 and 6 sextars of honey, Thetford £30 and 4 sextars, and Ipswich £15 and 6 sextars (in each case with further customary dues).[86] An attempt seems to have been made to organise royal income from East Anglia in units of £15 plus honey, but it was incomplete in Suffolk and confined to *burhs* in Norfolk.[87]

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[84] Rect 5.
[85] Stafford, 'The "Farm of One Night"', p. 496: Saham Toney, Hingham, Holt, Wighton, and Foulsham.
[86] Norwich: *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB f. 117a); Thetford: *DB Norfolk*, 1.70 (LDB f. 119a); Ipswich: *DB Suffolk*, 1.122g (LDB f. 290b).
[87] Such an organising principle would match payments in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire: Stafford, 'The "Farm of One Night"', p. 496.

LDB information suggests that the royal demesne in East Anglia still functioned as much by custom as by command. The honey renders of some royal manors were a regional peculiarity and apparent archaism. While it is impossible to know how much of the ninth-century royal demesne survived to fall into West Saxon hands, manors which continued to find such payments must count among the likeliest survivors. In this connection it is striking that all royal manors which rendered honey in 1066 were hundredal centres. No royal manor yielding purely monetary payments was accorded this status. Where individual estates seem to show evidence of long-term continuity, it becomes plausible to look for signs of stability in the territorial order around them.

TERRITORIAL ORGANISATION BEFORE THE HUNDRED

The internal organisation of Anglian and Danish-ruled East Anglia is historically unknown. No memory of early folk-groups or administrative subdivisions, such as occasionally survived in other kingdoms, is preserved in writing. For territories as much as for individual estates, judging the extent of continuity is a matter of identifying early features in late material. Lacking even one documented unit to work from, historians looking for signs of pre-hundredal organisation have reached for formulaic schemes which seem to match the available information. Thus the eight-and-a-half hundreds which became the Liberty of St Edmund have been suggested as an early 'miniature shire' or *scir*.[88] The ecclesiastical centres of South Elmham and Mendham in Suffolk, and East Dereham in Norfolk, have been

[88] H.W.C. Davis, 'The Liberties of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR*, 24/95 (1909), p. 419; *KAS*, pp. xliv-xlvii.

identified as heads of minster-territories.[89] On the Suffolk coast, the hundred of Blything has been proposed as an early *regio*.[90] But plausible though most of these examples are, they tend to stand alone. If any wider system pre-dating the hundreds is to be identified, we must settle upon uniform categories of information to compare with later arrangements. Only then will it be possible to suggest how far the hundreds built on whatever organisation may have prevailed in 917 or 869.

Of the categories used to identify the territories quoted above, river catchments and watersheds are the most promising. Unlike archaic-looking renders or putative mother parishes, topographical features can be traced everywhere. The work of Tom Williamson has emphasised that watershed boundaries, in particular, were an important feature of the East Anglian landscape.[91] Such boundaries can be traced for miles, bending rather than cornering, instinctively finding the highest ground, and there often coinciding with stretches of heath or woodland. They frequently define district, parish, or field boundaries to this day. Williamson has observed that hundreds often obey watershed boundaries.[92] On lower ground, the hundreds are often bounded by major watercourses.[93] This topographical span reflected a framework fundamentally based on land-use, which can be envisaged as replicating the scheme of river and wold on a very small scale.[94] Valley floors were occupied by

[89] Warner, *Origins of Suffolk*, pp. 131-3; Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 71-2; Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, p. 99.
[90] Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization', pp. 23-6.
[91] Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, pp. 70-71; *idem*, *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England: Time and Topography* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 83-94; A. Mason and T. Williamson, 'Ritual Landscapes in Pagan and Early Christian England', *Fragments*, 6 (2017), [doi: 2027/spo.9772151.0006.003], pp. 84-6.
[92] E.g. Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, p. 71, fig. 3.3. The point is illustrated most strikingly by Mason and Williamson, 'Ritual Landscapes', p. 86, fig. 2 (a link is provided to a complete, electronic map of East Anglian hundreds and river catchments).
[93] Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, p. 128; C. Barringer, 'Norfolk Hundreds', in T. Ashwin and A. Davison (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk* (3rd edn, Chichester, 2005), pp. 96-7; Mason and Williamson, 'Ritual Landscapes', p. 85.
[94] A. Everitt, 'River and Wold: Reflections on the Historical Origin of Regions and *Pays*', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 3/1 (1977).

meadowland, while slightly higher and better-drained ground was favoured for major settlements and arable cultivation, which in turn gave way to rough grazing and woodland on exposed or infertile soils. In a landscape of subtle bands lying close together, it was sometimes possible to go from river to wold within a single parish. If hundreds sometimes took account of this organic framework, one may expect any earlier organisation to have followed it even more closely.

Of the written sources, only LDB presents a semblance of uniform information for the region as a whole. Attempts to reconstruct early territories from the documentary record characteristically proceed by seeking out various kinds of territorial linkage. These may be outlying pieces of manorial demesne, settlements owing archaic-looking labour services to a central manor, or dependent chapelries attached to a church, but the general premise is that they represent relict features of originally compact units. The shadows of putative, early territories are then traced by drawing a line to enclose the places so connected. Spatial relationships recorded in LDB mostly conform to one of three types: the berewick lying away from its parent manor, the holding valued within another holding, or the holding whose soke lay in a distant manor. Of these, berewicks and valuations may preserve long-standing relationships but cannot be relied upon. As functions of the manorial economy they would have been exposed to change in the ordinary course of lordly estate-management, particularly in the brisk land market which operated in East Anglia.[95]

This leaves soke bonds as the most promising feature for investigation. It is safe to assume that these were more stable than berewicks or joint valuations. Soke generally remained inert

[95] On berewicks see R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1997), pp. 42-7. In extreme cases, berewicks and parent manors might lie 19 miles (30km) or more apart: see e.g. *DB Norfolk*, 1.192 (LDB f. 132a-b). Such arrangements plainly reflected lordly accounting rather than ancient territories.

and detached from the immediate workings of the land market, as Domesday occasionally emphasises by stating that a soke-holder would retain soke over a piece of land no matter who might purchase it. In addition, as discussed in the previous chapter, it seems to have been a principle that the manipulation of soke was a royal prerogative.

Where the soke of outlying holdings was attached to a central manor, the resulting structure is usually termed a 'territorial soke' by modern scholarship. Territorial sokes were particularly characteristic of the shires of the 'Northern Danelaw', where the GDB scribe developed a distinctive and specific way of recording them. Manorial centres received a marginal 'M', berewicks a 'B', and sokelands an 'S'. If sokelands were numerous, the scribe listed them as a group after the manorial entry. There is no evidence for kings artificially attaching soke to manors, and territorial sokes should therefore be distinguished from soke held by virtue of a writ granting it over one of the conventional categories. In fact, soke in its simplex sense (as opposed to e.g. *ciricsocn*) first appears in tenth-century documents in connection with central manors.[96] Here it plainly stood for established relationships, and the concept underlying these relationships appears to have been one which kings later found it useful to apply to their whole realm.

GDB's way of recording territorial sokes makes it easy to define units seemingly attached to central manors. This has helped to associate the territorial soke with the 'multiple estate' model, which seeks to identify a stable and long-lived class of territory internally organised for the provisioning of early royal centres.[97] While the multiple estate template has been

[96] See above p. 82, n. 42.
[97] G.R.J. Jones, 'Multiple Estates and Early Settlement', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *English Medieval Settlement* (London, 1979).

widely criticised, not least for the undue specificity of the organisation proposed, a less formulaic view still sees the territorial soke as one manifestation of a wider phenomenon:

> From Kent to Northumbria, without a break, some system of 'extensive' royal lordship, based upon a unit known variously as lathe, soke, shire or *manerium cum appendiciis*, had survived long enough for its main features to be traceable in record [*sic*] of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[98]

The most recent and thorough survey of the Northern Danelaw sokes has been made by Dawn Hadley, who identifies a number of important patterns.[99] Various pre-Viking royal and ecclesiastical centres subsequently came to head sokes, and these centres were often topographically prominent and bore early place-names.[100] Their territories frequently spanned rivers and incorporated different resources.[101] On the other hand, there are signs that new sokes could be created and old ones modified.[102] Sokes frequently overlapped, sometimes sharing vills, and thus did not necessarily control contiguous territories.[103] Nor did they generally coincide with wapentake boundaries.[104] Hadley therefore cautions against attempting to find an orderly pattern of early sokes, preferring to emphasise their diversity in extent and age.[105] Where sokes did coincide with hundreds or wapentakes, both Frank Stenton and David Roffe have suggested that they may have originated in royal grants of soke over all the freemen within the relevant unit.[106]

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[98] G.W.S. Barrow, 'Pre-Feudal Scotland: Shires and Thanes', in *idem*, *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth century* (2nd edn., Edinburgh, 2003), p. 22.
[99] D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800-1100* (London, 2000), pp. 94-164. A briefer synthesis is Hadley, 'Multiple Estates and the Origins of the Manorial Structure of the Northern Danelaw', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 22/1 (1996).
[100] Hadley, *Northern Danelaw*, pp. 123-6.
[101] Ibid., p. 124.
[102] Ibid., pp. 140-4, 152-5.
[103] Ibid., pp. 112-4, 144-8.
[104] Ibid., pp. 105, 152-3.
[105] Ibid., pp. 126-7, 162-4.
[106] F.M. Stenton, *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw* (Oxford, 1910), p. 45; D. Roffe, 'Introduction', in *Alecto DB Norfolk*, p. 26.

LDB also records territorial sokes, but these East Anglian examples have attracted much less attention. This may be because they appear much less distinctly in the source. Where GDB is meticulous and formulaic about recording the sokelands attached to particular manors, LDB accords them no special treatment. The scribes neither used marginal letters nor grouped sokelands after their head manor. They did frequently note that the soke of a given holding was attached to a manor but adopted no set formula for doing so. Indeed the variety of phrasings is such that the distinction between territorial soke and granted soke can blur. Identifying sokes in LDB is therefore a much more contextual exercise than in GDB: to loosen the criteria too far would be to obliterate known distinctions, while ascribing meaning to every different formulation would produce mere white noise. Some sokes are better recorded than others, but it is still possible to consider them as a group.

It soon becomes clear that what look like territorial sokes in East Anglia differed from their Northern Danelaw counterparts in several respects. Whereas northern sokes cut across one another in bewildering patterns, East Anglian examples very rarely overlapped and tended to adjoin neatly. Boundaries can usually be inferred with confidence. East Anglian sokes also corresponded closely, although not perfectly, with hundreds, whereas northern examples generally ignored wapentakes. Further, close examination of how some LDB entries express territorial soke-bonds suggests a more fundamental distinction.

Northern sokes are sometimes described as archipelagos in view of their structure, which GDB records so precisely. They consisted of central manors to which individual, outlying sokelands were attached. GDB leaves no room for doubt as to the specificity of this scheme: the particular sokelands which it enumerates in carucates and bovates, and for which it provides total assessments, made up the soke of a given manor. Any lands not specifically

designated, did not form part of the soke. For this kind of structure the traditional depiction of a territorial soke, by means of lines joining the relevant places on a map, is entirely apt.[107]

LDB proceeds on an inverse principle. Instead of enumerating sokelands specifically, it appears to assume that everything within a given territory fell under the head manor's soke. This is sometimes spelled out, in statements assigning all soke of a given hundred to a manor, but more often the assumption is silent.[108] In such instances it can nonetheless be inferred from LDB's apparently inconsistent recording conventions. One indication is that LDB never makes any attempt to provide a total value for the soke of a manor; indeed, whereas the value of northern sokelands is usually included in that of their head manor, East Anglian holdings are generally valued individually. Nor did holdings assigned to East Anglian sokes conform to a uniform type. Some comprised a freeman's 30 or 60 acres, which would in other localities have been unattached, but which were often explicitly placed within the territorial soke where one was present. Others were manors in their own right, with a carucate or more and different classes of tenants. This pattern indicates that, in areas which were held to fall under the soke of a head manor, that manor effectively replaced the king as the default location of soke.[109] Most of the relevant manors were the king's but even so, this soke did not originate in the universal concept discussed in the previous chapter. It was probably a gloss applied to an older relationship, as becomes apparent from a third category of soke-owing holding.

Many manors in East Anglia included, alongside the lord's carucates, demesne resources, and *villani* and *bordarii*, separate carucates or acres held by sokemen. These sokemen occupied a

[107] See e.g. Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 231-79 *passim*; Hadley, *Northern Danelaw*, pp. 111, 113, 114, 125.
[108] Even where LDB makes clear that all soke within a given hundred was attached to a manor, not every entry in the hundred will reflect this.
[109] See above, pp. 86-91.

semi-detached position, being valued within the manor, needing the lord's permission to sell their holdings, and often owing him 'all customs' (which generally appear to have included soke). In localities falling under a territorial soke, however, these sokemen often owed soke explicitly to the head manor, rather than their local lord. For the head manor's purposes, their holdings stood on a level with his—an outside link which bypassed seigneurial lordship and must pre-date it.[110] These configurations show that LDB's recording of the East Anglian territorial sokes is residual rather than specific. All land within a given territory was assumed to form part of the head manor's soke unless otherwise noted. Where a holding was explicitly assigned to that manor's soke, the notice could serve to remove possible doubt rather than, necessarily, to differentiate the holding from its neighbours. A conventional line-diagram would give a misleading impression of this type of soke, which contemporaries viewed not as a prominent archipelago but as an encompassing backdrop.

The pattern is best illustrated with a concrete example. The LDB entry quoted below concerns a manor held by Ulfkil in Harling, in the Norfolk hundred of Guiltcross. Thanks to an unambiguous statement in a different entry, it is clear that all the soke of Guiltcross hundred lay in the royal manor of Kenninghall.[111]

> ¶ In HARLING Ansketil holds 4 carucates of land which Ulfkil, a free man, held TRE.
> Then 15 *villani*, later and now 13; always 4 *bordarii*. Then 2 slaves, later and now 1. Meadow, 8 acres; always 2 ploughs in demesne. Then 7 men's ploughs, later 6, now 4; always 1 mill. Then 5 fisheries, now 1½ fisheries.
> Also 4 sokemen, ½ carucate of land. Soke in Kenninghall.
> Always 1 *bordarius*. Meadow, 4 acres. Then and later 2 ploughs, now 1; always 1 cob. Now 4 head of cattle; 20 pigs; always 70 sheep.
> Value then £6; later £7; now 100s.

[110] The hardening of the seigneurial horizon is described by Faith, *English Peasantry*, ch. 6, especially pp. 168-77.
[111] *DB Norfolk*, 1.146 (LDB f. 128a).

> The whole has 1½ leagues in length and 1 league in width, whoever holds there, 27d of geld.[112]

In this case LDB does not indicate where the soke of Ulfkil, the manorial lord, lay, but the statement concerning the soke of the hundred makes clear that it was in Kenninghall. Entries for other manorial lords, as well as independent freemen, state this explicitly. The half-carucate cultivated by the four sokemen might elsewhere have been wholly subject to Ulfkil, but here it answered partly to the superior manor. The manor of Kenninghall reached into the manors falling within its territory, circumscribing the power that their lords might otherwise have enjoyed. Ulfkil must have collected rent from the sokemen's holdings, for they contributed towards his revenue, but in other respects they answered to Kenninghall in the same way as he did. The position of Kenninghall amounted to territorial superiority, which contemporaries conceived in terms of soke. This picture can be explained by a wholly familiar process of territorial fission. Lords had tightened their grip on their immediate dependants but some (such as Ulfkil) were not yet fully masters of their own manor. Only once does LDB explicitly place a holding in Guiltcross hundred outside the soke of Kenninghall, by ascribing soke to St Edmund.[113] Soke granted by writ to magnates over their own lands could plainly override that of the head manor. Ely Abbey, which also held in the hundred, would have been in a position to exercise the same privilege, although the relevant entries do not explicitly say so.[114] This would represent fragmentation from above, by royal

[112] *DB Norfolk*, 4.47 (LDB f. 149b): *In Herlinga tenet Anschittillus IIII carucatas terræ quam tenuit Vlchetel liber homo tempore regis Edwardi. Tunc XV uillani, postea et modo XIII; semper IIII bordarii. Tunc II servi, postea 7 modo I. VIII acrae prati; semper II carucatae in dominio. Tunc VII carucae hominum, postea VI, modo IIII; semper I molendinum. Tunc V piscariae, modo I piscaria 7 dimidia. 7 IIII sochemanni, dimidia carucata terræ. Soca in Keninchala. Semper I bordarius 7 IIII acrae prati. Tunc 7 postea II carucae, modo I; semper I runcinus. Modo IIII animalia 7 XX porci; semper LXX oues. Tunc ualuit VI libras, postea VII libras, modo C solidos. Totum habet I leugam et dimidiam in longo et I leugam in lato, quicumque ibi teneat, et XXVII denarios de gelto*.

[113] *DB Norfolk*, 14.7 (LDB f. 209b).

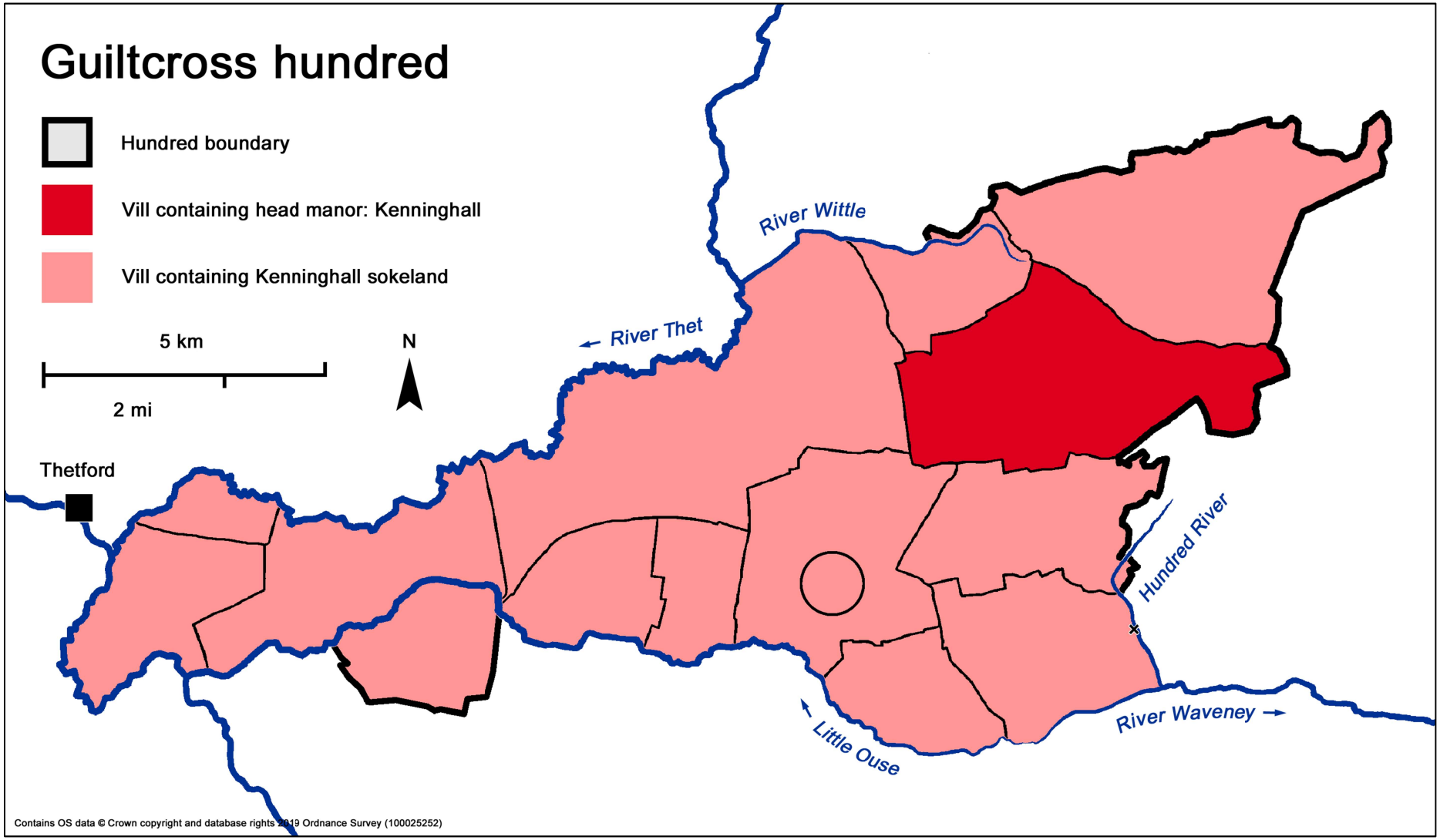
[114] No writs granting Ely soke over its lands or men survive, but the soke regularly ascribed to the abbey, even outside its own hundreds, indicates that it received such documents.

grant.[115] Whether the abbeys ever had landbooks for these particular holdings is a matter for speculation, but their powers were plainly intruded into the territory of Kenninghall rather than growing up within it.

On this evidence we can identify the East Anglian sokes as a particular category of unit, which may have had early origins, and which was closely related to the hundred. The inevitable question is whether soke or hundred was the earlier of the two. Several sokes repay closer examination in this context. For mapping purposes they are represented not as line-diagrams but, in keeping with their general coverage, by shading Domesday vills. The boundaries of ancient parishes are used as proxies for vills, while lost vills are marked as circles where their location is known.

The soke of Kenninghall was coterminous with Guiltcross hundred (Map 6). LDB states as much and all but two named settlements in the hundred record holdings whose soke is explicitly ascribed to Kenninghall.[116] There is also a rare additional indication of the head manor's penetrating influence: from Little Snarehill, at the far end of the hundred and immediately adjoining Thetford, a group of sokemen owed carrying-service in Kenninghall.[117] By far the most arresting feature of soke and hundred is their adherence to topographical boundaries. Only once does the boundary cross onto the Suffolk bank of the Little Ouse to take in a portion of the vill of Rushford, but even here the parish church and main area of cultivation have always been on the north bank, with little but heathland to the south. The only other land boundary lies on high ground in the north-east. With these two exceptions, hundred and soke are completely defined by the Wittle, Thet, Little Ouse,

[115] On this process, see S. Baxter and J. Blair, 'Land Tenure and Royal Patronage in the Early English Kingdom: A Model and a Case Study', *ANS*, 28 (2006), pp. 29-46.
[116] *DB Norfolk*, 1.146 (LDB f. 128a).
[117] *DB Norfolk*, 9.75 (LDB f. 178a).

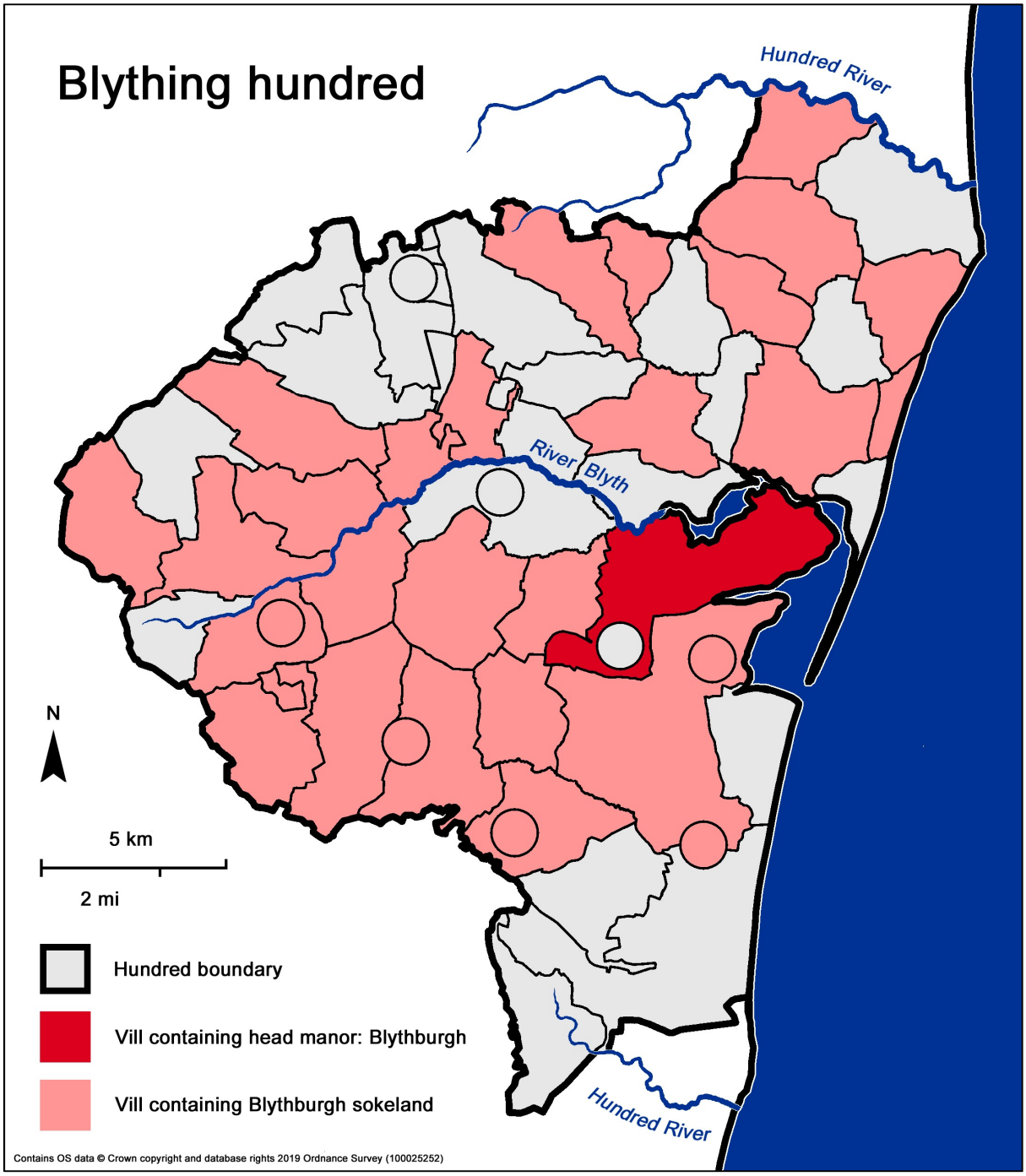


Map 6. The soke of Kenninghall and Guiltcross hundred.

Waveney, and Hundred Rivers. This recourse to topographical features is all the more significant because the Wittle and Hundred Rivers, although natural watercourses, are little more than drainage ditches (Plate 1). Neither can ever have presented a meaningful obstacle, but a natural boundary was evidently preferred to an artificial one. The firmly topographical framing of the territory attached to Kenninghall suggests an inherited unit rather than an artificial one.

Unlike Guiltcross, Blything hundred (Map 7) has attracted detailed study in the past.[118] The archaic characteristics of Blything were several: the territory was bounded on the inland side by a watershed and consisted substantially of the catchment of the river Blyth, which lent its name to a presumed folk-group called the *Bliðingas*. It was from this group that the hundred would eventually take its name. The river also provided the root of the name Blythburgh, which was central to the territory, probably a Middle Saxon royal minster, and certainly an eleventh-century royal manor.[119] Blything presents a likely example of an early territory, and indeed bears a resemblance to the coast-facing Northumbrian territories of Coldinghamshire and Islandshire, both of which were centred upon important ecclesiastical settlements.[120] Where its inland boundary seeks a way down from the watershed in the north and south, it resembles the boundary of Guiltcross hundred in following minor watercourses (both named Hundred River) down to the sea. A feature of the hundred which has escaped attention is that it contained a soke based on Blythburgh. Blything records soke in a less consistent way than Guiltcross, and holdings whose soke LDB explicitly assigns to Blythburgh occur under only

[118] P.M. Warner, 'Blything Hundred: A Study in the Development of Settlement, A.D.400-1400' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 1982).
[119] Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization', pp. 23-6; *idem*, *Origins of Suffolk*, pp. 120-21, 157-9; *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'River Blyth', 'Blythburgh'.
[120] Barrow, 'Pre-feudal Scotland', pp. 23-6; G.R.J. Jones, 'Broninis', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 37 (1990).



Map 7. The soke of Blythburgh and Blything hundred.

three vills.[121] However, Blything hundred also contained a multitude of holdings whose soke LDB ascribes to 'the King and the Earl'. In view of everything else that is known of Blything hundred, these instances of an otherwise thoroughly conventional formula can be taken to refer to Blythburgh.[122] With these included, the soke of Blythburgh again closely shadows the hundred and the topographical frame, if not as perfectly as does that of Kenninghall.

While divisions along watersheds were no doubt organic and related to settlement, it is impossible to be certain how old the river-boundaries were. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that they were a regional peculiarity rather than a recent innovation. This suggestion arises from three toponyms. One of these is Shadingfield ('the open land at the boundary valley'), a vill just beyond the nameless stream which touches the northern boundary of Blything hundred.[123] The second is Shadwell ('the boundary stream'), on the south bank of the Thet in Guiltcross hundred.[124] Shadwell was never a vill in its own right and is first recorded in 1314, but the only 'boundary stream' to which the name can refer is the Thet, which is a late back-formation from Thetford.[125] Shadwell could preserve an older name for the river. These are the only two instances of the element *scead* ('boundary') in major place-names in East Anglia, and both refer to topographical features which marked hundred- and soke-boundaries. The third toponym to consider is the old name of the River Brett in southern Suffolk, which is attested as *Mearcella* in a charter of 962.[126] This has generally been considered to contain the element *mearc* (also 'boundary'), although the

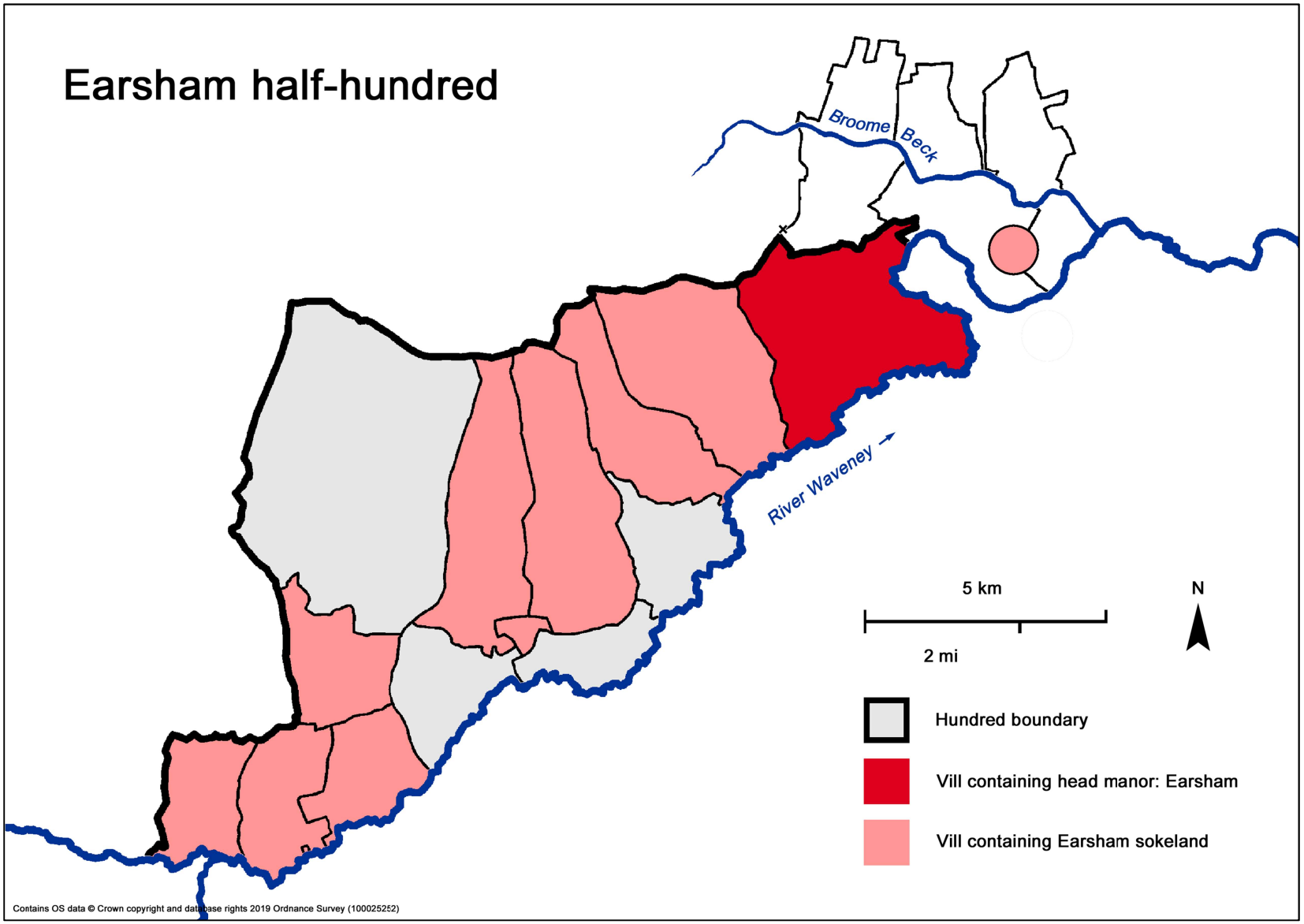
[121] *DB Suffolk*, 6.82 (LDB f. 311a); 26.12a (f. 399a); 33.10 (f. 415a).
[122] What would otherwise be a conjectural leap is strengthened by the fact that one record of 'soke and sake in Blythburgh' is described as being 'for the use of the King and the Earl': *DB Suffolk*, 6.82 (LDB f. 311a).
[123] *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'Shadingfield'.
[124] E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (4th edn, Oxford, 1960), *s.v.* 'Shadwell'.
[125] E. Ekwall, *English River-Names* (Oxford, 1928), *s.v.* 'Thet'.
[126] S 703. Brett is a back-formation from Brettenham: Ekwall, *English River-Names*, *s.v.* 'Bret or Breton'.

second element of the compound is less certain.[127] If the name *Mearcella* derives from Old English *mearc*, it may be significant that here too, the river served as a hundred- and soke-boundary, in this case to the hundred-and-a-half of Samford and the soke of East Bergholt.

There is every reason to think that the topographical framework that defined many of the units under consideration was considerably earlier than the mid-tenth century. On the other hand, nothing has so far enabled us to separate hundreds and sokes chronologically. Indeed, neither Guiltcross nor Blything would contradict the idea that territorial sokes were created simply by alienating soke over all freemen within a given hundred.[128] For the purpose of determining their chronological order, it is more helpful to look at cases where soke and hundred did not coincide exactly.

One example of this can be found in Earsham half-hundred and the soke of Earsham (Map 8). To a significant extent, both conform to the previous examples, soke and hundred being bounded by the Waveney in the south and a curving watershed in the north. But in the north-east, the hundred boundary departs from this alignment and describes an abrupt dogleg down to the river. What looks like an older boundary continues to bend northwards until it reaches the Broome Beck (Plate 2). The soke of Earsham nearly filled the hundred, except for the large manor of Pulham, which was held by Ely Abbey. It was unusual in that one of the vills into which it reached, the now-lost settlement of Pirnhow, lay in the neighbouring hundred of Loddon. In this case it seems that both the soke and an older boundary extended to a topographical feature, namely the Broome Beck, whereas the hundred did not. Any lord of Earsham (which was held by Archbishop Stigand TRE) would have had reason to control the

[127] Ekwall, *English River-Names*, *s.v.* 'Markle'; K.A. Lowe, '*Mearcella* in S 703 and the Etymology of Childrey Brook (Berkshire)', *JEPNS*, 37 (2005). A. Breeze, 'The River-Name *Mearcella*, Suffolk', *JEPNS*, 43 (2011) proposes a Celtic derivation.
[128] See above, p. 159.

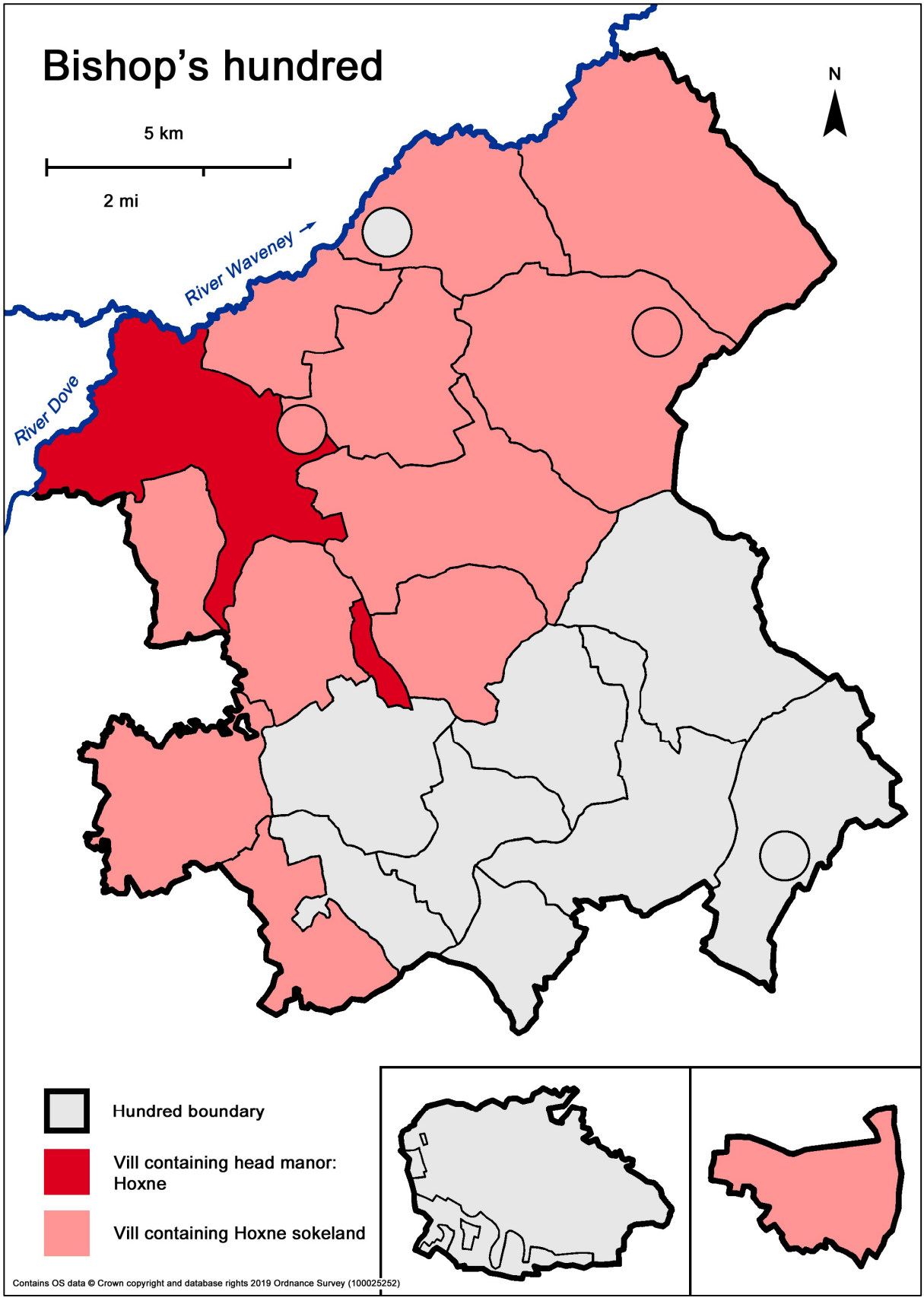


Map 8. The soke of Earsham and Earsham half-hundred.

strip of land on which Pirnhow stood.[129] At Wainford, just south of Pirnhow, what may have been the lowest practical ford on the Waveney took the Roman road towards Caistor St Edmund and Norwich across the river.[130] The road traversed the Pirnhow strip to cross the Broome Beck precisely where the watershed boundary also descended to the stream. In the case of Earsham, the hundred may have truncated an earlier territory.

Bishop's hundred, containing the soke of Hoxne (Map 9), is still more revealing. The hundred was delimited by the Waveney in the north and adjoined Blything along a watershed in the east, but otherwise featured distinctly irregular boundaries. The soke of Hoxne filled most of the hundred but did not extend into the south-eastern part. It was bounded by a curving alignment running diagonally south-west to north-east, which coincided with the watershed between the Waveney catchment and rivers to the south. To the north and west of this line, nearly every vill contained holdings which LDB assigns to 'the bishop's soke', or the soke of which it places 'in Hoxne'. The stretch of country to the south and east of the watershed was composed of large, centralised manors mostly held by the regional magnate Eadric of Laxfield. Although LDB places this area in Bishop's hundred, the soke of Hoxne did not extend into it. All this suggests that the bishop's soke-territory formed the basis of the hundred, which was completed by the addition of several vills which had no original connection with Hoxne. Exceptionally for East Anglia, there is independent supporting evidence: the will of Bishop Theodred of London (942×951) disposes of seven identifiable estates in what would become Bishop's hundred, all of them within the area of the soke.[131]

[129] Earsham also had a berewick in the neighbouring vill of Ditchingham, likewise south of the Broome Beck: *DB Norfolk*, 1.228 (LDB ff. 139b-140a).
[130] The name implies heavy, wheeled traffic: Anderson, *English Hundred-Names*, pp. 86-7. The Roman road was Stone Street, Margary no. 36: I.D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain* (3rd edn, London, 1973), pp. 269-70. Today, the Waveney is tidal to Geldeston lock, 3.5 miles (5.5km) downstream.
[131] S 1526. The estates were at Mendham, Syleham, Instead, Chickering, Ashfield [Green], Horham, and Athelington.



Map 9. The soke of Hoxne and Bishop's hundred.

Some anomalies do impinge on this division. The western boundary of both hundred and soke must have experienced considerable upheaval. LDB also connects the detached coastal vill of Aldringham with the soke of Hoxne, although the relevant entry appears anomalous.[132] It is nonetheless clear that soke and hundred diverged, and that where they did, the soke observed the topographical frame whereas the hundred did not.

Their closer relationship to natural features suggests that sokes pre-dated hundreds. Another indication in favour of this chronology is that not all sokes were as complete as those already examined. LDB seems to show a few at an advanced stage of fragmentation. Even where they were relatively intact, some sokes did not make a suitable basis for a hundred, and at least one was simply encompassed by the later and larger unit. Such cases would be difficult to explain if sokes were taken to post-date the hundreds. Three examples of sokes less influential within their hundreds are considered more briefly below.

The royal manor of Hingham would come to be considered the head manor of Forehoe hundred-and-a-half, but its recorded soke was considerably smaller (Map 10). This particular hundred has been explained as an artificial unit created out of three large estates.[133] Except in the south-west, along a watershed, its boundaries certainly appear irregular and artificial. It is nonetheless possible to infer a territory presumably once dependent on Hingham, bounded by the watershed, the Dyke Beck, and the Blackwater. Several vills within this triangle record no connection with Hingham in LDB, and some even appear under the neighbouring hundred. It appears significant that Hingham retained an interest in Woodrising, outside the hundred but

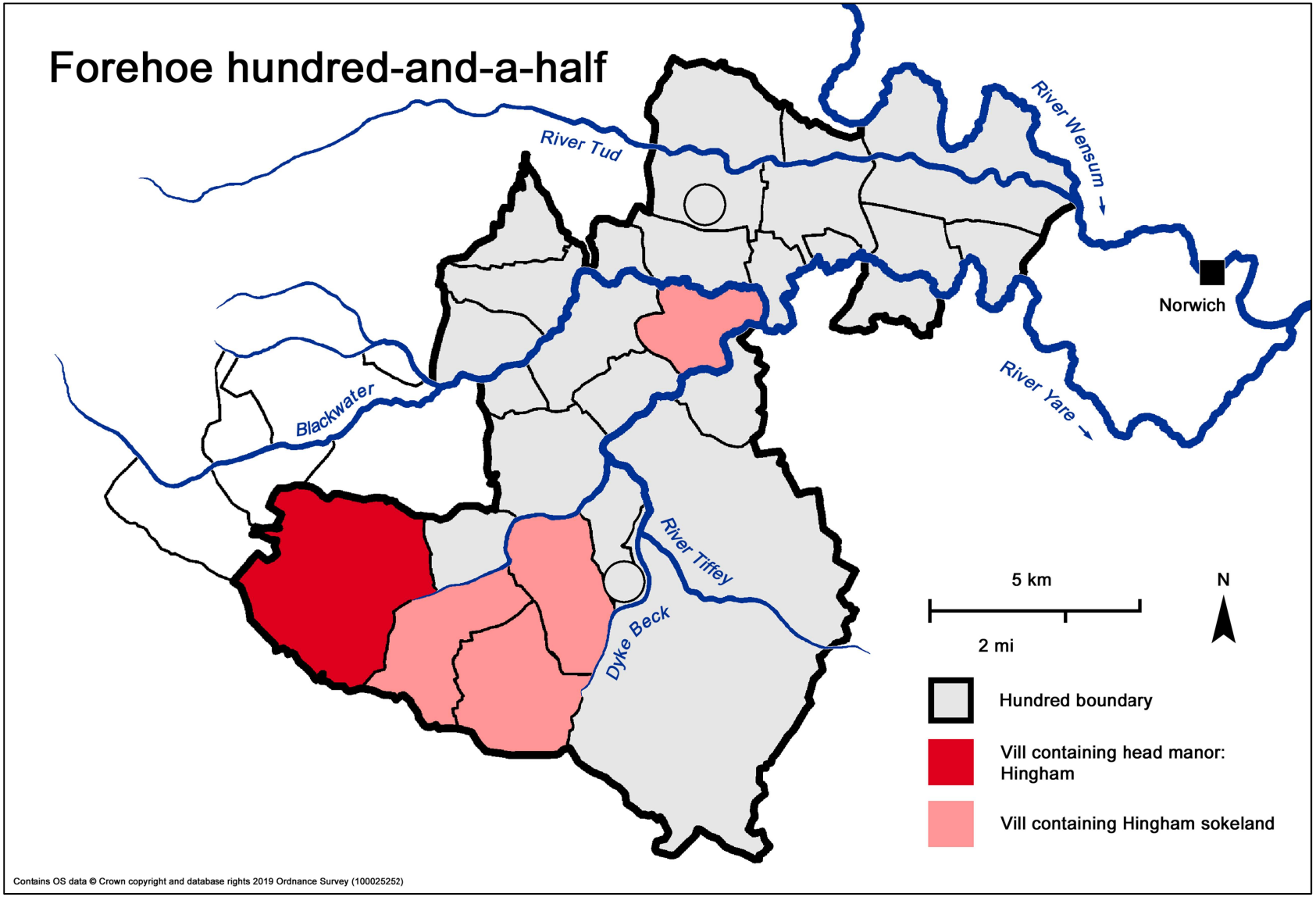
[132] *DB Suffolk*, 6.70 (LDB f. 310a). It places land held by *villani* in the soke of Hoxne. This might otherwise have been described as a berewick.
[133] Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, pp. 96-9.

the next vill to the north-west, along the watershed.[134] A soke-territory based on Hingham is only just recognisable in LDB.

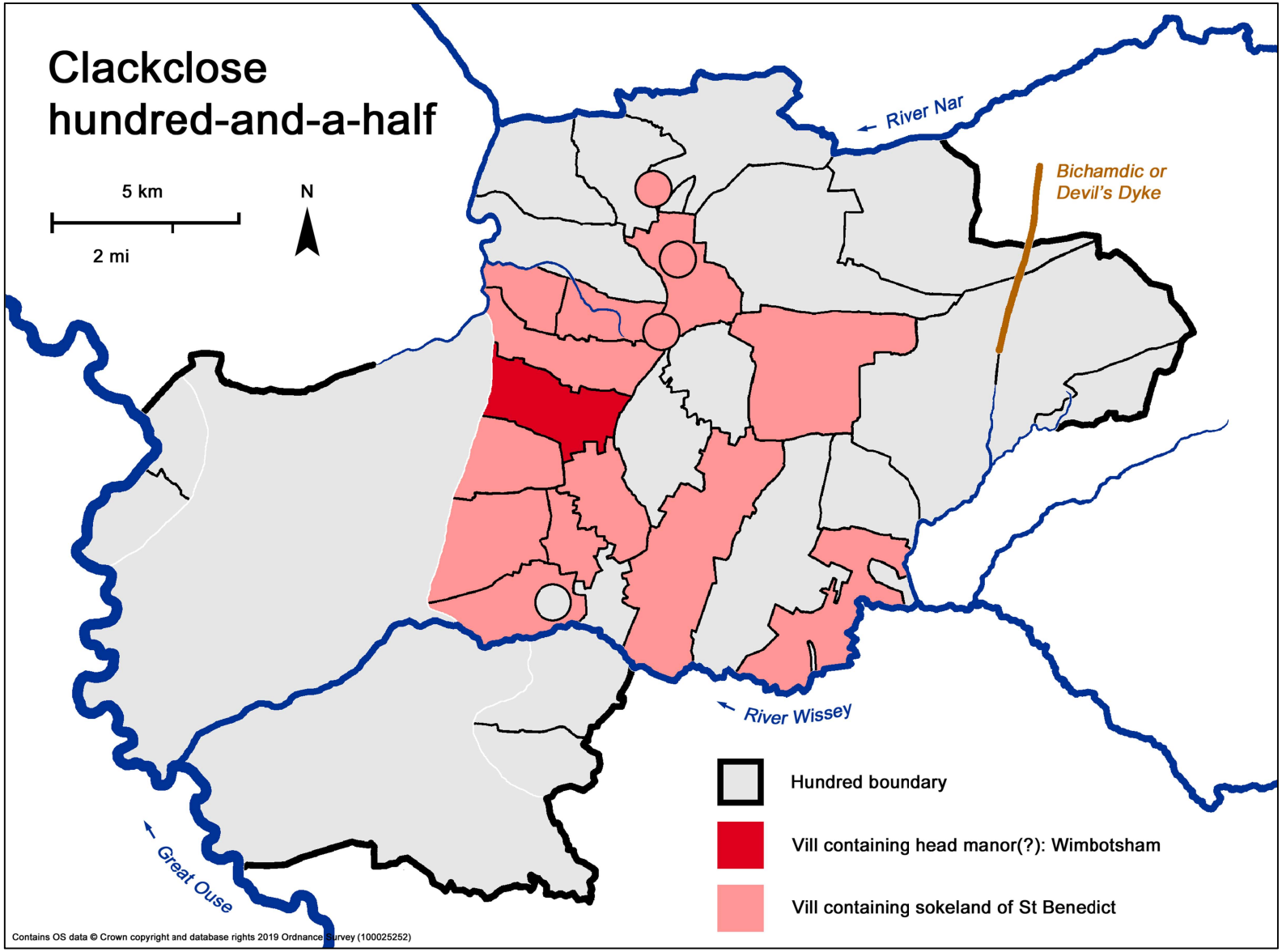
In western Norfolk Ramsey Abbey held, according to its house chronicle, 'Wimbotsham with the hundred-and-a-half [of Clackclose] and with 64 of the sokemen of that hundred' by grant of Edward the Confessor.[135] This is partly corroborated by LDB's statement that the abbey had 70s of the soke of Clackclose.[136] Separately, the text of a writ of Edward states that 'the soke within Bichamdic is to belong to St Benedict as fully…as it was first given to that church'.[137] *Bichamdic* referred to the Devil's Dyke, an earthwork in the east of the hundred (Map 11). A further passage in the Ramsey Chronicle records that William of Warenne deprived the abbey of '67 men, sokemen at Wimbotsham and in that soke'.[138] An examination of the LDB entries for Clackclose reveals that while Ramsey Abbey claimed the entire hundred-and-a-half, its soke was indeed confined to the area 'within Bichamdic'—which would align with the implication that the abbey's 70s were not the whole value of the hundred's soke. LDB records soke poorly in Clackclose and says little about Wimbotsham, but taken together, these references suggest that the soke within *Bichamdic* had come to the abbey as an appendage of the manor. If so, this soke-territory would have been bounded almost perfectly by the Wissey and its tributaries, the *Bichamdic*, the Nar, and the Fens, before it too suffered significant encroachment.

A much smaller soke can be identified around Harold's manor of Marsham in South Erpingham hundred (Map 12). A cluster of four settlements in the immediate vicinity

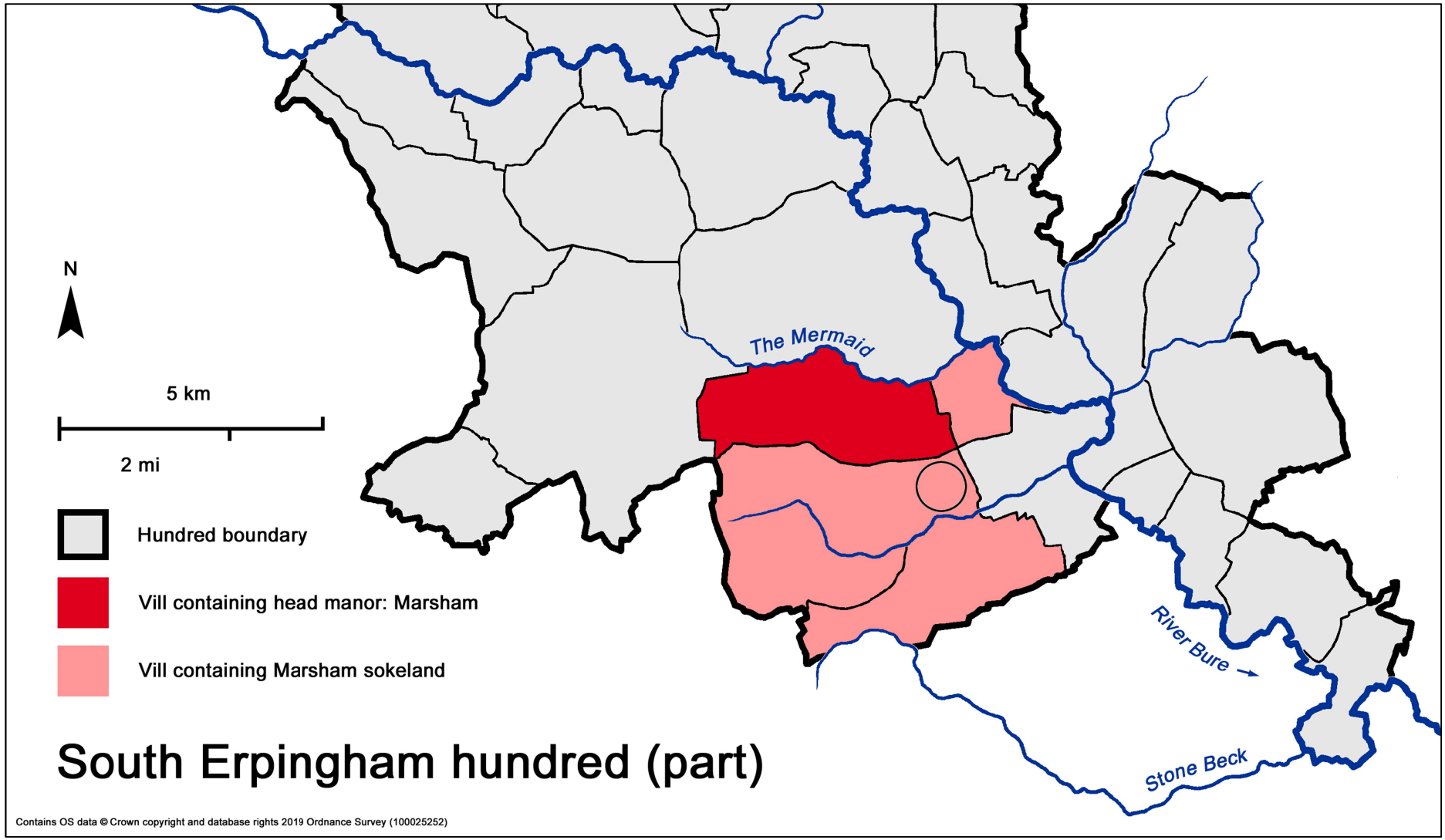
[134] *DB Norfolk*, 1.14 (LDB f. 111a).
[135] *CAR*, ch. 95, pp. 160-61.
[136] *DB Norfolk*, 16.2 (LDB f. 215b).
[137] S 1108.
[138] *CAR*, ch. 107, p. 175.



Map 10. The soke of Hingham and Forehoe hundred-and-a-half.



Map 11. Soke ascribed to St Benedict in Clackclose hundred-and-a-half.

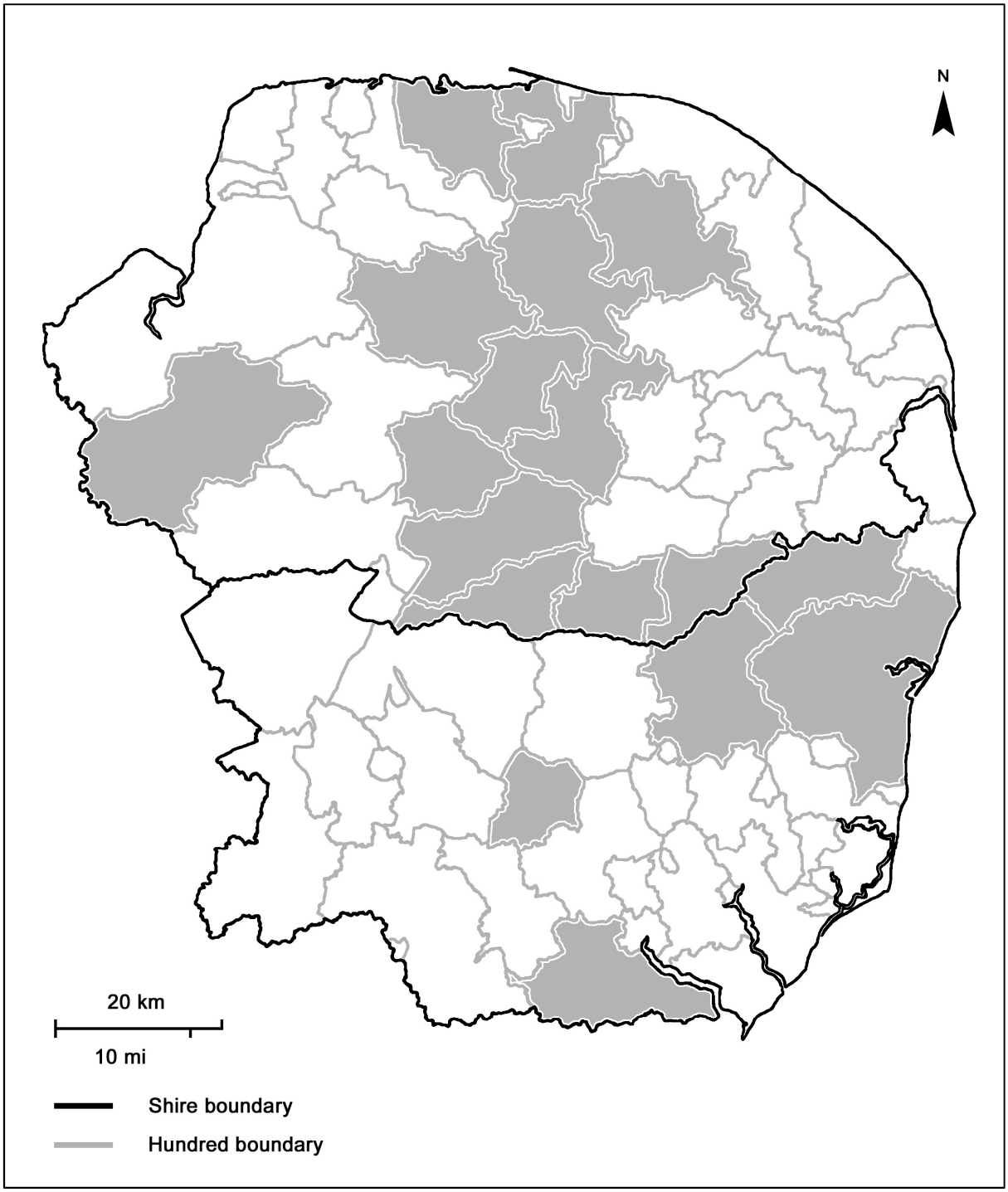


Map 12. The soke of Marsham in South Erpingham hundred.

contained sokemen attached to Marsham or holdings owing soke to Harold. These vills formed an almost rectangular territory bounded on three sides by the Bure, a stream known as the Mermaid or Aylsham Beck, and a heathland watershed. Marsham itself was overshadowed by Aylsham and Cawston, two larger manors also held by Harold, which immediately adjoined it.[139] It never occupied a special position within South Erpingham hundred, of which its soke-territory formed only a small part.

The examples considered invite one further observation, concerning their geographical spread. Map 13 shades hundreds where soke-territories, or possible signs of them, can be identified from LDB, and demonstrates that territories of this kind were common to most of East Anglia. Not all related to the topography in the same way. Typical examples, particularly in the Waveney valley, might occupy a band of country between river and watershed, while others tended to fill a catchment basin. What is certain is that most, although not all, bore a close relationship to natural features. Only in a few areas does LDB show no traces of soke-territories: notably in the eight-and-a-half hundreds of Bury St Edmunds, Ely's five-and-a-half hundreds of Wicklaw, and the area around the Great Estuary in eastern Norfolk. This suggests that territorial stability was greatest in the interior, away from coastal areas where economic development may have attracted unwelcome attention.

[139] *DB Norfolk*, 10.40 (LDB f. 196b); cf. 1.192 (f. 132a) and 1.57 (ff. 114b-115a).



Map 13. Hundreds containing soke-territories or signs of dependence on a manor.

Conclusions

What kind of territorial organisation did the West Saxons find in place after the submission of East Anglia? The evidence considered in this chapter gives no reason to think that early centres identified from historical or archaeological sources were distinctively long-lived. Instead, it is royal manors unrecorded before the Conquest that present the strongest case for antiquity. These often rendered small and irregular honey dues which may have perpetuated traditional food renders, and in many cases acquired appendant hundreds. But it has become clear that their original territories sometimes differed from those of the hundreds, and that LDB records these units using soke terminology. Topographically defined territories, dependent on large manors likely to stay in royal hands, represent the likeliest organisational legacy from independent East Anglia. They would have been far from exceptional, bearing a notable resemblance to the early riverine units of Devon.[140] While the East Anglian soke-territories were not an administrative system in purpose or coverage, they may have been the nearest thing to one that West Saxon kings could initially command.

The origins of the soke-territories are a matter for conjecture. Their close association with watercourses and watersheds could suggest that they developed organically according to the river-and-wold model, expanding from primary river-valley settlements onto more marginal lands.[141] This would account for examples defined by catchment-areas, such as the soke of Blythburgh, but not for others such as Hingham, where the head manor itself stood on high ground. The relationship of the sokes to patterns of land-use, not least extensive areas of

[140] W.G. Hoskins, 'The Making of the Agrarian Landscape', in W.G. Hoskins and H.P.R. Finberg, *Devonshire Studies* (London, 1952), pp. 300-310. These units matched the East Anglian soke-territories both in scale and in boundary features. The example based on Plympton seems to have extended between the Plym, the coast, the Yealm, and the high moors. At Hartland, smaller watercourses were pieced together over a considerable distance to demarcate a rectangular block of territory.

[141] Everitt, 'River and Wold'; Williamson, *Environment, Society and Landscape*, pp. 55-6,

common land, suggests something closer to the 'resource-territories' described by Rosamond Faith.[142] Complications arise from the structure of the East Anglian landscape, for common land often existed in bands running along territorial boundaries, allowing easy and separate access from different settlements. In this arrangement the commons may have been less likely to act as focal points during annual stock-drifts or other communal activities. It is perhaps safest to see the East Anglian sokes as territories demarcated for tributary purposes by authorities sensitive to the grain of the landscape. As units of lordly exploitation, it was natural that they should encompass peasants' exploitation of the land as neatly as possible.

Some head manors retained their position into the eleventh century. LDB shows that the relationship of head manors to territories was conceived as soke by default over all land within their limits. The reality behind this seems to have been a territorial superiority which long pre-dated the official adoption of soke terminology. LDB's use of *soca* can blur the distinction between territorial and granted soke, but the two had different origins. Unlike granted soke, the relationship which LDB describes in terms of territorial soke did not necessarily confer acre-rents.[143] Nor was it specific and exclusive in the sense of territorial soke in the Northern Danelaw.[144] Instead, LDB entries imply that it was universal within a given territory but often went unrecorded. It plainly carried a tenurial quality strong enough to recommend the label *soca*. As neither of the alternatives match its characteristics, East Anglian territorial soke is best explained as a gloss applied to superiority over a defined area. Other expressions of this relationship, although virtually invisible in LDB, may have included

[142] R. Faith, 'Forms of Dominance in the Early Medieval Landscape', *Medieval Settlement Research*, 23 (2008), pp. 9-13; D. Banham and R. Faith, *Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 156-62; B. Eagles with R. Faith, '"Small Shires" and *Regiones* in Hampshire and the Formation of the Shires of Eastern Wessex', *ASSAH*, 19 (2015), pp. 124-6.
[143] Compare e.g. *DB Norfolk*, 4.47 (LDB f. 149b), where Kenninghall seems not to have received them, and *DB Norfolk*, 1.220-226 (LDB ff. 138b-139b), where Earsham apparently did.
[144] See above, pp. 158-61.

obligations such as carrying-service or boon-works.[145] Particularly where granted soke impinged upon them, it is possible to see soke-territories undergoing a process of fragmentation common to extensive units in many areas. They nonetheless survived widely in East Anglia, and would have made a natural foundation for any initial assertion of royal control in the early to mid-tenth century.

While unprovable, integration by such means would not be without parallel. Something similar can be observed in an area where the process was still underway in 1066. This was the 'land between Ribble and Mersey' in what would become southern Lancashire, where GDB records six hundreds: West Derby, Newton, Warrington, Blackburn, Salford, and Leyland. In fact, these were named after and coterminous with royal manors.[146] All landholders dwelling between Ribble and Mersey were subject to one of the six. Manor and hundred were therefore synonymous, as the entry for Blackburn acknowledges in the statement that 'to this [manerium uel hundred] were attached 28 free men who held 5½ hides and 40 carucates of land as 28 manors'.[147] We have encountered the same concept in East Anglia, most completely in the manor of Kenninghall and hundred of Guiltcross. The phenomenon of the soke (or hundred) as dependent territory usefully illustrates the close connection between soke and tenurial doctrine, discussed in the previous chapter.

[145] An exceptional reference to carrying-service and royal forfeitures owed in Kenninghall by manorial sokemen in a distant vill, appears to replace the more concise 'soke in' employed elsewhere: *DB Norfolk*, 9.75 (LDB f. 178a). See also the customs owed by sokemen of various Ely manors: *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066–1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), no. 117.
[146] The area is discussed by C.P. Lewis, 'An Introduction to the Lancashire Domesday', in *Alecto DB Lancashire*, pp. 20-31 and F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', ibid., pp. 44-7.
[147] *DB Cheshire*, R4.1 (GDB f. 270a).

It could be a long-lasting connection. Even five centuries after the Conquest, the superior lordship of Earsham manor continued to define landholding in the eponymous half-hundred.[148] Thus when Charles le Grice, lord of Brockdish, died in 1575,

> 'He…was found to hold [Brockdish-Earl's] manor of the hundred of *Earsham*, in free *soccage*, without any rent or service, and not in *capite*; and *Brockdishe's-hall* manor of the King, as of his *barony* of *Bury* St. *Edmund* in *Suffolk*, which lately belonged to the *abbey* there, in free *soccage*, without any rent or service, and not in *capite*…'[149]

LDB divides Brockdish between two entries: one comprising 51 freemen with 200 acres in Stigand's soke of Earsham, and another forming part of the Bury St Edmunds manor of Thorpe Abbotts.[150] After the Conquest Earsham, with its soke and half-hundred, passed into royal hands and eventually to the Bigod earls of Norfolk.[151] The freemen of Brockdish were plainly made into a manor along the way. Brockdish-Earl's manor remained subject to the jurisdiction of, and payments to, the half-hundred of Earsham until the fourth duke of Norfolk detached it from his honor and sold it to Charles le Grice in 1570.[152] The Bury St Edmunds manor of Brockdish-Hall, on the other hand, became part of the abbot's honor and remained so even beyond the Dissolution. In the eleventh century, to be free in Earsham half-hundred was to be in the soke of Earsham and thus of its holder Stigand, and only where the soke had explicitly been assigned to someone else did the rule not apply.[153] The Bigod earls duly became residuary tenants-in-chief within the hundred, but manors which had been in the soke of St Edmund lay outside their power.

The administrative integration of East Anglia may well have begun with units similar to those stretching between Ribble and Mersey in the eleventh century. Their head manors controlled

[148] See above, pp. 169-71.
[149] Blomefield, v, pp. 334-5. Italics as printed.
[150] *DB Norfolk*, 1.226 (LDB f. 139a-b); 14.18 (f. 210b).
[151] Blomefield, v, p. 313.
[152] Blomefield, v, pp. 333-4.
[153] LDB has an explicit statement to this effect: *DB Norfolk*, 1.226 (LDB f. 139b).

substantial territories within which all freemen were notionally dependent: a relationship which was treated as synonymous with soke. The status of the local free population did not suffer from this arrangement, for attachment to a traditionally royal manor seems to have conferred the same quality of royal immediacy as attachment to no manor at all. It was no doubt for this reason that the soke-territories were so easily re-cast as hundreds. As we have seen, the hundred functioned as the default repository of soke unless the king chose to alienate it. The manors of Kenninghall, Earsham, or Hoxne did the same within their territories, encompassing all freemen not explicitly subject to someone else. In this respect, within their traditional bounds, they answered to the purposes of the West Saxon kings. But the universal aspirations of tenth- and eleventh-century rulers required a standard point of contact with all freemen, and not only those associated with royal manors. The next chapter turns to the institutions that brought the free population as a whole within the king's reach.



Plate 1. The Hundred River, Guiltcross hundred.
(National Grid reference TM058812, looking north; marked '×' on Map 6).



Plate 2. A watershed boundary between Bedingham and Hedenham parishes, near Earsham.
(National Grid reference TM295914, looking north-east; marked '×' on Map 8).

Chapter IV

Burhs and hundreds

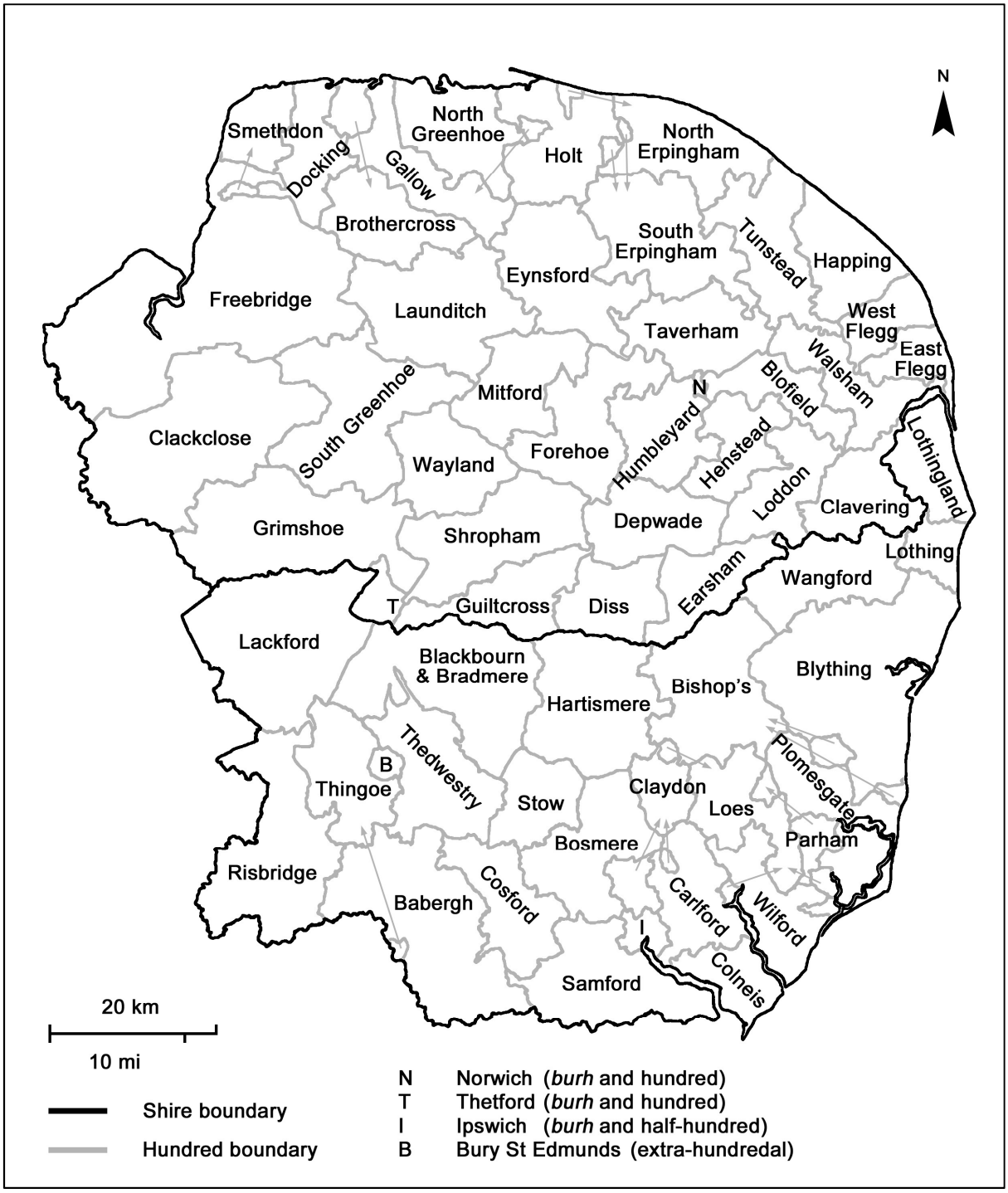
By 1066, and probably already in the late tenth century, English kings could call upon a recognisable administrative system throughout most of their realm. Few records shed any light on how shires, *burhs*, and hundreds came into being. It is no longer possible to infer a wholesale administrative reorganisation in the aftermath of Edward the Elder's campaigns, for these did not generally amount to territorial conquests. Indeed, Alfred's descendants plainly encountered some structures which were amenable to their purposes and which therefore endured. But it is equally clear that the aspirations of the West Saxon dynasty went beyond those of previous rulers. To regulate local society as specifically and uniformly as their law-codes envisaged, kings required a framework independent of their own demesne estates.

A particular concern of tenth-century legislation was the suppression of lawlessness. Royal codes provide for the holding of regular assemblies to settle disputes, the enforcement of judgements arising from assemblies, the witnessing of transactions, the verification of transactions by vouching to warranty, the pursuit of thieves, and the arraignment of untrustworthy individuals. These functions are consistently associated with the *burh* and the hundred (or the equivalent wapentake). Both institutions had other roles besides, notably as permanent defensive centres and mints in the case of the *burh*, and as units of taxation and military mobilisation in the case of the hundred. The functions of the shire were limited and

episodic in comparison.[1] *Burhs* and hundreds were the vehicles through which royal enforcement touched the localities most directly, and the hundred may indeed have originated in the extension of activities initially carried out from *burhs*.[2] The two are therefore usefully discussed together.

The present chapter seeks to explain how the burghal and hundredal templates were applied to East Anglia. This process has so far escaped systematic attention, perhaps because a conventional account of military conquest and the apparent uniformity of *burhs* and hundreds emphasise the regularity of the system. There are nonetheless good reasons for examining it on a regional scale. Although comprehensive by 1066, the administrative framework was patently not introduced everywhere at once: while many *burhs* in Greater Wessex originated in Alfred's reign, their counterparts north of the Thames were established in quite different circumstances. The imposition of the burghal scheme also coincided with budding urbanisation, and not all settlements with urban characteristics became royal *burhs*. Evidence for hundreds survives only from the mid-tenth century onwards, and the previous chapter has argued that some perpetuated earlier units. All this cautions against imagining a uniform process according to which *burhs* were founded or hundreds laid out. Nor should we content ourselves with invoking nameless administrators, for the recorded form of the institutions in question can shed a measure of light on their origins.[3]

[1] On the appearance and functions of the shire, see G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 165-72.
[2] Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 153-5.
[3] E.g. Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, p. 128.



Map 14. The hundreds and burhs *of East Anglia.*

The Old English noun *burh* could signify a wide range of defended places and may have been associated particularly with ditched enclosures.[4] In its institutional sense, the *burh* can be traced to Greater Wessex in the reign of Alfred, whose network of fortified places were known by this name. Maintained and garrisoned by recourse to the 'common burdens', Alfred's *burhs* provided places of refuge and denied invaders safe use of the surrounding country. The sophistication of the system is revealed by the so-called Burghal Hidage of the early tenth century, which ascribes a set number of hides to each of the southern *burhs* and gives a formula relating this to the size of the garrison.[5]

In keeping with the overriding defensive concerns of Alfred's reign, the first *burhs* occupied a wide variety of sites. Asser may have had this in mind when he referred to some towns and cities being rebuilt on the king's orders, while others were founded from scratch, and dedicated fortifications were built in yet other places.[6] Chippenham, for instance, was a royal vill, while Shaftesbury was a minster settlement, Chisbury an iron-age hillfort, Portchester a re-used Roman fortress, and Eashing a newly-fortified emergency refuge. As royal priorities evolved, neither the list of *burhs* nor their uses remained static, and some sites lost their importance once defence became less urgent. Eashing, on its isolated bluff, was soon abandoned for more accessible Guildford. Chisbury, Portchester, and other *burhs* without prior settlement or potential for growth also lapsed into insignificance.

[4] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 183-4; D.H. Hill and A.R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester, 1996), p. 3; M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past* (3rd edn, Chichester, 1997), pp. 145-8; *CDEPN*, p. xlii; S. Draper, 'The Significance of Old English *Burh* in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASSAH*, 15 (2008).
[5] The Burghal Hidage appears to depict the system late in Alfred's reign; *burhs* north of the Thames have been identified as later insertions: N.P. Brooks, 'The West Saxon Hidage and the "Appendix"', in Hill and Rumble (eds.) *Defence of Wessex*, pp. 89-92.
[6] *Asser*, ch. 91.

Edward the Elder's reign saw *burhs* employed in a different way, as forward strongpoints to consolidate and encourage submission to West Saxon rule. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle frames Edward's east Midland campaigns in terms of systematic *burh*-building at pre-existing centres, some of which were associated with a Scandinavian army. This programme too had control over communications, and hence territory, as one of its objectives: it has been pointed out that all the future county towns of the Midlands stood astride major rivers.[7] Other *burhs*, which proved less permanent, were situated on Roman roads.[8] Although shires named after the Midland *burhs* are not attested until later in the tenth century, it is likely that many of the places fortified already had recognised hinterlands.[9] References to the establishment of *burhs* cease after Edward's death in 924, but the sense of the word as a royal fortification maintained by public obligations appears to have been firmly established.

As settlements, *burhs* are often considered within a timeline of progressive urban development, but as institutions they continued to serve royal interests.[10] West Saxon kings faced the difficulty of enforcing these interests on a much wider scaler than hitherto, as they expanded their territories north of the Thames. At least in the beginning, it seems that this was most conveniently done by installing loyal subordinates in *burhs*, for each *burh* was assumed to have a resident reeve.[11]

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[7] J. Campbell, 'Power and Authority 600-1300', in D.M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume 1: 600-1540* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 53-4.
[8] Towcester and Witham appear as conventional manors in Domesday, although both lent their names to hundreds.
[9] G. Williams, 'Towns and Identities in Viking England', in D.M. Hadley and L. ten Harkel (eds.), *Everyday Life in Viking-Age Towns* (Oxford and Oakville, 2013); J.T. Baker and S. Brookes, 'Governance at the Anglo-Scandinavian Interface: Hundredal Organization in the Southern Danelaw', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, special volume 5 (2013).
[10] On how far *burhs* succeeded extinguished coastal *wics* or foreshadowed self-governing medieval boroughs, see J. Blair, 'Towns', in *WBEASE*, pp. 469-71; G. Astill, 'General survey 600-1300', in Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume I: 600-1540*.
[11] I Ew 1; I As prol.

One long-standing royal concern which Edward the Elder advanced through his burghal programme was the supervision of economic activity. Until the late ninth century, traders wishing to legitimate their activities sought out the king's reeves. Alfred decreed that traders were to present all those accompanying them at a public meeting before such an official.[12] In a period without freestanding administrative institutions, the reeve would have been found at the nearest royal estate. The first recorded victim of Viking attack in England was a royal reeve who attempted to summon men whom he took to be traders to the royal vill of Dorchester.[13] Edward the Elder decreed that all trade should be conducted in a *port* (an apparent synonym of *burh*) before the port-reeve.[14] This unenforceable provision was soon moderated, although it probably represented an attempt to maximise the effectiveness of the available reeves rather than a mere fit of naivety.[15] Edward plainly appreciated the potential of *burhs* as centres for other functions besides defence, which no doubt influenced his policy of fortifying existing settlements.[16] Closely allied to supervision of trade was the regulation of the coinage. When Æthelstan expanded minting from traditional centres at Canterbury and London in his Grately code, he categorically associated it with *ports*, each of which received a specified number of moneyers.[17] While the resulting distribution was heavily weighted south of the Thames, the new Midland *burhs* extended the system northwards, hosting one moneyer each.

[12] Af 34.
[13] *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), iii.1, p. 27.
[14] I Ew 1; Liebermann, *Gesetze*, ii, *s.v.* 'Stadt'.
[15] II As 12; cf. e.g. H.R. Loyn, 'Towns in Late Anglo-Saxon England: the Evidence and Some Possible Lines of Enquiry', in *idem*, *Society and Peoples* (London, 1992), p. 147.
[16] This represented a departure: kings in earlier centuries had not necessarily treated trading settlements as royal outposts: Hl 16, 16.1.
[17] II As 14.2.

The king's dominating influence was reflected in the *burhs*' social structure. It has long been accepted that most *burhs* were not organised on agricultural lines and thus stood fundamentally apart from surrounding settlements.[18] The *burhwara* or *burgenses* formed a distinct social category characterised by personal freedom.[19] They did not include all inhabitants of the *burh*, but those who held their own plots or dwellings and rendered the *consuetudo* due from them. Burghal *consuetudo* was paid to the king by default (the 'third penny' often going to the earl), and again serves to emphasise the *burh*'s nature as a royal outpost: all *burhs* seem to have been considered royal demesne. Burgesses can therefore be understood as freemen directly subject to the king, either by settlement in a royal centre or by having a royal fortification thrown up around them. As in rural society, this status seems to have been characterised by the payment of a rent or tribute assessed on landed plots. In some north-eastern *burhs* the 'lawmen' among the burgesses formed a distinct and privileged category, and there is scattered evidence for early guilds. Nonetheless, corporate self-government had yet to develop, and *burhs* were not yet far removed from the administrative institutions covering rural areas.[20] Æthelstan's legislation could indeed envisage *burhs* as centres for assemblies covering wider areas, perhaps corresponding to shires: the 'chief men of the *burh*' were to ride out and enforce attendance and judgements if necessary, under the more general supervision of royal reeves.[21] In this respect burghal society and organisation foreshadowed the workings of those more explicitly rural units, the shire and hundred.[22]

[18] J. Tait, *The Medieval English Borough* (Manchester, 1936), pp. 130-38.
[19] Ibid., p. 82,
[20] Ibid., pp. 130-38.
[21] II As 20ff., 25.
[22] Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 153-5.

How the burghal template was extended to East Anglia is a neglected question. In the East Midlands, Edward the Elder took care to extend the Alfredian system of territorial defence as he went. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle follows these operations closely and reveals a recurring pattern of submission followed by fortification, which the chronicler plainly saw as connected developments. Edward's rule manifested itself unequivocally in the passage of his armies and the fortification of permanent royal outposts. The agreement with the East Anglian army in 917 was followed by no such assertion of royal power. So assiduous is the chronicler in recording when Edward ordered a *burh* to be built in various places both before and after 917, that the absence of such statements in connection with the armies of East Anglia and Cambridge should be taken seriously. There is no suggestion that any *burhs* were fortified east of Huntingdon or north of Colchester. Previous accounts have assumed that East Anglia was overrun too quickly for either side to build fortifications, but it is more likely that there were none because the region was never overrun at all.[23] If royal fortification was generally fundamental to the nature of *burhs*, East Anglia therefore presents an exception, for LDB is explicit in according some places burghal status. The problem at hand is how they became *burhs* and whether they functioned like their counterparts elsewhere.

LDB consistently reserves the term *burgus* to Norwich, Thetford, and Ipswich.[24] Cambridge, Colchester, and Maldon enjoyed the same status in neighbouring shires. For their size, Norfolk and Suffolk therefore had a thin complement of *burhs*, although this did not reflect a

[23] J. Campbell, *Norwich*, in M.D. Lobel (gen. ed.), *The Atlas of Historic Towns, Volume II* (London, 1975), p. 6; M. Atkin, 'The Anglo-Saxon Urban Landscape in East Anglia', *Landscape History*, 7/1 (1985), p. 36. On the quality of Edward's relationship with the East Anglian army, see L. Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia: An Alternative Hypothesis', *Historical Research*, 81/ 211 (2008), pp. 3-5, and above, pp. 55-7.
[24] Urban 'titles' are collated by H.C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 364-8.

shortage of places performing urban functions. Urban or urbanising settlements are usually identified by diagnostic criteria: first and foremost the presence of burgesses (at least TRW), supplemented by a market, fortifications, or minting. These form a more extensive list comprising Norwich, Thetford, Yarmouth, Ipswich, Dunwich, Sudbury, Clare, Beccles, Eye, and Bury St Edmunds.[25]

Clare, Beccles, and Eye were no more than large manors before 1066, and their conventional entries only record burgesses TRW.[26] Bury St Edmunds has an anomalous and detailed LDB entry but firm evidence for early urban development is lacking.[27] The case of Sudbury is more suggestive. MS F of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that an East Anglian bishop died there in 798, while the main church was strikingly dedicated to St Gregory, and the settlement's name incorporated the element *burh*, all of which suggest an early ecclesiastical centre.[28] LDB nonetheless describes Sudbury in manorial terms. Yarmouth seems to have been a growing but recent settlement based on trade and fishing.[29] Dunwich very likely originated earlier, for while its identification with the early bishopric of *Dommoc* is highly uncertain, the element *wic* suggests a trading settlement.[30] It is nonetheless denied burghal status by LDB, for reasons which will become apparent.

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[25] H.C. Darby, *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England* (3rd edn, Cambridge, 1971), pp. 139-42, 192-9. The presence of burgesses is the defining criterion, except in the case of Bury St Edmunds, which was undergoing a planned expansion no less dramatic for lacking them.
[26] *DB Suffolk*, 25.1 (LDB f. 389b), 14.120 (LDB ff. 369b-370a), 6.191 (LDB ff. 319b-320a).
[27] The element *burh* could denote a religious settlement, and this was no doubt the original sense here: Draper, 'The Significance of Old English *Burh*', pp. 242-3. The name *Seynt Eadmundesbiri* in S 1527 seems to refer to the minster itself; the settlement as a whole was known as *Beaduricesworth* in the tenth century. Another document (S 1483) refers to St Paul's, London as *Paulesbiri*.
[28] *ASC* MS F, *s.a.* 799; *DB Suffolk*, 1.97 (LDB f. 286b); Draper, 'The Significance of Old English *Burh*', pp. 242-3.
[29] B. Brodt, 'East Anglia', in Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume I: 600-1540*, p. 647. Brodt's identification of Yarmouth as a Domesday *burgus* appears to be mistaken.
[30] J. Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees before the Conquest', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 108-10; *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'Dunwich'.

Norwich, Thetford, and Ipswich, by contrast, all seem to have been important centres in 917 and before. Archaeological evidence shows that a trading and industrial settlement existed at Ipswich from the first half of the seventh century. It was notable both for international contacts and for its potteries, which produced the distinctive wheel-thrown Ipswich ware from about 700.[31] To all appearances, Ipswich had been in continuous existence for more than two centuries by the time East Anglia came under West Saxon control. Thetford is first recorded in 869, when the Great Heathen Army wintered there, suggesting that it was a prominent place already.[32] Archaeology has uncovered Middle Saxon settlement, although continuous occupation during the ninth century remains to be proved.[33] In view of its location at the limit of navigation on the Little Ouse, where the Icknield Way crossed the river, it seems unlikely that the site was ever wholly deserted.[34] Moreover, excavations to date have been confined to peripheral areas, away from the present town centre.[35] Tenth-century Thetford was certainly a substantial settlement, and its inhabitants were described as *urbani* in the context of a transaction in Edgar's reign.[36] The early development of Norwich is poorly understood, but seems to have involved the growth and amalgamation of several smaller settlements. Despite the recovery of some quantity of Ipswich ware, as well as continental pottery, the nature of the Middle Saxon settlement remains elusive.[37] Later, Thetford ware was manufactured on a large scale.[38] Norwich too seems to have been well established by the

[31] K. Wade, 'Ipswich', in R. Hodges and B. Hobley (eds.), *The Rebirth of Towns in the West AD 700-1050*, CBA Research Report 68 (London, 1988), p. 96; P. Blinkhorn, 'Of Cabbages and Kings: Production, Trade, and Consumption in Middle-Saxon England', in M. Anderton (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: Beyond the Emporia* (Glasgow, 1999), pp. 4-10; C. Scull, 'The Buttermarket Cemetery and the Origins of Ipswich in the Seventh Century AD', *PSIAH*, 43/1 (2013).
[32] *ASC*, *s.a.* 870.
[33] P. Andrews, *Excavations at Redcastle Furze, Thetford, 1988-9* (Gressenhall, 1995), pp. 26-7, 137-8.
[34] The name and situation are discussed in S. Dunmore with R. Carr, *The Late Saxon Town of Thetford* (Gressenhall, 1976), pp. 8-9.
[35] P. Andrews and K. Penn, *Excavations in Thetford, North of the River, 1989-90* (Gressenhall, 1999), p. 91.
[36] *LE*, ii.16, p. 92.
[37] M. Atkin and D.H. Evans, *Excavations in Norwich 1971-1978, Part III* (Norwich, 2002), pp. 236-7.
[38] Campbell, *Norwich*, p. 4.

early tenth century. The functions of these three centres must have recommended them for burghal status even without any act of foundation.

Defence was traditionally the most essential role of a *burh*. East Anglia's three pre-Conquest *burhs* all had earthworks, but these differed from the defences of 'founded' *burhs* elsewhere. Of the deliberate foundations Huntingdon, for instance, was a Danish military encampment captured and restored for West Saxon use, while Colchester was a Roman fortress taken over in the same way.[39] Both were fortified in a military context, and the walls of Colchester were very substantial.[40] Norwich, Thetford, and Ipswich all had defensive ditches by the early tenth century.[41] It has also been pointed out that all three, like the Midland *burhs*, straddled a major river, but the observation is somewhat misleading.[42] The Midland examples all formed double *burhs*, with a fortification on either side of the river crossing. Norwich had ditches on both banks of the Wensum, but their course and nature are uncertain.[43] At Thetford, ditches existed on both banks of the Little Ouse, but the two semicircles did not align. The ditch on the south bank enclosed c. 60 hectares (c. 150 acres), extending beyond the built-up area, and can hardly have been intended for defence. By the eleventh century it had been filled in and built over.[44] At Ipswich, the settlement north of the Gipping possessed a ditch while Stoke, on the south bank, seems to have been undefended.[45] The town never subsequently acquired a wall. Cambridge seems to have developed in a similar way, for while it occupied both banks of the Cam, it was never fortified as a *burh* and did not subsequently acquire more than

[39] *ASC* MS A, *s.a.* 917.
[40] On pre-Conquest Huntingdon, see P. Spoerry, 'The Topography of Anglo-Saxon Huntingdon: A Survey of the Archaeological and Historical Evidence', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 89 (2000); on the walls of Colchester, J. Cooper, 'Walls and Gates', in *VCH Essex* (11 vols, London, 1903–), ix, pp. 248-251.
[41] Atkin and Evans, *Excavations in Norwich 1971-1978, Part III*, p. 237; A. Rogerson and C. Dallas, *Excavations in Thetford 1948-59 and 1973-80* (Gressenhall, 1984), p. 197; Andrews and Penn, *Excavations in Thetford, North of the River, 1989-90*, p. 89; Wade, 'Ipswich', p. 97.
[42] Andrews and Penn, *Excavations in Thetford, North of the River, 1989-90*, p. 92.
[43] See e.g. the map provided in B. Ayers, *Excavations at Fishergate, Norwich, 1985* (Gressenhall, 1994).
[44] Rogerson and Dallas, *Excavations in Thetford 1948-59 and 1973-80*, p. 197.
[45] Atkin, 'Anglo-Saxon Urban Landscape', fig. 3, p. 31.

ditches and gatehouses for protection.[46] A lack of emphasis on defence seems to be borne out by events in Æthelred II's reign: Ipswich was taken by Danish forces in 991, Norwich and Thetford in 1004, and Thetford and Cambridge (from a landing at Ipswich) in 1010.[47] The ditches of the East Anglian *burhs* were probably intended to control peacetime traffic rather than to resist serious assault.

Trade was plainly fundamental to the East Anglian *burhs*. Ipswich supplied pottery to a wide domestic market and was involved in overseas commerce from an early date, while Thetford's industries were more domestic.[48] Norwich remains opaque by comparison, but continental trade is in evidence before the Conquest.[49] The *burh*'s role as a source of witnesses is attested for Cambridge and Thetford in the *Liber Eliensis* and undoubtedly applied to the others too.[50] A well-known passage recounts how, when Abbot Byrhtnoth requested sureties for a land transaction concluded at Cambridge, he was told that Cambridge, Norwich, Thetford, and Ipswich were 'of such liberty and dignity' that sureties were not required for land bought there.[51] The statement has been interpreted simply as a sign of these towns' regional pre-eminence, but this seems to miss the inflection of the story.[52] Byrhtnoth had given £40 for ten hides and plainly assumed that a purchase of this magnitude would involve sureties; he was no doubt aware that he was in a *burh*. In other words, the 'liberty and dignity' that dispensed with the need for sureties was something that set Cambridge, Norwich, Thetford, and Ipswich apart from other *burhs*.[53] The origin of the privilege is a matter for conjecture, but it is striking that precisely the four pre-existing

[46] Brodt, 'East Anglia', pp. 648-9.
[47] *ASC*, *s.a.* 991, 1004, 1010.
[48] Wade, 'Ipswich'; C. Dallas, *Excavations in Thetford by B.K. Davison between 1964 and 1970* (Gressenhall, 1993), pp. 219-20.
[49] Atkin and Evans, *Excavations in Norwich 1971-1978 Part III*, pp. 237-8.
[50] Cambridge appears on multiple occasions; Thetford at *LE* ii.16, pp. 92-3.
[51] *LE*, ii.26, p. 100.
[52] Brodt, 'East Anglia', p. 643.
[53] Although sureties for a land transaction at Cambridge are mentioned at least once: *LE*, ii.10, p. 83.

centres acquired but not fortified by Edward the Elder should have enjoyed special status. Perhaps settlements with resident populations of at least 1600 (Cambridge), 5000 (Norwich), 4000 (Thetford), and 1600 (Ipswich) TRE were not amenable to a surety system.[54] Social fluidity would have been amplified by commerce, and trade and industry are discernible even in LDB. Among the customs which the burgesses of Norwich owed Edward the Confessor was a bear for baiting.[55] The animal must have been imported, most likely from Scandinavia, and offers a striking glimpse of overseas contacts.[56] Thetford, in keeping with its more domestically oriented economy, rendered goat-skins and ox-hides.[57] While trade and defence usually reinforced one another, East Anglian *burhs* owed their existence to the former.

A related function which became closely associated with *burhs* was the royal prerogative of minting. In theory, every place deemed to be a *burh* could have had at least one moneyer from late in Edward the Elder's reign.[58] The first coins certainly attributed Norwich date from the reign of Æthelstan, while Thetford, Ipswich, and Cambridge mint-signatures appear under Edgar.[59] Ipswich and Cambridge are first recorded on Edgar's 'Reform' issue, and these as well as Thetford may therefore have struck earlier without applying a mint-signature.[60] All four struck the great majority of post-reform issues. Only from 1009 did East Anglia acquire another mint in non-burghal Sudbury, which may have originated as an 'emergency' location

[54] Darby, *Domesday Geography of Eastern England*, pp. 140, 141, 193, 310.
[55] *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB f. 117a).
[56] The brown bear was probably extinct throughout Britain by this time: A. Hammon, 'The Brown Bear', in T. O'Connor and N. Sykes (eds.), *Extinctions and Invasions: A Social History of British Fauna* (Oxford, 2010), p. 100.
[57] *DB Norfolk*, 1.70 (LDB f. 119a). In Suffolk, by contrast, the standardisation of customary renders extended to Ipswich, which eschewed miscellaneous items in favour of the £15-plus-honey formula: *DB Suffolk*, 1.122g (LDB f. 290b); on the Suffolk renders see above, p. 154.
[58] II As 14.2. The list seems to reflect circumstances under Edward the Elder: see above, p. 57, n. 131.
[59] C.E. Blunt, 'The Coinage of Athelstan, 924-939: A Survey', *BNJ*, 42 (1974), pp. 80-81; D. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1981), pp. 131-2.
[60] Mint-signing became compulsory with Edgar's coinage reform: Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 260-61.

away from the vulnerable trading centres.[61] But one or more of the primary mints may have had a longer history, for minting activity never ceased in East Anglia during the period of Danish rule. A single known a St Edmund Memorial penny (c. 895×917) bears the legend NORDVICO, which has been interpreted as 'Norwich'. While it has also been argued that this was the moneyer's name, the existence of an Alfred imitation reading SCELDFOR (?Shelford, Cambridgeshire) suggests that mint-signing was not unknown in the region.[62] Edward the Elder imitation pennies of the Morley St Peter hoard exhibit a degree of die-linking which indicates that the coins were buried near their minting-place, and Norwich is considered the likeliest candidate.[63] At Norwich at least, an existing mint may therefore have been taken over during the reign of Æthelstan. It is true that no known moneyer struck both Edward imitations and Norwich coins of Æthelstan, but a deliberate replacement of personnel is not imposssible.[64]

Little evidence survives for other administrative functions. Norwich's association with the shrievalty of Norfolk and the 'geldable' portion of Suffolk is not attested before the Conquest.[65] The ounce of gold which the burgesses owed the sheriff every year TRW, is explicitly associated with Robert Blund's tenure of the office.[66] Cambridge burgesses had customary obligations to the sheriff TRE, but nothing of the kind is recorded in Norwich, Thetford, or Ipswich.[67] Events during Æthelred's reign have been taken to suggest that

[61] Hill, *Atlas*, p. 132. A feature of Æthelred II's troubled reign was the relocation of mints to more defensible sites, but East Anglia had few convenient hillforts. See R.H.M. Dolley, 'Three Late Anglo-Saxon Notes', *BNJ*, 3rd series, 8/1 (1955), pp. 99-105.
[62] Naismith, *MEC8*, pp. 290-92; M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Expansion and Control: Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian Minting South of the Humber', in J. Graham-Campbell et al., (eds.), *Vikings and the Danelaw* (Oxford, 2001), p. 132.
[63] R. Rainbird Clarke and R.H.M. Dolley, 'The Morley St Peter Hoard', *Antiquity*, 32/126 (1958).
[64] Blunt, 'The coinage of Athelstan', p. 80.
[65] 'The Geldable' was the rump of Suffolk outwith the monastic liberties: E. Martin, 'Hundreds and Liberties', in D.P. Dymond and E. Martin (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk* (3rd edn, Ipswich, 1999), pp. 26-7.
[66] *DB Norfolk*, 1.66 (LDB f. 118a).
[67] *DB Cambs.*, B.11 (GDB f. 189a).

Thetford functioned as a 'regional capital' at this time, but the evidence is not conclusive.[68] Ulfketel fought the Danes nearby in both 1004 and 1010, while Herman's Miracles of St Edmund name Thetford as the collection-point for a tribute to Swein.[69] It is unclear whether any East Anglian *burh* had a 'riding' role in the sense of enforcing the royal will on the surrounding country. Some *burhs* elsewhere had bodies of twelve 'lawmen' or 'judges', who may have been equivalent to the thegns stipulated by Edgar as standing witnesses for every *burh* and hundred, or to the senior thegns ordered by Æthelred II to bring malefactors to justice in every wapentake.[70] Thus Cambridge had *lagemanni*, who seem to have been subordinate to the sheriff, but none are attested in Norfolk or Suffolk.[71] In the case of Ipswich, it is certain that there was no standing body of judges until 1200.[72] Although the East Anglian *burhs* were also treated as hundreds, there is no evidence for duodecimal executive groups in either capacity. This evidently did not affect their organisational capabilities, for a naval contingent from Ipswich would play an active role in the capture of Lisbon in 1147.[73]

Town-dwellers were of course far from equal. The universal obligation upon their inhabitants appears to have been a 'scot' of 1d per head, paid by burgesses and non-burgesses alike.[74] The status of burgess, however, was defined by the obligation to render the king's *consuetudo* as well. This was a levy assessed on the *mansio* or *mansura*, which was presumably a

[68] Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia', 18.
[69] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1004, 1010; K. Briggs, 'The Battle-Site and Place-Name Ringmere', *Notes and Queries*, 58/4 (2011), pp. 491-2; *MStE*, ch. 10, pp. 24-6.
[70] P. Wormald, 'Jury', in *WBEASE*, pp. 272-3; IV Eg 3-6; III Atr 3.
[71] *DB Cambs.*, B.13-14 (GDB f. 189a).
[72] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 211-12. At Norwich, a group of 24 wealthy burgesses with unknown responsibilities existed by the thirteenth century: Campbell, *Norwich*, p. 12.
[73] Campbell, 'Power and Authority', p. 65.
[74] This much can be deduced from *DB Suffolk*, 1.122c (LDB f. 290a) (Ipswich) and *DB Essex*, B3b (LDB f. 106a) (Colchester).

nominal plot upon which a burgess's house would stand and for which he would pay geld.[75] Norwich burgesses who became unable to render the *consuetudo* still had to pay 1d head-scot and became mere *bordarii*.[76] In Huntingdon, *bordarii* 'aided' burgesses in paying the geld.[77] Quite apart from its equivalent fiscal status, a place such as Norwich therefore resembled a rural hundred in miniature. Free men (albeit in greater proportion) discharged public obligations directly to the king and answered for their dependents in the process. The same magnates as elsewhere, such as Harold or Stigand, had soke-rights.[78] Even in the late thirteenth century, the internal organisation of Norwich into four letes bore a distinct resemblance to that of a hundred.[79] Norwich only gained a charter, and with it the right to commute its payments to the king for an annual 'farm of the borough', in 1194.[80] Considering the general absence of 'lawmen', East Anglian burgesses therefore appear to have formed notably flat and extensive urban societies.

It seems that burghal status in East Anglia was conferred upon those existing centres which came closest to matching the expected functions. The eastern *burhs* were defended more in name than in fact, and certainly received no new fortifications of the kind built elsewhere.[81] They were already centres of trade and so, if commerce was to be controlled, coin re-struck, and potential revenue realised, reeves had to be installed in them. Norwich, Ipswich, and Thetford would have demanded administrative roles for economic reasons, but these were not the sole consideration. Settlements made up (to judge from Domesday evidence) of free traders and producers looked naturally to kings for protection and represented obvious

[75] *DB Suffolk*, 1.122c (LDB f. 290a), 41.13 (LDB f. 427a) (Ipswich); *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB f. 116b) (Norwich).
[76] *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB ff. 116a-b).
[77] *DB Hunts.*, B.1 (GDB f. 203a).
[78] *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB f. 116a).
[79] Campbell, 'Power and Authority', pp. 56-7.
[80] Campbell, *Norwich*, p. 9.
[81] Consider e.g. the surviving ramparts of Wallingford, or a reference to Towcester being walled in stone: *ASC*, *s.a.* 917.

opportunities to assert royal authority in a newly-subject province. Where economic activity took place in a private setting, no *burh* was declared. By 1066, Sudbury hosted burgesses and a mint, but the structure of the LDB entry suggests that its burgesses had until recently been the *bordarii* of the manor.[82] The trading settlement of Dunwich has been identified as a 'mediatised borough', but the Domesday commissioners in fact had good reason for calling it a *manerium*.[83] Dunwich was not fully independent of the royal manor of Blythburgh, four miles away, which controlled the changing of money and the performance of corporal punishment.[84] It would appear that the royal manor maintained residual powers over what had once been its trading outpost. As a private manor, Dunwich was not a suitable *burh*, while Blythburgh had no trading population of its own. The division of required characteristics between two places evidently ruled out burghal status for either. Even the three acknowledged *burhs* were not perfect approximations of the template. They probably matched it most closely in their large free populations, but the earliest sure sign of administrative importance consists in the centralised coin issues which began to be struck at Norwich in Æthelstan's reign. The suggestion that the limited administrative reach of *burhs* encouraged the introduction of hundreds, if correct, would be particularly cogent in East Anglia.[85]

[82] *DB Suffolk*, 1.97 (LDB f. 286b).
[83] Tait, *Medieval English Borough*, pp. 58-9.
[84] *DB Suffolk*, 6.89b-c (LDB ff. 312a-b).
[85] Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 153-5.

Hundreds projected the king's will in a new and distinctive way. Each hundred represented both a territory and the freemen within it, who assembled at fixed intervals and collectively performed important functions otherwise associated with royal officers. The hundred first appears in the documentary record in the mid-tenth century, in Edmund's third (Colyton) code, and its workings are set out in the Hundred Ordinance of similar date.[86] Subsequent legislation mentions it regularly. It is therefore widely accepted that the hundred, as a recognisable unit under that name, can hardly pre-date the reign of Edmund.[87] Earlier laws do not mention it despite addressing matters which would fall within its remit, and many areas divided into hundreds were not securely under West Saxon control before the 940s.[88] Prior references to assemblies being held at similar intervals, and the longstanding practice of levying assessments in multiples of 100 hides, prove only that the hundred drew on older traditions of governance.[89] Hundreds were often known as wapentakes in Danish-settled areas but the two terms described the same institution.[90]

The creation of the hundreds is historically imperceptible. Whereas the foundation of a *burh* was an event worthy of record, which might leave a permanent mark on the landscape, no

[86] III Em 2. The Hundred Ordinance could date from any reign between Edmund and Edgar (inclusive): Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 378-9.
[87] Æthelstan's 'London Ordinance' describes 'hundreds' reckoned by headcount, made up of ten tithings each, but these were not fiscal units and no hundreds are recorded anywhere else before the accession of Edmund: VI As 3; Molyneaux, *Formation*, p. 150.
[88] H.M. Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge, 1905), pp. 239-48; Molyneaux, *Formation*, p. 183.
[89] Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, pp. 241-4;
[90] One name probably derived from a notional assessment of 100 hides and the other from a ceremonial flourishing of weapons in assembly: C.T. Onions, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford, 1966), *s.v.* 'Hundred', 'Wapentake'. The terminology is discussed by Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 150-2. The term 'hundred' also described a subdivision of the wapentake. On these small 'Danelaw hundreds', often of 12 carucates, see J.H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1895; 1964 edn), pp. 69-78; D. Roffe, 'The Lincolnshire Hundred', *Landscape History*, 3/1 (1981). Outliers of this type may have extended into the Norfolk Marshland: *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. A.J. Robertson (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1956), no. 104, p. 192; D.C. Douglas, 'Fragments of an Anglo-Saxon Survey from Bury St. Edmunds', *EHR*, 43/171 (1928).

source comes close to describing how the hundreds were first demarcated. The hundredal programme nonetheless outstripped the *burhs* in scale and ambition. *Burhs* were focal points and thus intrinsically exceptional, but hundreds covered all territory and encompassed all freemen. Although the hundredal system operated within the familiar scheme of hidage assessments and often worked on a similar scale to earlier territories, the seamless coverage envisaged by the Hundred Ordinance had no clear precedent. Just as significantly, hundreds were often assessed at approximately 100 hides, particularly in the Midland shires. This has been considered strong evidence of artificial planning, and a symptom of the late Anglo-Saxon kingdom's administrative sophistication.[91]

The roles of the hundred are fairly well documented. Perhaps most fundamentally, the hundred was the forum in which freemen sought formal justice. As an assembly, it also saw to the detection of theft, the witnessing of trade, vouching to warranty in suspect transactions, the establishment of sureties to answer for men's good standing, and the arrest of people under investigation.[92] Other functions are less readily discernible. The assessment in hides points to a fiscal role, and the hundred certainly became instrumental in the collection of the geld. A military dimension is implied in scattered references, although it is not clear that all hundreds came to be grouped into 'shipsokes'.[93] In all these functions, from the king's perspective, the hundred was a mechanism to gather and supervise men who might be subject to no other lord. Cnut's secular code explicitly ordered that every free man above the age of 12 was to be brought within a tithing and hundred.[94]

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[91] H.R. Loyn, 'The Hundred in England in the Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries', in *idem*, *Society and Peoples*, p. 113; J. Campbell, 'The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 1-6.
[92] Loyn, 'The Hundred in England', pp. 120-5.
[93] N. Hooper, 'Some Observations on the Navy in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in M. Strickland (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Warfare* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 23-6.
[94] II Cn 20.

It is not easy to define who the freemen making up the hundred were, for not all freemen were alike. Edgar's fourth (*Wihtbordesstan*) code reveals some of the distinctions. It laid down that the *tunesmen* (men of the vill) should inform the headman of the hundred of any newly-purchased livestock brought to the common pasture without public announcement. If they did so within five days, neither they nor their herdsmen would be fined; if they did not, the herdsmen were to be flogged.[95] *Tunesman* was the literal equivalent of *villanus* (man of the vill), and thus perhaps of *ceorl*.[96] Such men would have been personally free and the hypothetical purchaser may well have been one of them; the herdsmen were a rung lower. The code went on to stipulate that *tunesmen* and herdsmen should have the same right to investigate the king's and his thegns' livestock as their own.[97] Whether or not the herdsmen were fully free, they clearly shared in the hundred's investigative function. If *tunesmen* were equivalent to *villani*, DB suggests that they were qualified to give evidence at an assembly.[98] Thegns represented a higher category of freeman. Æthelred's third (Wantage) code directed that twelve be nominated in each wapentake to assist the reeve in apprehending men of bad reputation.[99] They have been identified as an early jury of presentment, and their number recalls the twelve standing witnesses—likewise sworn in with relics—stipulated for each hundred by Edgar.[100] Elsewhere, it was assumed that a 'judge' (*dema*) was a thegn or that a verdict would be arrived at by thegns.[101] The *Leges Henrici Primi* follow the same principle in stating that the king's judges should be 'barons of the county' or hold land freely; they could not be villeins, cottars, or other 'base and poor persons'.[102] A hierarchy within the

[95] IV Eg 8-9.
[96] Liebermann, *Gesetze*, ii, *s.v.* 'tunesman'; 'villanus'; 'gemeinfrei'. The Latin recension of IV Edgar, however, renders *tunes men* unspecifically as *vicini* (neighbours): Liebermann, *Gesetze*, i, p. 211.
[97] IV Eg 13.
[98] *DB Hants.*, 23.3 (GDB f. 44d); *DB Suffolk*, 25.52 (LDB f. 393a).
[99] III Atr 3-3.4.
[100] IV Eg 5-6.
[101] III Eg 3; III Atr 13.2.
[102] Hn 29-29.1a.

broad category of freemen seems to have dictated who was qualified to do what in the hundred.

The lordly household could cut across this hierarchy. Cnut's secular code laid down that every freeman above the age of twelve was to be under surety: that of his tithing if he had his own hearth, or that of his lord if he was in someone else's service.[103] In the same way, the alms required of a follower were given by his lord if he could not pay them.[104] But none of this appears to have prevented a follower from bringing charges against his lord in the hundred.[105] Men of the hundred need not have been a fixed category, and Cnut expressly forbade the practice of presenting a man as free or unfree for legal advantage.[106] Anyone personally free was entitled to seek justice in the hundred, and others of lower status were probably called upon to report offences or even give evidence. Arriving at a judgement is generally depicted as the preserve of reeves and thegns.[107] Local though the hundredal assembly was, it was not designed to be egalitarian—nor should we expect to find West Saxon kings imposing a system in which local elites might be judged by their social inferiors.

The assembly was a hundred's focal point, both as an occasion and as a place. It occurred every four weeks, as directed by the Hundred Ordinance, recalling the four-weekly meetings under the auspices of reeves stipulated by Edward the Elder.[108] Hundredal assemblies,

[103] II Cn 20, 31.
[104] VII Atr 5.
[105] Hn 59.6.
[106] II Cn 20.1.
[107] See e.g. I Ew prol; III Eg 3; Cn 1020 11. T. Lambert, 'Jurisdiction as Property in England, 900-1100', in G. Kantor, T. Lambert, and H. Skoda (eds.), *Legalism: Property and Ownership* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 124-9 argues for general participation in judgements. The argument here is not that reeves and thegns had absolute authority but that others were not necessarily entitled to take part in final deliberations. Had these figures lacked any formal responsibility, and depended for their influence on mobilising their private followers, there would have been no reason for the laws to describe them as *deman*. For that matter, if judging had been envisaged as everyone's business, it would have been unnecessary to distinguish anyone at all as a *dema*.
[108] Hu 1; II Ew 8.

however, do not appear to have relied on the presence of officials. The earliest references to 'hundred-reeves' date from the time of the Domesday inquest, and there is nothing to suggest that the *hundredesman* or *hundredes ealdor* mentioned in tenth-century legislation was anything other than a local 'elder'.[109] Hundreds might be summoned by an ealdorman or other potentate, but were expected to assemble and carry out their business unprompted. The Hundred Ordinance shows that they had their own corporate existence from the beginning, as collective receivers of certain judicial profits.[110]

Many hundreds were named after their meeting-place, a fact which only serves to underline the centrality of the hundredal assembly. Although a wide variety of features were used, there were some recurring characteristics. Nodal points such as crossroads, fords, or bridges may have been attractive for reasons of accessibility.[111] Perhaps for similar reasons, hundred meeting-places tended to be centrally located within the unit.[112] On the other hand, centres of habitation were often avoided. This was long explained as a means of resolving disputes on neutral ground between settlements, although a more recent interpretation views assembling on common land as an expression of community.[113] The sites themselves have undergone similar re-assessment. Features lending hundreds their name were previously interpreted in narrow terms as landmarks or platforms for speech-making.[114] Recent scholarship has stressed both the importance of the wider assembly-place, and the ideological associations which prominent features might have.[115] The open-air moot was once considered an archaism

[109] Hu 2; IV Eg 8.1; T. Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 247-50, esp. p. 247 n. 34.
[110] Hu 2.1, 3.
[111] O.S. Anderson, *The English Hundred-Names* (Lund, 1934), pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
[112] Ibid., p. xli.
[113] A. Pantos, '"On the Edge of Things": The Boundary Location of Anglo-Saxon Assembly Sites', *ASSAH*, 12 (2003).
[114] A. Pantos, 'The Location and Form of Anglo-Saxon Assembly-Places: Some "Moot Points"', in A. Pantos and S. Semple (eds.), *Assembly Places and Practices in Medieval Europe* (Dublin, 2004).
[115] Ibid., pp. 161-3, 170-3.

embodying both social and locational continuity, but it is becoming clear that it too remained a live and evolving feature: at least one hundred appears to have acquired an artificial mound for assembly purposes.[116]

East Anglian hundreds as planned units

Not much has been written about the making of the East Anglian hundreds, although the process has generally been connected with Edward the Elder's 'conquest' of 917.[117] Only then, it is reasoned, would a West Saxon king have had a free hand to impose a thorough reorganisation. The general lack of evidence for hundreds before the reign of Edmund, and a specific recognition that the Edwardian conquest was no such thing, mean that this account is no longer tenable. Finding an alternative explanation is not quite as daunting a prospect as it might seem, for while the creation of the East Anglian hundreds is undocumented, the process is no better attested anywhere else. Where the origins and workings of the hundred are concerned, the East Anglian material can in fact be notably revealing.

East Anglian hundreds had some features which distinguished them from their counterparts in other regions. Unlike other shires where there had been Scandinavian settlement, Norfolk and Suffolk knew their subdivisions as hundreds rather than wapentakes. Unlike the southern shires, East Anglia had replaced the hide with the carucate as a conventional land unit by the

[116] R.A. Adkins and M.R. Petchey, 'Secklow Hundred Mound and other Meeting Place Mounds in England', *Archaeological Journal*, 141/1 (1984), pp. 243-6. Examination of the meeting-place of Copthorne hundred (Surrey) has revealed disparate elements which may reflect changes over time: Pantos, 'Location and Form of Anglo-Saxon Assembly-Places', pp. 158-61.
[117] Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 76; Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, pp. 126-30; J. Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets: A Survey with Suggestions', in C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 153.

time of the Domesday survey.[118] Uniquely, East Anglian hundreds did not collect geld on the basis of fiscal land assessments, but through the pence-in-the-pound system, in which individual vills contributed a fixed proportion of every pound levied on the hundred. Vills were gathered into groups responsible for larger fractions of the hundredal pound, which were known as letes.[119] As an initially fiscal subdivision of the hundred, the East Anglian lete may have provided the blueprint for the courts leet which would later appear across England.[120] Although their internal organisation was distinctive, the East Anglian hundreds were treated as equivalent to hundreds elsewhere, for their £10 assessment in a standard geld was equivalent to the sum levied on 100 hides.[121] Considering that many hundreds deviated substantially from the 100-hide figure, this would suggest that East Anglian examples were notably true to type. These characteristics have been taken to imply a system which was regular, highly sophisticated, and perhaps even equitable to a degree.[122] It is therefore a fundamental question whether the hundreds were laid out to be uniform.

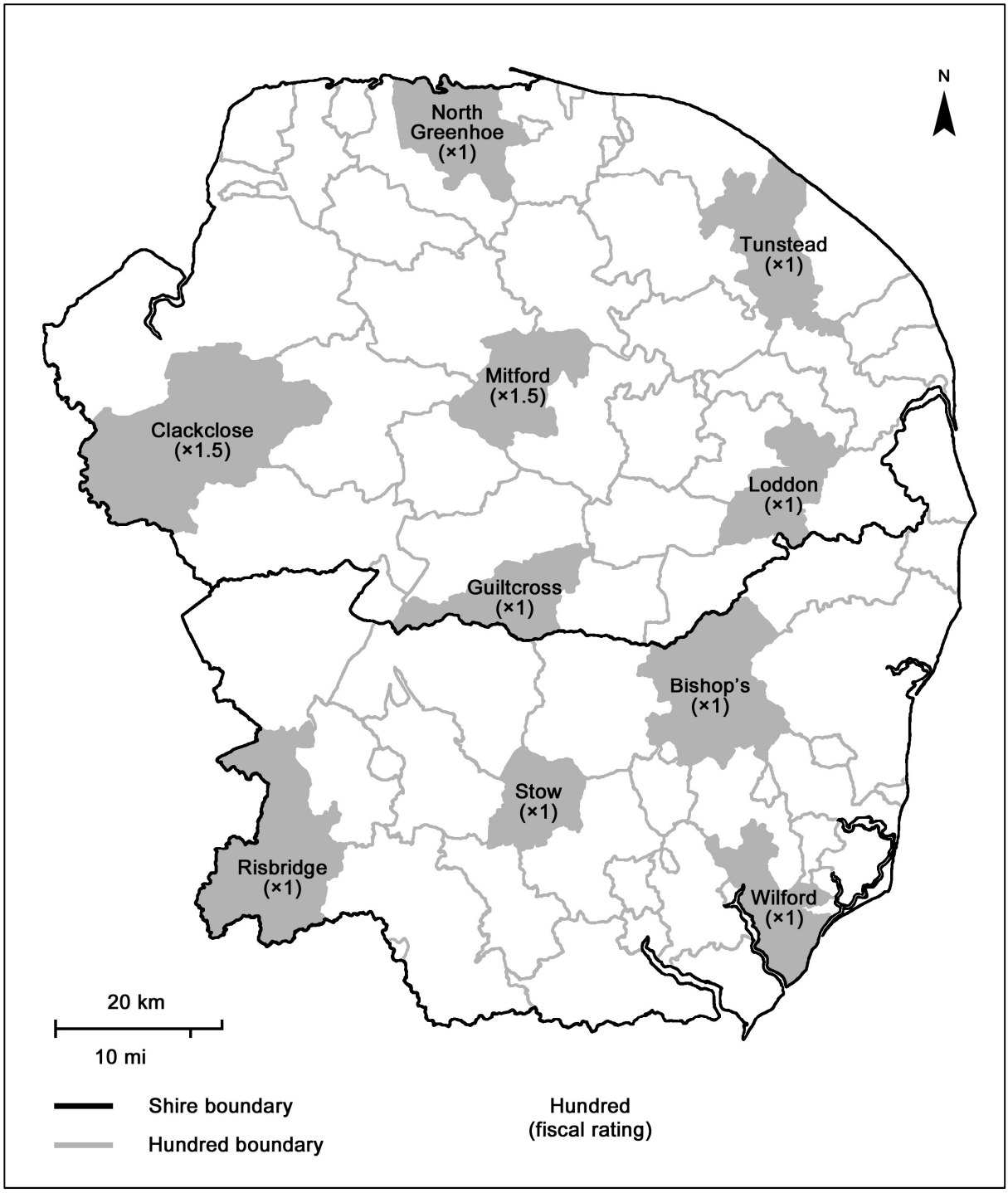
The suggestion that the East Anglian hundreds were planned and intended to be uniform was articulated most fully by James Campbell. He noted that eleventh-century Norfolk and Suffolk had 60 fiscal hundreds between them (the former 36 and the latter 24), a round figure reminiscent of the assessments listed in the Tribal Hidage.[123] Campbell also found strong indications of order in the pence-in-the-pound assessment system as well as the generally

[118] Tenth-century documentation relating to the region always refers to hides: Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 81-2. For references to hides in East Anglia see S 703; S 781; S 948; S 1213; S 1486; S 1494; S 1526; *LE*, ii.4, pp. 75-6; *LE*, ii.35-6. pp. 110-11; *LE*, ii.38, p. 111; *LE*, ii.44, p. 115; *CAR*, ch. 28, pp. 53-4; *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, no. 104.
[119] The term 'lete' or 'leet' seems to be derived from the word for a share of something: *KAS*, p. xxx; Bosworth & Toller, *s.v.* 'hlít'; *DMLBS*, *s.v.* 'leta (letum)'.
[120] D.C. Douglas, *The Social Structure of Medieval East Anglia* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 191-202; Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets', pp. 157-9; 165-6.
[121] *KAS*, p. xv.
[122] Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets', pp. 166-7.
[123] Ibid., pp. 155-6. The fiscal hundreds of East Anglia would have equated to 6,000 hides, compared with the 30,000 assigned to the old kingdom in the Tribal Hidage.

uniform appearance of the hundreds on the map.[124] Others have been less impressed by these considerations. Peter Warner has drawn attention to the disparity between the smallest and the largest hundreds, noting particularly that those in the Sandlings were much smaller than their counterparts in the Breckland, even though both areas have poor soils.[125] Campbell, however, explained this as a reflection of differing population densities, arguing that 'hundredal size was related to population which was in turn an indicator of taxable capacity'.[126] This suggestion was based on H. C. Darby's mapping of hundredal population densities according to LDB, and has never been tested in detail.

To establish whether population or taxable capacity bore a consistent relation to the hundred is a comparatively simple, if laborious task. The discussion below takes a sample of ten territorial hundreds, six in Norfolk and four in Suffolk, for which LDB information has been reordered on a geographical basis (Map 15).[127] These have been chosen to be broadly representative, being non-contiguous and covering the range of landscape types represented in East Anglia. A comparison of total figures for ten sample hundreds may be expected to reveal signs of any uniform pattern. While the figures extracted from LDB are of course representative rather than exact, there is no particular reason to think that they suffer from significant geographical distortion. Three categories of information stand out as measures

[124] Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets', pp. 153-3.
[125] P. Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization in East Suffolk', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 22-3.
[126] Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets', p. 155.
[127] The sample hundreds are Clackclose (hundred-and-a-half), North Greenhoe, Guiltcross, Loddon, Mitford (hundred-and-a-half), and Tunstead in Norfolk; and Bishop's, Risbridge, Stow, and Wilford in Suffolk.



Map 15. The sample hundreds and their fiscal ratings.

according to which hundreds might have been laid out artificially. We shall examine LDB population, arable acreage, and value for signs of a common plan.

The population of individual hundreds can be estimated by adding up the total figures for all LDB population categories and applying the standard multiplier of 4.5.[128] The following table also gives figures for what may be called the tax-paying population, meaning personally free individuals who probably acquitted their holdings directly to the authorities. They are here taken to include freemen and sokemen as well as miscellaneous thegns, priests, and free women. All figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number (see also Map 16).

Table 4. LDB population in ten hundreds.

Hundred	Total population	Tax-paying population
Bishop's (Sf)	3,830	251
Clackclose (Nf)	5,783	591
North Greenhoe (Nf)	3,294	283
Guiltcross (Nf)	2,295	169
Loddon (Nf)	4,131	507
Mitford (Nf)	2,939	276
Risbridge (Sf)	5,117	279
Stow (Sf)	3,375	377
Tunstead (Nf)	3,294	301
Wilford (Sf)	3,812	698

If the hundreds examined are representative, it seems most unlikely that the system was intended to reflect population. While individual units may have gained or lost inhabitants over a century or more, the scale of the disparities would be startling if they had arisen within this time. Clackclose and Mitford were both rated as hundreds-and-a-half, but Clackclose had twice the recorded population of Mitford, which had fewer inhabitants than some single

[128] Darby, *Domesday England*, pp. 87-91.

hundreds. Both Risbridge and Guiltcross were rated as single hundreds, and again one had twice the recorded population of the other. If there was a defining measure for the layout of the hundreds, we must look for it elsewhere.

To Campbell, population was a proxy for taxable capacity. If this was indeed the defining consideration behind the shape of the hundreds, other and indeed more practical measures could have been used. Arable acreage is the most obvious of these, and certainly more plausible than population in view of contemporary administrative practice. Were the hundreds planned with arable capacity in mind? The table below lists the total acreages recorded for the sample hundreds by LDB, assuming that each carucate contained 120 acres. Totals are also given as notional carucates, rounded to the nearest whole unit, for convenience (see also Map 17).

Table 5. LDB arable land in ten hundreds.

Hundred	Arable acres	Equivalent carucates
Bishop's (Sf)	14,666	c. 122
Clackclose (Nf)	12,395.5	c. 103
North Greenhoe (Nf)	11,170	c. 93
Guiltcross (Nf)	6,929.5	c. 58
Loddon (Nf)	9,051	c. 75
Mitford (Nf)	6,905	c. 58
Risbridge (Sf)	27,217	c. 227
Stow (Sf)	9,059	c. 75
Tunstead (Nf)	8,594	c. 72
Wilford (Sf)	7,710.25	c. 64

Perhaps more surprisingly, arable capacity also fails to reveal a uniform pattern. It is true that most of the hundredal totals converge on a range between 60 and 80 carucates, but a general convergence might be guessed at from the hundredal map. The arable acreage of some hundreds, notably Risbridge, was on a quite different scale. Once again, the figures bear no

discernible relation to fiscal rating: the small hundred of Guiltcross and the hundred-and-a-half of Mitford record nearly the same acreage. Shifts in cultivation over a century or so can hardly explain this degree of variation. Arable cultivation too, can be discounted as a defining measure.

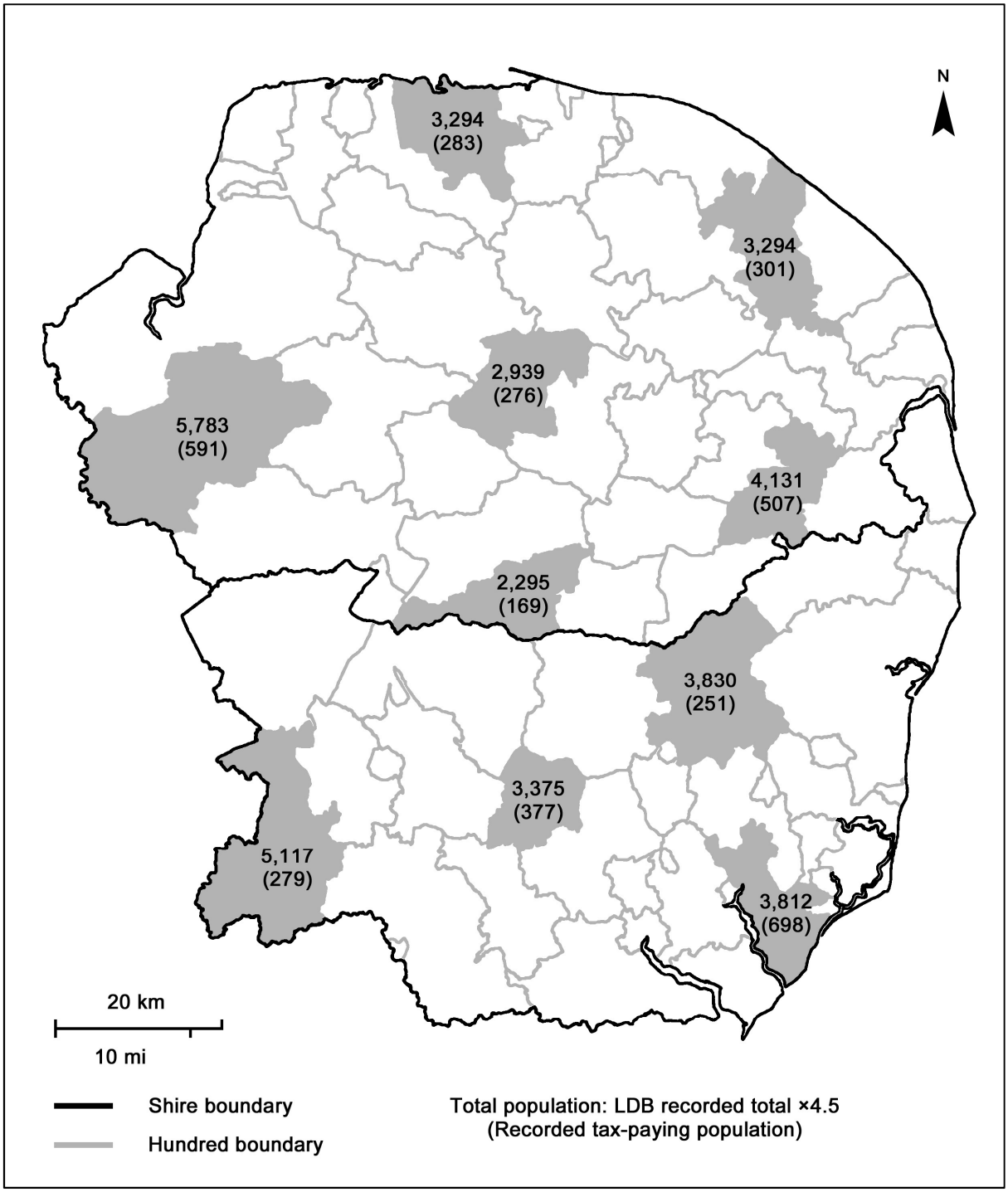
There is a further indication of taxable capacity to be considered, in the shape of Domesday values, which are generally taken to represent the annual yield of a property to its lord.[129] If so, they must provide the best measure of all, because annual yields would have encompassed multiple strands of economic activity. Adding up LDB values should therefore capture sources of profit which may have compensated for disparities in population or arable land. Hundreds straddling the fen-edge, for instance, might owe much of their productivity to sheep-rearing on the Breckland side and fish and much else from the Fens.[130] The small hundreds of eastern Norfolk were well-provided with peat and herring.[131] Hundreds reaching up to watersheds often had access to reserves of wood, which was a valuable resource in East Anglia.[132] If the system was laid out with economic productivity in mind, the total LDB values of the hundreds could be expected to converge. The extent of convergence may be judged from the following table (see also Map 18).

[129] S.P.J. Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 161-209.
[130] On fenland land-uses see H.C. Darby, *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 21-85.
[131] J. Campbell, 'Domesday Herrings', in C. Harper-Bill, C. Rawcliffe, and R.G. Wilson (eds.), *East Anglia's History* (Woodbridge, 2002).
[132] Darby, *Domesday Geography of Eastern England*, pp. 124-9, 179-82; Williamson, *Origins of Norfolk*, pp. 113-4, 121-3.

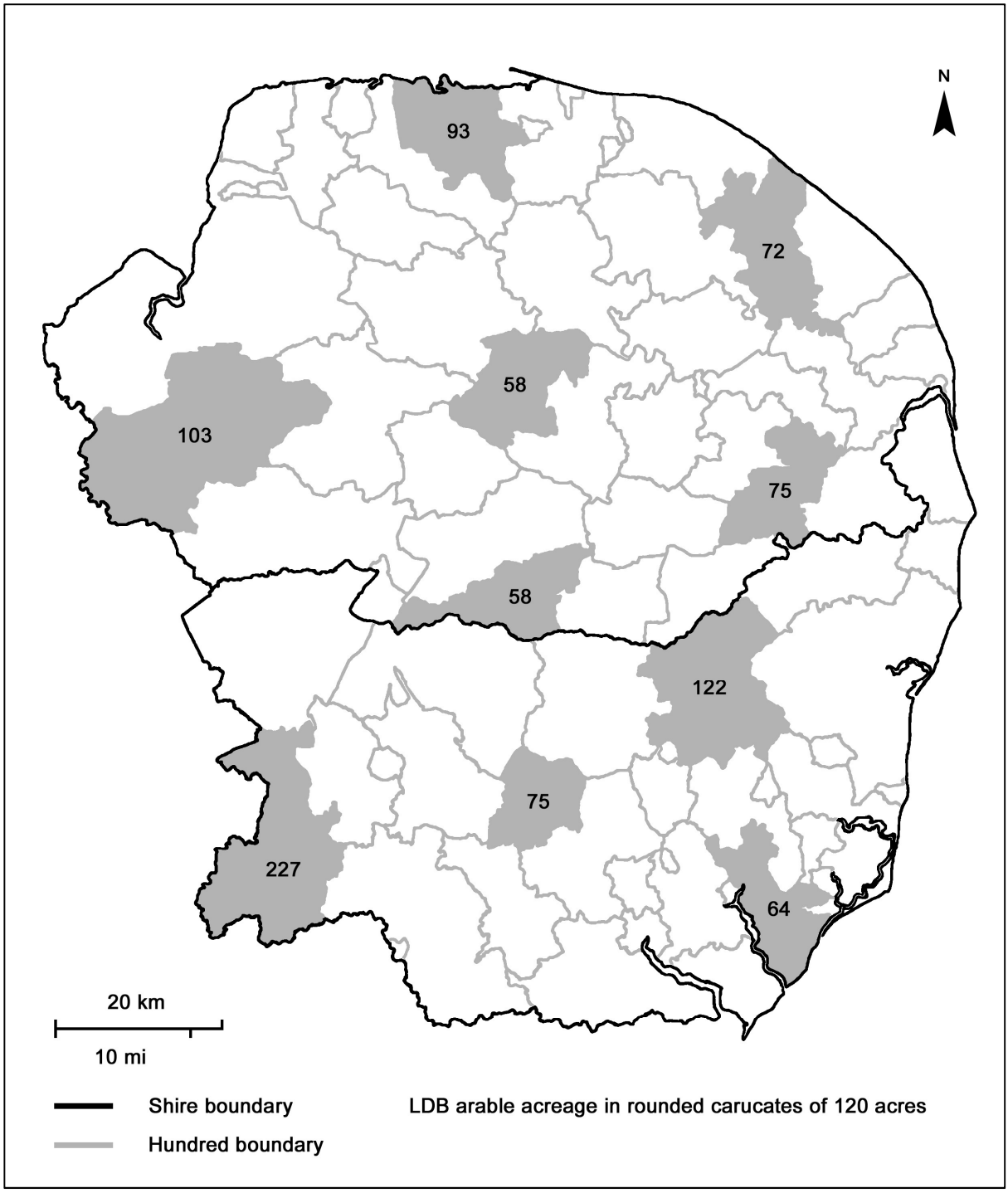
Table 6. LDB values in ten hundreds.

Hundred	Total value	Total value in £sd
Bishop's (Sf)	46,686d	£194 10s 6d
Clackclose (Nf)	45,415d	£189 4s 7d
North Greenhoe (Nf)	22,184d	£92 8s 8d
Guiltcross (Nf)	14,393d	£59 19s 5d
Loddon (Nf)	13,180d	£54 18s 4d
Mitford (Nf)	17,129½d	£71 7s 5½d
Risbridge (Sf)	61,285d	£255 7s 1d
Stow (Sf)	30,134d	£125 11s 2d
Tunstead (Nf)	14,871d	£61 19s 3d
Wilford (Sf)	18,249d	£76 9d

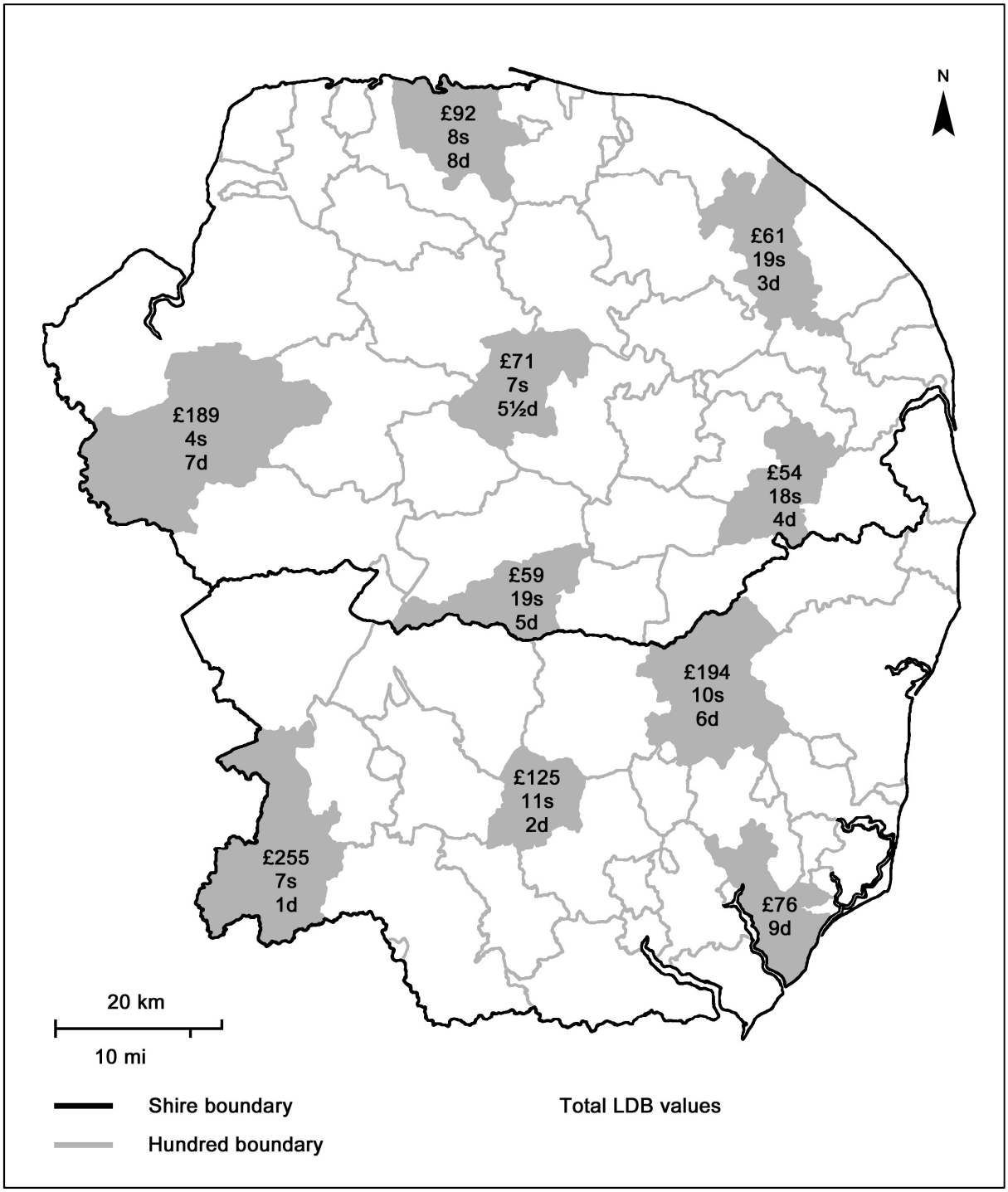
Total yield diverged as much as did population and acreage. Bishop's hundred yielded more than twice the total value of Mitford hundred-and-a-half. Stow yielded more than twice as much as Guiltcross, another single hundred, while Risbridge again dwarfed all the others. As with the other measures, values cluster visibly, but not to an extent that suggests anything beyond broad similarities in scale. Importantly, moreover, the hundreds which seem to converge are never exactly the same. According to LDB the hundreds of North Greenhoe and Tunstead had the same population (3,294), but their recorded acreage amounted to 93 and 72 carucates respectively, and their total values to £92 8s 8d and £61 19s 3d. The hundreds of Loddon and Stow recorded nearly the same acreage (c. 75 carucates) but their population and total values diverged widely. Guiltcross and Tunstead were similar in value but less so in acreage and not at all in population. Within the sample, there is no broadly consistent group of hundreds from which others form outliers. The ten hundreds considered here give no reason to think that the system was laid out by collecting quantitative information and arranging it into regular units.



Map 16. The population of the sample hundreds.



Map 17. The arable acreage of the sample hundreds.



Map 18. The total values of the sample hundreds.

Only on one measure were the East Anglian hundreds notionally regular, and this was their fiscal organisation. LDB records a geld figure for most vills in Norfolk and Suffolk, which represents the sum owed towards every pound of geld paid by the hundred. It remains unknown how these villar quotas were decided, but they were certainly intended to add up to 240d per hundred or 120d per half-hundred.[133] Intermediate between vill and hundred were the letes, which consisted of one or more vills which collectively answered for a (probably often uniform) fraction of the hundredal pound. Letes appear only twice in LDB, but a detailed impression of the system survives in the twelfth-century Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds.[134] Geld figures in the Kalendar match those in LDB, and it is therefore safe to assume that the letes were operational in 1066.[135] In the pence-in-the-pound system we have a measure that was common to all the East Anglian hundreds and matched their rating as half-, single, or multiple units.

In its reconstructed form, the pence-in-the-pound system suggests a rigid conception incorporating some scope for equity. Geld pounds were imposed on very different hundreds in unvarying quotas, and subdivided among uniform letes within hundreds. Within the vills making up the letes, the precise allocation of geld pence appears to have been agreed by local people. Although no doubt true in broad terms, this model requires qualification. In the first place, the great majority of letes are not documented but have been reconstructed from LDB geld figures. These figures have been listed on several occasions, but not always accurately,

[133] *KAS*, pp. xv-xvi; R. Welldon Finn, *Domesday Studies: The Eastern Counties* (London, 1967), p. 105.
[134] *DB Norfolk*, 1.71 (LDB f. 119b); 15.1 (f. 212b); *KAS*, pp. xv-xxv.
[135] *KAS*, p. xvi.

with obvious implications for subsequent attempts at reconstruction.[136] Difficulties also attend the method used to reconstitute the letes themselves, which consists essentially in identifying a recurring sum in a particular hundred and rearranging smaller figures into blocks of the same size. In many cases, the recurring sum is not a neat fraction of 240d, necessitating the interpolation of an anomalous lete to accommodate the residual vills. The problem is grounded partly in the assumption that letes were meant to be the same size. While the Kalendar of Abbot Samson shows that this was the case in some hundreds (Thedwestry had six letes intended to contribute 40d each), it equally demonstrates that the rule did not hold everywhere (Babergh had no uniform pattern).[137] Indeed, one of two entries mentioning letes in LDB states that South Greenhoe hundred had fourteen.[138] As 240 is not divisible by 14, these letes cannot possibly have been equal. The fact that letes were not always equal means that any attempt to reconstruct them from villar geld figures must ultimately be treated as speculation. While the letes were, therefore, probably less uniform than has been supposed, their essential rigidity requires emphasis. The pence-in-the-pound system enabled communities to influence allocations on the most local scale, but the levying of specific sums on particular groups of vills constrained any potential for reallocating the burden within the hundred. Here, as in the creation of the hundreds themselves, equity seems not to have been an important consideration. Letes served the convenience of the geld collector and were probably an administrative, rather than a communal invention.

[136] C. Johnson, 'The Danegeld in Norfolk', in *VCH Norfolk* (2 vols, London, 1901–), ii, pp. 204-11; B.A. Lees, 'The Danegeld and the Leet System in Suffolk', in *VCH Suffolk* (2 vols, London, 1907–), i, pp. 412-6; Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 86-7. Repeating the exercise suggests that Johnson's figures are almost always accurate, while Lees's contain various errors. Hart's fall between the two, but are presented in summary tables without listing geld pence for individual vills, making it impossible to trace how he arrived at his totals.
[137] *KAS*, pp. xvi, xxi-xxv.
[138] *DB Norfolk*, 1.71 (LDB f. 119b).

Letes have been interpreted as instruments of regular organisation and close control. If their regularity has been overestimated, the same is true of their administrative precision. When Roy Hart attempted to reconstruct all the letes in East Anglia, he noted that the pence-in-the-pound assessments for individual hundreds very rarely add up to a perfect 240d. This led him to propose a sophisticated scheme according to which hundredal geld assessments were raised or lowered by altering the quotas for individual letes within them. Hart concluded, for instance, that Bishop's hundred in Suffolk received a beneficial assessment of 186½d, equating to a 22% reduction in geld.[139] Blofield hundred in Norfolk, on the other hand, had its assessment raised by nearly 7% to 256d by selectively increasing the geld burden on the lete closest to Norwich.[140] The theory has been quoted approvingly but rests on uncertain foundations.[141] Pence-in-the-pound assessments for Bishop's hundred in fact add up to an unremarkable 236d, virtually eliminating the posited geld reduction, while a count for Blofield yields 248d rather than 256d. As a geographical rather than a tenurial unit the lete would, in any case, have been a curious vehicle for beneficial assessment. Favours of this kind were more usually bestowed on landholders, and should therefore have fallen either on vills or on entire hundreds. Nothing so far has suggested a concern for the general equity of geld assessments. All but a few dramatic deviations from the theoretical 240d norm are therefore better explained as products of accident than of design. Perhaps the strongest argument against detailed manipulation of the lete system is that only three out of 60 hundreds in East Anglia achieved precisely their intended quota, usually deviating by only a few pence.[142] If the letes had been controlled as minutely as Hart suggested, it should have been possible to achieve the intended figures.

[139] Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 87, 92.
[140] Ibid., pp. 86, 91-2.
[141] Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets', p. 158.
[142] The exceptions were Walsham in Norfolk (240d), and Lothingland and Parham half-hundreds in Suffolk (120d each). Lothingland was assessed as a whole, without villar quotas.

It is an obvious step to ask why the pence-in-the-pound assessments so consistently failed to meet their notional formula. Examining them in LDB suggests that the underlying scheme of villar assessments was far from regular. While geld pence were usually assigned vill by vill, this geographical scheme seems to have posed problems. Not all vills record a geld assessment in LDB, in some cases probably because the settlement was too small to warrant a separate figure. This indicates that they were included in the quota of a neighbouring vill, in turn suggesting that some villar figures in LDB effectively represent letes in miniature. It should come as no surprise, in a region of often dispersed settlement, that vills could not always be separated neatly on the ground. Sometimes, other considerations seem to have influenced the assessments. There are cases in which an otherwise conventional statement of geld liability notes that it refers to the manor, not the vill.[143] In one case, a pair of neighbouring Ely manors had separate 15d geld assessments, but the sokemen of both vills were rated jointly for a further 15d.[144] Elsewhere, LDB records more than one geld figure per vill. Even where the sums are the same, these do not represent duplications because the villar dimensions which accompany the geld figures tend to differ.[145] Instead, multiple geld figures appear to have been recorded mainly where a vill had more than one manorial centre.[146] In this context it is significant that across LDB, villar geld assessments are usually recorded at the end of the main manorial entry.[147] These features suggest that tenurial considerations may have impinged appreciably on the pence-in-the-pound system after all. Any lordly aspiration to shape assessments, would have conflicted with a scheme based on geographical quotas.

[143] E.g. *DB Norfolk*, 9.87 (LDB f. 179b).
[144] *DB Norfolk*, 15.16-17 (LDB f. 214a-b).
[145] E.g. *DB Suffolk*, 6.311 (LDB f. 329a); 14.105 (f. 368a).
[146] It should be stressed that multiple geld figures form rare exceptions: even vills with multiple manors usually record only one geld assessment.
[147] Welldon Finn, *Eastern Counties*, p. 105; M. Hesse, 'Domesday Land Measures in Suffolk', *Landscape History*, 22/1 (2000), p. 22. The pattern is suggestive in view of the qualified revival of Maitland's hypothesis that a manor was 'a house against which geld was charged': J.J.N. Palmer, 'The Domesday Manor', in J.C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1987).

The simplest explanation for most deviations from the 240d formula is that local influence and discretion ultimately outweighed exact accounting.

In some instances, those who did the accounting appear to have given up any attempt to make individual hundreds yield 240d to the geld pound. Blackbourn and Bradmere hundreds, in Suffolk, were both notionally single hundreds, but Blackbourn was over-assessed (333¼d) and Bradmere fell short (142½d); only together did they come close to a round 480d. In Norfolk, the coastal hundreds of East Flegg, West Flegg, and Happing adjoined, although the Flegg hundreds lay on what was effectively an island. LDB suggests that they were grouped together for administrative purposes, noting that 'the soke of three hundreds' was attached to Yarmouth.[148] Their fiscal rating corroborates this, for while they diverged from the 240d standard individually, the assessments of East Flegg (230½d), West Flegg (255d), and Happing (234¼d) added up to 719¾d, just a farthing short of the required total for three hundreds. The assessment of South Erpingham hundred (195½d) fell markedly short of the standard quota but was partly offset by that of neighbouring North Erpingham (255⅞d). In these cases, it seems that rigid 240d quotas were abandoned and the required geld figures made up, as closely as possible, by adjusting between hundreds.

In short, the East Anglian geld system does not give the impression of a flexible template universally applied, but of a rigid template applied to varying degrees. It was fundamentally inequitable in that hundreds were all treated the same, and this can only have been exacerbated by subordinate lete quotas. But for all the straining towards a 240d standard, the intended figure was almost never achieved. If precise regulation had been a feature of the system, one would expect the assessments of individual vills to have been adjusted to make

[148] *DB Norfolk*, 1.67 (LDB f. 118a).

up an exact geld pound, and might indeed question why letes were needed in the first place. In the inexact hundredal assessments we probably see a rigid idea being pushed as far as those responsible felt it prudent to go.

A possible objection to these arguments is that they depend on small variations in long lists of individual assessments. Could it be that some relevant figures were missed in the compilation of LDB, or that assessments were periodically corrected? Without contemporary geld receipts, these possibilities cannot be ruled out entirely, but there is nonetheless reason to trust the LDB figures. Geld receipts become available in the twelfth century, with the first surviving pipe roll. In 1129-30, Norfolk and Suffolk were liable for a total of £565 2s 10d.[149] The total from 60 hundreds should have been £600, and a shortfall equivalent to three-and-a-half hundreds might suggest a system in decay. Even so, the twelfth-century figure provides a benchmark against which to measure the notional yield in 1066. The first step in establishing this is to add up all pence-in-the-pound assessments recorded in LDB. Of all the East Anglian hundreds, only Norwich and Thetford record no geld information at all, which suggests genuine omissions. To allow for this, their notional assessments, collectively amounting to 480d, are added to the previous figure. The resulting total is then multiplied by ten to simulate a standard geld levy, which would on these figures have yielded £565 6s 1¾d—for practical purposes the same total as was collected six decades later. Individual shire yields do not match quite so neatly. According to LDB, Norfolk should have paid £340 3s 10¼d (compared with £330 2s 2d under Henry I) and Suffolk £225 2s 3½d (£235 8d under Henry I). But some or all of this discrepancy may be an artefact of LDB's inattention to burghal geld assessments. The assessments of Norwich and Thetford are not recorded and the treatment of

[149] *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Thirty First Year of the Reign of King Henry I, Michaelmas 1130*, ed. and trans. J.A. Green, Pipe Roll Society, n.s. 57 (London, 2012), pp. 75, 79.

Ipswich is unclear, admitting the possibility that Ipswich paid considerably more, and Norwich or Thetford less than their hundredal ratings would suggest.[150] On the whole, the apparent correspondence between eleventh- and twelfth-century geld figures appears more than coincidental. As there is no evidence for systematic reassessment in the century after the Conquest, Edward the Confessor, Henry I, and Henry II probably claimed very similar sums in geld.[151]

It would follow that the apparent under- or over-assessment of individual hundreds in LDB was real, and that vills without geld figures were indeed reckoned within others. Where the hundredal geld quota could not be made to fit the template, this was apparently accepted, even if it resulted in geld pounds of 191d (Hartismere, Suffolk) or 181¼d (Wayland, Norfolk). The men in charge of this system knew their rule and enforced it as far as possible, but where the numbers would not fit, it was maintaining the rule that counted. A standard geld was levied at £10 per hundred. Where the burden of an individual hundred was altered for whatever reason, this was done not by changing the number of pounds collected but by changing the size of the pounds. In other words, a system which operated on an assumption of regularity, and was powerful enough to treat disparate units as equal in a manifestly inequitable way, could still not reliably make each hundred pay £10. Fiscal uniformity yielded to conditions on the ground.

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[150] *DB Suffolk*, 1.122c (LDB f. 290a). As it is unclear what Ipswich ultimately paid, the present calculation uses its nominal rating of 120d (as a half-hundred). Another difficulty is that burghal geld-payments appear generally to have been replaced by *auxilia* early in Henry I's reign (see C. Stephenson, *Borough and Town* (Cambridge, MA, 1933), pp. 155, 160-63). This means that the notional £565 6s 1¾d of LDB include burghal geld whereas the £565 2s 10d of the pipe rolls may not. However, the close correspondence between the geld figures, along with the fact that *burhs* counted as hundreds in East Anglia, invites the question whether the East Anglian *auxilia* may not have been additional to the geld. For instance, whereas both Norwich and Ipswich paid more in *auxilium* than they would have done on their notional geld rating, Thetford paid exactly the same (£10), as did Bedford further afield (£5): *Great Roll of the Pipe, Michaelmas 1130*, ed. Green, pp. 75, 79, cf. 76, 83. Mere substitution, for an unchanged yield, would seem contrary to the purpose of a new tax.

[151] J.A. Green, 'The Last Century of Danegeld', *EHR*, 96/379 (1981). The East Anglian geld figures from the reign of Henry II are identical to those for 1129-30: Maitland, *DBB*, p. 400.

The geld was neither the only royal levy on the East Anglian hundreds nor the first, for it appears not to have been taken anywhere before 1012.[152] Other fiscal charges which must have pre-dated it are more dimly discernible in LDB. Roy Hart first drew attention to a recurring render of about £2 from individual hundreds, which LDB sometimes describes as the 'value of the soke of the hundred'.[153] Thus Ramsey Abbey received 70s from the soke of the hundred-and-a-half of Clackclose, while Ely Abbey had £11 from the soke of the five-and-a-half hundreds of Wicklaw and 60s from that of the hundred-and-a-half of Mitford.[154] Further examples can be added: Walsham hundred in Norfolk rendered 40s to the king and 20s to the earl, Shropham rendered 40s, and Guiltcross 20s.[155] Hart connected these payments with the profits of hundredal justice, but their fixed nature suggests otherwise, and two further instances give a clear indication of their provenance. In Earsham half-hundred, which was held by Stigand through his manor of Earsham, unattached freemen scattered across seven vills paid him 40s.[156] Some decades later, Henry I granted the manor of Bramford in Suffolk, with 40s from the sokemen of Claydon and Bosmere hundreds, to the bishop of Évreux.[157] These examples suggest a round payment of £1 or £2 from the free population of each hundred, which could be glossed as the value of its soke.

Potential for confusion arises from the use of soke terminology. When an eleventh-century king alienated a hundred, the beneficiary became the default holder of soke within it, as LDB consistently demonstrates.[158] Records from Bury St Edmunds reveal that this status carried an

[152] S. Keynes, '*Heregeld*', in *WBEASE*, p. 240; R.P. Cohen, 'Danegeld: The Land Tax in England, 991-1162' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2018), pp. 34-6.
[153] Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 77-8.
[154] *DB Norfolk*, 16.2 (LDB f. 215b); *DB Suffolk*, 21.52 (LDB f. 385b); *DB Norfolk*, 15.16 (LDB f. 214a).
[155] *DB Norfolk*, 1.44 (LDB f. 113b); 1.142 (f. 127a); 1.146 (f. 128a).
[156] *DB Norfolk*, 1.220-226 (LDB ff. 138b-139b)
[157] Douglas, *Social Structure of Medieval East Anglia*, no. 60, p. 255. This seems to prefigure the amalgamation of Bosmere and a rump of Claydon: see Martin, 'Hundreds and Liberties'.
[158] M. Bailey, 'Introduction', in *Alecto DB Suffolk*, p. 10.

entitlement to a basic rent from independent freemen who might owe nothing else. This was levied at 1d per acre, or 16d per 15 acres, and known as *hidagium* in the twelfth century.[159] Where LDB assigns a value to lands held by freemen, it is often clear from the sum involved (e.g. 10s from 1 carucate) that this was their only payment. But even though *hidagium* was paid by independent freemen, and went to the soke-holder, it was not the same as the hundredal payments discussed above. It was not levied as a predetermined sum but on acres and carucates, and consequently yielded more than the 'soke of the hundred'.[160] Given its name and its assessment on fiscal land measures, *hidagium* may have originated as a tenth-century royal tax. Although theoretically profitable, it appears to have been susceptible to alienation, perhaps because (unlike the geld) it could hardly have been multiplied at need. The 'soke of the hundred', on the other hand, is best understood as a tribute payment, being levied in sums both round and not particularly onerous. Although both of these levies can be assumed to pre-date the geld, neither bore any more consistent relation to the hundred. Neither as real measurements nor as imposed fictions do fiscal assessments appear to have been decisive in shaping the hundreds.

HUNDREDAL SOCIETY IN EAST ANGLIA

In the absence of a fiscal organising scheme, the social and legal functions of the hundred may shed more light on its origins. All the earliest references to hundreds are concerned with this sphere of activity, and particularly with the detection of theft and apprehension of

[159] *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. D.C. Douglas (London, 1932), pp. cxxiii-cxxvii; *KAS*, pp. xxxvii-xl; D. Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 245-6, 314. It should not be confused with the geld, which was sometimes called *hidagium* where it was levied on the hide: N. Neilson, *Customary Rents* (Oxford, 1910), pp. 115-20.
[160] In the late twelfth century, the *hidagium* of Thedwestry hundred yielded £10 14s 1½d, and that of Blackbourn double-hundred £5 19s 8d: *KAS*, pp. 23, 56.

thieves. It is reasonable to suppose that such tasks would have been uppermost in the minds of those who shaped the units on the ground. While these priorities cannot explain the shape of any individual hundred, they draw attention to a fundamental characteristic of the hundredal system—its universality. Edmund's stipulation that anyone refusing to pursue a thief should pay 120s to the king and 30s to the hundred, apparently assumed that there were hundreds as far as the king's authority extended.[161] Regulations concerning the tracking of stolen cattle presupposed that any trail leaving a hundred would thereby cross into the next.[162] Edgar required unexpected purchases of livestock to be announced publicly, and directed that any breach of this regulation was to be reported to the hundred elder.[163] These arrangements could not have functioned if the hundredal system had been discontinuous.

The principle extended to men as well as territory. Cnut's secular code is the earliest surviving document to stipulate that every free man over the age of twelve was to be in a hundred and tithing.[164] Tithings, however, enter the documentary record at the same time as hundreds.[165] As they consisted by definition in groups of ten freemen who might not share any other association, tithings can be taken as evidence that the system encompassed all freemen from the beginning. If so, hundreds must always have been conceived as the king's point of contact with the free population.[166] This interface came to be described as soke, and it was therefore only natural that hundreds so often provided the framework for its reckoning and alienation.

[161] III Em 2.
[162] Hu 5.
[163] IV Eg 5.1.
[164] II Cn 20.
[165] The institutions are presented as complementary in Hu 2, 4. 'Hundreds' and 'tithings' both appear previously in Æthelstan's London Ordinance (VI As), but the arrangements described seem to have been exceptional: Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 149-50.
[166] See above, pp. 86-91.

Although it is clear that all freemen fell under a hundred, we should be wary of concluding that they were equal within it. There is little evidence that hundredal meetings were descended from hypothetical 'ancient popular assemblies' at which free peasants deliberated amongst themselves.[167] A mere century after the hundreds first appeared, it could be accepted without comment that only some freemen were entitled or obliged to perform their core functions. The most expressive evidence comes from the half-hundred of Diss in the upper Waveney valley, in the shape of a miscellaneous statement which has already been quoted.[168]

> In Fersfield TRE lay the soke and sake of all those who had less than 30 acres. Of those who had 30 acres and of Winfarthing the soke and sake lay in the Hundred…[169]

The adoption of this particular standard suggests (as argued previously) that fiscal expediency was the original objective. But any rule which excluded some people from full involvement in the hundred's functions would have affected their status in a very visible way. It therefore seems likely that it acted as a property qualification for participating in the hundred in other respects too. A writ of William II refers explicitly to such a rule:

> And I forbid that anyone shall presume to cause [Bury St Edmunds Abbey] any annoyance or injury henceforth; and I also affirm that you shall not compel the men of the Saint to go to shires and hundreds, except those who hold so much land that they were worthy to go to shires and hundreds in the time of King Edward…[170]

The men of St Edmund were mostly concentrated in the abbey's eight-and-a-half hundreds and the Waveney valley, including Diss half-hundred. In this connection is seems significant that the threshold for 'soke in the hundred' in Diss was set at 30 acres. While suit to shire and hundred would in later centuries become a service to be negotiated and discharged from

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[167] As still envisaged by Stenton, *ASE*, p. 299.
[168] See above, p. 95.
[169] *DB Norfolk*, 1.181 (LDB f. 130b): *In Feruella jacuit soca et saca tempore regis Edwardi de omnibus qui minus habuerunt quam XXX acras. De illis qui habuerunt XXX acras jacuit soca 7 saca in hundredo 7 de Wineferthinc…*
[170] *Feudal Documents*, ed. Douglas, no. 16, pp. 59-60: *Et prohibeo ut nullus presumat eis molestiam uel iniuriam inde facere et defendo etiam ut non cogatis homines sancti ire ad scyras uel hundretos nisi illos qui tantum terre tenent unde digni fuissent tempore regis Edwardi ire ad scyras et ad hundretos…* My translation.

specific holdings, it often appears to have been associated with virgates and rarely with smaller holdings.[171] Considering that a virgate also notionally represented a full, undivided villein holding, the thirty-acre mark emerges as an important horizon in rural society.[172]

LDB's statement concerning Diss half-hundred makes it possible to consider how exclusive hundredal participation may have been in eleventh-century East Anglia. With the thirty-acre rule in mind, it is a simple step to reconstitute the half-hundred geographically and determine the how many passed the threshold. The recorded landholders and cultivators of Diss half-hundred numbered 543: a total made up of 96 freemen (including all individuals recorded by name), 94 sokemen, 100 *villani*, 239 *bordarii*, and 14 slaves. By this reckoning, the personally free male population (including one female landholder) was 290. As the criterion for seeking the hundred was based on land-holding, we should subtract the *villani* from this total. The free, landholding population would therefore have numbered 190. Determining the size of holdings is often impossible because many were recorded collectively. Assuming an unequal division maximising thirty-acre holdings, the hundredal threshold could have been cleared by 56 at most. In other words, the men whose soke was in the hundred made up under 20% of the free male population, a mere 10% of the total male population, and (assuming the conventional multiplier of 4.5) only 2% of the population as a whole. If these were the men fully qualified to participate in the hundred, the institution was far from egalitarian.

[171] F.W. Maitland, 'The Suitors of the County Court', *EHR*, 3/11 (1888); F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I* (2nd edn, 2 vols, Cambridge, 1898), i, pp. 541-2. See e.g. *Surveys of the Estates of Glastonbury Abbey, c. 1135-1201*, ed. N.E. Stacy (Oxford, 2001), pp. 85, 114-7, 121, 125, 141, 204, 208, 220, 229. Here, a survey of Glastonbury estates from 1189 mentions twelve suits to hundred or shire. Seven of these were incumbent on virgates or virgates-and-a-half, and only one on a smaller holding, held by a reeve. Holders of half-virgates otherwise only 'summoned' the hundred.
[172] P. Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England* (Oxford, 1892), p. 148.

Evidence from the Norfolk hundred-and-a-half of Clackclose gives an indication of what may have underpinned this hierarchy. Edward the Confessor granted soke over most of this territory to Ramsey Abbey, as a subsequent writ of his reveals.[173] At some date before c. 1170, the abbey had cause to fabricate a more extensive writ in Edward's name, detailing the abbey's privileges in Clackclose:[174]

> And it is my will that the soke within *Bichamdic* shall belong to St Benedict at Ramsey in all things as fully and as completely as I myself possessed it, and all the rights that any king can have; and all the men who are 'moot-worthy', '*fyrd*-worthy' and 'fold-worthy', in the hundred and a half, whosoever may own the men, St Mary and St Benedict and the abbot and the brethren at Ramsey are to have the soke in all things over them…[175]

Whatever its immediate origins, the passage connecting assembly, military service, and fold-keeping suggests familiarity with local custom.[176] It is both unique and, as a twelfth-century reference to the *fyrd*, archaic, and the importance ascribed to the fold tells in its favour. Poor Breckland soils made it a valuable privilege for lords to fold their men's sheep and thereby acquire their manure. References to 'fold-soke' are widespread in LDB, and a common indicator of at least partial subjection to a manor.[177] By definition, someone who kept a fold either owned many sheep or was the lord of people who did. The means necessary to serve in the *fyrd* would likely have been restricted to men of at least similar status. Although nothing suggests that participation in assemblies, *fyrd*-service, and fold-keeping were mutually conditional, there is reason to think that they naturally tended to go together. This would have restricted 'moot-worthiness' to substantial free peasants, if not lords of small manors.

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[173] S 1108.
[174] S 1109. On this document, see Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 248-52
[175] *7 ic wylle þæt seo socne wiðinnen Bicchamdic ligce in to Ramesege to Sancte Benedihte on eallen þingen swa full 7 swa forð swa ic heo me seolf ahte 7 ealle þa gerihte þa æni king mæi ahen 7 ealle þa men þa beon motwurði ferdwurði 7 faldwurði in þæt oðer healfe hundred swa hwilc man swa þa men ahe Sancte Marie 7 Sanctus Benedictus 7 se abbod 7 þa gebroðra in to Ramesege habben þa socne on eallen þingen ofer heom…* Text and translation: Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 259-62.
[176] The earlier writ, and the Ramsey Chronicle, frame Edward's grant differently. At first, the king may have given only a soke-territory attached to Wimbotsham: S 1108; *CAR*, ch. 95, pp. 160-1; above, p. 174.
[177] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 76-7, 91.

The only way of reconciling royal demands for universal attachment to hundreds with the evidence for restricted participation, is to consider the different roles which people might play in assemblies. If only around fifty men were able to participate fully in the activities of Diss half-hundred, these can be understood as men entitled to sit in judgement. The 'thegns' qualified to witness transactions and apprehend troublemakers would presumably have been drawn from among them.[178] The hundred as a fine-receiving body can hardly have extended beyond such a group, for practical reasons. Activities of this kind were perhaps usually closed even to less substantial freemen. These, of whom LDB records nearly 140 in Diss, would undoubtedly have been qualified to seek the hundred court as plaintiffs. The act of giving evidence is recorded another step down the social scale. LDB mentions a dispute in Ipswich which pitted the collective testimony of the half-hundred against that of certain *villani*.[179] The *villani* may have stood outside the hundred but were nonetheless qualified to give evidence. A dispute in Hampshire set the testimony of the 'better and old men' of shire and hundred against that of 'villani, commoners, and reeves'.[180] Here there seems to have been disagreement over who was qualified to testify. In the long-running dispute between Abbot Baldwin of Bury St Edmunds and Bishop Herfast of Thetford, the bishop was accused of relying for evidence on 'men called bacularii, who are disqualified by law'.[181] What kind of people *bacularii* were is unclear, but it appears that from a certain point, an individual's low status furnished a useful objection to sharing a forum with them.[182]

[178] See above, pp. 206-7.
[179] *DB Suffolk*, 25.52 (LDB f. 393a).
[180] *DB Hants.*, 23.3 (GDB f. 44d).
[181] *MStE*, ch. 27, p. 68.
[182] On *bacularii*, see *MStE*, p. 68, n. 276; *DMLBS*, *s.v.* 'bachelarius'.

Accounts which describe the act of assembling paint a similar, if necessarily less specific picture. Ely and Ramsey Abbeys both documented the process of their endowment at length. The phrase *coram totius hundreti testimonio* is rehearsed frequently in the *Liber Eliensis*, while the Ramsey Chronicle describes similar transactions but generally refers to the testimony of 'many' rather than the hundred.[183] While these wordings give away little, and the performative aspect of concluding transactions before as many eyes and ears as possible was no doubt important, it is probably again a restricted 'legal' hundred that is meant. When the Ely material describes witnessing by a larger assembly—of shire or *burh*—it usually specifies that the 'better' or 'wealthy' men of the district were present.[184] When objections were raised to Ely's purchase of a Cambridgeshire estate in the shire court of Huntingdon, the vendor brought 'all the better men of six hundreds' to support his title.[185] A further sign that testimony was above all a matter of status, is the bending of the institutional framework. Hundreds were supposed to assemble every four weeks but could apparently be summoned at need by a sheriff or other royal official.[186] Other, more irregular assemblies are mentioned in the *Liber Eliensis*. A purchase worth £15 was concluded at Chippenham in the presence of various substantial men from the surrounding area and 'almost all the better men who were in that vill'.[187] A different transaction was witnessed by 'all the better and older men of Ely'.[188] Yet another was made 'in the witness of the vill and hundred'.[189] There is no evidence that vills were required to assemble in the same way as hundreds, but if those qualified to bear witness came together, the event was glossed as a villar assembly. The weight of the

[183] E.g. *LE*, ii.11a, p. 89; ii.16, p. 92; ii.38, p. 111; *CAR*, ch. 49-51, 53, pp. 78-84.
[184] E.g. *LE*, ii.8, p. 81; ii.10, pp. 83-4; ii.11, p. 87.
[185] *LE*, ii.25, p. 99. A similar procedure is described at ii.34, p. 109.
[186] Ealdorman Æthelwine and Wulfstan of Dalham seem to have done this at Ely: *LE*, ii.12, p. 91; ii.18, p. 93.
[187] *LE*, ii.11a, p. 89.
[188] *LE*, ii.17, p. 93.
[189] *LE*, ii.31, p. 104.

hundred's testimony was not solely institutional, but derived to a significant extent from the status of those who gathered in that particular forum.

The chronology of the East Anglian hundreds

The social and legal concerns underlying the hundredal system bear on its age in the form recorded by LDB. If these, rather than fiscal considerations, shaped the hundreds in the first instance, it becomes unnecessary to propose an implausibly bureaucratic process of reorganisation at some point in the early to mid-tenth century. If the most important matter was that every freeman should be in a hundred, the drawing of hundredal boundaries can safely be ascribed to local officials and assemblies, who would have been best placed to ensure that units adjoined. Such a process would account for the survival of older units in an ultimately far more comprehensive system. It would, for instance, provide a context in which the episcopal soke-territory of Hoxne might have been augmented by a tenurially dissimilar and traditionally separate stretch of country, to form Bishop's hundred.[190] While speculative, such an account would accord due weight to social and legal practice and avoid the unsafe assumption that the scheme visible in LDB was exactly what had been put in place a century earlier. The less emphasis is placed on fiscal management, the easier it is to see the hundreds as living institutions subject to change.

An array of evidence suggests that hundreds were far from immutable even once in place. Some, such as Babergh double-hundred in Suffolk, were apparently treated as fiscal multiples from the beginning. This is significant in raising the possibility of changes after the first imposition of the hundredal principle. For instance, the five-and-a-half hundreds of Wicklaw

[190] See above, p. 171-3.

have long been seen as an early territory later subdivided into hundreds.[191] Their appearance in a charter of Edgar and in the *Liber Eliensis* is usually taken to show that the hundredal pattern visible in LDB was established no later than 970.[192] But the example of Babergh indicates that the five-and-a-half (or six) hundreds mentioned in the tenth century could have been a single unit merely rated at that number. They were apparently attached to Sudbourne, which had been held by a Scandinavian leader called Scule before Edgar granted the estate to Ely Abbey.[193] The untidy layout of the Wicklaw hundreds looks like an artificial administrative expedient, which would be easier to associate with a monastic community than with an Anglo-Scandinavian magnate. The shape of this group of hundreds could well be significantly later than their first mention in 970. A possible parallel can be found in north Norfolk, where another uncharacteristic group of detached portions confuses the hundredal map. The *Liber Eliensis* records a purchase of land at Kelling, concluded 'before the three hundreds in which Kelling lies', in Edgar's reign.[194] In LDB, the vill of Kelling is recorded entirely within Holt hundred. Viewed on a map, the adjacent hundreds of Holt, North Greenhoe, and Gallow form a symmetrical territory facing the sea, reminiscent of Blything hundred in Suffolk, into which detached vills ascribed to North and South Erpingham hundreds intrude. Again, the 'three hundreds in which Kelling lies' could have been a single unit up to an indeterminate date before 1066.[195]

Hundred meeting-places were long considered a particularly archaic feature but even more than boundaries, they show signs of instability. Some cases are apparent from the tendency of

[191] See notably P. Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization'. Ipswich, rated as a half-hundred, may have been integral to an original unit comprising the 'six hundreds which belong to Sudbourne' which are mentioned in the *Liber Eliensis*: Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 71; *LE*, ii.41, p. 114 and n. 3.
[192] S 779; Warner, 'Pre-Conquest Territorial and Administrative Organization', p. 17.
[193] *LE*, ii.41, p. 114; cf. *LE*, ii.37, p. 111. Scule is discussed below, pp. 267-70.
[194] *LE*, ii.48, p. 116.
[195] Their geld assessments add up almost perfectly, to 719d.

hundreds to take the name of the location where they assembled. Clackclose hundred-and-a-half was originally named after 'Klakki's pig-sty' but later preferred to meet at a barrow on common land near Stradsett.[196] Earsham half-hundred eventually came to assemble at Harleston, rather than Earsham, on market-days.[197] The hundred court of Gallow is documented in three different places.[198] Although late, these references caution against assuming that hundreds always met in the same place, or that meeting-places were necessarily ancient. Henry I had cause to decree that shire and hundred assemblies were to be held in the same places as during Edward the Confessor's reign.[199] While Henry was concerned with abuses, hundreds had always been peripatetic to a degree. This much is clear from the *Liber Eliensis* and a list of sureties for Peterborough estates, which contain various references to meetings of multiple hundreds.[200] Where more than one hundred assembled together, it is implicit that at least one was coming to a meeting-place that was not its own. There was nothing unusual about hundreds assembling at new locations.

Some evidence suggests that, far from remaining wedded to traditional moot-places or merely obeying royal summons, local society itself shaped this aspect of the hundred. East Anglia has no known example to parallel the artificial moot-mound identified at Secklow in Buckinghamshire, but there seems to have been a marked taste for assembling at barrows.[201] In Suffolk, Thingoe assembled at the 'assembly mound' that lent the hundred its name;[202] Bradmere likely at Troston, by the Broad Mere and Troston Mount;[203] and Lothing probably

[196] Anderson, *English Hundred-Names*, pp. 74-5; Blomefield, vii, pp. 268-9.
[197] Blomefield, v, p. 313, n. 5.
[198] Blomefield, vii, p. 2.
[199] Hn com 1.
[200] *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, no. 40, pp. 74-83.
[201] Adkins and Petchey, 'Secklow Hundred Mound'.
[202] Anderson, *English Hundred-Names*, pp. 95-6. (National Grid ref. TL850654).
[203] Ibid., p. 97. (National Grid ref. TL 897741).

by a barrow on Bloodmoor Hill.[204] In Norfolk, Clackclose met at 'Clackclose-hill';[205] Forehoe by the 'four hills' at Carleton Forehoe;[206] Freebridge at Flitcham Burgh;[207] South Greenhoe at the 'Greenhills' on the London Road south of Swaffham;[208] Grimshoe by a tumulus at Grimes Graves;[209] Smethdon likewise at a barrow;[210] and Taverham at 'Frettenham Hill' on Frettenham Common.[211] The hundred-name Greenhoe, which occurs twice in Norfolk, is of particular interest. North Greenhoe is only recorded to have met at a place called 'Crundle', but there was also a *Grenehowhyll*.[212] In Humbleyard hundred, besides the recorded meeting-place of 'Humble Yard' in Swardeston, there was a tradition that the court had been held at Greenhoe Hill in Gowthorpe (part of Swardeston).[213] Humble Yard was itself in Gowthorpe, where no tumuli are known, and it seems possible that the same place was meant. All this could suggest that a green mound was considered an essential feature of a hundredal meeting-place, to be chosen in preference to other locations or even invented if none was available. Local customs, as well as hierarchies, had the capacity to interpret royal institutions.

[204] S. Lucy, J. Tipper, and A. Dickens, *The Anglo-Saxon Settlement and Cemetery at Bloodmoor Hill, Carlton Colville, Suffolk* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 11. (National Grid ref. TM520897).
[205] Blomefield, vii, pp. 268-9 (National Grid ref. TF671062).
[206] Blomefield, ii, p. 374 (National Grid ref. TG080054).
[207] Blomefield, viii, pp. 328, 419. (National Grid ref. TF718282).
[208] Blomefield, vi, p. 1 (National Grid ref. TF824054).
[209] Blomefield, ii, p. 148 (National Grid ref. TL818898).
[210] Blomefield, x, pp. 195, 286; N. Whyte, '"Smithdon Hill", Snettisham: The Possible Meeting Place of Smethdon Hundred', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 44/3 (2004).
[211] Blomefield, x, pp. 398, 418 (National Grid ref. TG241175).
[212] Blomefield, ix, p. 205; Anderson, *English Hundred-Names*, p. 67.
[213] Blomefield, v, pp. 49-51. Humble Yard was at National Grid ref. TG212021.

Conclusions

As we have already seen, no part of England was without a class of independent freemen. East Anglia was distinctive in the scale of its free population, and the burghal and hundredal systems had to take account of this. *Burhs* were introduced in name where their expected features already occurred, but were not created as royal outposts. As settlements, they remained notably large concentrations of free merchants and producers, often with close connections overseas. In rural areas too, there was acknowledgement and adaptation of existing structures such as soke-territories. In units such as Blything or Guiltcross hundreds, central manors already acted as focal points for the free population of a defined area. Examples like these suggest a high degree of continuity, but this is not always in evidence, and no single explanation can account for the hundredal framework as a whole.

Attempts to explain it have usually sought a fiscal formula behind the hundreds as they stand in LDB. Not only has no overriding fiscal scheme become apparent, but there is no compelling reason to assume that kings or their men ever sought to divide East Anglia into regular territories. It is here that Domesday may distort our perspective. Geld was probably not levied in its recognised form before the last years of Æthelred II's reign, and the regular collection of vast sums for tribute or mercenaries had not been necessary for most of the tenth century. Other matters demonstrably enjoyed higher priority, above all the suppression of theft and supervision of local society in general. These functions were largely undertaken by local people, suggesting that the hundreds may have been more flexible and amenable to small-scale changes than is widely assumed. If local factors could subvert even the inflexible pence-in-the-pound system of geld assessment, the stability of matters wholly in local hands must be open to doubt. Considering that the East Anglian geld barely changed in the century

after the Conquest, it is quite possible that LDB served to ossify both this and other elements of the hundredal system. Royal government appears more as a source of guiding imperatives than of intrusive planning.

The hundreds were nonetheless entirely new in conception. This was not so much in their supposed administrative sophistication as in their explicit universality. Both in terms of territories and of individuals, the scheme allowed for no inter-hundredal spaces. Even where the territories themselves were old, they were new in expressing a system. This system included the East Anglian *burhs*, which appear to have been weakly institutionalised and could simply be treated as hundreds. All freemen in the region, rural or urban, were therefore explicitly encompassed by a hundred.

Although important functions were discharged by local assemblies without day-to-day oversight, this localisation of power did not serve to flatten hierarchies. There is clear, if fragmentary evidence of social stratification within the hundred, which affected the manner in which individuals could participate. While this may seem to contradict the idea of the hundred as a gathering of all freemen, royal pronouncements never envisaged it as a gathering of equals. Kings could hardly have expected to strengthen their grip on local society while eroding the social advantages of its wealthier members. At least by the eleventh century, stratification appears to have become formalised in the shape of property qualifications. Kings could play an active role in this: the attachment of all freemen who held under 30 acres in Diss half-hundred to the manor of Fersfield has the mark of an administrative act.[214] Even if this represented a retreat from an earlier, more inclusive conception, it should occasion little surprise. The hundredal system existed to bring the free

[214] See above, pp. 95, 100-101.

population under closer royal control, and in the absence of a permanent bureaucracy, it did so by co-opting its wealthier members.

Chapter V

The king's men

The previous chapter has emphasised the local roots of formally royal institutions. East Anglian *burhs* and hundreds not only relied upon, but effectively consisted in, the independent freemen who came to their assemblies. Except in cases where a hundred was closely bound up with a manor, there were no other carriers of institutional life. If administration at the lowest level fell to assemblies of local notables, such gatherings still had to be overseen and informed of the king's wishes. This chapter turns to the office-holders who mediated royal power in East Anglia. It will examine who they were, where they came from, how present they were in the localities, and what underpinned their position there. Although these questions are answerable only to varying degrees, they provide a means of assessing the depth of royal control. How important posts were filled and supported, provides an indication of how far administration had progressed from the improvised to the routine.

For most of the period under discussion, the king's officers in a given locality comprised the ealdorman (later earl), the bishop, and various grades of reeve. The Benedictine reform movement of Edgar's reign is sometimes considered to have cast the reformed abbot as a royal officer, but his worldly role was never formalised or geographically regular.[1] From about 1000 onwards, the sheriff emerged as distinct and superior to other reeves.[2] If the contemporary 'high-reeve' was ever an office with fixed attributes, these are no longer

[1] G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 173-5.
[2] W.A. Morris, *The Medieval English Sheriff to 1300* (Manchester, 1927), pp. 20-23; Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 179-82.

recoverable.[3] Cnut's reign saw the advent of the staller, a figure apparently serving the king in a more personal capacity.[4]

The tenth-century ealdorman was set over multiple shires, in which he represented the king's interests. While ealdormen of Alfred's reign had generally been responsible for one shire only, their successors soon came to resemble regional viceroys. It may be no coincidence that the law-codes of Ine and Alfred mention the ealdorman's activities more often than do those of tenth-century kings. We know little of ealdormen's formal responsibilities concerning taxation or the *fyrd*, although military leadership was certainly one of their main tasks. General injunctions to ensure that royal decrees were followed and tithes paid, were sometimes addressed to the ealdorman alongside other officers.[5] In the shire court, he presided jointly with the bishop at least from the time of Edgar, perhaps establishing a formal protection around it.[6] Beyond the confines of the individual shire, ealdormen were at various times tasked with the proclamation of royal decrees 'in all directions' and with the enforcement of treaties.[7] Ealdormen appear to have been regional figures with limited formal responsibilities, but endowed with comprehensive discretionary powers where needed.

Bishops were considered to rank alongside ealdormen, both in the shire court and in general precedence.[8] They nonetheless have a much greater presence in the tenth-century codes. Their prominence seems to have derived from the new and intrusive kinds of regulation

[3] H.M. Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge, 1905), pp. 228-39; Morris, *Medieval English Sheriff*, p. 8; Molyneaux,, *Formation*, pp. 108-9, 181.
[4] K. Mack, 'The Stallers: Administrative Innovation in the Reign of Edward the Confessor', *Journal of Medieval History*, 12/2 (1986), pp. 129-32.
[5] VI As 11; Cn 1020 8.
[6] III Eg 5.2; II Cn 18.1. The ealdorman's role in establishing protections is alluded to in III Atr 1.1-2 and II Cn 58.2.
[7] IV Eg 15.1 ordered ealdormen Ælfhere and Æthelwine to distribute copies of the code. II Atr 6 stipulated that if both ealdorman and king failed to proceed against truce-breakers, the whole ealdordom—rather than a particular shire—should be excluded from Æthelred II's truce with the fleet of Olaf Tryggvason.
[8] Af 3; III Eg 5.2; II Cn 18.1, 58.2.

which kings were trying to impose. Detecting theft, witnessing transactions, and establishing guilt were recurrent themes in tenth-century legislation. Such matters required oaths and ordeals, the supervision of which was the natural domain of the bishop.[9] He also appears to have had a broader, discretionary remit in the prescription of penance and financial penalties.[10] A more surprising, and comparatively little-explored, episcopal function was the supervision of the king's reeves.[11] It was the bishop, not the ealdorman, to whom these men answered for any misdemeanours. The bishop also seems to have had a formal role in the setting of weights and measures. This, alongside the administration of oaths and ordeals, may have involved him in the supervision of the coinage.[12] It seems that the bishop was called upon where formal procedures were required, particularly in the testing of truth.

Royal reeves must have been more closely involved in routine administration than ealdormen or bishops. They were more local figures, a fact which has put the great majority of them beyond historical knowledge. The term 'reeve' (*gerefa*) had a considerable range of meaning: some were mere overseers on a lordly estate.[13] Tenth- and eleventh-century legislation associated the king's reeves with a wide range of tasks. It occasionally refers to port-reeves, township-reeves, and lords' reeves, while hundred-reeves, shire-reeves and high-reeves appear in other sources. Usually, however, the laws treat reeves as an undifferentiated group. It would be correspondingly unwise to assume that there was an ordered, uniform hierarchy of such officials across the kingdom.[14] When a king instructed his reeves to witness transactions, proceed against suspicious men, or enforce the payment of church dues, the

[9] II As 26; VI As 12.2; Episc 5; Ordal 1; II Cn 36.
[10] II As 26, 26.1; VI As 12.2; II Em 4; VI Atr 51; EGu 4; Cn 1020 9; II Cn 53.1.
[11] As Alm 2; II As 25.1; III Eg 3; Cn 1020 11. Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 109-10 and T. Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 123-4 note the point in passing.
[12] II As 14.1; III Atr 8; IV Atr 5.2, 8, 9.2; compare these provisions with Episc 5-6.
[13] Chadwick, *Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, p. 229.
[14] The activities of local reeves are discussed by J. Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 207-11.

order was doubtless meant for whatever reeve he might have in a given place.[15] Where port-reeves were thin on the ground, as in East Anglia, it may be that others based at royal manors gained in importance. Little is known of the early sheriff's responsibilities, except that they included taxation, military levies, and the administration of justice by the eleventh century. The sheriff's role therefore seems partly to have replicated that of the ealdorman at a more local level, although the Latin style *uicecomes*, explicitly identifying the sheriff as the earl's deputy, only appeared after the Conquest.[16]

As always in pre-Conquest East Anglia, the evidence is fragmentary and uneven. The comparatively best-attested office is that of bishop, and this chapter will begin by considering the identity and resources of its holders. Not only did bishops have supervisory functions, but they were the only powerful figures who did not exclusively represent the interests of the West Saxon kings. They may therefore have been particularly important when royal authority was as yet uncertain, as well as officers of last resort.

[15] For witnessing: I Ew 1; II As 10, 12; III Em 5; for suspicious men: I Atr 4; III Atr 3.2; II Cn 33; for church payments: I As 1, 4; II Eg 3; VIII Atr 8; I Cn 8.2.
[16] Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 179-82; R. Sharpe, 'The Earliest Norman Sheriffs', *History*, 101/347 (2016), pp. 486-7.

BISHOPS

It is unclear whether East Anglia had any bishops at the beginning of the tenth century. The pre-Viking kingdom had possessed two sees: one at the unidentified *Dommoc* and the other at either North or South Elmham.[17] Both seem to have fallen into abeyance during the Scandinavian incursions, and no bishop can securely be associated with the region before Theodred of London.[18] The long hiatus in the East Anglian episcopal lists, beginning no later than 870 and ending no earlier than 909, has been explained in various ways. Some scholars have deemed it implausible that episcopal provision should have lapsed for so long in a region that swiftly assimilated Scandinavian incomers to Christianity.[19] Unrecorded bishops of local origin cannot be ruled out.[20] A related suggestion would allocate early tenth-century bishops of unknown dioceses to East Anglia.[21] Others have seen the hand of Wessex behind the prolonged vacancy, suggesting that its kings may have exploited their control of Canterbury to prevent episcopal consecrations.[22] An unknown quantity throughout this time is the role played by the archbishopric of York. Disrupted only briefly, York would have offered an alternative source of ecclesiastical authority.[23] Even once documented episcopal succession resumes, individuals can rarely be assigned precise dates before the Conquest. Insofar as it can be reconstructed, the sequence runs as follows:[24]

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[17] J. Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees before the Conquest', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 108-12 surveys possible identifications. See also above, p. 141, n. 43.
[18] S 1526. Theodred had lands in Norfolk and Suffolk, and a seat at Hoxne in the latter county.
[19] R.R. Darlington, 'Ecclesiastical Reform in the Late Old English Period', *EHR*, 51/203 (1936), p. 423.
[20] Here one might recall—if it has any basis in fact—the late story that an undocumented Bishop Edmund rested at Mendham in Suffolk: see above, p. 136.
[21] D. Whitelock, 'The Conversion of the Eastern Danelaw', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 12 (1937-45), p. 171.
[22] J. Barrow, 'Survival and Mutation: Ecclesiastical Institutions in the Danelaw in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', in D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards (eds.), *Cultures in Contact* (Turnhout, 2000), p. 158.
[23] The parallel St Edmund and St Peter coinages, carried in opposite directions along the eastern seaboard, hint at contact between the regions.
[24] Based on S. Keynes, 'Archbishops and Bishops, 597-1066', in *WBEASE*, pp. 553-5. A modification concerns 'Theodred I' and 'Theodred II', usually assigned consecutive episcopates between Ælfric I and Æthelstan. Rather than infer a third bishop of this rare name, it is assumed that one of the 'two Theodreds' mentioned by

(909×926) – (951×953)	**Theodred** (of London)	(*PASE*: 'Theodred 3')
(951×955) – (966×974)	**Athulf**	('Athulf 7'='Eadwulf 39')
fl. 966×974	**Ælfric I**	('Ælfric 71')
(966×974) – (995×997)	**Theodred II**	('Theodred 4')
(995×997) – 1001	**Æthelstan**	('Æthelstan 56')
1001 – (1012×1016)	**Ælfgar** (retired; d. 1020)	('Ælfgar 31')
(1012×1016) – (1023×1029)	**Ælfwine**	('Ælfwine 47')
(1023×1029) – (1038×1039)	**Ælfric II**	('Ælfric 104')
1039 – (1042×1043)	**Ælfric III**	('Ælfric 116')
1043	**Stigand**	('Stigand 1')
1043	**Grimketel**	('Grimcytel 3')
1044 – 1047	**Stigand**	('Stigand 1')
1047 – 1070	**Æthelmær**	('Æthelmær 35')

The origins and appointment of Theodred are of particular interest. His will, dateable to c. 946×951, describes him as 'bishop of the people of London' but mentions an episcopal seat at Hoxne in Suffolk. This is taken to mean that the bishop of London exercised episcopal functions over Suffolk at least. No contemporary source associates Theodred with a see based within East Anglia; the first bishop of the restored diocese of Elmham was Athulf.[25] How and why did Theodred come to hold an expanded see of London? As to the expansion of London, analogies with Dorchester-on-Thames (and, more distantly, York) are convincing.[26] Dorchester encompassed the former sees of Leicester and Lindsey, which had been disrupted by the ninth-century Scandinavian invasions, while York was held in plurality with Worcester for some time in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[27] Stretching existing sees into Scandinavian-settled areas kept bishops and their main landholdings near the West Saxon

both John of Worcester and William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum* is a misplaced duplication of Theodred of London. Neither of these writers connect Theodred of London with an East Anglian see, although William of Malmesbury knew of his involvement in the translation of St Edmund. Compare S.E. Rigold, 'The Bishops of the Re-Established See at Elmham', in P. Wade-Martins, *Excavations in North Elmham Park, 1967-1972* (Gressenhall, 1980), p. 8, and 'Theodred 4', *PASE*. A bishop named as 'Æthelgar of the East Angles' appearing (alongside Theodred of London) in the witness list of the spurious charter S 436 appears to be an error for Æthelgar of Crediton (934-952×953).

[25] A very late reference from John Leland makes Theodred bishop of Elmham before his appointment to London, and it has been noted that he is only called 'bishop of London' by charters from 931 onwards: V.H. Galbraith, 'The East Anglian See and the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR*, 40/158 (1925), p. 223, n. 4.

[26] Barrow, 'Survival and Mutation', pp. 158-61; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 118.

[27] Keynes, 'Archbishops and Bishops, 597-1066', pp. 557-60.

heartlands. Such men would have been less likely to support separatist aspirations, and perhaps materially better equipped to carry out their pastoral duties, than bishops wholly embedded in newly-subjected territories.

Theodred the individual is more difficult to place. His name incorporates the element *þeod*, rare in Anglo-Saxon England but common in continental Germanic nomenclature.[28] The presence of several men bearing identifiably German names in his household has been taken as an indication that he was a foreigner.[29] On this reading, he was a safe choice for a politically sensitive see and foreshadowed the several German- or Lotharingian-born bishops installed in England during the eleventh century.[30] Other evidence, however, suggests that Theodred was a native of East Anglia. He had kindred in England, who bore English names and to whom he left extensive lands in Suffolk.[31] His will shows him taking a particular interest in the cult of St Edmund. But the strongest indication derives from his own name, so unusual in a West Saxon context but probably much more familiar in East Anglia. A survey of moneyers named on the St Edmund memorial coinage has revealed an overwhelming continental Germanic contingent, including another Theodred.[32] A trading class of continental origin may have produced the St Edmund pennies.[33] If so, it was apparently distinctive to East Anglia during the period of Scandinavian settlement; the moneyers of

[28] J. Insley, 'Continental Germanic Personal Names in Tenth-Century England', in D. Rollason, C. Leyser, and H. Williams (eds.), *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 40-43.
[29] Stenton, *ASE*, p. 444, n. 3; D. Whitelock, 'Some Anglo-Saxon Bishops of London', Chambers Memorial Lecture 1974 (London, 1975), pp. 19-20.
[30] Barrow, 'Survival and Mutation', pp. 158-9; M.F. Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 95.
[31] S 1526: Osgot, Offa, and Osgot son of Eadulf; see Whitelock, 'Conversion of the Eastern Danelaw', p. 172. Whitelock appears subsequently to have changed her mind on Theodred's birth, even suggesting that a sister could have followed him to England in order to account for the English names of his nephews ('Some Anglo-Saxon Bishops of London', pp. 19-20).
[32] V.J. Smart, 'The Moneyers of St. Edmund', *Hikuin*, 11 (1985).
[33] V.J. Smart, 'Economic Migrants? Continental Moneyers' Names on the Tenth-Century English Coinage', *Nomina*, 32 (2009), pp. 117-25.

Edmund of East Anglia and Edward the Elder were mostly English.[34] We can reasonably infer that someone with a continental name, East Anglian kin, and an interest in St Edmund, who appeared at the West Saxon court when Theodred did, probably came from East Anglia.

Theodred's position invites a double analogy. His diocese was such as to cover potentially unstable territory from a secure seat, recalling Dorchester-on-Thames. He himself seems to have come to court from a newly subjected province, like Archbishop Oda, his almost exact contemporary. To all appearances, Theodred enjoyed considerable influence: 89 surviving, acceptable charters carry his subscription, and after 937 he only once attested lower than third among the bishops.[35] He conveyed opinions between Æthelstan and Archbishop Wulfhelm, and William of Malmesbury records that he and Oda accompanied the king on the *Brunanburh* campaign.[36] Both prelates look like personal appointments to meet the circumstances of the early-mid tenth century; Theodred doubly so, in remaining firmly based in his region of origin.

After Theodred's death, a see for East Anglia was established at North Elmham no later than 955. Much less is known of its incumbents. The first, Athulf, may well have been another local appointment. The *Liber Eliensis* mentions a kinsman of his witnessing a transaction at Thetford, and a list of benefactors to Bury St Edmunds claims that he was elevated to the episcopate from the young community.[37] His origins could have been another reason—apart from the establishment of a new see—for Archbishop Oda to demand a profession of obedience.[38] Athulf too was frequently at court, attesting 64 acceptable charters, although

[34] Smart, 'Moneyers of St Edmund', p. 89.
[35] S. Keynes, *An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters c. 670-1066* (Cambridge, 1998), tables XXXVII, XLI, XLIV. The sole authentic exception is S 505, of 945.
[36] VI As 12.1; *GPA*, 14.4, p. 26; 73.16, pp. 228-30.
[37] *LE*, ii.16, p. 92; *BBen* D.
[38] *Canterbury Professions*, ed. M. Richter (Torquay, 1973), no. 30, pp. 25-6 and xlvii.

never higher than third among the bishops and that only once.[39] His successor, Ælfric I, is no more than a name. He attests only three surviving documents, none of them certainly authentic.[40] The next bishop (or possibly two) was once again called Theodred.[41] It is possible that Theodred II was a kinsman of Theodred of London, or the namesake whom that bishop had remembered in his will, or both.[42] At all events, the name suggests another local appointee. Theodred II appears to have spent limited time at court, attesting only eleven reputable documents over an episcopate of up to 31 years.[43] Although the evidence is circumstantial, it reveals the possibility that the see of Elmham was held by local men for the first 40 years of its existence. Indeed, while allowing for the unknown quantity of Ælfric I, all incumbents to 995 may have been linked to Theodred of London. If the tradition of Athulf's background in the Bury St Edmunds community is genuine, one may wonder whether he had originally accompanied the bishop who helped to establish it. His subsequent profession of obedience would follow closely the text used by a ninth-century bishop of London.[44]

The passing of the bishopric from Theodred II to Æthelstan, between 995 and 997, seems to mark a new phase in its development. For the next half-century, successive bishops would maintain a particularly close relationship with the Benedictine foundation at Ely. Æthelstan is another shadowy figure, attesting only four surviving charters.[45] The *Liber Eliensis* reveals that he was invited to perform episcopal functions at Ely (in preference to the diocesan, based at Dorchester) and was buried there.[46] With the appointment of Ælfgar, Elmham for the first time received a bishop who was certainly an outsider to the region. Ælfgar had been priest

[39] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, tables XLIV, XLVIII, LIV.
[40] Ibid., table LIV.
[41] See above, p. 247, n. 24.
[42] An identification with the legatee of S 1526 would be supported by the fact that this Theodred was also a churchman, receiving a chasuble, chalice, and massbook.
[43] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, tables LIV, LXa.
[44] Richter, *Canterbury Professions*, no. 30, pp. 25-6; cf. no. 7. pp. 7-8
[45] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, tables LXa, LXb.
[46] *LE*, ii.65, pp. 137-8.

and confessor to Archbishop Dunstan and would eventually retire to Ely.[47] To judge by his 15 authentic charter attestations, he must regularly have been at court.[48] His successor, Ælfwine, was of local origin but nonetheless an establishment figure. Ælfwine entered Ely Abbey as an oblate, bringing with him lands in the Fens and south-east Suffolk.[49] Raised to the episcopate by Æthelred II, he would consecrate two successive abbots of Ely and retire there.[50] More significantly, he is credited with the establishment of monks at Bury St Edmunds at the instance of Cnut.[51] He was followed by Ælfric II and Ælfric III, who cannot always be distinguished with certainty. The first of these was appointed by Cnut; it has been suggested that he was a royal priest, although none of that name attests any surviving contemporary charter.[52] One of these two Ælfrics seems to have been prior of Ely before his elevation, but it is uncertain which.[53]

The Ely connection ceased with the appointment of Stigand in 1043. Stigand's background was at court, where he had been a household priest under Cnut and Harthacnut.[54] It is very likely, however, that he was from Norfolk.[55] Excepting a short period in 1043 when he shared Queen Emma's fall from grace and was replaced by Grimketel of Selsey, Stigand held the bishopric until 1047, when he was translated to Winchester and replaced at Elmham by his brother Æthelmær. The retention of Elmham in the family was probably a measure of

[47] *LE*, ii.72, pp. 142-3.
[48] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, table LXb.
[49] *LE*, ii.75, pp. 144-5.
[50] *LE*, ii.80, pp. 149-50; ii.86, p. 155.
[51] *LE*, ii.86, p. 155; *BBen* D.
[52] Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 121; but cf. Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, table LXVIII.
[53] Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 122; T. Licence, 'Herbert Losinga's Trip to Rome and the Bishopric of Bury St Edmunds', *ANS*, 34 (2012), p. 166.
[54] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, table LXVIII.
[55] Stigand's sister held land in Norwich, and his brother Æthelmær held the church of St Simon and St Jude as his 'patrimony' in the same city: *DB Norfolk*, 1.63 (LDB ff. 116a-117b). Æthelmaer was also permitted to keep the Norfolk estate of Gunton after his deposition: *DB Norfolk*, 10.23 (LDB f. 194a). Another entry, which appears to have attracted no comment hitherto, shows a man who may have been Æthelmær's son surviving in 1086 as a subtenant at Mileham, in much reduced circumstances: *DB Norfolk*, 4.8 (LDB f. 144b). On Stigand's career, see S. Baxter, 'Stigand 1: Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury (1052–1070, d. 1072)', in *PASE DB*.

Stigand's influence rather than a return to any local succession practices that may have prevailed in the tenth century. Indeed, Stigand may not have relinquished his powers fully even after translation. The will of the wealthy thegn Ketel shows him maintaining, and profiting from, a local following even as archbishop.[56] So too does LDB, which records many men as commended to him. A writ of 1053×1057 addresses 'Bishop Stigand, Bishop Æthelmær, Earl Ælfgar, and all [the] thegns of Norfolk'.[57] This apparently authentic document seems to accord him precedence over his brother, the diocesan at the time.[58] Æthelmær himself attests low on the witness-lists of the sporadic charters surviving for this period.[59] It appears that bishops of Elmham continued to depend on their personal standing, rather than their see, for any seniority they might achieve.

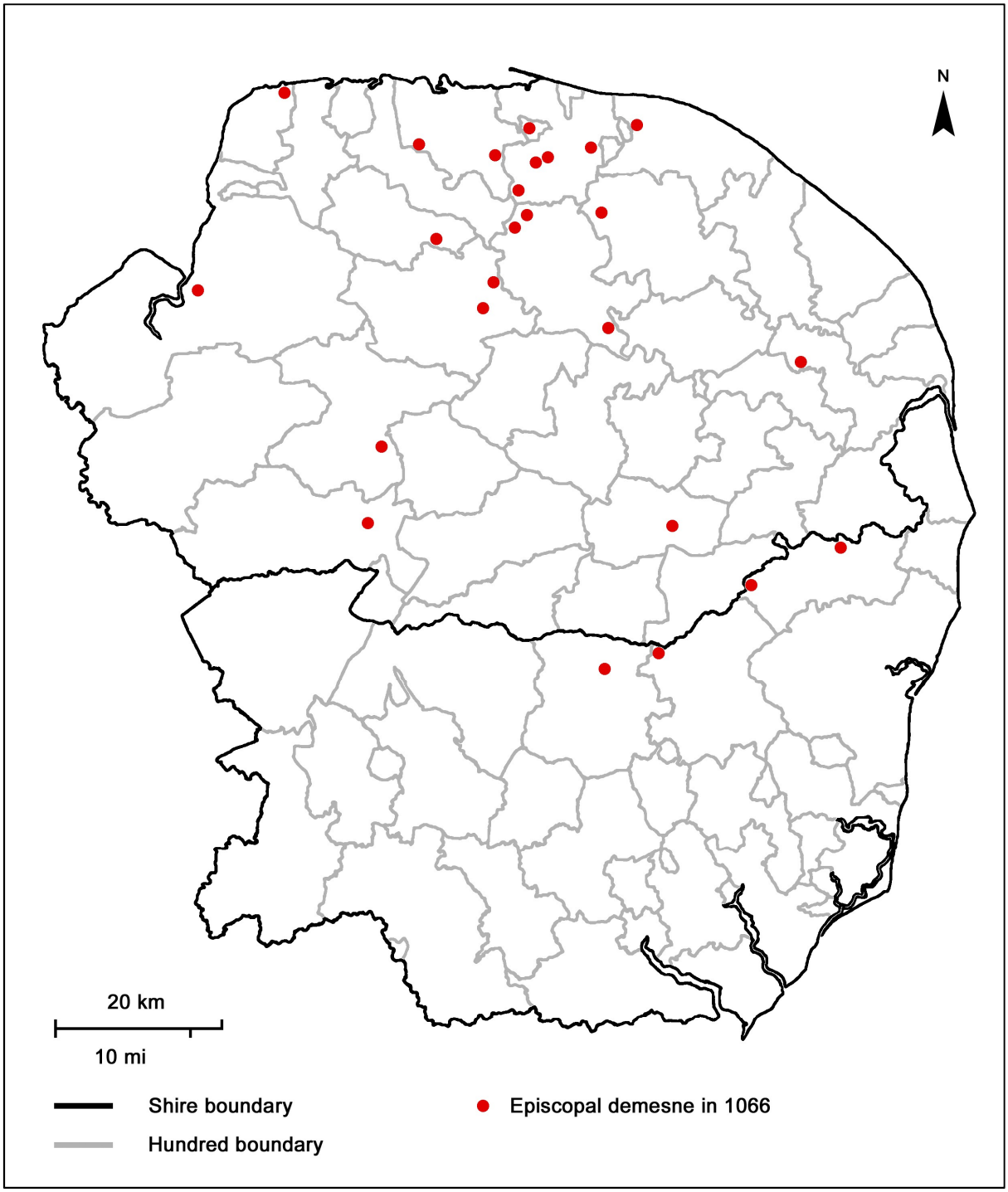
A straightforward explanation for Elmham's modest status lies in its poverty. Compared with the great southern sees and neighbouring abbeys, its Domesday endowment appears thin.[60] Even so, the bishops were far from destitute, unlike those of the re-established see at Lincoln.[61] The provenance of their estates is beyond recovery, but patterns from better-documented areas suggest some possibilities. A wider study of episcopal demesne has shown that most was acquired before 900.[62] In the tenth and eleventh centuries, holders of smaller bishoprics in particular faced a struggle to maintain their endowments as well as growing competition for lay patronage.[63] Royal grants were generally fewer after 900.[64] Elmham is identified as a possible exception to this rule, but in view of the local origins of its tenth-

[56] S 1519.
[57] S 1108.
[58] Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 247-8 considers reasons for Stigand's presence without finding a conclusive answer. Evidence for subordinate *chorepiscopi* is surveyed by Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 121-2.
[59] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, table LXXII.
[60] Stenton, *ASE*, p. 437; Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 126-7; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', pp. 118-9.
[61] On Lincoln, see Barrow, 'Survival and Mutation', p. 160.
[62] Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 132-8.
[63] Ibid., pp. 131-3.
[64] Ibid., pp. 140-43.

century bishops, extensive royal grants do not appear very likely.[65] In the absence of local records, evidence from elsewhere and the archaic features attributed to some estates could suggest a measure of continuity.[66]

In 1066, the estates traditionally attached to Elmham yielded Bishop Æthelmær £143 16s per year (Map 19).[67] While no more can be assigned to the bishopric with absolute certainty, there is evidence that it may once have had larger holdings. One way of uncovering these is to consider the lands given away by bishops of Elmham. Over the century before the Conquest, such outward donations were numerous, although some may have been purchased rather than episcopal estates. In a see often supposed to have been in need of endowment itself, this alone should attract attention. Most striking, however, is multiple bishops' seemingly inordinate liberality towards Bury St Edmunds. The scale of the gifts attributed to Bishops Theodred, Ælfric II, Ælfric III, and Æthelmær becomes apparent when several documents are considered together.[68] In Domesday values, the total received from these prelates amounted to £63 12s and 20,000 herrings per year. Had all their intended bequests taken effect, this figure would have risen to £85 2s. If the early gifts of Theodred are discounted, the eleventh-century bishops of Elmham still apparently gave £35 14s as well as fish—up to a fifth of the see's possessions—to Bury St Edmunds. Even once the scale of the transfers must have been clear, Æthelmær (unsuccessfully) bequeathed more.

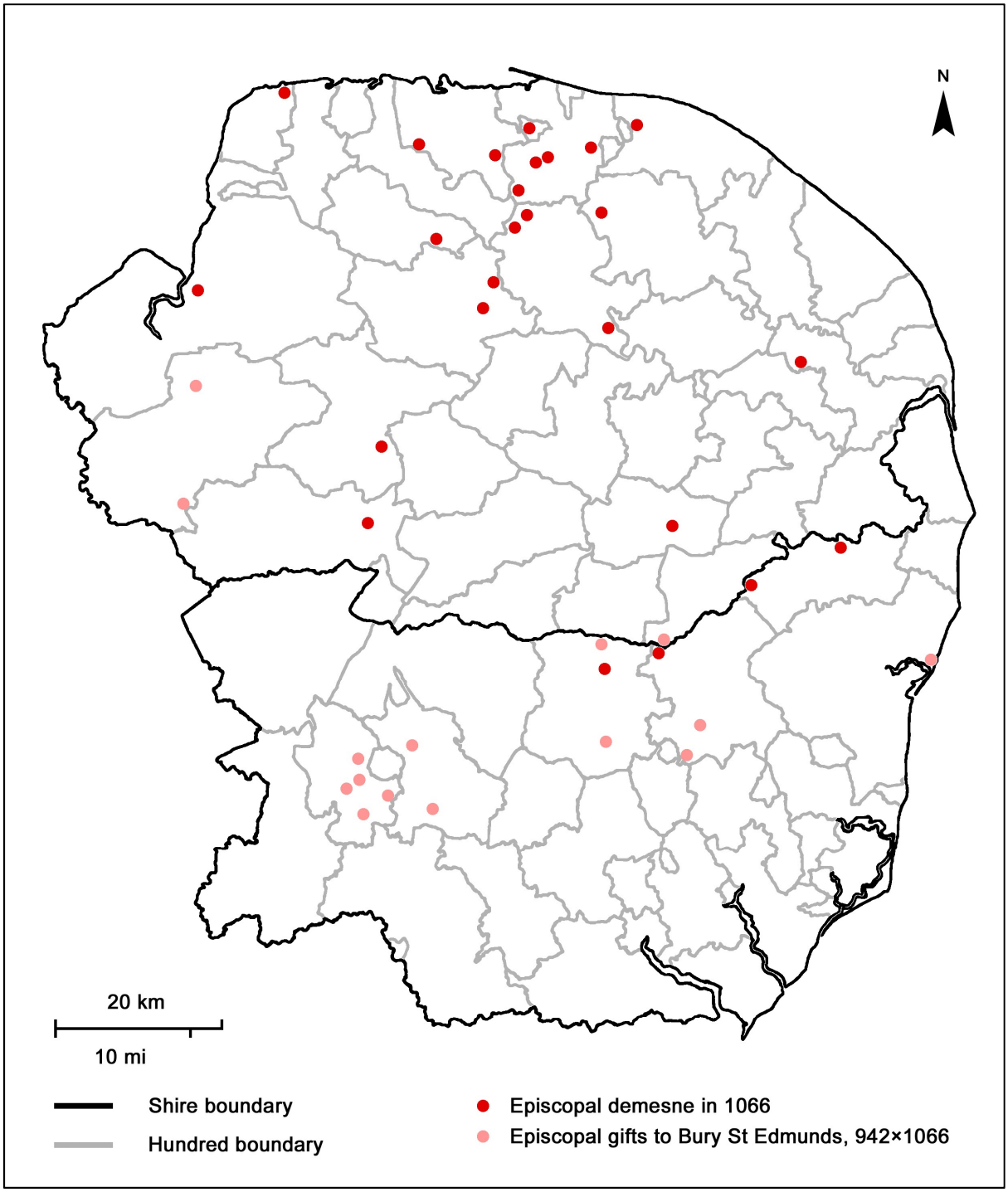
[65] Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, p. 143.
[66] Notably South Elmham: P. Warner, *The Origins of Suffolk* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 131-3.
[67] Counting only demesne manors ascribed to 'the bishopric' rather than 'the fee' in LDB. On this division, see Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 123 and B. Dodwell, 'The Honour of the Bishop of Thetford-Norwich in the Late Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 33/2 (1963), pp. 186-7.
[68] These are the wills of Bishop Theodred (S 1526), Bishop Ælfric II (S 1489), and Bishop Æthelmær (S 1499); and the Bury St Edmunds benefactor lists (*Charters of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Lowe and Foot, forthcoming).



Map 19. Demesne lands held by Bishop Æthelmær TRE.

All this would seem to suggest that the bishops either knowingly diminished their see's wealth or spurned many opportunities to increase it. But it may be that they had different intentions. This possibility arises from the recent, cautious rehabilitation of the text known as the 'Norwich Narrative'.[69] Composed in the early twelfth century to lay out the bishop of Norwich's case for episcopal control over Bury, it was long regarded as patently falsified.[70] It is certainly partisan and in some respects inaccurate. But its claim that St Edmund rested in a minster dedicated to St Mary, at *Beaduricesworth*, until the reign of Cnut is corroborated elsewhere.[71] The assertion that the bishops of East Anglia were based there until Ælfric II's time is not necessarily inconsistent with surviving evidence, as the first reference to an abbot—rather than prior—of Bury dates to c. 1040.[72] If St Edmund rested at an episcopal minster of St Mary from the mid-tenth century onwards, gifts to him would not have represented losses to the bishopric (Map 20). Any such early connection appears to have been expunged from Bury's records, and it has been observed that Abbo's *Passio* fails to mention Theodred's status as benefactor.[73] If there was indeed a campaign to write the bishops out of Bury's early history, there is no indication that it began before Abbot Baldwin and Bishop Herfast. The introduction of the Benedictine rule under Cnut need not have separated abbey and bishopric (or their lands) overnight. Documents from Edward the Confessor's reign show Bury St Edmunds acting in its own right, but do not disprove an episcopal interest in the foundation. As will become apparent, ambiguity only developed into a problem after the

[69] Now re-edited and translated by Licence, 'Herbert Losinga's Trip to Rome', pp. 164-8. On its composition and reliability, see T. Licence, 'The Norwich Narrative and the East Anglian Bishopric', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 45/2 (2007).
[70] Galbraith, 'The East Anglian See', pp. 222-8.
[71] Licence, 'The Norwich Narrative', p. 199; A. Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary at *Beodericisworth* and then in Bury St Edmunds Abbey to c. 1150', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55/4 (2004), p. 629.
[72] Licence, 'The Norwich Narrative', p. 199-200; S 1489.
[73] Ælfric's Old English version, deriving from a Latin text earlier than the surviving one, does: A. Gransden, 'Baldwin, Abbot of Bury St Edmunds, 1065-1097', *ANS*, 4 (1981), p. 72; Ælfric, *St Edmund, King and Martyr*, ed. G.I. Needham, *Lives of Three English Saints* (Exeter, 1976), p. 54. The bishop's part in the *Passio* could be read as a reproof for his exercise of judicial powers within the minster: *PStE*, ch. 15, pp. 83-5.



Map 20. Demesne lands held by Bishop Æthelmær TRE and gifts made by bishops of East Anglia to Bury St Edmunds, 900×1066.

Conquest. The formalisation of Bury's independence may have deprived the bishopric of a great deal.

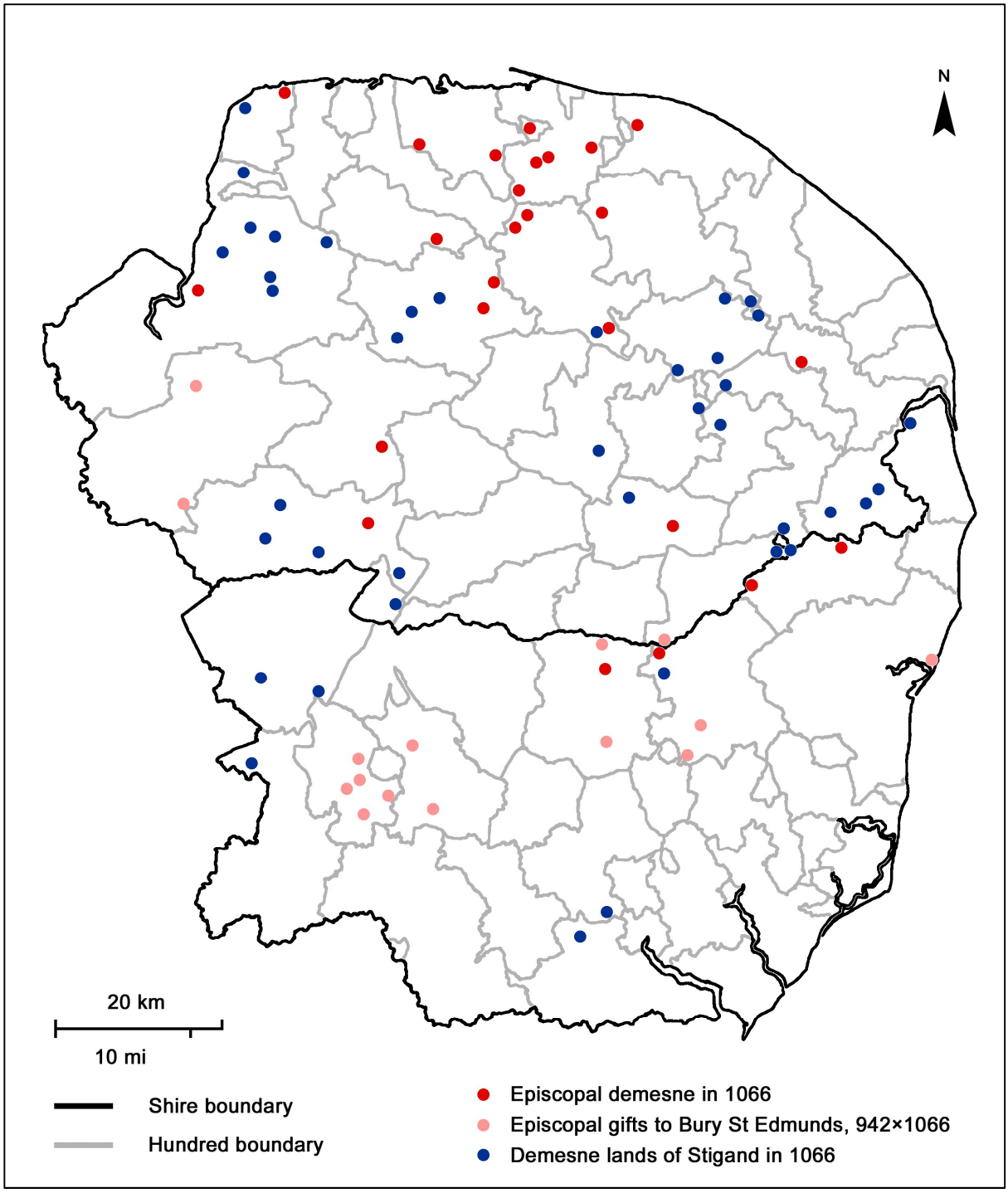
More certain losses were sustained from another quarter. Elmham's connection with the family of Stigand has usually been considered beneficial.[74] LDB shows Æthelmær using purchase, marriage, private dealings, and forfeitures to secure lands for his see.[75] In the upheavals after the Conquest, he appropriated land from an outlaw.[76] Another estate, which Stigand had gained by questionable means, also went to Æthelmær.[77] Stigand himself, for all his covetousness, has been acquitted of taking lands from his own sees.[78] There is, in fact, good reason to think that he did enrich himself at the expense of Elmham. It has been observed before that much of Ælfric II's will never took effect, and that the manors in question appeared in Stigand's hands by 1066.[79] In this way he retained Hunstanton and Grimston.[80] To these can be added Docking, for which Bury was to have made payment, but which came to be held by two free men 'under' Stigand.[81] Moulton, which was Ælfric's by purchase, similarly failed to reach the designated legatee.[82] These were acquired lands and some or all (depending on the nature of the relationship with Bury) were not destined for the bishopric in any case, but the fact remains that Stigand kept them even after the see had passed to his brother. The value of these manors was at least £24 10s in 1066. Other holdings raise the suspicion that Stigand's appropriations may have extended to the episcopal demesne. Among these is Mileham, the head manor of Launditch hundred, which included

[74] Dodwell, 'The Honour of the Bishop of Thetford-Norwich', p. 186; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 124; Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 149-50.
[75] *DB Norfolk*, 10.23 (LDB f. 194a); 10.28 (ff. 194b-195a); 10.33 (ff. 195b-196a); 10.67 (f. 199a).
[76] *DB Norfolk*, 10.76-7 (LDB f. 200a).
[77] *DB Norfolk*, 10.30 (LDB f. 195a).
[78] M.F. Giandrea [Smith], 'Archbishop Stigand and the Eye of the Needle', *ANS*, 16 (1994), p. 211.
[79] Baxter, 'Stigand 1'.
[80] *DB Norfolk*, 1.209 (LDB ff. 135b-136a); 2.2 (f. 142a).
[81] *DB Norfolk*, 2.5 (LDB f. 143a); 29.5 (ff. 245b-246a).
[82] *DB Suffolk*, 15.1 (LDB f. 372b).

North Elmham.[83] One might expect the bishop to have had the soke of the hundred surrounding his northern seat, much as he controlled Bishop's hundred in Suffolk from Hoxne. Stigand may well have separated Mileham (worth £30) and Launditch hundred from the bishopric at his translation. His Waveney valley manors of Earsham, Bungay, and Denham, near another concentration of episcopal lands, invite similar questions (Map 21).[84] Stigand certainly appears to have done better out of the bishopric than it out of him, unless his holdings reflected some continuing episcopal role.[85] How much Elmham lost is impossible to quantify, but the see may once have been wealthier—perhaps by a considerable margin—than in 1066.

The see's failure to consolidate its position before the Conquest can be explained by its unusual organisation. Most bishoprics were known by the location of their cathedral church but, unusually, bishops of Elmham are almost always styled 'bishop of the East Angles' in contemporary charters.[86] This observation deserves more attention than it has received, for a distinguishing feature of Elmham was its lack of a cathedral establishment. The East Anglian bishopric is generally held to have had two cathedral churches: North Elmham for Norfolk and a subsidiary one at Hoxne for Suffolk.[87] While correct in the literal sense of 'seats', such statements miss a distinction. North Elmham and Hoxne were plainly important episcopal manors with churches, but their churches were not cathedrals. Their LDB entries leave no room for doubt. The church at Hoxne, which served as 'the episcopal seat of Suffolk'

[83] *DB Norfolk*, 1.212 (LDB ff. 136b-137a)
[84] *DB Norfolk*, 1.219 (LDB f. 138b); *DB Suffolk*, 1.110-11 (LDB f. 288a-b); 7.4 (f. 331a).
[85] See above, p. 253.
[86] Rigold, 'The Bishops of the Re-Established See', p. 10. Rigold was mistaken in suggesting that no authentic pre-Conquest charter uses the style 'bishop of Elmham' (Athulf attests as such in S 712 and 726, as well as his profession of obedience), but 'bishop of the East Angles' does seem to have been conventional. Theodred II, Æthelstan, and Ælfgar attest as *Orientalium Anglorum episcopus* (S 876, 885, 891, 899), while the dispositive section of S 958 refers to Ælfwine, *orientalis episcopus*.
[87] Darlington, 'Ecclesiastical Reform', p. 423; *English Episcopal Acta, VI: Norwich, 1070-1214*, ed. C. Harper-Bill (Oxford, 1990), p. xxvi; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 121.



Map 21. Demesne lands held by Bishop Æthelmær TRE; gifts made by bishops of East Anglia to Bury St Edmunds, 900×1066; and demesne lands held by Stigand TRE.

possessed one carucate of land in nearby Yaxley and Thrandeston, while the church at North Elmham had 60 acres to its name.[88] Both look like manorial appurtenances with land set aside for their support, rather than institutions with a claim on the manors of the bishopric. Introducing the lands of other sees, Domesday almost invariably implies a community whose rights stood alongside the bishop's: hence the fees ascribed to 'the bishop of Salisbury and the monks of Sherborne', 'the church of Worcester', or 'the archbishop of York and the canons'.[89] Nothing suggests that the priests at the church of North Elmham, or at St Æthelberht's at Hoxne, had any such status. North Elmham only acquired its stone-built 'cathedral' after the removal of the see.[90] Seen in this light, the bishops' lack of regard for their seat, and the supposed loss of its archive, are hardly surprising.[91] It was probably neither a permanent base nor a natural repository for documents.

Another influence on the see's internal structure was its geographical extent. This, as well as the lack of a conventional cathedral seat, suggests that East Anglian bishops were more peripatetic than most. The two main concentrations of episcopal land, in the Waveney valley and north Norfolk, must have defined itineration in some measure. Travel by bishops, often using their own estates as staging-posts, is well-attested.[92] Setting out from Hoxne, the bishops held Stratton almost exactly half-way along the Roman Pye Road to Norwich. From Norwich, again at a similar distance, a third day would have seen them reach the episcopal manor of Helmingham. North Elmham was ten miles further, four easy days' travel from Hoxne. This convenient arrangement was surely deliberate, and the bishops would have had

[88] *DB Suffolk*, 18.1 (LDB f. 379a) and 18.6 (f. 379b); *DB Norfolk*, (LDB f. 191b).
[89] *DB Dorset*, L (GDB f. 75a); *DB Worcs.*, L (GDB f. 172a); *DB Yorks.*, L (GDB f. 298d).
[90] S.E. Rigold, 'The Anglian Cathedral of North Elmham, Norfolk', *Medieval Archaeology*, 6/7 (1962-3); the building's date is placed firmly after the Conquest by S. Heywood, 'The Ruined Church at North Elmham', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 135 (1982).
[91] Commented upon by Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 121; Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 2, 143; H. Leyser, 'Æthelmaer (d. after 1070), bishop of Elmham', in *ODNB*.
[92] J. Barrow, 'Way-Stations on English Episcopal Itineraries, 700-1300', *EHR*, 127/526 (2012). Ten to twenty miles are suggested as a normal day's travel at p. 554.

every reason to travel. East Anglia was fragmented in its ecclesiastical organisation, with few minsters and a growing profusion of private churches.[93] This presented clear problems of control for a bishop, but also opportunities to assert his authority. Demand for certain rites reserved to bishops—ordination of priests and consecration of churches—would have been high.[94] It is reasonable to imagine that they spent much of their time engaged in these activities, which may account for their sporadic attendance at court.

The bishops of East Anglia emerge as rather anomalous royal servants, in keeping with their marginal sphere of authority. Early appointees seem to have been local to the region, and were very likely chosen for political reasons. The see of Cornwall offers a parallel to East Anglia in this and other respects.[95] A bishop's status depended on his background rather than the office he held. Theodred of London and Athulf were regularly present at court; Theodred II was not. Ælfgar owed his prominence to his association with Dunstan; Stigand to his connections as a royal priest. All this suggests a fundamental lack of institutional continuity. With the possible, early exceptions of Athulf and Theodred II, no bishop was promoted internally. There was no cathedral community to press for the appointment of one of its own or represent the continuing interests of the diocese during a vacancy. The nearest thing to one may have been Bury St Edmunds. If we treat the bishops as a succession of individuals, it becomes easier to account for their attitude to land. Their open-handedness and lack of concern to endow their church (unless it were Bury St Edmunds) evokes the handling of a lay

[93] P. Warner, 'Shared Churchyards, Freemen Church Builders and the Development of Parishes in Eleventh-Century East Anglia', *Landscape History*, 8/1 (1986); T. Williamson, *The Origins of Norfolk* (Manchester, 1993), pp. 154-161; Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 126.
[94] On reserved rites, see Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 101-8.
[95] The tenth-century bishops Conan, Daniel, and Wulfsige Comoere were probably local men, and may have had multiple (or competing) seats. See C. Insley, 'Athelstan, Charters and the English in Cornwall', in M.T. Flanagan and J.A. Green (eds.), *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 20-23, and Keynes, 'Archbishops and Bishops', pp. 550-51. Significantly, Cornwall was another diocese named after a region rather than an episcopal seat: Bishop Ealdred attests as *Cornubiensis ecclesiae episcopus* (S 876, 878, 880, 885, 891, 899, 1380).

magnate's estate. Indeed, the holdings of bishops without a cathedral community must have resembled 'comital manors', being assigned to successive bishops at royal discretion. Bishops of East Anglia succeeded to tasks and resources, rather than an institution.

EALDORMEN AND EARLS

Although the bishops remain largely obscure as individuals, their sphere of authority is not in doubt.[96] The ealdormen and earls active in the region present the opposite problem. Most were figures of national importance who have left a corresponding historical footprint, but their territories did not necessarily pass from one incumbent to the next. Kings defined ealdordoms or earldoms for individuals, and unmade or remade them at will. While it is quite possible to speak of the 'bishop of the East Angles', a corresponding ealdorman would be an anachronistic invention. We can do no more than determine who was ealdorman in East Anglia at a given time. Only then can the practical basis of their power be approached.

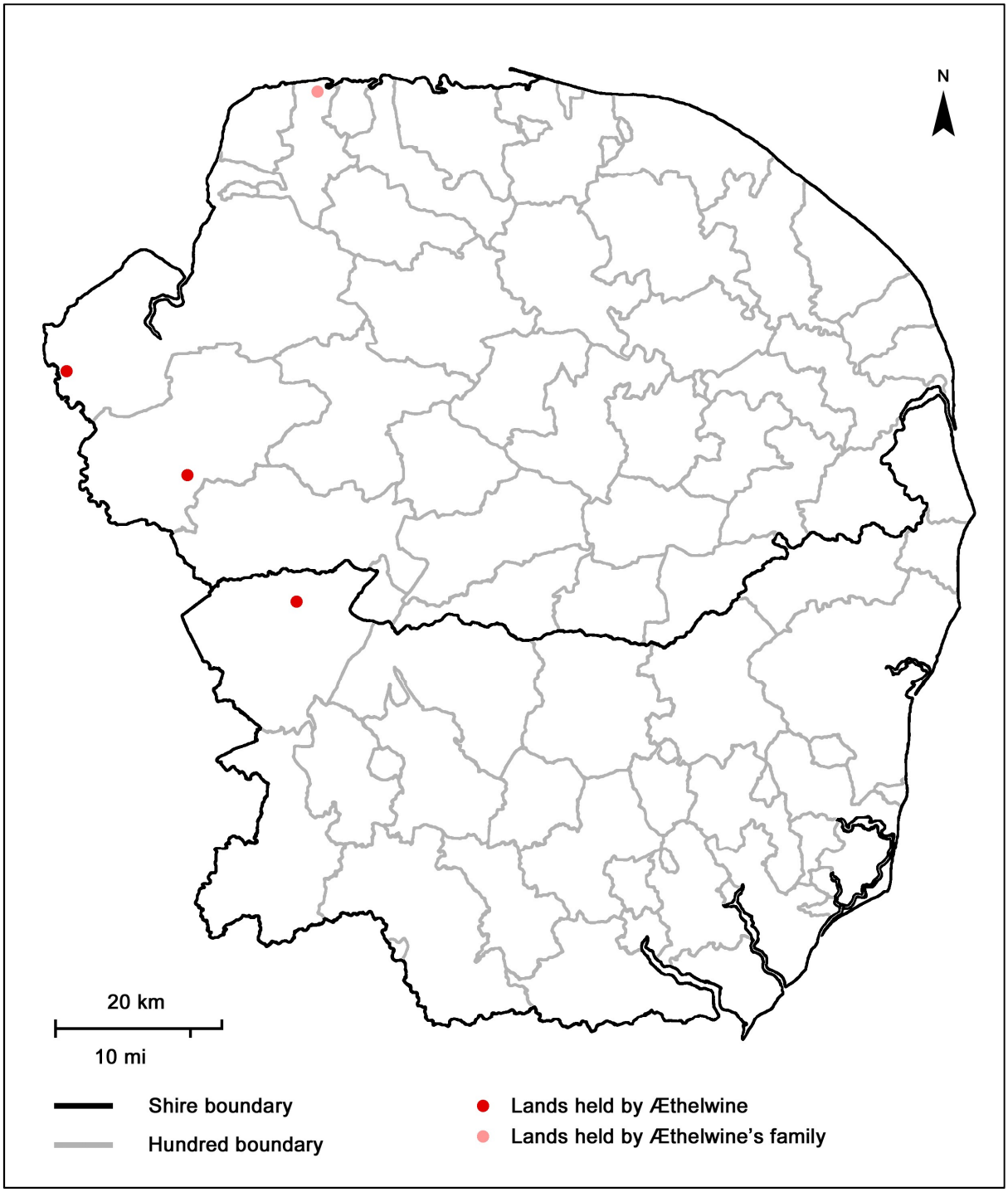
A supposed ealdordom of East Anglia has long been associated with the house of Æthelstan 'Half-king'. For the six decades between 932 and 992, Æthelstan and his sons, Æthelwold and Æthelwine, served as ealdormen in eastern England. Their sphere of authority has generally been taken for granted. A detailed study of the family can note that tenth-century ealdormen were rarely given territorial titles and that *princeps Orientalium Anglorum* and *Orientalium Anglorum dux* were later coinages, yet consistently assume that Norfolk and Suffolk were the core ealdordom of Æthelstan and his sons.[97] As will become clear, later

[96] The diocese of East Anglia covered Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire east of the Devil's Dyke: Campbell, 'The East Anglian Sees', p. 115, n. 32.
[97] C.R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), pp. 574-5.

authors had reasons for bestowing a specific title on the family, but contemporary evidence strongly suggests that the house of Æthelstan was based in the East Midlands. The most thorough treatment to date of this and related points is the regrettably unpublished doctoral thesis of Nicholas Banton, upon which the following section draws extensively.[98]

Records preserved at the fenland abbeys, particularly Æthelwine's foundation of Ramsey, make it possible to trace the family's landholdings in unusual detail. Such material naturally concentrates upon lands which were both alienable and deemed suitable for endowing the abbey. While discouraging at first sight, these qualifications may in fact provide an indication of where the family's core interests lay. Some of the lands involved are explicitly said to have been Æthelwine's by inheritance, whereas estates held *ex officio* would have been difficult to alienate.[99] Only four estates in Norfolk and Suffolk can be associated with the kindred, none of them very far east (Map 22).[100] In Essex there was one near the Thames estuary.[101] By contrast, members of the kindred are known to have had land in six Cambridgeshire vills.[102] In Huntingdonshire, they held in fifteen vills.[103] One of these was Upwood, where Æthelwine is said to have kept his main residence. Both he and his elder brother Ælfwold received lands in Bedfordshire from King Edgar, and Æthelwine's son Leofwine laid claim to two Northamptonshire estates.[104] Previously, Æthelstan 'Half-king' had acquired Hatfield in

[98] L.N. Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls in England from the Reign of King Alfred to the Reign of King Aethelred II' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1981), pp. 212-5.
[99] Brington and Old Weston in Huntingdonshire (*CAR*, ch. 28, p. 53) were inherited.
[100] Norfolk: Hilgay with Snore (*CAR*, ch. 28, p. 53); Walsoken (ibid.); Brancaster (*Chron Rams.*, ch. 30-31, pp. 57-8). Suffolk: Wangford (*CAR*, ch. 28, p. 54).
[101] Wakering (*CAR*, ch. 29, p. 55).
[102] Toft (*CAR*, ch. 28, p. 54); Swaffham (*CAR*, ch. 49, pp. 78-80); Longstowe and Bourn (*CAR*, ch. 32, p. 58); Burwell (*CAR*, ch. 26, p. 51); *Henning* (ibid.).
[103] Upwood (*Chron Rams.*, ch. 28, p. 52); Great Raveley (ibid.); Ramsey (ibid.); Sawtry (ibid.); Brington (*CAR*, ch. 28, p. 53); Gidding and Woodwalton (ibid.); Stukeley (*CAR*, ch. 28, p. 54); Hemingford (ibid.); Houghton (*CAR*, ch. 28, 34, pp. 54, 63); Wyton (*CAR*, ch. 34, p. 63); Ripton with Wennington (*CAR*, ch. 34-5, pp. 63-4); Bythorn (ibid.); Ellington (ibid.).
[104] In Bedfordshire, Æthelwine received Shillington *(CAR*, ch. 77, p. 143) and Ælfwold 15 hides at Apsley Guise (S 772). In Northamptonshire, Leofwine claimed 10 hides at Wigley and 8 at Oakley (*CAR*, ch. 47, p. 77).



Map 22. East Anglian holdings attributed to Ealdorman Æthelwine and his family.

Hertfordshire, which subsequently passed to Ely Abbey.[105] The kindred's personal interests were almost certainly concentrated in the East Midlands, and particularly on the western edge of the Fens.

Personal landholdings and geographical ealdordoms were not necessarily aligned. For Æthelwine, a sphere of responsibility can be inferred from narratives preserved at Ely and Ramsey. The *Liber Eliensis*, which describes assemblies in some detail, records him presiding over hundredal and larger assemblies in Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.[106] While he is not shown acting in this way in East Anglia, he sometimes brought men from East Anglia to assemblies, suggesting that the region fell under his authority.[107] He is also known to have leased six Suffolk hundreds from Ely Abbey.[108] No account of a Huntingdonshire assembly explicitly associates the event with Æthelwine, and in one case the shire was summoned by Byrhtnoth of Essex.[109] This has been interpreted in different ways. Roy Hart took it to mean that Æthelwine controlled Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Holland in Lincolnshire, whereas Byrhtnoth was ealdorman of Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire as well as Essex.[110] Hart's reading is unsatisfactory because it gives Huntingdonshire to Byrhtnoth on the strength of one passage and does likewise with Northamptonshire despite evidence for Æthelwine presiding there.[111] Nicholas Banton placed the East Midlands firmly under Æthelwine's control but thought that East Anglia might have fallen under Byrhtnoth's authority because of his family's landed interests in Suffolk.[112] He

[105] *LE*, ii.7, pp. 79-80.
[106] *LE*, ii.11, pp. 84-8; ii.11a, pp. 89-91; ii.12, p. 91; ii.24, pp. 97-8; ii.34, pp. 109-10.
[107] *LE*, ii.11, pp. 84-8; ii.11a, pp. 89-91.
[108] *LE*, ii.41, p. 114.
[109] *LE*, ii.25, pp. 98-9.
[110] Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 592-7.
[111] Byrhtnoth could simply have been using his status to expedite a case. Moreover, the Ælfwold who joined him in summoning the shire was probably Æthelwine's brother, who seems to have assisted the ealdorman locally. See also Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls, p. 211.
[112] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', pp. 212, 215.

discounted references to 'Orientales Angli' as referring to the 'eastern English' of the East Midlands, rather than to the East Angles.[113] This explanation does not convince either: not only do the passages in question suggest that a region beyond Cambridgeshire is meant, but East Anglia was probably a recognised territorial unit before its division into Norfolk and Suffolk.[114] There is no reason to doubt that while Æthelwine himself was based near the Fens, his office extended over both East Anglia and the East Midlands. Those whom he invited to the rededication of Ramsey church in 991 comprised 'the leading great men of East Anglia and the powerful men of Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire and Kesteven'.[115]

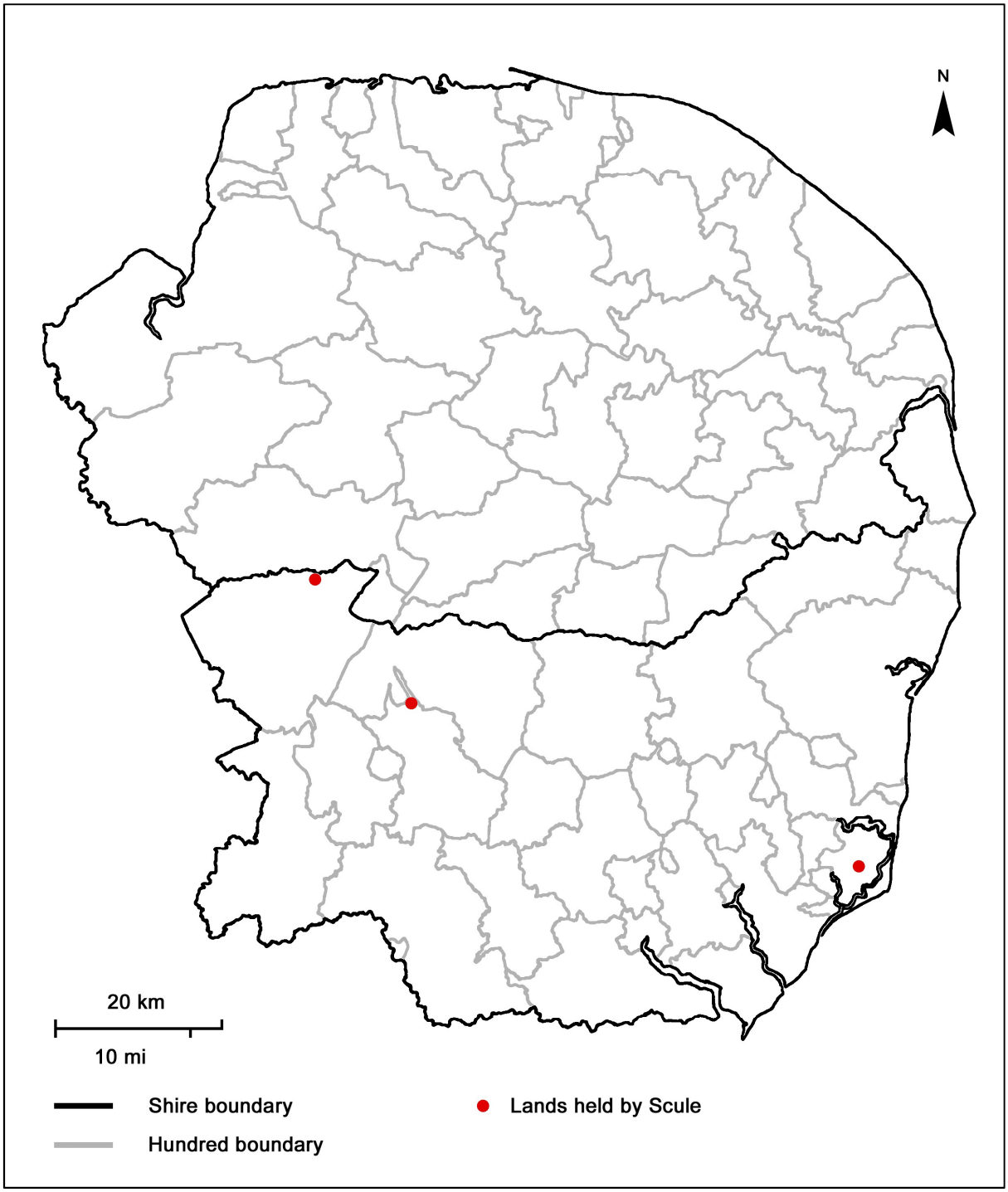
While Æthelwine's ealdordom of 962-992 can be defined with a degree of confidence, it is mere supposition that his father and brother had controlled a similar area from 932 onwards. Who held authority in East Anglia before 932, has not been considered in any detail. An important figure in this connection is a *jarl* called Scule, who witnesses several charters between 931 and 950.[116] He was one of a group, usually bearing Scandinavian names, who attest charters featuring expansive witness-lists in the mid-tenth century.[117] Scule is plausibly identified with the *comes* of that name whom the *Liber Eliensis* mentions as having held land in Suffolk.[118] What was his position? Hart saw Scule as a subordinate assisting in the administration of Æthelstan 'Half-king's' far-flung ealdordom.[119] Banton thought that all the

[113] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', p. 212.
[114] *LE*, ii.11a, pp. 89-91; ii.32, pp. 105-7. On East Anglia see L. Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia: An Alternative Hypothesis', *Historical Research*, 81/211 (2008), pp. 13-17.
[115] *CAR*, ch. 58, p. 93.
[116] His earliest signature occurs in S 412 and his last in S 552a. Men like Scule were distinguished from English ealdormen by the use of *eorl*, representing the Old Norse *jarl*. The Norse term is used here to differentiate between these figures and eleventh-century earls, the successors of the ealdormen.
[117] On the Scandinavian *jarls* see Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', ch. 8.
[118] D. Whitelock, 'Foreword', in *LE*, p. xiv; Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 577. *PASE* separates the charter-attesting *jarl* ('Scule 1') from the *comes* of the *Liber Eliensis* ('Scule 3') on chronological grounds, because the *Liber Eliensis* draws on records dating from the 970s and after. But the references to Scule concern past events, making the distinction unnecessary (*LE*, ii.36, p. 111—but see ii.35, p. 110 for the chronology—and ii.37, p. 111).
[119] Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 577.

Scandinavian *jarls* came from Northumbria, and identified Scule with a follower of King Ragnald of York who received some of St Cuthbert's lands in 914.[120] He was thus obliged to explain Scule's Suffolk holdings by suggesting that Ragnald's lieutenant had been granted lands in East Anglia by English kings in return for loyalty.[121] This seems improbable, as does a chronology that would have a high-ranking warrior who received lands in 914 still attesting charters in 950.

Some of Banton's other conclusions in fact provide a key to the problem. One of these is that there were probably no subordinate ealdormen of any kind.[122] More specifically, the Scandinavian *jarls* held an alternate office rather than a subordinate one. In Northumbria, the king always had several such men before 966, each of whom attested charters as *dux*; as soon as Edgar appointed one of their number to hold overall power, only he was called *dux* and the others became *ministri*.[123] The inference is that the position of *jarl* derived from local standing and was supplanted when the king named an ealdorman, replacing multiple adopted subordinates with a single appointed one. If the Scule of the charters and the Suffolk *jarl* of the *Liber Eliensis* were indeed the same man, the identification has substantial consequences. Given the date of Scule's last known attestation, Æthelstan 'Half-king' could not have controlled East Anglia before 950. It is true that the region was probably too large for a single *jarl*, but Scule was not alone. An individual called Hadd consistently signs alongside him as *dux*, which may well mean that they were kinsmen (or neighbours).[124] While Scule was active in Suffolk (Map 23), Hadd cannot be located, although it is of interest that the name occurs in

[120] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', pp. 239-40. 'Scula 1' and 'Ragnald 1' in *PASE*. See C.R. Hart, 'Ragnall [Rægnald, Rögnvaldr] (d. 920/21), king of York', in *ODNB*.
[121] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', pp. 242-3.
[122] Ibid., pp. 217-18.
[123] Ibid., pp. 241-2. The individual in question was Oslac.
[124] Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 577; Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', p. 245.



Map 23. Holdings attributed to Scule.

two Norfolk place-names.[125] Other Scandinavian *jarls* remain unlocated and may also have been based in East Anglia.[126] A little more can be gleaned from the charter attestations. Scule appears in 13 reputable witness-lists (931×950) and Hadd in six (931×934).[127] While their signatures do not uniformly coincide with those of the East Midland ealdormen, they always appear in the company of Bishop Theodred of London, who would have been a natural associate.[128] Hadd's attestations always coincide with Scule's, but in five out of six cases Hadd attests first of the two.[129] If at his last attestation he looked back on a career as long as Scule's would prove, he could have been in office since 917.[130] At all events, it now seems likely that Scandinavian *jarls* remained in control of East Anglia until at least 950. To judge by their appearance alongside Welsh sub-kings in the charters, their presence at 'imperial' courts may have reflected a specific relationship rather than administrative business.[131]

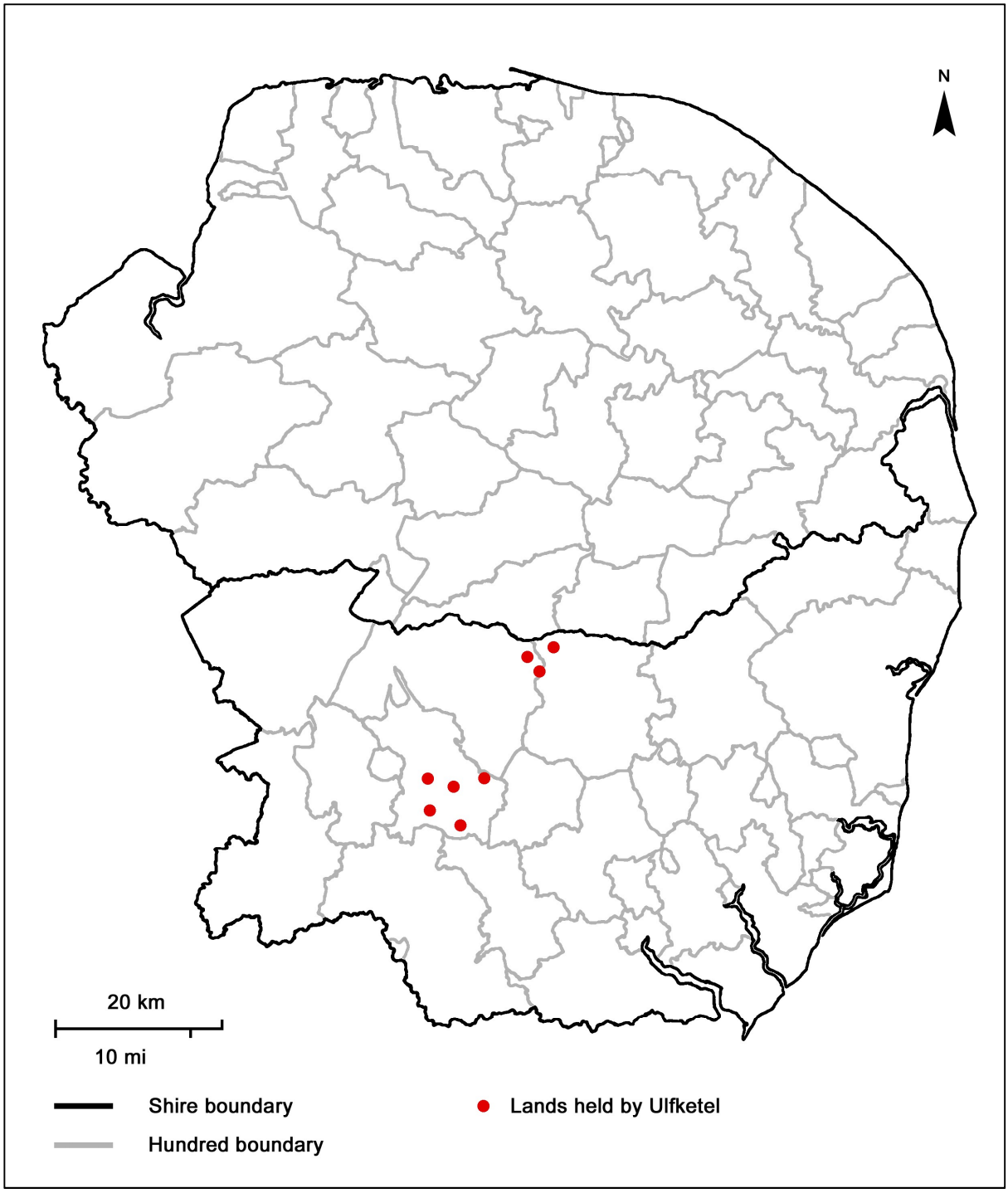
The East Midland ealdormen apparently controlled East Anglia from some point after 950 until 992.[132] Æthelwine's death brought about a realignment, with Ealdorman Leofsige of Essex probably taking responsibility for the region. Leofsige's association with East Anglia would be wholly speculative but for his seamless replacement in witness-lists by Ulfketel, who was certainly East Anglian.[133] Although he replaced an ealdorman, Ulfketel was not

[125] Scule held land in Brandon, Livermere, and Sudbourne: *LE*, ii.36-7, p. 111. The name Hadd occurs in Haddiscoe and Hudeston (lost in Bunwell): J. Insley, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk* (Uppsala, 1994), pp. 172-3. Insley's categorical refusal to connect Hadd with East Anglia seems unwarranted.
[126] Whitelock, 'Dealings', p. 77.
[127] Scule: S 412, 413, 416, 417, 425, 407, 434, 514, 1497, 528, 544, 550, 552a. Hadd: S 412, 413, 416, 417, 425, 407.
[128] S 413 shows Hadd and Scule attesting in the absence of Ealdorman Alfred, who briefly preceded Æthelstan 'Half-king' in 930-31. In S 550, Scule attests while Æthelstan does not.
[129] Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, table XXXVIII.
[130] Alternatively, his disappearance may be linked to Æthelstan's Scottish campaign, for he last attests at Nottingham on 7 June 934 (S 407).
[131] On the courts of Æthelstan see S. Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven and London, 2011), pp. 91-3.
[132] Æthelstan 'Half-king' retired in 957 and his son Æthelwold attests as *dux*, alongside him, from 956. Æthelwold's initial sphere of authority is unclear, but he can now be accommodated in East Anglia until 957. On this transitional period see Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', pp. 129-30.
[133] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', pp. 174-5, 177-8; Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, tables LXII, LXIII. Leofsige succeeded Byrhtnoth in Essex after 991 but was later banished: *ASC*, *s.a.* 1002.

himself accorded that title. He attests 13 authentic charters, always with the *ministri* or *milites*, and only twice (in 1013-14) in first place among them.[134] This may reflect a wider royal initiative to replace ealdormen with officials of lower formal rank.[135] It did not apparently constrain his power, for the Chronicle shows him presiding over the East Anglians' decision to pay tribute to Swein, and leading local forces in battle.[136] Ulfketel was also in a position to make significant gifts to the monks of St Edmund, who remembered him as the donor of several large estates.[137] These fall into two distinct groups in western Suffolk, and provide the only record of where he held land (Map 24). His position at court is similarly opaque. A late Scandinavian source gives him a daughter of Æthelred II in marriage, and a sword of his seems to have passed to the ætheling Æthelstan, either of which would suggest that he was cultivated by the royal house.[138]

After Ulfketel's death at *Assandun* in 1016, the comital succession in East Anglia becomes less certain. Thorkell the Tall was given charge of the region by Cnut in 1017 and proceeded to attest first among the earls.[139] In this capacity he seems to have ruled in England when the king was absent.[140] Nothing is recorded of his activities in East Anglia except that he supported Bishop Ælfwine in introducing monks to Bury St Edmunds.[141] Thorkell was exiled in 1021.[142] It is possible that East Anglia then passed under the authority of Godric, who attests four charters between 1014 and 1021×1023, and has tentatively been located in the

[134] S 900, 901, 906, 910, 911, 912, 915, 916, 922, 926, 931, 931b, 933.
[135] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', pp. 177-82.
[136] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1004, 1010.
[137] S 1219; *BBen* B, C, D, E: Rickinghall, Rougham, Woolpit, Hinderclay, *Redfaresthorpe*, Bradfield, Felsham, Hessett, Redgrave.
[138] R. Abels, 'Ulfcytel [Ulfcytel Snillingr] (d. 1016), soldier', in *ODNB*; S 1503.
[139] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1017; Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations*, table LXIX. Thorkell's career is discussed by S. Keynes, 'Cnut's Earls', in A.R. Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut* (London, 1994), pp. 54-7 and R. Abels, 'Thorkell the Tall [Þorkill inn Hávi], earl of East Anglia (fl. 1009-1023), viking leader, magnate, and regent', in *ODNB*.
[140] He alone is addressed by name in Cn 1020 1.
[141] This tradition was preserved at both Bury and Ely. It is recorded in a marginal note in the Bury Psalter: see *Charters of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Lowe and Foot (Oxford, forthcoming). See also *LE*, ii.86, p. 155.
[142] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1021.



Map 24. Holdings attributed to Ulfketel.

East Midlands.[143] Who, if anyone, was in office between these dates and the appointment of Harold Godwineson in 1043×1045 is unclear. One suggestion would have Osgod Clapa take over the functions, if not the title, of earl.[144] Osgod certainly held land in the region and was remembered as a powerful man at Bury St Edmunds.[145] Is unlikely that he had overall authority in East Anglia, for he was not supplanted by Earl Harold, after whom he witnesses the will of Thurstan son of Wine in 1043×1045.[146] Edward the Confessor's reign saw East Anglia change hands rapidly.[147] Harold shared his father's exile in 1051 and was replaced by Ælfgar son of Leofric, who relinquished the earldom at the Godwine family's return in 1052. Harold was given his father's earldom of Wessex after Godwine's death in 1053, whereupon Ælfgar was reappointed to East Anglia. Ælfgar continued in office (barring a brief period of exile in 1055) until 1057, when he took over his father's old earldom in Mercia. He was succeeded in East Anglia by Gyrth Godwineson, who remained in office until his death at Hastings.

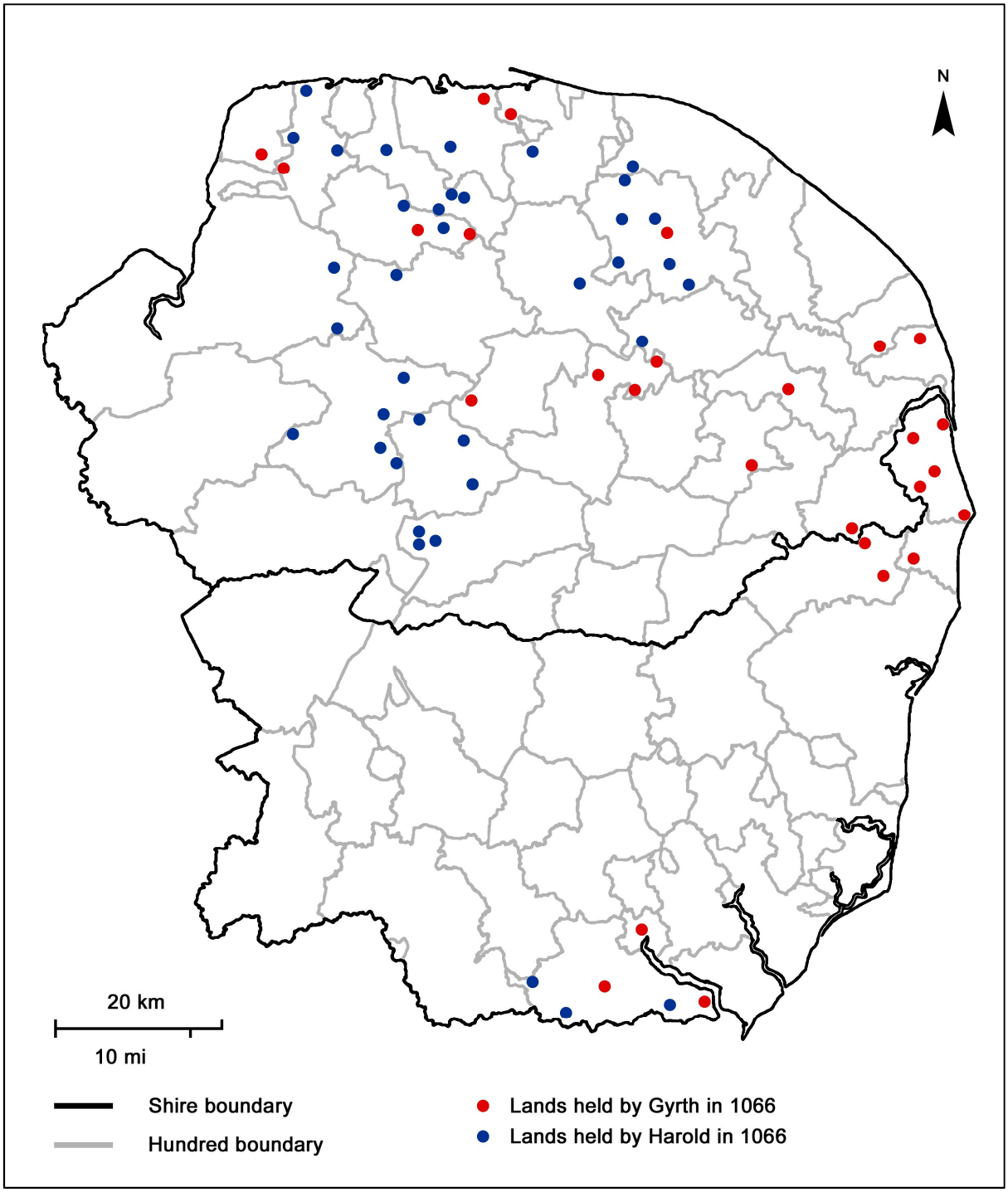
The resources sustaining the eleventh-century earldom can be examined in LDB, although political instability confuses the picture. As elsewhere in England, two sources of revenue appear to have been attached to the office. One of was a share in the proceeds of official functions, particularly of a judicial kind, known as the 'third penny'. This privilege saw a third of what would otherwise have been royal revenue, diverted to the earl.[148] Such a division is widely recorded in East Anglia. Soke is often attributed to 'the king and the earl', suggesting that the earl took a third of the royal tribute and incidental fines arising from the

[143] Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', p. 189; Keynes, 'Cnut's Earls', pp. 76-7.
[144] Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 195.
[145] A. Williams, 'Osgod Clapa (d. 1054), landowner and exile', in *ODNB*.
[146] S 1531.
[147] Harold is first called earl in S 1531. On the career of Ælfgar see S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 43-8. While Edward the Confessor's charters are too few to shed much light on shifting earldoms, the East Anglian earls are addressed by name in writs for Bury St Edmunds: S 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1077, 1078, 1083, 1084, 1085.
[148] On the third penny see Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 89-97 and Lambert, *Law and Order*, pp. 337-42.

land in question. It may be that the same division is left implicit where soke is attributed to the king alone, although inconsistent recording practices between hundreds preclude certainty. A similar division applied to revenues arising from *burhs*, in whose functions earls took a necessary interest.[149] As early as Æthelred II's reign Ulfketel had been concerned, although unable, to defend Norwich and Thetford.[150] By 1066, the earl received £10 to the king's £20 in both towns.[151] In Ipswich his share was £5 to the queen's £10.[152]

The earls' second major source of income were the 'comital manors', meaning estates which seem to have been assigned to incumbent earls.[153] A convincing argument holds that it was the ability to reassign a recognised group of estates at a stroke that underlay Edward the Confessor's constantly shifting earldoms.[154] In East Anglia, the estates held by Earl Gyrth in 1066 were valued at £108. They were concentrated in three areas: in north Norfolk alongside significant royal and episcopal holdings, in the east around the lower Yare and Waveney, and in the immediate vicinity of Ipswich (Map 25). This distribution is unremarkable in itself, often shadowing royal holdings but suggesting a special concern for the vulnerable east coast. Difficulties arise from Harold's recorded interests. Harold, who had been earl until 1053, still held East Anglian lands worth £93 3s and six nights' farm. If the farm from the great manor of Necton was worth the £60 rendered TRW, the total would be £153 3s.[155] Gyrth could count on a further £20 from Norwich and Thetford (where his interests were not reckoned in land), but held one manor worth £10 only 'from' St Benet's at Holme.[156] The resulting total

[149] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 97-104.
[150] *ASC*, *s.a.* 1004.
[151] *DB Norfolk*, 1.61 (LDB ff. 116a-117b); 1.70 (ff. 118b-119a)
[152] *DB Suffolk*, 1.122a-g (LDB f. 290a-b); 3.55 f. 294a-b).
[153] Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 167-8; S. Baxter, and J. Blair, 'Land Tenure and Royal Patronage in the Early English Kingdom: A Model and a Case Study', *ANS*, 28 (2006), pp. 23-6; Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 141-50.
[154] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 62-71, 143-4.
[155] *DB Norfolk*, 22.1-8 (LDB f. 235a-b).
[156] This manor, Ormesby, therefore cannot have been a comital one: DB *Norfolk*, 1.59 (LDB f. 115b).



Map 25. East Anglian demesne lands held by Gyrth and Harold TRE.

of £118 takes no account of the unknown revenues arising from his share of soke, but still suggests that a former earl was gaining about as much from the region as the incumbent.

There is an obvious parallel in the careers of Stigand and Æthelmær. Had Harold enriched himself at the earldom's expense? Stephen Baxter has suggested that estates in Essex may have been granted to Harold and Ælfgar for life rather than strictly for their terms in office.[157] Earls would also have sought to acquire further lands, presumably by purchase, in order to maintain an independent foothold in a given area. The recorded characteristics of former earls' estates can shed light on their provenance. For Ælfgar, the picture is quite clear. He is known to have sold two large estates in eastern Norfolk at some time before his death in c. 1062.[158] Being alienable, Beighton and Hemsby must have been acquisitions on his own account. One manor was still attributed to him in 1066, while his widow and a son also held land in the region.[159] We may take from this that Ælfgar's comital lands had passed to Gyrth in 1057, whereupon he had sold two of his personal manors but kept a family presence in East Anglia.

Harold's holdings were of a different kind. It has been pointed out that where earls held manors with appendant hundreds, these were probably 'comital'.[160] Harold often held in the same areas as Gyrth, notably in the hundreds of Samford in Suffolk and South Erpingham in Norfolk (Map 25). In Samford hundred, it was Harold who held the hundredal manor of East Bergholt in 1066.[161] In South Erpingham, the hundred itself seems to have remained unattached, but Harold had widespread soke centred on Cawston and Marsham. The holdings

[157] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, p. 149.
[158] *DB Norfolk*, 10.25 (LDB f. 194b); 10.30 (f. 195a).
[159] 'Ælfgifu 23' and 'Burgheard 6' in *PASE DB*.
[160] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, p. 142.
[161] *DB Suffolk*, 1.100, 103 (LDB f. 287a-b).

of the brothers resembled one another in further respects. Most were unlike the typical royal manor of the region, with its soke-territory and traditional renders, and instead bore marks of creative organisation. Such manors were characterised by large numbers of berewicks and other holdings 'valued within' them, often at distances too great to reflect any traditional attachment.[162] It is, of course, unprovable that Harold had detached his examples from the earldom, but his possessions in East Anglia were surely too large to represent the purchased residue of what he had held as earl. While Ælfgar maintained a foothold in a conventional manner, it seems that Harold's hands shared the adhesive qualities of Stigand's.[163] Like the bishopric, the earldom was not particularly wealthy in 1066, but again this may have been a recent development.[164]

Much like the bishops of the East Angles, ealdormen were long appointed on an individual rather than a routine basis. Up to 1016, all drew on existing sources of power in the wider region: Scule was probably a local magnate, Æthelstan 'Half-king' and his family had prospered as royal officers in the East Midlands, Leofsige of Essex was already established in that shire, and Ulfketel was another local figure. An important feature is that all seem to have been choices of convenience. East Anglia could be attached to existing ealdordoms to the west and south, or left separate. While the region was recognised as a unit, it was not treated as a self-evident ealdordom or necessarily as part of one at all. Ulfketel was given no formal title and it is unknown whether anyone had overall control between 1021×1023 and 1043×1045. Only in Edward the Confessor's reign does East Anglia appear as an established earldom in its own right. Then, despite the region's wealth and independent royal heritage, it

[162] Gyrth held manors of this type in Aylsham, Costessey, and Gorleston; Harold in Fakenham, Cawston, and Necton.
[163] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 45-6 suggests that Ælfgar's outlawry in 1055 could have arisen from discontent at Tostig's promotion to the earldom of Northumbria. One may now also wonder whether Ælfgar had received all the rightful assets of his own earldom.
[164] For the wealth of earls TRE, see Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, p. 129.

was a junior position.[165] This degree of improvisation and discontinuity, even as other institutions were hardening into their familiar shapes, cannot be explained as a mere symptom of slow integration. Ealdormen and earls may not have been as indispensable as other royal servants. Whereas a bishop's work could be done by no one else, that of an earl required few qualifications beyond local wealth. The formalised structures of the mid-eleventh-century earldom may have arisen only when appointees ceased to be local men.

Reeves

Bishops and earls did not exhaust the officers at a king's disposal. Below them sat others, no less essential for entering the historical record only occasionally. Reeves oversaw various aspects of local justice and revenue-collection but, unlike earls and bishops, were not usually of a standing to frequent the royal court.[166] The most powerful representative of the type was the sheriff, who seems to have replicated many of the earl's functions within a specific shire: supervising justice, raising military levies, and collecting taxes.[167] He was probably responsible for any royal demesne in the shire, and therefore the king's man rather than the earl's.[168] While the sheriff emerged as an almost omnicompetent figure in the early decades of the eleventh century, the responsibilities of other reeves are more opaque. Few East Anglian reeves of any kind are known, but they only add to the impression that kings as yet relied on individuals rather than offices.

[165] The appointments of Harold and Ælfgar aside, a passage in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis* suggests that Gyrth was appointed very young: *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster*, ed. F. Barlow (London, 1962), p. 33.
[166] Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies'.
[167] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 121-2.
[168] Morris, *Medieval English Sheriff*, pp. 28-30; J.A. Green, *English Sheriffs to 1154* (London, 1990), pp. 10-11.

Two royal reeves are recorded from tenth-century East Anglia, one of them reliably. The case of a certain Leofstan must be disentangled at the outset.[169] According to the 'Miracles of St Edmund', composed by Herman the Archdeacon late in the eleventh century, a *vicecomes* called Leofstan was struck mad for violating the saint's sanctuary during the reign of Æthelred II.[170] The story appears to draw on a passage in Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* (composed 985×987) in which a Leofstan suffers the same fate.[171] The *Passio* places Leofstan's madness in the mid-tenth century, following upon a passage concerning Bishop Theodred of London. Herman too associates his Leofstan miracle with a time, during the episcopate of Athulf, when St Edmund's cult was gathering strength but mistakenly dates all this to Æthelred's reign.[172] Herman therefore seems to have drawn the sheriff's name from a mid-tenth century context. This is significant because the accounts of Abbo and Herman are far from alike. The Leofstan of the *Passio* was 'a man of great power' who demanded to see the martyr's body and suffered madness when the coffin was opened. The Leofstan of the 'Miracles' was a malevolent sheriff who ordered a woman to be dragged from sanctuary in the church and lost his mind as he waited in the churchyard.[173] Only the name and the punishment are common to the two stories. Circumstantial detail suggests that Herman was drawing upon a genuine tradition, or at least familiarity with local procedure and topography, but it seems that he conflated this with an earlier miracle.[174] There is no evidence that the tenth-century Leofstan of the *Passio* was a reeve, and nothing to identify the sheriff who may have held pleas at Bury St Edmunds several decades later.

[169] Green, *English Sheriffs*, p. 76 lists him as a possible sheriff for Suffolk (c. 940×970).
[170] *MStE*, ch. 3, pp. 10-14.
[171] *PStE*, ch. 16, p. 85.
[172] *MStE*, ch. 2, pp. 8-10, and xx-xxi.
[173] *MStE*, ch. 3, p. 12.
[174] He records nothing resembling the *Passio*'s miracle elsewhere.

Less doubt attends the position of Wulfstan of Dalham, who was active in the reigns of Eadred to Edgar.[175] He is best known as a royal confidant. A charter of Eadred calls Wulfstan *sequipedus* and Edgar tasked him with evicting the secular clerics from Winchester's Old Minster.[176] He was able to intercede personally with the king to prevent the alienation of Ely Abbey prior to its refoundation by Bishop Æthelwold.[177] The toponymic byname suggests that he came from Dalham in Suffolk, near the Cambridgeshire border, and the *Liber Eliensis* identifies him as a reeve.[178] On several occasions Wulfstan is shown acting in an official capacity, for instance convening an assembly of two hundreds at Ely.[179] When Æthelwold purchased the minster of Horningsea from the king, Wulfstan ordered him to measure the land held by the incumbent priest, presumably acting on the king's behalf.[180] In the passage which names him as reeve, it is implied that he had some responsibility for forfeited land.[181] Wulfstan may have been one of the royal reeves whom tenth-century law-codes associate with *burhs*: in this case presumably Cambridge. But there can be no doubt that he owed his appointment to landholding and standing at court. His lands extended into Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. He was in a position to give 4 hides to Bury St Edmunds during his lifetime and bequeath 36 hides to Ely.[182] Other holdings passed through his hands to kinsmen.[183] While it is unknown how Wulfstan first became Eadred's *sequipedus*, regional standing may have recommended him in the first place. His familiarity

[175] S 572 (954×955), a diploma of Eadred, was probably first issued for him; *LE*, ii.43, pp. 114-5 implies that he predeceased Edgar (*d.* 975). 'Wulfstan 16', 'Wulfstan 20', 'Wulfstan 21', and 'Wulfstan 22' in *PASE* probably all represent the same individual. On his kindred and career, see A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 33-43; A. Williams, *The World before Domesday: The English Aristocracy 900-1066* (London, 2008), pp. 33-6 and Appendix 4.
[176] S 572; Wulfstan of Winchester, *Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and trans. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991), ch. 18, p. 32.
[177] *LE*, ii.2, pp. 73-4.
[178] *LE*, ii.34, p. 109.
[179] *LE*, ii.18, pp. 93-4.
[180] *LE*, ii.32, p. 106.
[181] *LE*, ii.34, p. 109.
[182] S 1213; *LE*, ii.7, p. 80.
[183] *LE*, ii.32, p. 107; ii.35, p. 110.

with Edgar could have arisen at court or, alternatively, when the future king was in eastern England in the care of Æthelstan 'Half-king'.[184] Wulfstan's family seems to have maintained its position in the region, for a probable kinsman would serve Queen Emma in an administrative capacity.[185]

Royal reeves known from the eleventh century were rather different figures. Only one pre-Conquest sheriff is known from East Anglia: Toli, whom LDB calls *vicecomes* in both Norfolk and Suffolk.[186] While no pre-Conquest source refers to him as sheriff, he is among the addressees of several writs preserved at Bury St Edmunds, always appearing after the bishop and earl but before the thegns of the shire. Out of five authentic documents naming Toli, two are addressed to the shire of Suffolk, one to Suffolk and Norfolk, and two to East Anglia.[187] There can be no doubt that Toli was sheriff in East Anglia by either 1052 or 1053×1057 and remained in office until 1066. He appears not to have been a regional magnate akin to Wulfstan of Dalham. According to LDB he held only a single carucate in demesne, which he gave to Bury St Edmunds before 1066.[188] This has been interpreted as an inadequate landed holding for a sheriff.[189] But there are few indications that Toli's interests were more extensive. His personal following of commended men was small, comprising only nine individuals, two of them near his demesne holding in Broome, in south Norfolk. It is perhaps more likely that his main livelihood derived from having charge of royal manors. His ability to put a carucate of the royal manor of Thorney in pledge to Ralph the Staller (whether lawfully or otherwise) seems to suggest as much.[190] Broome itself contained a berewick of

[184] *CAR*, ch. 4, p. 11.
[185] On the family relationship see Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, pp. 33-5; on the connection to Queen Emma, S 1078.
[186] *DB Norfolk*, 14.35 (LDB f. 211b); 47.4 (f. 264a); *DB Suffolk*, 4.15 (LDB f. 299b); 7.67 (f. 338a).
[187] Respectively S 1078, 1084; S 1080; S 1083, 1085.
[188] *DB Norfolk*, 14.35 (LDB f. 211b).
[189] C.P. Lewis, 'Toli 2: Toli, sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, fl. 1066', in *PASE DB*.
[190] *DB Suffolk*, 31.53 (LDB f. 409b).

Earsham, which had almost certainly once been royal or episcopal.[191] In a parallel case from Cambridgeshire, Ordgar the sheriff held lands adjacent to the royal manors of Chippenham and Isleham.[192] The available evidence suggests that, perhaps to a greater extent than was usual, Toli's influence rested on his office. His lack of personal resources is of particular interest in that he was probably not in a position to farm his shires from the king.[193] Such arrangements may well have existed before the Conquest but were apparently not fully developed in East Anglia.[194]

Port-reeves based in burghal centres are hardly better attested. LDB identifies a certain Brun as reeve of Ipswich, the only such official who can be named with certainty. Brun was another minor landowner, apparently holding a total of 107 acres, and lord of seven commended men.[195] He has been credited with considerable personal resources to sustain his office but they can hardly have derived from land, although an '*Æ*lfric son of Brun' had rather more valuable holdings nearby.[196] Whatever wealth Brun possessed could have been based on trade out of Ipswich, but we should not assume that it was very great on the evidence of his office alone. Records from Norfolk are more ambiguous. An Ulfketel active in the area to the south of Norwich is described as 'the king's reeve' both TRE and TRW.[197] It has been suggested that he may have been the port-reeve of Norwich and that this position attracted the 117 freemen commended to him.[198] While the exact nature of Ulfketel's position cannot be established, neither Toli the sheriff nor Brun of Ipswich had anything like the same

[191] See above, pp. 149-50, 169-71.
[192] *DB Cambs.*, 22.6 (GDB f. 197b); 28.1 (f. 199b).
[193] Ordgar of Cambridgeshire held at least one royal manor at farm: *DB Cambs.*, 22.6 (GDB f. 197b). On his personal wealth, see S. Baxter, 'Ordgar 14: Ordgar, sheriff of Cambridgeshire, fl. 1066', in *PASE DB*.
[194] Morris, *Medieval English Sheriff*, pp. 28-30.
[195] *DB Suffolk*, 1.119 (LDB f. 289b); 7.63-6 (ff. 337b-338a). On the identification of Brun see C.P. Lewis, 'Brun 19: Brun, reeve of Ipswich, fl. 1066', in *PASE DB*.
[196] '*Æ*lfric 464' in *PASE DB*.
[197] 'Ulfkil 55' in *PASE DB*. His position is discussed by Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 217-19.
[198] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 217-18.

number of commended men, suggesting that reeves did not necessarily attract very many followers. It may be that it was his own commendation to successive magnates that made Ulfketel a desirable lord.[199] At Thetford, the sole evidence consists in a writ of Harthacnut ordering that the abbot of Ramsey shall have undisturbed possession of a messuage in the *burh*.[200] Surviving in Latin translation, it is addressed to 'Agelwinus' and the burgesses. This individual has been identified with the Æthelwig of Thetford who appears in LDB and may have acted as sheriff after the Conquest.[201] The Thetford writ is of interest in establishing that royal officers and assemblies within *burhs* received routine commands in the same way as their larger rural counterparts.

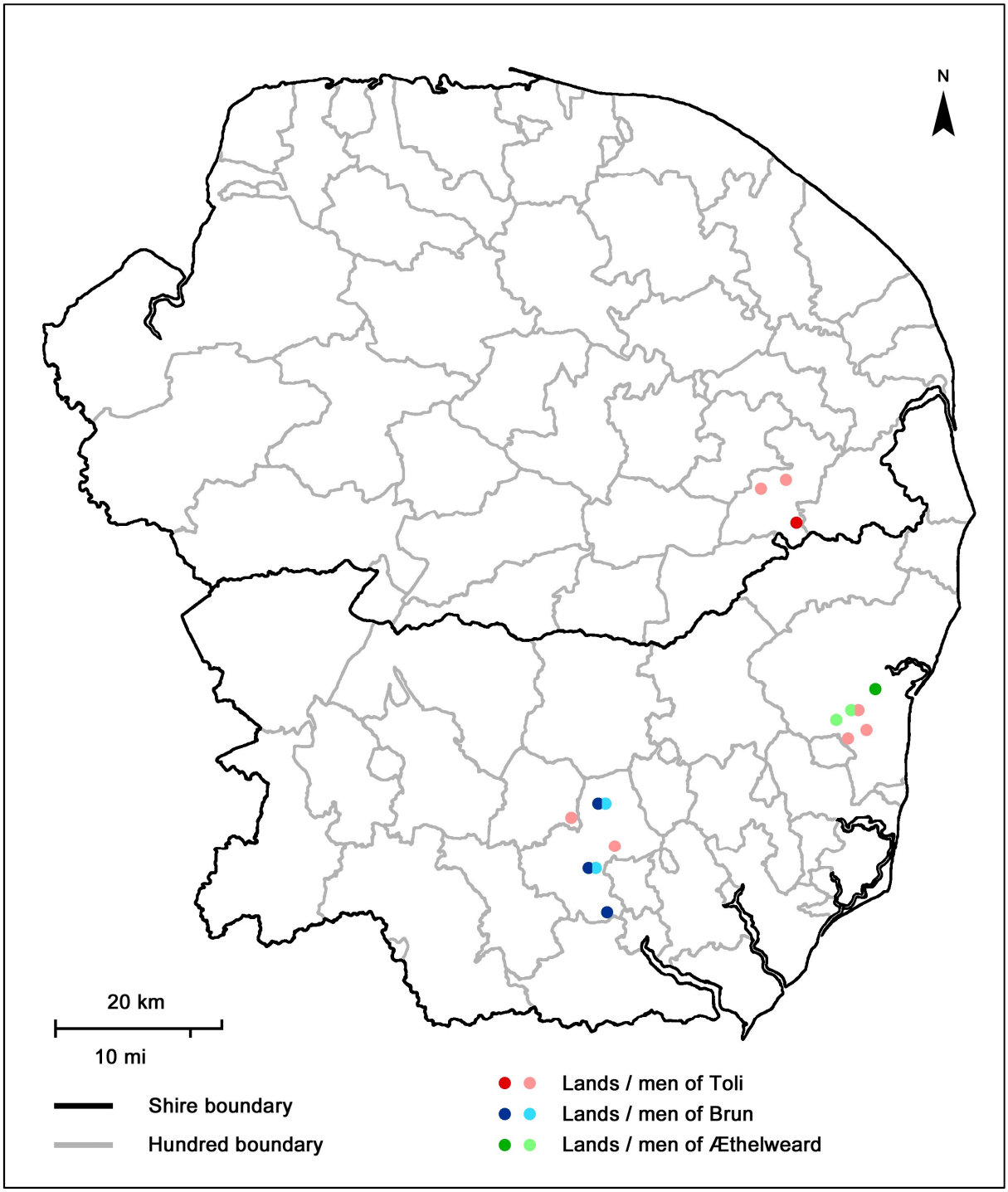
Other royal reeves are almost completely hidden from us. It is often assumed that each hundred or wapentake had its own reeve but the evidence for this is slight.[202] The idea seems to derive from a conflation of the 'hundredman' (the hundred's most senior tithing-head) with the reeve.[203] A case has been made that one aim of Edgar's reforms was to bypass reeves and deal with local assemblies directly, with the reeve retaining a role in revenue-collection.[204] It can no longer be assumed that there was a network of hundred-reeves, although a neat separation of powers between hundredman and reeve may have been difficult to maintain in practice, particularly where the hundred was attached to a royal manor. A suggestive case from Suffolk can be examined in detail. Three men in the south of Blything hundred were commended to '*Æ*thelweard, the king's reeve' TRE, and a freeman of that name held 50

[199] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 218-9.
[200] S 996.
[201] Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 555-6; F.M. Stenton, 'St Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest', *EHR*, 37/146 (1922); E.A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England* (6 vols, Oxford, 1867-79), v, pp. 815-17.
[202] Chadwick, *Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, p. 234; Morris, *Medieval English Sheriff*, pp. 25-6; P. Stafford, 'Reeve', in *WBEASE*. See above, p. 208, n. 109.
[203] Lambert, *Law and Order*, pp. 247-8.
[204] Ibid., pp. 249-50.

acres worth 8s in Hinton.[205] Hinton lies within Blythburgh parish, whose church held land there, and the place-name Hinton itself signifies a settlement of dependents.[206] Blythburgh was the head manor of Blything hundred. There can be little doubt that Æthelweard was the reeve of Blythburgh and held an associated ministerial tenancy. Judicial and fiscal functions which were reserved to Blythburgh from nearby Dunwich suggest that his day-to-day business would have included public matters from beyond the manor itself.[207] As nothing indicates that Æthelweard was a wealthy individual, it was probably his office that gave him what influence he had.

The examples of Toli, Brun, and Æthelweard suggest that they neither owed their appointment to local power nor acquired very much as a result. All three held very modest amounts of land and, although their official responsibilities were no doubt extensive, they seem not to have attracted many commended men. One example each for sheriffs, port-reeves, and manorial reeves is a slender base for general conclusions. Reeves active before and after the mid-eleventh century, and in other regions, were different figures altogether.[208] But in East Anglia in Edward the Confessor's reign, they seem above all to have collected revenues. The individuals examined here do not look wealthy enough to have been enterprising farmers of offices. Indeed, their profile could suggest that they were custodial officers, which are usually treated as an innovation of King John.[209] It is certainly striking that the two Englishmen who may have taken Toli's place in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest—Æthelwig of Thetford in Norfolk and Northmann in Suffolk—had personal resources of a different order. Æthelwig's demesne lands yielded £20 10s per annum and

[205] 'Æthelweard 83' in *PASE DB*; see *DB Suffolk*, 7.5 (LDB f. 331a); 7.18 (f. 333a); 7.36 (f. 334b).
[206] *DB Suffolk*, 7.5 (LDB f. 331a); *CDEPN*, *s.v.* 'Hinton'.
[207] *DB Suffolk*, 1.12 (LDB f. 282a); 6.89b-c (f. 312a-b).
[208] Mid-eleventh century sheriffs elsewhere (notably Mærleswein of Lincolnshire) could be substantial landholders. Green, *English Sheriffs*, p. 15.
[209] R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 149-51.



Map 26. Lands and commended men attributed by LDB to Toli the sheriff; Brun, reeve of Ipswich; and Æthelweard the reeve.

Northmann's £17 10s.[210] Farming out offices as a matter of course could have been one of William's initial and less disruptive expedients to raise money.

If pre-Conquest reeves acted as revenue-collectors and owed their resources to royal pleasure, this could explain why they were not among the most desirable commendatory lords. Desirable lords would have commanded private resources which they could mobilise to protect their men. While a pattern of uncomplimentary references to reeves suggests that they commonly abused their power, their ultimately precarious position would have been obvious to the local population. Similar considerations suggest that reeves, at least of the kind found in East Anglia, were not primarily installed to project royal power. Men such as Toli, Brun, and Æthelweard cannot have been chosen to harness independent power in the king's interests.

The indications are that the projection, as opposed to upkeep, of royal interests was the domain of trusted individuals rather than any one category of officer. Wulfstan of Dalham was plainly a royal confidant who happened to be appointed reeve in addition. In the eleventh century, Ralph the Staller provides a suggestive example. The office of staller is poorly understood, if indeed it was an office rather than denoting a particularly favoured courtier.[211] Ralph was of Breton descent but may have been born in Norfolk, and certainly had a brother and nephew among the thegns of the shire.[212] Although Edward the Confessor usually had a full complement of officers in East Anglia, he favoured Ralph conspicuously. To add to

[210] 'Æthelwig 45', 'Æthelwine 129', and 'Northmann 48' in *PASE DB*. 'Æthelwig 45' and 'Æthelwine 129' are here treated as one person, following *DB Norfolk*, 1.239n and 9.100n. Although LDB's renderings include variants of 'Ailuuinus' as well as 'Alwius', both are given the toponymic 'of Thetford' and appear as *antecessor* of Roger Bigod in southern Norfolk. Moreover, lands held by both 'Ailuuinus' and 'Alwius' passed to Stanheard as a subtenant of Roger Bigod. Stanheard is independently recorded as the son of Æthelwig: F.M. Stenton, 'St Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest', *EHR*, 37/146 (1922), p. 227.
[211] Mack, 'The Stallers', pp. 123-34.
[212] A. Williams, 'Ralph the Staller, earl of East Anglia (d. 1068x70), magnate', in *ODNB*; 'Godwine 366' and 'Alsige 45' in *PASE DB*.

already considerable holdings, Ralph received three large royal manors (Sporle, Buckenham, and Swaffham), two of which are explicitly said to have been 'of the kingdom'.[213] The total value of his East Anglian holdings came to £74 15s 7d and 2 sesters of honey, equivalent more than 60% of Earl Gyrth's landed revenues. Ralph's cross-Channel connections may have recommended him to the king, while his existing lands gave him a firm local base. Perhaps he was Edward's man in a region generally controlled by Godwineson earls. During Harold's reign in 1066, on the other hand, the defence of the Norfolk coast was entrusted not to a lay officer but to Abbot Ælfwold of St Benet's at Holme.[214] In matters that went beyond the routine, it was local resources and the king's trust that determined who would mediate royal power.

HOLDERS OF SOKE

Office-holding alone is plainly an inadequate guide to the delegation of royal power. As we have seen, there is reason to think that local potentates whom the king trusted might receive personal instructions. While the reasons for individual appointments can only be guessed at, it is possible to isolate the people who enjoyed powers cutting across the conventional structures of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. These were the holders of soke. The interpretation of soke put forward in Chapter II suggests that it delegated responsibility for mobilising public obligations, notably fiscal and military ones. LDB records soke in a uniquely differentiated manner, revealing who was trusted with it and to what extent.

[213] *DB Norfolk*, 1.71 (LDB f. 119b); 1.139 (ff. 126b-127a); 4.1 (f. 144a). Buckenham's prior royal status is implied in 6.1 (f. 152a).
[214] *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1859), p. 293.

There is no doubt that essential public business—fiscal, judicial, or military—was usually conducted through the hundreds. The king's soke thus resided in the hundred unless a royal writ had directed otherwise. This original state was recorded in different ways, with different hundreds ascribing soke to 'the king', 'the king and the earl', or 'the hundred'. It seems that all three formulae meant the same thing, describing the default arrangement with reference to the ultimate holder, the division of revenues, and the administrative forum respectively. Routine administration of the king's soke probably fell to the 'hundredmen' and other leading figures of the individual hundreds, overseen by the sheriff. No evidence suggests that the earl had a practical role in the hundredal assemblies: references to 'the king and the earl' refer simply to his 'third penny'.

The delegation of soke to a subject proceeded by sealed writ. A written instruction delivered to the shire or hundred would detach soke, within defined bounds, from the hundredal reservoir. At this point it will be helpful to recall the different frames within which soke might be granted. The most expansive writs alienated soke over entire hundreds, such the eight-and-a-half given to Bury St Edmunds.[215] Alienation of manors with appendant hundreds would have had the same effect, although no writs to this effect have chanced to survive.[216] Kings also occasionally granted soke over other defined areas.[217] A different principle was at work in writs granting soke over the beneficiary's men. Here, the lands of the beneficiary's personal followers, irrespective of location, were placed under their lord rather than the hundred.[218] Yet another category of writ alienated soke over the beneficiary's lands, setting a subject's demesne apart within the administrative framework, again irrespective of

[215] S 1069, 1078, 1084.
[216] The soke of Shropham hundred in Norfolk was attached to Buckenham, and presumably passed with it from King Edward to Ralph the Staller (see above, p. 148).
[217] S 1108 records the grant of soke 'within Bichamdic' to Ramsey Abbey. This covered most, but not all, of Clackclose hundred: see above, pp. 174.
[218] E.g. S 1071. See above, pp. 83, 116-7.

location.[219] The patterns created by soke grants can be traced in LDB, with allowance for the inconsistent recording conventions adopted by different hundreds. No explicit soke information is recorded for the Norfolk hundreds of Brothercross, Gallow, Holt, and Thetford, while several hundreds in Norfolk and Suffolk mention soke only occasionally. Others record it in obsessive detail. Overall, it is possible to make plausible suggestions as to who had writs for holding soke. These reveal the people trusted with a personal role in the public framework, as well as something of how these exclusive privileges operated.

The most select group were those given soke over entire hundreds, who took the place of 'the king and the earl' within the relevant unit. Certain diagnostic features indicate that soke over a hundred had been alienated, although uneven information makes some identifications more secure than others. In some hundreds the holder of the hundredal manor is readily identifiable. Elsewhere, the most important indication is an absence of soke ascribed to 'the king', 'the king and the earl', or 'the hundred'. If even a minority of soke-related entries show it in royal hands, this is an indication that the default state had not been altered. If no soke is recorded in the king's hands, it becomes a question of identifying who had it over unattached freemen within the hundred. In cases where soke and commendation lay with the same person, it is possible that soke derived from a writ granting it over the beneficiary's commended men. Equally, where freemen held land near a manor held by a magnate and owed soke to the same person, a connection with the manor is the likely explanation. But where soke was the only bond between unattached freemen and the soke-holder, and the king was not represented, we can infer that the hundred had been alienated. Applying these tests yields a short list of hundredal lords, without exception magnates. The beneficiaries are tabulated below (see also Map 27).

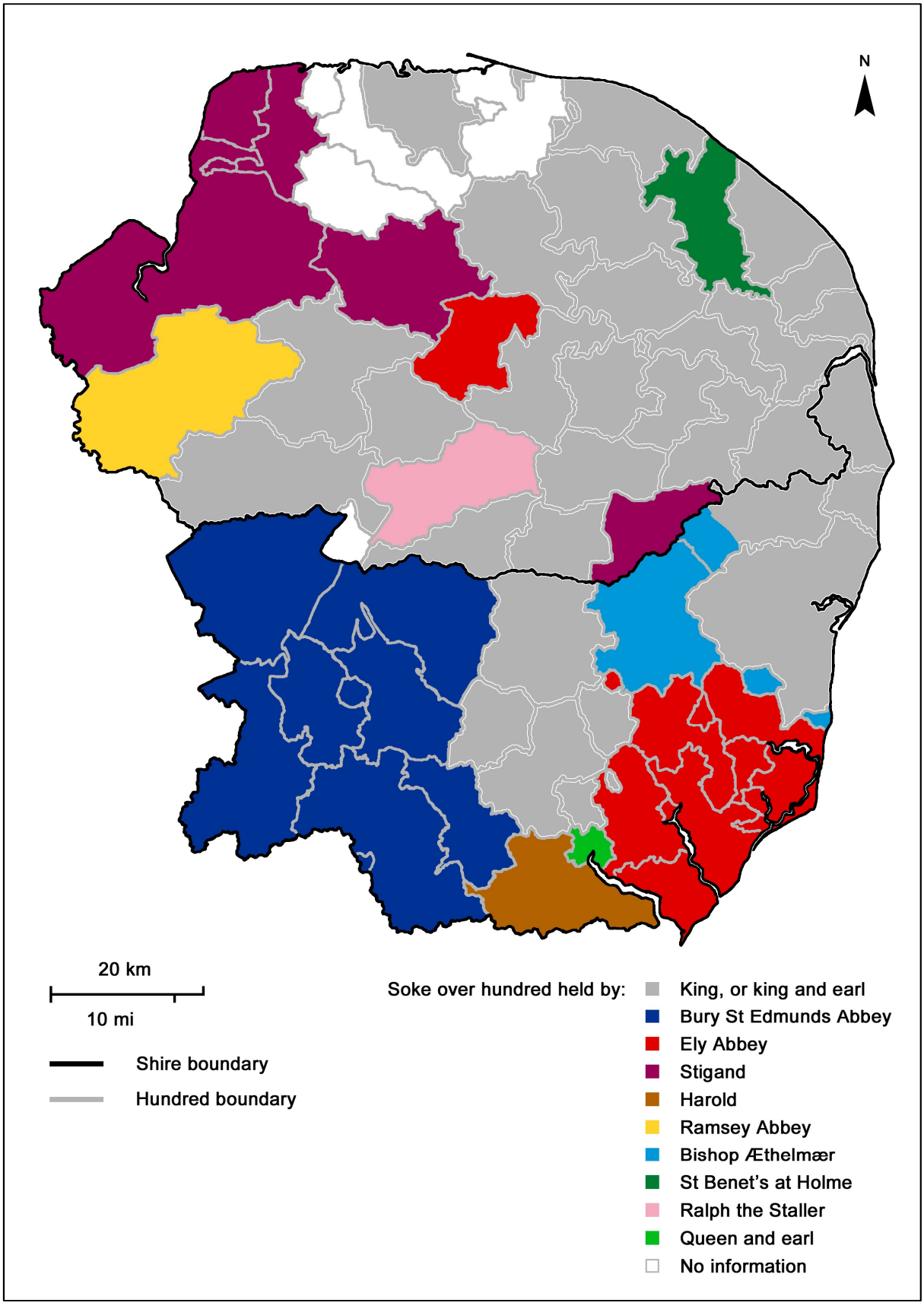
[219] E.g. S 1072, which assures Bury St Edmunds of soke over any lands bequeathed to the house.

Table 7. Holders of soke over hundreds in East Anglia in 1066.

Holder	No. (fiscal)	Hundreds
Bury St Edmunds Abbey	8½	Babergh, Blackbourn, Bradmere, Cosford, Lackford, Risbridge, Thedwestry, Thingoe (Sf)
Ely Abbey	7	Carlford, Colneis, Loes, Parham, Plomesgate, Wilford (Sf); Mitford (Nf)
Stigand	5	Docking[220], Earsham, Freebridge, Launditch, Smethdon[221] (Nf)
Harold	1½	Samford (Sf)
Ramsey Abbey	1½	Clackclose[222] (Nf)
Bishop Æthelmær	1¼	Bishop's, ferding of Elmham [in Wangford] (Sf)
St Benet's at Holme	1	Tunstead (Nf)
Ralph the Staller	1	Shropham[223] (Nf)
Queen and earl	½	Ipswich (Sf)
King and earl	32¼	[remainder][224]

Only nine individuals or institutions held private hundreds in East Anglia on the eve of the Conquest, a group consistent with the rest of the kingdom.[225] But King Edward had been almost equally sparing in issuing writs that conferred soke over men. The beneficiaries of such grants can be identified by searching for soke attributed to them over freemen, in hundreds which they did not hold. Where soke and commendation went to the same individual, or where soke was recorded over unattached freemen while commendation was not, it can reasonably be assumed that a writ granting soke over the beneficiary's men had been issued. These criteria produce a list very similar to the previous one, with the addition of four leading thegns.

[220] Docking was subsumed into Smethdon soon after the Conquest: Blomefield, x, p. 285; and see n. 221 below.
[221] Statements concerning soke are sparse in both Docking and Smethdon, but Stigand seems so have been the default holder. Ramsey's soke was confined to the vicinity of its manor at Ringstead. Freebridge hundred-and-a-half and Smethdon (apparently by then incorporating Docking), were confirmed together to William d'Albini by Henry I in 1107×1109: *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154*, ed. H.W.C. Davis et al. (4 vols., Oxford, 1913-69), ii, no. 911, pp. 85-6.
[222] Edward the Confessor's writ (S 1108) refers only to the soke within *Bichamdic* and not Clackclose hundred-and-a-half. But the distinction was soon forgotten, and the abbey claimed the whole hundred-and-a-half: Blomefield, vii, pp. 268-70.
[223] Ralph is never named as soke-holder in Shropham hundred, but the soke of the hundred lay in Buckenham, which he held.
[224] There is no evidence to suggest that the four Norfolk hundreds recording no soke information were in private hands TRE.
[225] H.M. Cam, 'The "Private" Hundred in England before the Norman Conquest', in *eadem*, *Law-Finders and Law-Makers in Medieval England* (London, 1962), pp. 67-70.



Map 27. Soke over hundreds in East Anglia.

Table 8. Holders of soke over commended men in 1066.

Holder	***PASE DB* identity**
Bury St Edmunds Abbey	'Baldwin 5'
Canterbury, Holy Trinity	'Stigand 1'
Eadgifu the Fair	'Eadgifu 24'
Eadric of Laxfield	'Eadric 113'
Ely Abbey	'Wulfric 71'
Gyrth	'Gyrth 1'
Harold	'Harold 3'
Ralph the Staller	'Ralph 2'
Siward of Maldon	'Siward 3'
St Benet's at Holme	'Ælfweald 30'
Stigand	'Stigand 1'
Wihtgar son of Ælfric	'Wihtgar 10'
Wulfwine, Aubrey de Vere's antecessor	'Wulfwine 61'

Grants of soke over the beneficiary's lands are more difficult to pinpoint. There are, for instance, indications that holding a manor implied soke over the dependent population; on the other hand, some entries make a point of stating where this was not the case.[226] A privilege claimed over dependent tenants cannot be assumed to reflect royal writs. One argument would interpret entries employing the 'x tenuit' formula as marking land held with sake and soke by king's thegns, and a provisional list has been published for Norfolk.[227] While many of the individuals thus identified no doubt did have soke over their lands, or were king's thegns, a simple equation on these lines cannot be sustained.[228] The list below takes in only those who are recorded as having had soke over land in more than one place. It is without doubt incomplete, particularly concerning landholders in northern Norfolk, where soke is sparsely recorded. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that soke over land was a privilege granted more widely than the previous two, albeit still to a relatively select group.

[226] See e.g. *DB Suffolk*, 40.3 (LDB f. 425b)
[227] D. Roffe, 'Introduction', *Alecto DB Norfolk*, pp. 30, 42-3.
[228] See above pp. 78-81.

Table 9. Holders of soke over demesne lands in 1066.

Holder	***PASE DB* identity**
Bishop Æthelmær	'Æthelmær 35'
Bury St Edmunds Abbey	'Baldwin 5'
Canterbury, Holy Trinity	'Stigand 1'
Earl Ælfgar	'Ælfgar 46'
Eadgifu the Fair	'Eadgifu 24'
Eadric of Laxfield	'Eadric 113'
Ely Abbey	'Wulfric 71'
Esgar the Staller	'Esgar 2'
Guthmund	'Guthmund 5'
[Gyrth][229]	'Gyrth 1'
[Harold][230]	'Harold 3'
Ketel	'Ketil 40'
Northmann	'Northmann 48'
Queen Edith	'Eadgyth 3'
Ralph the Staller	'Ralph 2'
Ramsey Abbey	'Ælfwine 55'
Robert fitz Wymarc	'Robert 14'
Siward Barn	'Siward 4'
Siward of Maldon	'Siward 3'
St Benet's at Holme	'Ælfweald 30'
Stigand	'Stigand 1'
Thored	'Thorth 7'
Thorn	'Thorn 2'
Wihtgar son of Ælfric	'Wihtgar 10'
Withri	'Withri 2'
Wulfwine, Aubrey de Vere's antecessor	'Wulfwine 61'

The people identified in the tables above must have had royal writs for the soke that they held, and the shape of their soke allows us to deduce who had which kind of writ. This has been the argument so far. It has worked from the clean categories in which kings alienated soke, and which can often be discerned in the LDB folios. Writs were addressed to one or more shires and couched as blanket grants within a specific frame, be it hundred, commendatory following, or landed estate. However, it is quite apparent that the privileges announced by these writs were not claimed to the letter. Many free men commended to St Edmund were not in the abbey's soke, even though the abbey had writs which would have permitted it. How is this to be explained?

[229] Nowhere explicitly ascribed soke over his land, although he must have had it.
[230] Ibid.

It is the incidental detail preserved in LDB that shows how writs were deployed. We thus know that the soke of all land in Diss half-hundred was in the hundred, 'except St Edmund's land, and of that the Saint [had] half and the King the other half, [and] except Wulfgeat's land and except Stigand's land'.[231] Elsewhere, the king had 'the soke and sake of North Erpingham hundred except for the land of Siward Barn'.[232] Stigand, in his half-hundred of Earsham, had soke everywhere 'except Thorpe [Abbotts] [which was] of St Edmund, and Pulham [which was] of St Æthelthryth'.[233] These examples suggest that local assemblies were expected to know who had claimed soke within the hundred, although the information in two of the three was out of date. Neither Stigand nor a Wulfgeat held land in Diss half-hundred in 1066.[234] In North Erpingham hundred, not only Siward Barn but also Withri of Hanworth and St Benet's at Holme had soke over land.[235] General statements had evidently been recorded concerning who had soke in the hundred, but not fully reconciled with information provided directly by magnates. Other cases spell out how soke was claimed. In Stow hundred in Suffolk, soke over the saint's commended men 'belonged to St Edmund, by King Edward's gift, as the writs and seal which the Abbot has, show'.[236] In the ferding of Elmham (Wangford hundred), Bishop Æthelmær had soke over all except Stigand's men, while Abbot Baldwin too 'according to the testimony of the Hundred, had a writ from King Edward [stating] that he himself ought to have soke and sake over St Edmund's land and his men'.[237] Æthelmær himself claimed the 'six forfeitures' over a group of sokemen in Blofield hundred in Norfolk, for which the hundred '[had] seen neither the King's writ nor seal nor grant', although its members plainly expected to.[238]

[231] *DB Norfolk*, 1.51 (LDB f. 114a).
[232] *DB Norfolk*, 1.149 (LDB f. 128a)
[233] *DB Norfolk*, 1.226 (LDB f. 139b).
[234] Although there is an ambiguous reference to 42 acres which a free man held 'under' Stigand in Gissing: *DB Norfolk*, 9.47 (LDB f. 176b).
[235] *DB Norfolk*, 9.87 (LDB f. 179b); 17.5 (f. 216a).
[236] *DB Suffolk*, 14.37 (LDB f. 360b).
[237] *DB Suffolk*, 18.4 (LDB f. 379a).
[238] *DB Norfolk*, 10.28 (LDB f. 195a).

On the evidence of these entries, those to whom the king granted soke had to present their writs in individual hundreds in order to claim it. The categorical formulae of the writs appear at odds with the irregular patterns of soke recorded in LDB, suggesting that beneficiaries did not have all the soke to which they might theoretically have been entitled. Two explanations suggest themselves. It is not impossible that restrictions were placed upon the execution of writs in certain hundreds. But the much more likely conclusion is that writs granting soke acted as licences. In other words, their beneficiaries were empowered to claim soke within certain specifications but under no obligation to do so everywhere. For instance, Wihtgar son of Ælfric, who generally had soke over his lands and men in Suffolk, held an outlying estate in Stow hundred in the soke of 'the king and the earl'.[239] Bury St Edmunds laid claim to soke over its commended men in Stow hundred, immediately adjacent to its own eight-and-a-half hundreds, but did not necessarily do so in Bosmere, which was further distant.[240] In Claydon hundred, which was adjacent to the five-and-a-half hundreds of Wicklaw, Ely Abbey claimed soke over large numbers of its commended men. More detailed investigation will be necessary to establish how far administrative convenience dictated where soke was claimed, as these examples seem to suggest. For the present, the significant conclusion is that soke-holders appear to have been left to their own devices in claiming and organising their rights. The inconsistent execution of writs in itself testifies to the active role of their beneficiaries: if writs were only presented where it was convenient, this would suggest that responsibilities—as well as rights—were involved.[241] As kings appear to have sanctioned private organisation at a hundredal level when they granted soke, it is small wonder that they granted it sparingly.

[239] *DB Suffolk*, 32.1 (LDB f. 411a).
[240] On Stow, see above, p. 117. On Bosmere, *DB Suffolk*, 16.16 (LDB f. 374b), 30.1 (f. 405a).
[241] See the suggestions made in Chapter II on the reasons behind soke grants: pp. 111-12.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to identify who mediated royal authority in East Anglia. Royal officers have emerged as a disparate group. While conventional titles came to be bestowed in an increasingly routine manner, they did not necessarily denote institutional offices. Even the episcopate, which had an array of official responsibilities according to royal law-codes, in East Anglia represented a succession of individuals. Theodred of London, the semi-permanent courtier, and Theodred II, who was very rarely in Wessex, can hardly have run their diocese in the same way. Ealdormen probably appeared in the region only after 950, and then by extension from the East Midlands or Essex. Unlike the bishop, who had sole responsibility for certain functions, the ealdorman or earl was not an essential figure. Ulfketel attested charters as *minister*, and it is unclear whether anyone had comparable authority for most of Cnut's reign. Reeves, while always necessary, were not necessarily powerful. Their local influence seems to have depended largely on the royal resources which they administered, their main role consisting in the extraction of royal revenues. Executive commands beyond routine administration, enforcement, or conveyancing were likely beyond the powers attached to their office.

The main qualifications for acting in the king's name seem to have been local roots and independent resources, coupled with the ruler's trust. It was local influence which encouraged appointment to office, rather than the reverse. This pattern persisted despite observable changes across the period under discussion. Before 950, it was probably essential to appoint local men because kings lacked the depth of control to impose outsiders. Bishop Theodred and *Jarl* Scule exemplified this stage. After mid-century, appointees were still generally chosen from the wider region, but this was no longer a necessity. By Edward the Confessor's

reign, the office of earl had become subject to a much wider political competition played out across the kingdom. Perhaps because routine office tended to imply frequent attendance at court, there remained a place for trusted individuals with local landholdings. Edward the Confessor's notable generosity to Ralph the Staller hints at a personal role, the details of which are lost to us.

If a general picture can be synthesised from this material, it is of government by emissary and local assembly. Particular functions fell within the remit of office-holders, but there is little evidence that royal commands were transmitted and implemented through fixed offices. Rather than interpolate layers of officialdom from mere titles, we should consider where the business of local government was conducted. The indications are that the hundred was the most important interface. In the absence of a reeve for each hundred, collective responsibility lay with the more substantial landholders. It was certainly these landholders who expected to see royal writs for privileges claimed in their locality. The beneficiary of a royal writ had to deal with the 'thegns of the shire' himself—nothing suggests that the sheriff did it for him. Where the relationship between independent landholders and a remote king required personal, rather than institutional mediation, local notables were better placed to provide it than nascent officialdom.

Conclusion

This thesis began with a writ of Edward the Confessor to his East Anglian subjects. With this plain administrative order he adjusted, almost casually, the local collection of a national tax for the benefit of a privileged abbey. How had West Saxon kings acquired the means of doing this in an area where they had wielded no power at all 150 years earlier? The preceding chapters have traced different aspects of this process, each considering the evidence largely on its own terms. Although there are few fixed points in the history of East Anglia between 917 and 1066, it will be helpful to synthesise—if approximately—how and when individual developments manifested themselves. This chronological summary will assist in determining what East Anglia can reveal about the larger process of expanding the English kingdom. In closing, we shall consider the implications of this study for the structure of the 'Anglo-Saxon state' itself.

A CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE

When the East Anglian army swore oaths to Edward the Elder in 917, it did so of its own accord. East Anglia remained unconquered and if the Chronicle is any guide, the form of the oaths may not have amounted to much more than an alliance. This particular army, however, had traditionally been led by a king and the agreement plainly involved the acceptance of Edward in this capacity. While the army may have viewed him as the successor to its own leaders, it is clear that Edward's own understanding of his position prevailed in some essential respects. The adoption of a West Saxon regnal coinage, albeit struck to the local

weight standard, represented a departure of unmistakable significance. Edward was evidently in a position to insist on some traditional rights. Even if the 'common burdens' were not claimed as a formal prerogative from the outset, it is safe to assume that the king expected military support on demand. The presence of *Jarls* Hadd and Scule, and Bishop Theodred, on Æthelstan's northward march in 934, and of Theodred at *Brunanburh* in 937, could reflect such an obligation. It seems likely, if unprovable, that kingship also brought Edward the Elder an established royal demesne. He would have been the natural successor to any lands held by the Danish kings, and these may account for the distinctive core of estates with territorial functions that remained in royal hands even in the eleventh century. There may even have been some continuity in episcopal landholding, given that bishoprics generally struggled to attract substantial gifts in the tenth century. Even so, numismatic evidence could suggest that the East Anglians cherished the idea of a special relationship to the West Saxon kings for some time. They took several years to acknowledge Æthelstan's kingship on the local coinage, meanwhile continuing to strike in the name of Edward, and showed a marked attachment to designs incorporating a royal portrait.[1] Indeed all issues struck in East Anglia before the reform of 973 bore the king's head, whereas designs from Mercia—where submission to Edward the Elder had been less voluntary—uniformly avoided it.[2]

Kings soon began to exercise their accustomed powers. Edmund received forfeited land in East Anglia and issued the earliest diploma to survive from the region, reserving his right to 'common work' in a conventional manner.[3] It is generally accepted that hundreds were not in wide operation before Edmund's reign, and there is reason to date their introduction in East Anglia to within a few years of his death. Some hundreds probably originated in the

[1] C.E. Blunt, 'The Coinage of Athelstan, 924-939: A Survey', *BNJ*, 42 (1974), pp. 80-81.
[2] Naismith, *MEC8*, p. 183.
[3] S 483.

adjustment of earlier territories into neatly contiguous units, while others were no doubt defined from scratch. In either case, the process seems to have been locally directed, as there is little evidence of central planning. It may have had a particular urgency in East Anglia, where *burhs* and royal estate-centres—and consequently royal reeves—were spread unevenly. Although this is necessarily speculative, it aligns with documentary references to suggest that East Anglia saw an administrative step-change around 950. That year saw the last known attestation of *Jarl* Scule, whose place would soon be taken by an ealdorman based in the East Midlands. An independent bishopric of East Anglia was established between 951 and 955. It may be no coincidence that the only hint of unrest in the region, throughout the period, comes from Thetford in 952.[4] A generational change, with the deaths of Bishop Theodred and perhaps *Jarl* Scule, appears to have made the early 950s a propitious time for administrative innovation.

The East Anglian hundreds were certainly in place by Edgar's reign, but while they provided the king with a comprehensive framework for projecting royal policy, this need not imply an immediate increase in practical power. Hundreds organised local people without multiplying royal officers. Chief among these, for most of Edgar's reign, was Ealdorman Æthelwine, whose core interests lay in the East Midlands. To judge by their general absence from court, Bishops Ælfric I and Theodred II stood well outside the king's inner circle. Something about this may explain why Bury St Edmunds, despite hosting a saint growing rapidly from local into national prominence, was neither patronised nor reformed by Edgar's regime.[5] Edgar proved more generous to Ely Abbey, granting various properties including Dereham. But when the abbot removed the relics of St Wihtburh from the local church, royal approval was

[4] *ASC* MS D, s.a. 952.
[5] Edgar's follower Wulfstan of Dalham was probably responsible for S 1213, but the king himself granted the abbey nothing.

of little immediate use to him in escaping the anger of the population.[6] Although hundreds in themselves did not impose close royal control, they soon began to be alienated. Edgar's apparent gift of five-and-a-half hundreds to Ely saw the earliest recorded reference to soke in East Anglia.[7] If documents surviving from outside the region are any guide, soke vocabulary was coming into use to describe pre-existing relationships, which seem to have taken the form of scattered 'territorial sokes' in the north and compact territories in East Anglia. Soke was not yet considered an alienable franchise, but it may have been first conceptualised in connection with the appearance of hundreds.

If this framework had a fiscal dimension from the outset, its nature remains obscure. Land in East Anglia was reckoned in hides in the tenth century, and perhaps as late as 1016, but these went out of use before 1066. The region's hundreds were, however, taxed at a rate equivalent to 100 hides in the eleventh century. The pence-in-the-pound assessment system of LDB was used for the geld and hence probably appeared with it from 1012, although there is no reason why earlier levies could not have been collected in this way. Hidation may have been found impractical in the context of extreme tenurial fragmentation, but neither this nor the lack of a formal ealdorman for most of Æthelred II's reign seems to have hampered the East Anglian fiscal system. It was a system that ran on private individuals acting in a public capacity. This much is implicit in its decentralised structure and made explicit by an account of a tribute collected for Swein Forkbeard in 1014. The sum due from the island of Flegg was taken to Thetford by Thurketel Heyng, who was a man of some means but seems not to have borne any official title.[8] Public organisation in the localities thus appears to have been improvised to a degree within the hundredal framework. The grants of franchisal soke which began to

[6] *LE*, ii.53, pp. 120-23.
[7] S 779, but see above, p. 74, n. 6.
[8] *MStE*, ch. 10, p. 26. Thurketel's will survives: S 1528; Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 180-81.

appear around this time took the organisation of public functions around private individuals a step further: soke-holders were not co-opted as required by their neighbours, but formally privileged by the king.

Hundreds, geld, and the king's soke were institutions common to the whole kingdom and the accession of Cnut, who owed nothing to the existing order, could only further erode any local distinctiveness. A general indication that old understandings no longer held is that the distinctive and subtle term *Angelcynn* rapidly went out of use after 1016, to be replaced by the flat *Englaland*. In East Anglia, Cnut's reign probably saw the replacement of a unitary organisation by two shires, and the creation of a great territorial franchise for Bury St Edmunds Abbey. The full complement of structures conventionally associated with the eleventh-century kingdom was in place by the time of Edward the Confessor, although not necessarily much before. It was under Edward that outsiders began to be appointed to the East Anglian earldom in a routine manner, the first sheriff appeared, and writs were demonstrably used to direct these and other matters. Executive efficiency should not, however, be taken to represent the culmination of progress towards a stable, bureaucratic order. The very efficiency of the process for replacing earls reflected a chronic and barely contained competition for power.[9] This manifested itself not only in office-holding but in land tenure, for there is evidence that both royal and episcopal demesne in East Anglia saw unusual alienations during Edward's reign.

East Anglia looks like a society organised at the level of the hundred. There is no direct evidence for regional assemblies before 'shiring' and once in existence, the shires were disrupted by the existence of territorial franchises which assembled separately. The sheriff

[9] S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 62-71.

seems not to have been a strong presence and in any case administered both Norfolk and Suffolk. Hundredal assemblies not only saw a great deal of well-attested judicial and commercial business, but indeed expected to see royal writs for privileges claimed within their territories. There could hardly be a clearer indication of where local power was mediated. Hundreds made a natural organising frame in a region where hierarchies were relatively flat and authority widely dispersed, and where many consequently shared the king as the focus of their loyalty.

East Anglia and the English kingdom

The implications of this thesis for the larger kingdom naturally depend on how exceptional East Anglia is considered to have been. Findings from any regional study are open to the charge of singularity, which usually assumes the existence of an otherwise general rule. Against what rule is East Anglia to be measured, given that its status manifestly changed across the period? One might consider whether its path diverged radically from that of the other former kingdoms as they came under West Saxon rule. An alternative approach would be to measure the extent of its distinctiveness within the putative norms of English government on the eve of the Conquest.

An obvious point of difference between East Anglia on the one hand, and Mercia and Northumbria on the other, is the apparent lack of separatist aspirations after 917. Both Mercia and Northumbria were ready to proclaim their own kings in times of stress during the tenth century, whereas the East Anglian elite is not known to have attempted this. But before diagnosing a distinctive collapse in regional identity, it is well to consider the relative scale of

the polities involved. East Anglia was a much smaller area than its counterparts and may simply have had less prospect of asserting its independence. Nor did it forget its status as kingdom, for local devotion to the cult of St Edmund expressed loyalty to an explicitly royal martyr.[10] If one asks what underpinned separatism elsewhere, the precondition which stands out is the existence of institutional anchors (usually bishoprics). East Anglia for a long time lacked an appropriate bishopric but was hardly unique in its disrupted ecclesiastical organisation. It would be difficult to argue that East Anglia followed a path clearly distinct from two polities which were themselves as dissimilar as Mercia and Northumbria.

East Anglia's institutional distinctiveness within the English kingdom is, at first sight, much more obvious. It relates mainly to the way in which geld was levied in the eleventh century. The pence-in-the-pound system, in which pence were allocated to geographical vills, grouped into intermediate lete quotas, and then further combined to make up the hundredal quota, seems not to have been paralleled anywhere else. Any formula which governed how much was demanded from each vill remains elusive, as does the relationship between assessments and the villar measurements recorded in LDB. The workings of this system require further investigation, but its uniqueness should not be overstated. Its core principle—that a geld quota was allocated to the hundred as a whole, subdivided into intermediate blocks, and finally apportioned on a local level—has been shown to apply in Cambridgeshire and further afield.[11] More fundamentally, the very hundredal template against which regional peculiarities are measured can hardly be accepted as such. Although often considered typical of West Saxon government, the compact hundred assessed at 100 hides was not a feature of the West Saxon heartlands but rather a Midland phenomenon.[12] But even had this pattern

[10] S. Foot, 'Households of St Edmund', *Studies in Church History*, 50 (2014), pp. 56-8.
[11] J.H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1895; 1964 edn), pp. 48-55; Maitland, *DBB*, pp. 459-60.
[12] Stenton, *ASE*, p. 298.

represented the hundredal system in its ideal form, East Anglia would in fact have been notably consistent rather than divergent, for its hundreds were assessed at the equivalent of 100 hides.

Little about East Anglia was unique, and the features which appear unique are those which have not been fully explained. The more obscure elements of the local assessment system may seem less distinctive once they are better understood. East Anglia shared characteristics both with Wessex and with other Danish-settled areas, and we should, in general, resist assuming that any area exhibited a perfect institutional structure against which others can be measured. Wherever the English kingdom expanded, it encountered earlier arrangements. Its expansion should be seen in terms of applying universal schemes to local diversity.

This applies particularly to the introduction of the hundred. In its Midland form, the hundred has been considered the product of 'a deliberate remodelling of the administrative geography', but little evidence of deliberate planning has emerged in East Anglia.[13] Here, significant traces of earlier units seem to underlie the hundredal system, suggesting that the new order adapted the old where possible. What the West Saxon kings remodelled was not so much the administrative geography as the assessments imposed on it, which displayed a uniformity conspicuously lacking in the hundreds themselves. This suggests a less thorough-going yet in some respects more arbitrary process than the methodical reorganisation previously envisaged. It worked not by combining hides from the bottom up, but by dividing them from the top down. Once recognised, the same pattern can be observed in the Midlands, the heartland of the ostensibly regular hundred. In Northamptonshire there were several

[13] Stenton, *ASE*, p. 298; for East Anglia see J. Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets: A Survey with Suggestions', in C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 155-6.

hundreds which, despite their regular hidages, built on earlier estate structures or took their names from royal manors.[14] The phenomenon of the manor with its appendant hundred, which probably descended from earlier modes of organisation, has been recorded or inferred at some level in most of the Midland shires.[15] From this we can conclude that the procedure adopted in the Midlands was probably the same as in East Anglia, a preconceived fiscal framework being grafted onto various older territories. Not all hundreds can be accounted for in this way, and some may have been based on communal 'assembly districts' rather than 'revenue collection districts' of the kind discussed here.[16] In any case, the fact that round numbers of hides could be forced inside pre-existing boundaries means that fiscal planning cannot reliably explain the shape which individual hundreds took.

It has been suggested that hundredal boundaries were probably, in the first instance, improvised in response to the judicial demands of tenth-century kings. The relationships of East Anglian hundreds to earlier units are best explained in this way, in the absence of an underlying fiscal formula and given the contexts in which the law-codes first mention hundreds. Could local improvisation account for the creation of hundreds elsewhere and thus begin to fill, even speculatively, the historical void surrounding the process? Evidence to this effect arises from Kent, where the hundred occupied an anomalous position in local government. In a neglected paper, J. E. A. Jolliffe showed that the Kentish hundred took its shape from tenurial patterns and that, to judge by later plea records, its business was limited to the judgement of hand-having thieves and the maintenance of frankpledge.[17] It seems that

[14] H.M. Cam, '*Manerium cum Hundredo*: The Hundred and the Hundredal Manor', *EHR*, 47/187 (1932), p. 369; G. Foard, 'The Administrative Organization of Northamptonshire in the Saxon Period', *ASSAH*, 4 (1985), p. 192; C.R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), pp. 162-3.
[15] See the map printed by Cam, '*Manerium cum Hundredo*', between pp. 370-71.
[16] The terminology is that of T. Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 243-6. This interpretation runs somewhat contrary to Lambert's view, which sees the hundreds largely as successors of 'assembly districts'.
[17] J.E.A. Jolliffe, 'The Origin of the Hundred in Kent', in J.G. Edwards, V.H. Galbraith, and E.F. Jacob (eds.), *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait* (Manchester, 1933), pp. 160-67.

these were the defining concerns of the hundred, and that in Kent they promoted its demarcation around bookland estates.[18] The Kentish hundreds described by Jolliffe were unlike their counterparts elsewhere (although they bore a resemblance to the manors hived off from East Anglian soke-territories)[19] and are best explained as local responses to general directions from above. That local adaptation was an accepted corollary to royal decrees is clear from the law-code III Æthelstan, which is in fact the response of the Kentish notables to Æthelstan's original legislation.[20] Whenever precisely the establishment of hundreds was decreed, the decree can be envisaged as a general instruction which was interpreted in different ways. South of the Thames, it was often carried out under the shadow of long-established tenurial patterns. In the Midlands and East Anglia, it could be projected onto older units of government. In some areas, it was not applied to *burhs* whereas elsewhere, in the East Midlands or East Anglia, *burhs* became hundreds in their own right. The heterogeneity of the hundreds does not disprove the idea that they originated in 'a single act of state'—perhaps indeed the reverse.[21] It does, however, indicate that the act which provided for their creation was a judicial rather than a fiscal one, and that it admitted considerable flexibility in its implementation.

On a larger scale, the apparently uniform template of the shire proved equally elastic. In East Anglia, it seems clear that the shire post-dated the hundred by several decades, and even in the Midlands it appears to have been the younger institution.[22] It was also a less essential one or perhaps, in view of its comparatively infrequent assemblies, a political more than an

[18] It should be noted that Jolliffe's dating of the process depends on a reading of II Em 5 which is probably an interpolation (Liebermann, *Gesetze*, iii, pp. 127-8), but this does not detract from the significance of his observations.
[19] See above, pp. 163-4 and Jolliffe, 'Origin of the Hundred in Kent', pp. 156-60.
[20] The process is discussed by L. Roach, 'Law Codes and Legal Norms in Later Anglo-Saxon England', *Historical Research*, 86/233 (2013), pp. 468-79.
[21] Cf. Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 298-9.
[22] G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 157-64.

administrative unit. East Anglia's late 'shiring' helps to define the gradations of West Saxon control as the kingdom expanded northwards. James Campbell identified three bands within the English kingdom as it stood by 1066: the 'zone of palaces and councils', the 'zone of uniform administration', and the 'zone of frontier lordships'.[23] East Anglia fell squarely within the 'zone of uniform administration', but the uniformity of this zone was at first more apparent than real. Three coastal territories—Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and East Anglia—stood apart from the rest in their exceptional size, which necessitated permanent subdivisions (Map 28). East Anglia as a whole, its subdivisions, and the constituent Parts of Lincolnshire all bore territorial names rather than being called after a central *burh*. Yorkshire would long have been known simply as Northumbria, and is only attested under its present name from the 1060s.[24] As the West Saxons moved further northwards and eastwards in the tenth century, they ceased to establish fortifications and instead took over existing centres—York, Lincoln and, by analogy, Thetford[25]—which oversaw areas far more extensive than most shires. These units had or acquired subdivisions, but only in East Anglia did the subdivisions gain shire status in their own right.[26] The definition of the shire began to change as it was applied at greater distances, to territories which the West Saxons had taken over rather than shaped themselves. No such distortion, however, affected the introduction of hundreds and wapentakes, which seem to have been immune to the political considerations that moulded the shires. These were more practical gatherings, which articulated a different kind of loyalty.

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[23] J. Campbell, 'The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement', in *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 47-50.
[24] Molyneaux, *Formation*, p. 160.
[25] The importance of Thetford is only dimly apparent from surviving sources (above, pp. 194-9) but its topographical resemblance to Lincoln is too striking for coincidence. Lincoln sits astride the Witham, which (with the Fossdyke) separates Lindsey from Kesteven and Holland, where Ermine Street crosses the river on its way to the Humber. Thetford sits astride the Little Ouse, which (with the Waveney) separates Norfolk from Suffolk, where the Icknield Way crosses the river on its way to the Wash.
[26] It is unknown whether Norfolk and Suffolk were names coined in the 1040s or traditional units. The split may have resulted from Thetford's weaker gravitational pull relative to York and Lincoln, both of which had a Roman pedigree and an effective monopoly on water-borne access to the interior of their territories. Thetford lacked *Romanitas* and, in Norwich and Ipswich, had competitors with more direct access to the coast.



Map 28. Subdivided shires in eastern England.

The relationship between king and subject has run through the preceding chapters. Although initially conceived as a study of institutions, this thesis has identified a direct link between kings and freemen as a defining feature of the late Anglo-Saxon kingdom. What look like formal administrative structures depended on, and to a large extent consisted in, that bond. Even before formal loyalty to the king had become universal and obligatory, West Saxon kingship rather than national solidarity or administrative power supplied the adhesive that held the growing kingdom together.

Seeing loyalty as the basis of identity (rather than the reverse) runs contrary to an influential strand of English historiography but does align with recent work on Britain's other major kingdom. Fundamental to the making of Scotland was a process in which the definition of *Scotia* (originally the land between Forth and Spey) expanded to match the territories ruled by its kings.[27] Once the English kings demanded loyalty from everyone in their kingdom, the resulting relationship was mediated for practical purposes by the hundred. It has recently been re-emphasised that this was a collective unit, without an appointed royal officer.[28] The essential relationship soon came to be conceptualised as soke, which belonged to the king by default and had the hundred as its conventional repository. A king might transfer soke to particular individuals within a specified frame, making them answerable for his interests within it. This mechanism could be used to bypass not only royal officers but the hundreds themselves. Most matters arising from the king-subject relationship could thus be handled communally or through magnates, and kings seem to have made little effort to build an

[27] D. Broun, 'Britain and the Beginning of Scotland', *Journal of the British Academy*, 3 (2015), [doi: 10.5871/jba/003.107], pp. 109-19.
[28] Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 243-50.

autonomous hierarchy of administrators. Royal officers appear chiefly in connection with the king's demesne, various specific tasks, and roles of command in exceptional circumstances.

A less institutional view of the late Anglo-Saxon kingdom, alongside earlier conclusions qualifying its administrative regularity, might be taken to deny the precocious statehood widely attributed to it.[29] The emphasis on the king as lord could, indeed, recommend the more elastic term 'lordship', which has been offered as an alternative to the 'state' in medieval settings.[30] While this conclusion does not make a case for or against Anglo-Saxon statehood, the conception of soke outlined here was rather more than a superior form of lordship. It was capable or harnessing everyday lordship bonds, but itself articulated universal demands in an impersonal manner. Here again, the later experience of Scotland provides a useful comparison. In Scotland, where there was little resembling a free-standing administrative structure, historians do not now hesitate to see lordship as a conventional means of extracting common burdens. Kings mobilised resources through lords rather than seeking to bypass them with an administration of their own, but such mobilisation was conceived as being enforceable for the good of a wider whole.[31] If the point of contact with the king was higher up the social scale in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland than in eleventh-century England, the fundamental concerns were similar. The English kings were themselves not averse to collecting burdens directly from powerful individuals, for they developed a means of doing so in the delegation of soke. Nor were these overriding prerogatives levied for the king's personal good, as illustrated by one chronicler's lament on

[29] For references to works inclining towards or against this proposition, see S. Baxter, 'The Limits of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in W. Pohl and V. Wieser (eds.), *Der Frühmittelalterliche Staat – Europäische Perspektiven* (Vienna, 2009), p. 503, n. 2.
[30] R.R. Davies, 'The Medieval State: The Tyranny of a Concept?', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 16/2 (2003), pp. 293-7.
[31] D. Broun, 'Statehood and Lordship in "Scotland" before the Mid-Twelfth Century', *Innes Review*, 66 (2015), pp. 65-70; A. Taylor, *The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124-1290* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 102-13.

a time when no shire would help the next in war.[32] Obligations connected with loyalty to the king were of a kind that concerned the polity as a whole.

The only obvious vehicle for the king-subject relationship, which has proved such a consistent theme, is the universal oath of loyalty. It has usually been interpreted as a general undertaking, its main innovation being that certain kinds of wrongdoing (particularly theft) were held to constitute disloyalty.[33] Doubt has now been cast on this dimension of the oath.[34] More broadly, most historians have seen it as a reservation of loyalty, which affirmed that men were bound to the king even against their personal lords in a manner prefiguring the Salisbury Oath of 1086.[35] But the picture which has emerged in this thesis would suggest that the oath had implications extending beyond loyalty, however defined. Could it really have created a bond powerful enough ultimately to affect landholding?

The loyalty oath recorded in III Edmund is generally associated with two antecedents: the Carolingian loyalty oath and the common oath of fidelity to a lord.[36] Of these, the oath first demanded by Charlemagne has commanded greater attention, as evidence of continental influence on Anglo-Saxon thought. Few tenth-century Englishmen, however, would have been in a position to draw the connection between an obsolete Frankish practice and the oath demanded by Edmund. To the men first required to swear it, and the lords first expected to countenance it, the loyalty oath's resemblance to the familiar lordly one surely represented the startling departure.[37] If ninth-century kings of Wessex had only a limited capacity to

[32] ASC, *s.a.* 1010.
[33] P. Wormald, '*Engla Lond*: The Making of an Allegiance', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7/1 (1994), pp. 6-7; Wormald, *Papers*, pp. 119-29.
[34] See references at p. 58, n. 135.
[35] W. Kienast, *Untertaneneid und Treuvorbehalt in Frankreich und England* (Weimar, 1952), pp. 172-5; P. Wormald, 'Pre-modern "State" and "Nation": Definite or Indefinite?', in S. Airlie, W. Pohl, and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Staat im Frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), pp. 183-4.
[36] Wormald, 'Pre-modern "State" and "Nation"', pp. 183-4.
[37] Compare III Em 1, Swer 1.

engage directly with the general population, it would follow that their power was often mediated through lords.[38] They did not seek, for instance, to organise other men's men into fine-receiving bodies, or to specify how they were to go about livestock transactions.[39] It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the oath and the hundred appear at the same time, in consecutive clauses of Edmund's Colyton code.[40] One can only speculate as to what prompted these innovations. In a much-expanded kingdom, it may have become difficult to find the lord who could be made to answer for any given member of the population, leading the king to institute an impersonal oath to himself.[41]

There are certainly signs that kings gained a right to more than loyalty from people who were not their personal followers. Domesday Book records the quintessentially lordly heriot (*relevatio terrae*) as something that the king had by default over the *alodiarii* of Kent.[42] Another royal prerogative concerned forfeited land. Cnut's secular code asserts that forfeited bookland always went to the king, but doubts have been expressed as to whether other land could be lost in the same way (rather than returning to the kindred).[43] The tenth-century evidence reveals little, but Domesday Book records a suggestive case at Potsford in Suffolk, where three freemen forfeited their shares of a 30-acre holding to the Abbot of Ely.[44] The abbot was neither the lord of the manor nor their personal lord, but he had their soke because the hundred of Loes was his. Here we seem to see a very small, non-bookland forfeiture being claimed by virtue of a royal franchise. If these privileges were what they seem, the king's lordship over freemen was no mere formality. It would, in effect, have given many

[38] The assessment of royal power is that of Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 235-6.
[39] E.g. Hu 3-4.
[40] III Em 1-2.
[41] It has recently been observed that the size of the ruling elite was probably self-limiting: S. Baxter and C.P. Lewis, 'Domesday Book and the Transformation of English Landed Society, 1066–86', *ASE*, 46 (2017), pp. 378-80.
[42] *DB Kent*, D.16-17 (GDB f. 1b).
[43] Lambert, *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 319-21.
[44] *DB Suffolk*, 67.30 (LDB f. 443b).

people a second lord—a universal, impersonal, and institutional one, but one whose rights were all too real.

A scheme in which the king's lordship had a tangible reality leaves little room for lordless men, and the laws seem to associate only men who had no land with lordlessness. As far as landholders were concerned, many probably had the king as their only lord.[45] This could account for the ambiguous and sometimes interchangeable use of the terms *hlaford* and *landhlaford*.[46] It seems clear that the king was the *landhlaford* or *landrica* of default (in the absence of a book-holder), and where there was no more personal *hlaford* to contrast with him, the tangible qualities of royal lordship could have blurred the distinction.[47] Everyone seems to have had a *landhlaford*, and it is tempting to connect this form of lordship with the general loyalty oath. Chronology alone suggests that there was something new about it. Although the *landhlaford* has been characterised as a 'fine-receiving lord', this cannot have been all, as kings had collected *wites* for a long time while the words *landhlaford* and *landrica* only appear in the tenth century.[48] Although their rarity makes it impossible to be certain, these terms present a close fit for the king's impersonal lordship.

One of the criticisms levelled at the idea of the medieval state is that it mistakes royal power for statehood.[49] On one level, the highly traditional perquisites of lordship which late Anglo-Saxon kings seem to have elided into their loyalty oath lend credence to this. But it is equally clear that this lordship was a fiction, mediated through a communal or lordly interface. To the

[45] Liebermann, *Gesetze*, ii, *s.v.* 'Gefolge [9h]' thought that such men were few, but cf. above, pp. 86-91.
[46] See S. Baxter, 'Lordship and Justice in Late Anglo-Saxon England: The Judicial Functions of Soke and Commendation Revisited', in S. Baxter et al. (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 404-6.
[47] For the king as blanket *landhlaford*, see I Cn 8.2 and II Cn 37.
[48] The first laws to use them are VI As 1.1 and IV Eg 8.1.
[49] Davies, 'The Medieval State', pp. 288-91.

king, it was a prerogative without the direct obligations of conventional lordship; to the subject, a mark of status but not in itself a source of protection. Its nature is captured in a little-remarked episode in the crisis of 1051, when Earl Godwine and his son Harold were summoned to London to face the king.

> Then the king asked for all those thegns that the earls had had, and they were all handed over to him.[50]

Edward the Confessor could hardly have instructed the earls to transfer their men's commendation to him, and in the event of their lords' banishment, unoffending freemen should in any case have been free to seek another lord. The lordship of these thegns was something that had been given to the earls by the king, and was his to take back if he chose. It seems very likely that the passage shows Godwine and Harold being stripped of soke over their men, or of a military quota arising from it. Either way, the episode shows that the thegns' loyalty was institutional rather than a personal. It depended on an understanding of loyalty to the king that was free of any personal bond to Edward. Edward's ability to act as he did required not only sufficient power to overawe the earls, but also an abstraction. All this suggests that, although the Old English kingdom may have had few institutions, the king was one of them. With the advent of a general oath of loyalty, it became necessary to admit a distinction between the man and the office, which helped to make the man interchangeable.[51]

The English kingdom was probably less administratively developed than the picture of an 'Anglo-Saxon state' would imply. Its structures have not emerged from this study as expressions of bureaucratic planning in a modern sense, their uniformity being notional rather than real. But if England was less precocious on this count than some have suggested, it was

[50] *ASC* MS E, *s.a.* 1048: *Ða gyrnde se cyng ealra þæra þegna þe þa eorlas ær hæfdon. 7 hi letan hi ealle him to handa*. This act is recorded for Harold alone in MS D, *s.a.* 1052.
[51] See also Baxter, 'The Limits of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', pp. 511-12.

more so in another respect. The handling and implications of soke reveal a parallel structure of power, which was not a late-surviving echo of Carolingian practice but a pragmatic innovation in step with contemporary developments on the continent. Once observed, these patterns appear at some level throughout the English kingdom, but their identification in the first place depends on the social structure and source base of a particular region. In East Anglia, where people had few other ties to bind them, they maintained a strong relationship with living kings as well as dead ones.

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