Buildings of Secular and Religious Lordship:
Anglo-Saxon Tower-nave Churches

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Abstract

Tower-nave churches are essentially free-standing towers which incorporated chapels, and are characteristically Anglo-Saxon in date and construction. Due to their elaborate form and limited capacity they have been suggested as having a dual ecclesiastical and secular high-status function.

This study has identified thirty-five examples, dating mainly to the 10th and 11th centuries, both standing and known from documentary sources and excavation. A thorough study of each site has been undertaken: a review of previous work on the site, extant fabric drawn and described, documentary sources investigated, and each site placed in its settlement and landscape contexts.

All but two tower-naves were constructed at the behest of powerful secular or ecclesiastical lords, either at their residences or at major early medieval monasteries. The monastic tower-naves are more heterogeneous in size and form than the lordly examples, which are almost uniformly small and square. Both monastic and lordly tower-naves can be related to the highest ranks of early medieval society. Monastic tower-naves functioned as funerary structures, gateways, high-status private chapels or burial-chapels. Lordly tower-naves were private chapels and architectural embodiments of aristocratic status, many of which would have made useful watchtowers and articulated with landscapes of social power.

The construction of tower-naves largely ceased after c. 1100. Monastic tower-naves endured as free-standing monastic belltowers, which shared their gateway and mortuary functions, whilst lordly tower-naves are argued to have influenced the development of the early Norman tower-keep.
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**Abbreviations**

*DB* – *Domesday Book* (Williams and Martin 2002).

HER – Historic Environment Record.

*M* – Roman road identification number (*e.g.* M 100), from Margary (1973).

*O.D.* – Ordnance Datum (*i.e.* height above sea level)

*OE* – Old English

*ON* – Old Norse

*OS* – Ordnance Survey

*RCHME* – Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

*S* – Charter no., from Sawyer (1968).

*TRE* – *Tempus Regum Edwardii*, ‘in the time of King Edward [the Confessor]’ (1042-66).

Individual tower-naves are accompanied throughout this study by their number in bold square brackets (*e.g.* Abingdon [1]), which refers to their entry in appendix I.

Lordly timber towers accompanied by their letter in bold square brackets (*e.g.* Bishopstone [A]), which refers to their entry in appendix II.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Tower-nave churches essentially take the form of free-standing towers. A chancel, porticus or baptistery may adjoin the central tower, but the tower-space comprises the ‘nave’ of the church. The ostentatious and elaborate form of these churches, together with their limited capacity, suggests they were buildings of Anglo-Saxon elite practice. Many occur at locations of power, such as at lordly residences, within Norman castles, or at major monasteries. Others functioned as royal or episcopal chapels and mausolea, or as the gate-towers to towns and monasteries.

Several attempts have been made to catalogue Anglo-Saxon tower-naves, but many examples are unrecognised. Over past decades tower-naves have been variously suggested as aristocratic structures, but they have never been interpreted as a group. Isolated examples have been studied but these results have never been synthesised, and the majority of examples remain unrecorded and poorly understood. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the fabric of all known tower-naves and place them in their social, architectural and landscape contexts in order to interpret their role in early medieval society. Hundreds of castles and manor-houses survive from Norman England: tower-nave churches provide a unique opportunity to study standing aristocratic architecture from the pre-Conquest period. It is hoped that this will add a new dimension to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon lordly practice and material culture.

1.1 The form of this study

The following chapter reviews previous work on tower-naves, Anglo-Saxon churches, church towers and lordly residences. Aspects of late Anglo-Saxon social structure are surveyed in order to contextualise the social role of tower-nave churches: the exercise of political, military and economic social power, the ideological justification of this power, and the focal places of this power in the landscape. Since tower-naves seem to have been curated and built after the Norman Conquest, aspects of the transition between Anglo-Saxon and Norman society and lordly practice are be considered.

Chapter three lays out the methodology for a gazetteer of all known tower-nave churches up to c. 1100, whether extant or surviving in the archaeological or documentary records. Where necessary, the fabric of each tower-nave was recorded and their construction and date interpreted. The documentary and archaeological evidence for each site is studied, and each site placed in its landscape context in terms of topography, communication networks and focal places of social power. A synthesis and
analysis of these case-studies is be presented in chapter four: the case-studies themselves comprise appendix I of this study.

Chapter five of this study seeks the origins of the tower-nave form, and the early history of its construction in the monasteries of Anglo-Saxon England. The intention is not to simply assume diffusion from the Continent, but to trace the iconographic meanings of the tower form in early Christian architecture. This enables a better understanding of the roles of tower-nave churches in Anglo-Saxon monasteries, and the reasons why this curious form was adopted by secular elites.

Chapter six of this study discusses tower-nave churches in terms of late Anglo-Saxon aristocratic practice. Several non-ecclesiastical timber towers have been identified archaeologically at Anglo-Saxon lordly residences in recent years, which prefigure the adoption of tower-naves by the late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. These non-ecclesiastical timber towers are detailed in appendix II. Tower-nave churches are related to the political, military, economic and ideological aspects of Anglo-Saxon aristocratic power introduced in chapter three. The articulation of lordly tower-naves with focal places of social power in the landscape will also be explored, analogous with recent work on the landscape settings and symbolic meanings of post-Conquest castles.

The seventh and final chapter traces the tower-nave form in early Norman England, in both lordly and monastic contexts. This draws upon the assertion that aspects of the impact of the Norman Conquest upon elite society have been over-stated, including the transition from Anglo-Saxon lordly residences to Norman castles. Several Anglo-Saxon tower-naves were curated in Norman castles, and it has been suggested that the tower-nave form influenced the construction of Norman tower-keeps. Turning to monastic contexts, it is less controversial that the Norman Conquest marks an emphatic break in the architecture of the greater Anglo-Saxon churches, which were all rebuilt. Nevertheless, the roles of monastic tower-naves, if not the tower-nave form itself, was preserved in 12th century England.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the study of tower-nave churches

The tower-nave form was first identified by Micklethwaite (1896, 333-6), who attributed it to Danish influence; the majority of early discussion of tower-naves dwells upon their origins. Thomson (1911, 33) argued that the form originated at Charlemagne’s tower-chapel at Aachen and at San Vitale in Ravenna, and spread to England by way of Germany and France. Later interpretations originated the form in the East (Tyrell Green 1924, 30) and the early Byzantine Empire (Fisher 1969, 16-19; Braun 1974, 41). John Blair has variously suggested that Anglo-Saxon tower-naves were influenced from Scandinavia (Blair 1998, 233-5) or by existing minster towers (Blair 2005, 412-4).

The social explanation of tower-nave origins was by Addy (1913, 79-85), who argued that the example at Barton-upon-Humber [3] was a high-status tower-house and chapel, due to its stone construction and unsuitability for public worship. Much later, Radford (1953) independently made a similar suggestion. Thereafter, it has been widely suggested that the limited capacity, ostentatious form and often lavish construction of tower-nave churches indicates they were built as high-status private chapels (Davison 1967, 209-10; Wilson 1976, 443; Stocker 1987a, 12; Morris 1989, 255; Williams 1992a, 232-5; Audouy et al. 1995, 89; Sawyer 1998, 165-6; Fernie 2000, 242; Christie 2004, 21; Blair 2005, 425). Anglo-Saxon parishioners increasingly identified, and used, the church nave as their communal space (Blair 2005, 508), making it difficult to believe that a nave-less tower-church could have been conceptually viewed as a public building. It is therefore likely that tower-naves would have graced the residence of the local lord rather than serving the spiritual needs of a community (Morris 1989, 255).

2.2 Tower-naves churches and the Promotion Law

Radford (1953, 197) was the first to draw attention to the potential relevance of a passage in the early 11th century Geþycđno (‘Promotion Law’) to the study of tower-nave churches. This was written by Archbishop Wulfstan, which lists the requirements for thegnly (lordly) status:

---

1 Individual tower-naves are accompanied throughout this study by their number in bold square brackets, which refers to their entry in appendix I.
If a freeman prospered so that he had fully five hides of his own land, a bell and a burhgeat, a seat and a special office in the King’s hall, then henceforward he was worthy of the rights of a thegn.

Gif ceorl geþeah, þæt he hæfde fullice fif hida agnes lands, bellan 7 burhgeat, setl 7 sundernote on cynges healle, þonne wæs he þanon forð þegenrihtes weorðe.

(Liebermann 1903, 456; trans. Whitelock 1979, 468-9).

An expanded version of the Promotion Law in the compilation of Anglo-Saxon laws known as the Textus Roffensis (c. 1125) adds a ‘church and kitchen’ (cirican 7 kycenan) to the buildings required for thegny status and expands the ‘bell’ (bellan) to ‘bell-house’ (bellhus). It is thought that this version of the text may be from mid-11th century Kent or, given that the manuscript in which the original version of the Promotion Law appears has a tendency to drop words and phrases, it might in fact preserve the original form of the ‘Promotion Law’ (discussed in Blair 2005, 371). Indeed, the Textus Roffensis has been confidently dated to the early 11th century on the basis of its inclusion of a genealogy which extends only as far as Æthalred II (Stafford 1989, 111).

2.2.1 A bellhus and a burhgeat

The word bellhus derives from the OE bell, ‘to make a loud noise’. It has been suggested that the meaning of bellhus can be extended to the Old French and Middle English word ‘belfry’, which means ‘strong place’ or ‘refuge’, from its Germanic root *bergan, ‘to protect’ (Morris 1989, 255). In this sense ‘belfry’ was a medieval term for a wooden siege tower (A. Williams 2008, 91-2). Nevertheless, the word ‘belfry’ has no etymological connection with the word ‘bell’ (Johnson 1912, 127). In both his late 11th century Glossary (Zupitza 1880, 314) and Colloquy (Voss 1996, 184-6), Ælfric translates bellhus into Latin as cloccarium, ‘bell/clock tower’, suggesting that this was its late Anglo-Saxon meaning. It occurs as a place-name in Broomfield, Essex: Belstead Hall (Belestedam 1086) derives from belhus-stede, ‘the site of the bell-house’ (Reaney 1935, 24). It is adjacent to Belstead Hall, which appears as a Domesday Book manor.

The word ‘burhgeat’ translates as ‘the gate (geat) of a protected enclosure (burh)’, and was used in early medieval sources to denote a whole manor-house (Williams 1992a, 226). In the context of the Promotion Law it is generally agreed to mean ‘a private fortified enclosure’; in short, a defensible manor-house (Stevenson

---

1 An Anglo-Saxon ‘hide’ was reckoned as the amount of land required to support one household. It varied considerably in geographical extent.

2 Oxford English Dictionary.
1897; Davison 1967, 204; Brown 1969, 142-3; Stenton 1970, 392; Loyn 1971, 119; Finberg 1972, 518; Beresford 1987, 34; Morris 1989, 253; Higham and Barker 1992, 45; Williams 1992a, 227; Renn, 1994, 182; Reynolds 1999, 96; Fernie 2000, 50; Morris 2003, 14; Turner 2006, 149; Draper 2008, 248). Beresford (1987, 36-7) suggests that an impressive gateway to the boundary of an otherwise potentially modest homestead may have served as a *burhgeat* for the numerous class of minor thegns.

2.2.2 The usefulness of the ‘Promotion Law’

Two main objections have been raised against taking the *Promotion Law* at face value. Firstly, it has been suggested that the text may refer only to the north of England, where Wulfstan was archbishop (Brown 1969, 141; Higham and Barker 1992, 45), although his upbringing and holding of other dioceses in the south weakens this charge of provincialism. Secondly, the *Promotion Law* may not refer to contemporary society, or even to any real conception of society at all. It opens with the phrase ‘Once it used to be…’, implying that it no longer represented current practice, anachronistically uses the word ‘ealdorman’, it draws heavily upon much older source material, and there are demonstrable examples of 11th century lords who do not conform to its definitions (Crouch 2005, 253-8). We should not assume that the *Promotion Law* was generally applicable across late Anglo-Saxon society.

Despite these reservations, there is good evidence that *burhgeats* not only existed, but were associated with late Anglo-Saxon lordly residences. In the late 10th or early 11th century tract ‘On Peace’ (*Be Griðe*), ‘*burhgeat*’ specifically denotes a high-status residence: the king’s peace was measured ‘from the *burhgeat* where he is dwelling’ (*fram his burhgeate, þær he is sittende*) (Lieberman 1903, 390; A. Williams 2008, 91). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 757, written c. 900, recounts the attack on the gate of a fortified residence where the king is staying (Swanton 1996, 44-50; Kleinschmidt 1996). A charter of 1153 granting Robert Fitz Harding, a baron from an Anglo-Saxon family, permission to build a castle uses the formulation *belle et burhgiete* (Davis 1913, 117), indicating the longevity of the buildings from the *Promotion Law* for demonstrating aristocratic status. There is a *burhgeat* place-name at Dalham (Suffolk), where the late 10th century royal minister Wulfstan of Dalham had his residence (Wareham 2005, 41-3). Wulfstan’s toponymic byname is particularly interesting here, as it implies that his place of residence embodied his status. Finally, at the *burhgeat* place-name ‘Yatesbury’ (Wiltshire) excavation has identified a late Anglo-Saxon enclosure and beacon guarding an army-way, although it is uncertain whether this was a
private or public defensive work (Reynolds 2000; Reynolds and Semple forthcoming). We can be confident that aristocratic *burhgeats*, whatever form they took, existed in the late Anglo-Saxon period.

The *Promotion Law* is not the only documentary source of the period indicating that manorial buildings could be symbols of lordship. In several 11th century charters and in the *Domesday Book* the lord’s hall appears as the material signifier for the whole estate (discussed in Gardiner 2007, 170-1). This is also visible in Anglo-Saxon poetry, especially *Beowulf* (Hume 1974). We know that Anglo-Saxon lords invested their identity and status in their residences. If nothing else, therefore, the *Promotion Law* suggests what form these buildings took. In order to assert his lordly status, a late Anglo-Saxon *thegn* would be expected to have some sort of fortification, a bell-house, a chapel and domestic buildings, much as his post-Conquest counterpart would be expected to live in a castle.

The particular relevance of the *Promotion Law* to the interpretation of tower-naves goes beyond furthering our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon lordly residences, where it is thought that many tower-naves would be located. It has been suggested that tower-naves such as Earl’s Barton [8] and Barton-upon-Humber [3] combined the chapel, bell-house and *burhgeat* required by the *Promotion Law* into one status-affording structure. The flexibility and extravagance of these tower-naves, their function as private chapels, and their postulated association with earthwork enclosures supports this (Audouy *et al.* 1995, 87-90; Speight 1998, 170; Blair 2005, 412-14). Nevertheless, they remain an under-interpreted group of buildings. An exception is Richard Morris (1989, 255) who has discussed tower-naves in terms of their being lordly status symbols of a more exclusive nature than the later proliferation of western church towers, which he suggests may themselves have been a popular adoption of the tower-nave form. Aside from this, there has little attempt to interpret anything of the social meanings attached to tower-naves as buildings in the landscape, or as part the material culture of lordship. This is approached in the context of:

- Anglo-Saxon lordly residences (section 2.3).
- Anglo-Saxon proprietary\(^1\) churches (section 2.4).
- Anglo-Saxon church towers (section 2.5).

---

\(^{1}\) *i.e.* privately-owned, lordly.
2.3 The study of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences

The basic lack of capacity of tower-nave churches coupled with their elaborate form indicates that they were private, high-status buildings. Tower-naves can therefore be associated with the aristocratic centres of the Anglo-Saxon landscape, and may have formed part of a suite of buildings constructed by Anglo-Saxon lords at their residences to express their status.

2.3.1 Archaeological and documentary evidence

Lordly residences are now generally thought to have been widespread in Anglo-Saxon England (Williams 1992a; Strickland 1997, 370; Sawyer 1998, 85-6; Reynolds 1999, 130; Coulson 2003, 35-6). Archaeological evidence suggests that they are a late Anglo-Saxon phenomenon (Reynolds 2003, 115, 132), present in towns as well as rural locations (Morris 1989, 204-6; Fleming 1993, 22-4). Documentary evidence for their form and function is summarised by Ann Williams (1992a), leading us to expect a defensible enclosure with a possible gate-tower. Within would have been a hall and other domestic buildings, potentially including a tower. A private chapel may also have lain within or adjacent to the enclosure.

Excavation has dramatically improved our understanding of lordly residences. This work needs synthesis and interpretation (Reynolds 2003, 103; see now Gardiner 2007), but it seems to bear out the documented characteristics of a typical lordly residence: hall, chapel, and an enclosure, sometimes with an elaborate entranceway (*burhgeat*) and a tower (fig. 2.1).
## Site Dates Description Reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chalton (Hants.)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: domestic buildings, church adjacent</td>
<td>Cunliffe 1973; Hughes 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishopstone (Sussex)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Halls, timber tower &amp; earlier minster church within enclosure: episcopal residence?</td>
<td>G. Thomas 2010; appendix II.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faccombe Netherton (Hants.)</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>Halls &amp; domestic buildings within enclosure</td>
<td>Fairbrother 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharram Percy (Yorks.)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>No survival of Anglo-Saxon structural remains; site within enclosure</td>
<td>Stamper and Croft 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradwell Bury (Bucks.)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Hall &amp; domestic buildings within enclosure</td>
<td>Mynard 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raunds (Northants.)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Halls &amp; domestic buildings within enclosure, timber <em>burhgeat</em>, church adjacent</td>
<td>Auduo and Chapman 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goltho (Lincs.)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Halls, domestic buildings &amp; kitchen within enclosure; church adjacent</td>
<td>Beresford 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portchester (Hants.)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Halls &amp; stone tower/tower-nave within a Roman fort; stone <em>burhgeat</em></td>
<td>Cunliffe 1976; appendix I.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield Lyons (Essex)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Halls, timber tower/tower-nave &amp; kitchen; partially within enclosure?</td>
<td>Tyler and Major 2005; appendix I.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketton Quarry (Rutland)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Halls, church &amp; timber tower(?) within enclosure</td>
<td>Meadows 1999; appendix II.C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trowbridge (Wilts.)</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>Halls &amp; domestic buildings within enclosure; church adjacent</td>
<td>Graham and Davies 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cotton (Northants.)</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>Halls, domestic buildings &amp; timber tower within enclosure</td>
<td>Chapman 2010a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cogges (Oxfordshire)</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: hall &amp; church</td>
<td>Blair and Steane 1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kempston (Beds.)</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: halls</td>
<td>Crick and Dawson 1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sulgrave (Northants.)</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>Halls &amp; stone building [tower?] within enclosure; church adjacent</td>
<td>Davison 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trowbridge (Wilts.)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Halls &amp; domestic buildings within enclosure, timber <em>burhgeat</em>, church adjacent</td>
<td>Graham and Davies 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eynsford (Kent)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Stone hall [tower?] within enclosure; church adjacent?</td>
<td>Rigold 1971; Horsman 1989</td>
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<td>Old Erringham (Sussex)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Halls, domestic buildings &amp; church within enclosure</td>
<td>Holden 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Caythorpe (Yorks.)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: enclosure; hall?</td>
<td>Coppack 1974</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barton-upon-Humber (Lincs.)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: enclosure, <em>burhgeat</em> place-name; tower-nave adjacent</td>
<td>Rodwell and Atkins 2011; appendix I.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleton Stoney (Oxon)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: stone building within enclosure</td>
<td>Rahrtz and Rowley 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penhallam, Cornwall</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Poor survival of Anglo-Saxon structural remains; site within enclosure</td>
<td>Beresford 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton Hill (Hants.)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Halls, domestic buildings and church within modest enclosure</td>
<td>Fasham et al. 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldecote (Herts.)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Halls within enclosure; church adjacent</td>
<td>Beresford 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Carey (Somerset)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Halls and domestic buildings within enclosure</td>
<td>Leach and Ellis 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove (Beds.)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Hall within enclosure; church adjacent?</td>
<td>Baker 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Shoebury (Essex)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: hall within enclosure; church adjacent</td>
<td>Wymer and Brown 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salehurst (Sussex)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>[Part. excavated]: hall</td>
<td>Gardiner et al. 1991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 2.1** – The characteristics of excavated and partially-excavated Anglo-Saxon lordly residences (listed in Gardiner 2007, with additions).
2.3.2 Social interpretations of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences

There is a growing body of scholarship on the social and architectural significance of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences. Material culture was pivotal to the expression of social identity in Anglo-Saxon society, and a lord’s residence would have comprised his largest and most prominent material possession. Guy Beresford (1987, 37) was the first to explore their role as manifestations of aristocratic status (see now Higham and Barker 1992, 45-51; Williams 1992a; Senecal 2001, 252-8; Wareham 2005, 46, 94; Turner 2006, 149; Sykes 2010, 183-4).

Lordly residences and other material culture would have been particularly important for the expression and negotiation of aristocratic status in late Anglo-Saxon England. Unlike in contemporary Normandy, there was an unwillingness to attain status by waging private wars against other lords (Strickland 1992, 56). Anglo-Saxon lordship was of a relatively fluid, non-hereditary nature (Yorke 1995, 285-90): ‘aristocrats achieved their social standing only because they convinced others of it, and not because of any normative declarations by the king’ (Senecal 2001, 258). Unlike in later medieval England, Anglo-Saxon lordship was not wholly based on ancestry, but had to be earned, and maintained thereafter (Stafford 1985, 164). A lord needed to demonstrate and legitimate his social standing to his peers and local community; his manorial complex would have been central to this (Faith 1997, 163; Senecal 2001, 258). It may be significant in this context that just as lords were expected to contribute towards the upkeep of royal burhs, tenants were obliged to build and fortify lordly residences (Abels 1988, 92). This work may have been an expression of the chains of lordship and obligation that bound Anglo-Saxon society together (see section 2.10).

There is linguistic evidence that a lord’s fortified residence embodied his status. The OE eador/eodor translates not only as ‘boundary’, ‘hedge’ or ‘enclosure’, but also as ‘house’ or ‘dwelling’, perhaps implying that the enclosure could be symbolic of the residence as a whole. It also meant, in a poetic context, ‘lord’ (Hall 1894, 83), further implying that the enclosure stood for the lord himself. Equally, weord meant ‘honor, worth, of high rank’ as well as ‘hall’ and ‘enclosure’ (Hall 1894, 83). In the Laws of Alfred (40), forced entry into a thegn’s residence is burh-bryce, ‘breaking into a fortress or stronghold’, whereas forced entry into a lower-ranked ceorl’s residence is eador-bryce (Attenborough 1922, 83). This implies that different levels of private fortification were associated with different ranks of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy (Draper 2008, 248).

Further evidence that Anglo-Saxon lordly residences were central to social identity is the mainly 11th century phenomenon of toponymic by-names, where lords
named themselves after their place of residence. These names could then be passed down to sons (Williams 1992a, 237). This practice was more prevalent in contemporary Normandy, and would become widespread in England only after the Conquest (Crouch 1992, 258; Holt 1997, 184-5). Nevertheless, this may be due to the Norman system of primogeniture rather than to any assumption that the Norman aristocracy invested more social identity in their property than the Anglo-Saxons. A related phenomenon is the Anglo-Saxon title *burhthegn*, in which the status of the individual was coherent with his fortification.¹

2.3.3 Social interpretations of enclosures and gates

The enclosure around a lord’s residence would have been more than a defensive expediency, and may have been as symbolically important as the buildings it contained. The later Anglo-Saxon landscape was increasingly characterised by physical boundaries, indicating the importance of delineated space to social organisation (surveyed in Reynolds 2003). A lord’s enclosure may therefore have been expressive both of the military power of his office (Saunders 2000, 223) and a physical manifestation of the separateness of the social elite (Reynolds 2003, 132).

The entrance of the lord’s enclosure is likely to have been significant due to its prominence and its role marking the transition to the elite space beyond. This makes the suggestion that tower-naves combined the functions of *burhgeats* and chapels into one gate-tower structure (section 2.2.2) an extremely interesting one. Churches were used to define liminal space throughout the medieval period. Anglo-Saxon town gates were often associated with churches, even incorporated into the same structure, affording spiritual as well as military protection (Morris 1989, 219; Palliser 1995, 116; Creighton and Higham 2005, 35, 175-7). This may also have been the case at private fortifications.

Related to this is the role of Anglo-Saxon lords in granting sanctuary. During the feuds which were integral to Anglo-Saxon social practice, secular lords would commonly have offered sanctuary to the warring parties prior to negotiation (Hyams 2003, 92-3). The lord’s residence is the obvious arena for this, perhaps at his hall, his church or at the gates of his enclosure. It may have been all three: early medieval places of sanctuary were often ringed by several increasing levels of protection (Hyams 2003, 95-6). The enclosure – and its gate-structure – would certainly have been vital to the delineation of this ritual conflict-space: the *Laws of Alfred* (42) state that an enemy’s dwelling had to be surrounded for seven days before it could be breached.

¹ Source: *The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* [http://www.pase.ac.uk]
(Attenborough 1922, 84). In the late 10th or early 11th century tract ‘On Peace’ (Be Grid), the ‘king’s peace’ was measured ‘from the burhgeat where he is dwelling’ (Lieberman 1903, 390): in the Laws of Henry I (16:1) this became his ‘gate’ (porta) (Downer 1972, 120-1; A. Williams 2008, 91). The king was central to the maintenance of peace in Anglo-Saxon society, in this instance symbolised by the gate structure of a lordly residence (Draper 2008, 248).

2.3.4 The landscape context of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences

Placing lordly residences in their landscapes has greatly benefited the study of later medieval castles in recent years, revealing much about the social, ideological, military and political contexts of their construction and use (e.g. Creighton 2002; Johnson 2002; Lowerre 2005; Liddiard 2007). This approach has rarely been applied to pre-Conquest lordly residences, despite increasing recognition of the extent to which late Anglo-Saxon thegns asserted their power and identity in the landscape (e.g. Turner 2006, 148). The construction of a tower-nave church could only have made these residences more prominent in the landscape.

Hansson (2006, esp. 43-4) is an exception to the lack of landscape approaches to Anglo-Saxon lordly residences. He argues that their location and spatial organisation can be eloquent about social identity and ideological legitimacy, as well as about the traditional questions of economic and military practicality. Furthermore, Hansson (2006, 80) borrows from Johnson’s (2002, 33) idea that the military practicality of a lord’s residence cannot be separated from its display of social identity, since the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy was inherently martial. This is echoed by the recent suggestion that we should end the military function versus social status dichotomy which has dominated recent castle studies (Creighton and Liddiard 2008). Allied is the potential, first raised by Liddiard (2000, 65-6), of Anglo-Saxon aristocratic ‘designed landscapes’ of the type familiar to later medieval and early modern England.

The theory of aristocratic designed landscapes rose from the observation that medieval castles were not necessarily constructed with defensive considerations in mind (surveyed in Liddiard 2005, 1-11). Pioneering work at Knaresborough (Yorkshire; Dixon 1990) and Bodiam (East Sussex; Coulson 1992; Everson 1994) suggested that the owners of medieval castles manipulated the surrounding landscape to express ideas about how society worked and their place in it (Liddiard 2007) as a means of asserting social control (Hansson 2009). The castle and its landscape was a meaningfully-imbued ‘stage-set’ for the negotiation and performance of social identities (Dixon 1990;
Johnson 2002, 12). As agents moved through these landscapes, each element – from the fishpond to the dovecote – had its associated meaning, forming a ‘powerful visual vocabulary of seigneurial power’ (Liddiard 2007, 206). These elements have recently undergone detailed study by Creighton (2009); each of these elements was potentially present at Anglo-Saxon high-status sites.

The potential for pre-Conquest designed landscapes is in some ways nothing new, given our long understanding of the meaningfully-imbued organisation of buildings and space at the early royal residence of Yeavering, Northumberland (Hope-Taylor 1977; Frodsham and O’Brien 2005). Nevertheless, and perhaps unsurprisingly given the present lack of a thorough treatment of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences, Liddiard’s early suggestion has received little attention. The exception is Mark Gardiner’s (2011) study of the structured approaches to several late Anglo-Saxon lordly residences, involving managed entrances and internal divisions of space which transcended any defensive necessity, in a similar fashion to that first suggested at Bodiam. The idea that overland travel relied on ‘mental maps’ of topography and socially significant places in a landscape has recently been explored by Reynolds and Langlands (2011): ‘funnelling of movement created locations in the landscape ripe for the monumental expression of power, belief and identity’ (p. 413). These are the places in which we can expect to find aspects of aristocratic design.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon proprietary churches

As stated above, tower-nave churches are too small to have been public, congregational spaces, making it overwhelmingly likely that they were private, high-status churches. They can therefore be interpreted alongside the growth of the proprietary church in late Anglo-Saxon England.

The large territories of middle Anglo-Saxon minster churches were fragmented into what would become local parishes, probably during the 10th to the 12th centuries, largely as a result of lordly agency. This was due to the growth in ownership, via ‘bookland’, of private estates, and the construction of private churches to minister them (Morris 1989, 227-274; Blair 2005, 368-425, although see Reynolds 1994, esp. 18). There was great regional variation in the formation of parishes from the earlier minster landholdings (detailed in Blair 2005, 291-367). Stocker and Everson (2001, 241), for example, have used sculptural evidence to suggest that the parochial system in Lincolnshire was established in the aftermath of its conquest by the Kingdom of Wessex.

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1 Building upon Chapman 2010a, 47.
in 917. Overall, the great majority of parish churches probably originated as the private chapels of local lords during the late Anglo-Saxon and early Norman periods (Pounds 2000, 28; Wood 2006, 599-600).

2.5 Anglo-Saxon church towers

In the last few decades church archaeology has broadened from the description, classification and dating of church architecture (summarised in Rodwell 2005, 15-28) to explore how churches were used and perceived by the societies that built them. This has encompassed their liturgical functions (e.g. Klukas 1984a & 1984b; Gem 2005), their place in the landscape (e.g. Morris 1989; Turner 2006), their embodiment of iconography (e.g. Krautheimer 1942; Gem 1983a; see here section 5.2) and their place in secular society (e.g. Graves 2000; Blair 2005).

English church towers remain comparatively under-interpreted within this wider study (Cherry 1976, 154; Christie 2004, 28). They are commonly dismissed as a functional adjunct to the main body of medieval churches, despite the fact that they only became common in England in the 10th or 11th centuries, and are liturgically unnecessary. Nevertheless, sufficient work has been done to form a basis for a broader interpretation of the tower-nave form.

2.5.1 The functions of Anglo-Saxon church towers

The obvious function for church towers is the housing of bells. It is widely understood that the ringing of bells was itself a socially meaningful activity (surveyed in Price 1983). Nevertheless, the towers themselves are thought of as incidental facilitator to the meaningful act of bell-ringing, despite their size and prominence, and the fact that their function could be fulfilled by a modest bellcote. Two exceptions are the recent studies of early medieval towers in Ireland (O’Keeffe 2004) and Lincolnshire (Stocker and Everson 2006), which draw upon architectural evidence to provide complex liturgical explanations for the adoption of early medieval bell-towers.

A second commonly suggested purpose of early church towers in England is the provision of security from attack (Tyrrell Green 1908, 11; Johnson 1912, 106-8; Addy 1913, 92; Crossley 1945, 9; Cook 1954, 81; Messent 1958, xvii-iii; Davies 1968, 93; Fisher 1969, 85-6; Elphick 1970, 207; Rigold 1979, 111; Bonde 1984, 83; Everitt 1986, 294-5). Whilst there is disagreement over whether they ever actually fulfilled this function (Taylor 1978, 889-91; Randall 1982, 18; P. Harrison 2004, 86; Jones 2005), debate has rarely progressed beyond disagreement over military practicalities. Recent
re-interpretation of medieval fortifications as expressions of social power (see Liddiard 2005) has made no impact: discussion of the military role of early church towers has not yet been widened to encompass perception, symbolism and meaning.

A third early function of church towers is as a dwelling for a priest or nobleman (Addy 1913, 65; Baldwin Brown 1925, 330-2; Crossley 1945, 9; Fisher 1969, 91-2; Rigold 1979, 111; Stocker 1987b, 142; Blair 1994, 167; Faith 1997, 165). A charter of the 1060s recounts that a thegn’s son dwelt in Bury St Edmunds or in Clare ‘in a certain tower where the hospital now is’ (Hart 1966, 71; see appendix II.B). In the mid-11th century Life of Saint Cynhelm, an early 9th century Mercian princess is described as occupying the upper room of a monastic church at Winchcombe (stabat in salario occidentalis ecclesie), keeping watch on the road outside (Bassett 1985, 85-7; Love 1995, 71). William of Poitier’s Gesta Gvilleimi relates that William the Conqueror stayed in an unidentified ‘broken tower’ (fractam turrim) in 1066 on his march from Dover to Sandwich (Davis and Chibnall 1998, 144-5). The social significance of this phenomenon is unexplored.

Early church towers are also variously said to have been constructed as watchtowers (Johnson 1912, 106-8; Rigold 1979, 111; Bonde 1984, 83; Christie 2004, 25), court-houses (Baldwin Brown 1925, 282; Bonde 1984, 83) and treasuries (Addy 1913, Taylor 1978, 889; Bonde 1984, 83). Again, the practicalities of these functions have been discussed without considering any wider meanings they may have had.

The predominant social explanation for the presence of church towers is the old idea that they were lordly status symbols (e.g. Tyrrell Green 1908, 21-3). This has been explored by many recent authors: early church towers were symbols of social promotion and seigneurial status (Yorke 1995, 230; Faith 1997, 165; Fleming 2001, 12; Senecal 2001, 260; Creighton 2002, 123-4; Christie 2004, 26; Finch 2004, 54; Blair 2005, 370; Hansson 2006, 169). Since this is the sole existing social explanation for the construction of tower-naves (see section 2.1), lordly status is an important avenue for their interpretation.

Tower-naves in the structure of late Anglo-Saxon society

2.6 Forms of social power

It is the intention here to move beyond the classification of tower-nave churches and explore their role in the society which constructed them. This social interpretation builds upon the existing suggestion that they were the status-affording churches of the
late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. It is therefore necessary to briefly survey relevant aspects of the structure of late Anglo-Saxon society.

A convenient basis for the discussion of social power, authority and legitimacy is provided by the work of Michael Mann (1986) and Timothy Earle (1997). They generalise control over the structures and institutions of a society, which they term 'social power', as coming from four main sources: political, economic, military and ideological. These four sources are essentially inseparable (Mann 1986, 2-4), but are useful as an interpretative model to frame discussion of whether Anglo-Saxon tower-naves can be considered as the material culture of social power.

Material culture cannot be interpreted as an aspect of social practice without considering its spatial context. In any society, certain significant places – ‘locales’ – are particularly expressive of how that society is structured (Giddens 1984, 118-9). These locales are places of particularly significant social practice, such as the negotiation of status or the imposition of authority. Clifford Geertz has termed them ‘centres of power’:

Points in a society where its leading ideas come together with its leading institutions to create an area in which the events that most vitally affect its members’ lives take place.

(Geertz 1977, 151).

Powerful individuals are invariably be closely associated with such places, as are centres of religious significance and legitimisation (Geertz 1977).

Material culture often articulates the importance of these places, and manifests social practice. This material culture in turn becomes imbued with some the power and authority of the place that it is helping to define (Geertz 1977). The restriction of access to these centres of power, and the ability to manipulate the material culture that helps define them, can be potent in the exercise of power and control over the society that these places help to structure (Tilley 1994, 26-7). Therefore:

1. Were tower-nave churches aspects of the material culture of power and authority in Anglo-Saxon society?
2. Were tower-nave churches constructed at the places where this social power was most clearly expressed?

The four main sources of social power in late Anglo-Saxon society – political, economic, military and ideological – are discussed here in turn.
2.7 Political power

Political power is the legitimised control over society, otherwise termed ‘state power’ (Mann 1986, 9). In pre-state societies it is chiefly exercised through kin groups and personal relationships rather than the impersonal scaffolding of government (Earle 1997, 4-5). The issue of whether late Anglo-Saxon England can be considered a ‘state’ is too complex to explore here (see Reynolds 1997; Yorke 2009). Imposing modern definitions of what constitutes a ‘state’ or a ‘chiefdom’ can be unhelpful: it is better to take each society’s political structure on its own terms (Gledhill 1988, 2-3; Champion 1989, 1; Miller et al. 1989, 1-3; Chapman 2003; Davies 2003; Kapferer 2005, viii).

2.7.1 The exercise of Anglo-Saxon political power

The peripatetic kings of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms could not hope to rule in person across the whole of their lands. As kingdoms grew in size from the 6th century in particular, political power was increasingly exercised at a local level through the aristocracy, the agents of a powerful monarchy (Loyn 1974, 7; Yorke 1988b, 66; Fleming 1991, 35-6; Williams 1997a, 8; Hadley 2000, 157; Stafford 2003, 17; Hansson 2006, 203; Wood 2008, 170-1).

By the late Anglo-Saxon period, lordly presence and political involvement at a local level had grown significantly, sometimes at the expense of royal influence (Hadley 2000, 162; Wareham 2005, 46, 94; Turner 2006, 148). Warren (1987, xiv) goes as far as to suggest de facto autonomous local government in England during the 10th and 11th centuries. Conflicting with this is the ‘maximum’ view of the Anglo-Saxon state of Patrick Wormald (1994; 1999, 313-57) and James Campbell (2000a, 179-99), which holds that late Anglo-Saxon England was characterised by an unusually powerful, centralised, legalistic authority. Their position is undermined by the practical impossibility of implementing the royal will over great distances at this time without a powerful and supportive local aristocracy (Hyams 2003, 98-101; Dennis 2007, 33). Davies (2003, 295) has therefore turned to lordship rather than to the state for the exercise of political power in late Anglo-Saxon society, and to centres of political power residing at a local level.

Baxter (2007, esp. 10-12, 61-2) provides a useful compromise. He argues that to draw too firm a distinction between ‘formal’ vehicles of power, such as governmental institutions, and ‘informal’ webs of personal influence and obligation creates a false dichotomy. We should instead explain Anglo-Saxon political power in terms of the integration of these potent local networks into larger and more formal social structures.
which codified them. Thus, networks of royal power and influence operated on a
national scale through ‘informal’ personal ties and relationships with the local
aristocracy. The king may have been utterly remote in person at a local level, but he
would have been omnipresent in terms of the exercise of his power through those
obligated to him (Williams 1999, 149-50).

2.7.2 The judicial power of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

Of great relevance to this debate is the extent to which judicial power was operated at
the local level by the lords themselves, rather than being the preserve of royal officials.
On the one hand, Hyams (2003, 94-6) sees the prominence of the feud in Anglo-Saxon
society as evidence for law being predominantly a question of civil disagreement rather
than state-censored wrongs. The king acting as a regulatory force, stepping in directly
for the most serious offences, but local lords were entrusted to deal with more general
breaches of social order. As the Anglo-Saxon period progressed the king granted his
lords ever more sokeland – estates with certain devolved legal powers – which
concentrated legal authority ever more in the hands of the local aristocracy (Runciman
1984, 24-5). The generally broad and unspecific nature of surviving Anglo-Saxon royal
laws suggests that they were more of a codified statement of royal intent than a
legislative programme. The actual practice of law at the hundred1 and shire courts was
left to royal agents and the local aristocracy (Stafford 2003, 28-9).

Of great significance for the aristocratic practice of judicial power are the private
lordly courts which have been identified in certain circumstances running parallel to
royal institutions (Maitland 1897, 258-61; Stenton 1947, 486-7; Cam 1962, 26-9;
Warren 1987, 45). These private manorial courts are much better documented in the
Norman period; it may be significant that these Norman manorial courts used Old
English rather than Norman French terminology (Stenton 1932, 42). Reid (1920, 175-6)
asserts that thegns had full legal rights over England at a local level, with the King’s
interest being limited to the harvesting of fines, although his conclusions are largely
reached by working back from post-Conquest documentary evidence. From the reigns
of Ethelred II (978-1016), certain crimes were explicitly reserved for royal jurisdiction,

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1 The Anglo-Saxon ‘hundred’ was theoretically a coherent geographical area of a hundred hides, although
there was considerable variation in practice. Ideally, each contained an estate centre, minster church,
assembly-place and execution cemetery for its population. Although the hundredal system was first
documented in the mid-10th century (Campbell 1986, 161-2) there is good evidence that many hundreds
are of much greater antiquity than this (discussed in Reynolds 2009a, 205). Hundred courts met every
month; shire courts twice a year (Reynolds 1999, 75-81).
which is eloquent as to the continuing importance of the legal power of local lords into the 11th century (Hyams 2003, 84-6).

Against this, it has been argued that the ‘private’ exercise of judicial power was strictly limited to the post-Conquest period, due to its comparative absence in pre-Conquest written sources (Adams 1876, 27-54; Goebels 1937, 339-78; Wormald 1998, 6-8; Blair 2005, 370). Although this is a necessarily crude summary of complex documentary research, this argument is nevertheless based on negative documentary evidence, which is undermined by the fact that oral communication was the chief method of discourse in Anglo-Saxon society (Moreland 2001, 35). Two recent reassessments of the evidence conclude that the private exercise of considerable legal – albeit not fully judicial – powers did exist. These probably consisted of the harvesting of fines under the auspices of royal power, and was potentially practiced at local courts (Baxter 2009; Lambert 2010).

2.7.3 Infangentheof and private judicial practice
The view that the private, lordly exercise of judicial power was a post-Conquest phenomenon does not take sufficient account of infangentheof. This was the right granted by the king to a lord to set up a gallows for the summary judgement and execution of thieves caught red-handed on their estates. This is significant, as capital offences were otherwise dealt with at the hundred or shire courts. Infangentheof is first visible in the writs of Ethelred II, although Stenton (1947, 491-3) believed it to be pre-Alfredian in origin. It is also not known how widespread it was, due to the uncertain survival of the documentary evidence. Despite this, it has been widely speculated that it extended to all the king’s thegns and other major landowners (Reid 1920, 173-4; Stenton 1947, 495; Warren 1987, 45; Roffe 1990a, 335). Maitland (1897, 82) was more cautious, limiting it to ealdormen and bishops. If Maitland (1897, 275-6) and Wormald (1995, 116-7) are right in equating the right of furis comprehensio with infangentheof, this picture may change.

What is the significance of this? Previous scholars have found there to be little. Kemble (1839, xlv) and Maitland (1897, 279) took the harvesting of fines as the most important aspect of infangentheof. Cam (1962, 27-8) thought of it as a simple matter of practicality, and Wormald (1995, 119) saw it as ‘essentially routine’ that thieves could be killed by a local lord without recourse to any state authority. However, the very great power represented by infangentheof, and possibly furis comprehensio, is implied by the fact that execution was actually extremely unusual in Anglo-Saxon society, and very
probably a deeply significant act. Surviving Anglo-Saxon law-codes prescribe fines for all but the most serious of crimes. Despite assumptions about the bloodthirsty nature of Anglo-Saxon society (e.g. Gillingham 1994), archaeological evidence from execution cemeteries suggests that victims were uncommon, perhaps being killed only at the rate of one every ten years in each hundred (Reynolds 2009a, 247). The execution of offenders by lords therefore represents a considerable delegation of judicial power. This undermines the perception of late Anglo-Saxon society as a centralised state, and emphasises the importance of lordly practice at a local level.

2.7.4 Dispersed landscapes of Anglo-Saxon political power

An important insight into the spatial dynamics of Anglo-Saxon political power is provided by the recent work on dispersed landscapes of administration by Andrew Reynolds (2009a, esp. 241-7 and forthcoming. The administrative and judicial functions of the Anglo-Saxon state were not centralised in towns, as they had been under Roman authority. A locality’s court, parliament, place of ordeal and place of execution were dispersed across the landscape, as were its muster-place and fortifications.

The Anglo-Saxon ‘state’ was able to maintain a complex administrative framework with a considerable organisational capacity largely without major central places but instead dependent upon a network of dispersed functions, themselves forming what might by termed ‘focal places’ in the landscape.

(Reynolds forthcoming).

Reynolds’ ‘focal places’ can be identified with Giddens’ (1984, 118-9) ‘locales’ and Geertz’s (1977, 151) ‘centres of power’ (section 2.6), and are of central importance to the question of whether tower-nave churches were constructed at the places where Anglo-Saxon social power was most clearly expressed.

2.7.5 The focal places of Anglo-Saxon political power

The focal places of late Anglo-Saxon political power were the lordly residence (see section 2.3), the assembly-place, the execution site and, increasingly, the town. The most important was probably the assembly-place, although legislative assemblies were also held in towns (Jewell 1972, 54), and manorial courts may have existed at lordly residences, where thieves may also have been summarily executed (see section 2.7.3).
The importance of hundred assembly-places as focal places of political power lay in their role as the regular and predictable gathering-place of all folk of consequence in a locality. They were the chief forum for local lords to reaffirm their prestige and authority amongst their peers (Baxter 2009, 388), to personify their community and to exercise political power (Stafford 1985, 139, 163). Prestige, rather than the weight of evidence, seems to have been the chief factor in deciding cases (Warren 1987, 44). Shire courts were also the main local forum for the assertion of royal power, and were fundamental in mediating between the political ambition of local aristocracy and the will of the king (Baxter 2007, 111-8).

The locations of assembly-places are increasingly seen as numinous and imbued with power, rather than being incidental scenery (Meaney 1995; Pantos 2003). Of particular relevance here is Loyn’s (1974, 14) suggestion that the presence of a lord’s residence adjacent to a hundredal assembly-place may have allowed him to dominate proceedings, although the extent of the correlation between the two remains unknown. In Lincoln, for example, the residence of, successively, Earl Leofric of Mercia and Earl Morcar of Northumbria was situated at the moot-stone of the city (Hill 1965, 131). It is even possible that assemblies were held within lordly residences, as seems to have been the case at Nottingham (Baxter 2007, 103-4) and Whittlebury (Northamptonshire) (Reynolds 2003, 117).

In practical terms, the proximity of lordly tower-nave to an assembly-place would have been of great utility in the swearing of the oaths that were so important in the practice of Anglo-Saxon justice and daily life (Stafford 1985, 162; Williams 1992b, 39). The more important oaths were sworn within churches, over relics and altars (Deansley 1961, 332-3). The 12th century Textus Roffensis – a Norman compilation of Anglo-Saxon law – suggests that rituals of judicial ordeal would have taken place in churches at this date (Deansley 1961, 332-3). A resident lord would have accrued a certain amount of status as a result of judicial activity occurring in the shadow of, and even within, his church. In contemporary Scandinavia, by way of analogy, there was a high incidence of churches erected at the (pre-existing) assembly-places of each locality (Brink 1998, 25).

Towns were growing in importance as focal places of political power in late Anglo-Saxon England. Often royal in origin, they rivalled assembly-places in importance for mediating royal and aristocratic power at a local level (Baxter 2007, 97).

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1 See now the Landscapes of Governance project, hosted by the Institute of Archaeology, University College London [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/assembly].
Like assembly-places, they would have been places where the powerful individuals of a region would have gathered (Fleming 1993). Aristocratic competition would have been enacted with material culture, especially the lordly residences, and potentially tower-nave churches. Anglo-Saxon lords have therefore been compared to the urban nobility of early medieval Italy (Fleming 1993, 11), who used towers as an important means of displaying and negotiating their status during the 11th and 12th centuries (Christie 2004, 27).

2.8 Economic power

Economic power encompasses control over production, resources and exchange networks. This form of power tends to lead to control over land tenure, and lead to strong demarcation of the agrarian landscape in rural economies (Mann 1986; Earle 1997). By the late Anglo-Saxon period, the economic power of Anglo-Saxon lords was increasingly exercised through the ownership of land and the nucleation of rural settlement.

2.8.1 Economic power and the ownership of land

The sine qua non of lordly power in later Anglo-Saxon society was the ownership of land. The rise of settlement planning from the late 6th century onwards represent the shift of a kin-based society to a more rigid social structure centred on the ownership of land (Reynolds 2003, 131). The ‘multiple estates’ of mid Anglo-Saxon England began to fragment with the granting of bookland estates from the late 7th century onwards. The granting of these estates by the king to the lay nobility peaked in the mid-10th century (Stafford 1989, 37-8), which cemented lordly power at a local level (Runciman 1984, 3; Stafford 1985, 165; Fleming 1991, xv; Golding 1994, 124; Saunders 2000, 215; A. Williams 2008, 87). Late Anglo-Saxon England was exceptional in Europe for the extent of its privately-held property (Wood 2008, 176). The produce and rents of land, especially bookland, would have been a major source of lordly income: in the medieval period, land ownership was wealth (Pestell 2004, 227).

Land provided social status, not least indicated by the five hides of land required by the Promotion Law for the rank of thegn (section 2.2). Bookland increasingly placed political power directly in the hands of the local nobility, rather than it coming solely from royal patronage (Charles-Edwards 1979, 100-1; Dodgshon 1987, 158-62; Yorke

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¹ Large sub-kingdoms or tribal areas of c. 50-100 hides which encompassed a variety of resources and land-types, typically centred on a royal vill and served by a minster church, although generalisations are problematic.
1995, 247). By the Conquest, bookland came to be something of a definition of nobility itself (Abels 1988, 60; A. Williams 2008, 84). This coincided with the lordly construction of tower-nave churches in the 10th and 11th centuries, which may have acted as prominent architectural symbols of these new estates. Pestell (2004, 54) has suggested that both proprietary and monastic churches were built in prominent places so as to demonstrate authority over a territory.

2.8.2 Settlement nucleation and the late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

Coincident with the fragmentation of multiple estates and the reorganisation of the landscape into privately-held estates was a revolution in the organisation of the agrarian landscape characterised by the nucleation of English settlement. The development of villages has occupied geographers and archaeologists for the past century or more (surveyed in Rippon 2008, 1-13), and significant progress has been made over the last decade to synthesise regional studies into a coherent national picture (Lewis et al. 2001; Roberts and Wrathmell 2002; Rippon 2008; Fleming 2011). England’s dispersed settlements began to nucleate into villages around the middle of the 9th century, albeit in a highly regionalised and context-specific fashion. This process was broadly focussed along England’s ‘central zone’, a lowland belt of fertile land stretching across northern Somerset, the south and east midlands, northern Lincolnshire and Yorkshire (for a fine-grained picture see Lewis et al. 2001, 4). This erosion of great lay estates is paralleled by the contemporary fragmentation of minster parochiae by local churches (section 2.4).

A consensus has developed in the above-cited works that there was no overarching reason behind settlement nucleation: various major factors were at play which were manifested at different times and places depending on local circumstances. These factors include the pressures of population growth, the self-assertion of local communities, the emulation of new farming techniques by neighbouring communities, the rise of the market economy focussed on towns and the increased demands for taxation from the burgeoning English state. Additionally, local lords may have compelled the rise of nucleated settlements, managing the removal of dispersed populations to planned settlements where they could be served by estate churches and overseen from seigneurial residences. This cleared the way for efficient open field systems, again managed from above, which were capable of providing greater surpluses for the lord and greater tax revenues for the king. The local knowledge and physical

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1 See now Jones 2010 on the futility of attempting any monocausal explanation beyond environmental determinism to tackle settlement nucleation.
presence of these lords was advantageous for social control and economic development compared to the peripatetic masters of the old multiple estates.

Local lords played a profound part in the nucleation of settlements and the development of open field systems. However, they seem to have been shaping existing communities, who were already in the process of change for many of the reasons mentioned above, rather than transforming docile populations regardless of local circumstances (Lewis et al. 2001, 172-7; Rippon 2008, 251-67; Fleming 2011). Building on work in Northamptonshire (Brown and Foard 1998, 76) and Cambridgeshire (Oosthuizen 2006, 148-52), Stephen Rippon (2008) refined this picture to one where villages underwent a ‘second phase’ of planning, bounding and greater delineation of space at the hands of the local aristocracy from the 10th century onwards, once the initial phase of settlement nucleation was well underway. This elides with the first evidence for the rectilinear planning of Anglo-Saxon settlements, which can be traced to the 9th century, the first appearance of local churches and manorial residences, and the mid-10th century apogee of bookland estates granted to the lay nobility (Stafford 1989, 37-8; Reynolds 2003, 130-1). Overall, therefore, we can discern a considerable degree of lordly agency in the settlement and organisation of the landscape from the 9th century onwards, albeit with the sanction of the local community, who were quite capable of effecting settlement planning and nucleation without compulsion from above (Dyer 1985). It remains to be seen whether tower-nave churches were constructed by lords as a part of this nucleation process.

2.8.3 Focal places of Anglo-Saxon economic power

Within the grand sweep of estate ownership and settlement nucleation there were several focal places in the late Anglo-Saxon landscape for the practice of lordly economic power. Lordly residences were centres for the collection of rents, the consumption of goods and the redistribution of economic surplus (Davies 2006, 304). By the 10th century they had become ‘theatres of consumption’ for the economic resources of one’s person and estate, in which the construction of lavish buildings played a prominent role (Loveluck 2007, 156). In crude terms, the ability to construct a private stone church at this time would have been a formidable demonstration of wealth (Saunders 2000, 224), the more so if it was elaborated into the liturgically unnecessary form of a tower. The labour embodied in the construction of a stone tower would have been considerable: the late 10th century tower at Langeais (Indre-et-Loire), which is on a
similar scale to the contemporary St George’s tower-nave in Oxford [21], is estimated to have cost 83,000 work days to construct (Bachrach 1984).

Lords had had the right to call markets and authorise sales (Reid 1920, 175). The ownership of a chapel may have legitimised the lord’s role mediating business transactions, and is likely to have hosted any accompanying oaths (Campbell 1986, 148; Williams 1992b, 39). A charter of King Æthelred II (S 876) was attested by the king from the church (oratorio) in Gillingham (Dorset). Markets were often held at assembly-places (Campbell 2000b, 57) and in towns, where lords were closely involved in their establishment in some cases (Fleming 1993, 5-6, 16-18). The proximity of tower-nave churches to lordly residences, towns and assembly-places forms part of this study.

Estate churches often appropriated lucrative tithes from minster churches, particularly involving burial-rights (Pounds 2000, 29; Blair 2005, 463). The estate church excavated at Raunds (Northamptonshire) may have marked the appropriation of burial-rights with the construction of a bellcote (Parsons 1996a, 58-65): the prominent belfry of a tower-nave church may have played a similar role.

2.9 Military power
The military form of power can be a straightforward coercive force, or can involve the implication or threat of force, often manifested in material culture. The ability to protect others from attack can also legitimate authority. The ability to wield military power, or imply the ability to wield it, must be carefully controlled due to its potential to overturn social structures and overthrow those who have control over other forms of power (Mann 1986; Earle 1997).

The military form of power is of particular relevance to the Anglo-Saxon nobility, who were fundamentally military in character and origin (John 1966, 132; Brooks 1978, 81; Campbell 1986, 132-3; Abels, 1988, 137-8; Hansson 2006, 31). Halsall (1989, 164-71) has further argued that lords were involved in frequent ‘ritual’ warfare at numinous places as part of the maintenance of a ‘warrior cult’ amongst the English lords. The legitimacy of the king could be entirely based on military success (DeVries 1999, 2), to the extent that battles of this period have been described as ‘the ultimate judicial ordeal’ (Golding 1994, 26).

In the late Anglo-Saxon period, lords would have been responsible for mustering the army (fyrd) and fighting in it, for keeping military watch, and for maintaining
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fortifications, including their own fortified residences. This is outlined in the mid-11th century\(^1\) *Rectituciones Singularum Personarum*:

\[
\text{Degenlagu is þæt he sy his bocrihtes wyrðe 7 þæt he ðreo ðinc of his lande do fyrdfaereld 7 burhbote 7 brycgeweorc eac of manegum landum mare landriht arist to cyniges gebanne swilce is deorhege to cyniges hame 7 scorp to friðsceipe 7 saeweard 7 heafodweard 7 fyrdweard aelmesfeoh 7 cyricsceat 7 maenige oðere mistlice ðingc.}
\]

The law of the *thegn* is that he be entitled to his book-right, and that he shall contribute three things in respect of his land: armed service, and the repairing of fortresses and work on bridges. Also in respect of many estates, further service arises on the king’s order such as service connected with the deer fence at the king’s residence, and equipping a guard-ship, and guarding the coast, and guarding the lord, and military watch, almsgiving and church dues and many other various things.

(Liebermann 1903, 444-53; Douglas and Greenaway 1953, 813).

The act of a lord assembling and leading an army had considerable social significance in this period. The threat of violence underpinned the power of Anglo-Saxon government (Dumville 1992, 145; Campbell 2000, 37-8; Baxter 2007, 87), and yet from the 10th century onwards its documented use against internal threats was surprisingly rare and localised (Strickland 1992, 56; Campbell 2000, 37-8; Baxter 2007, 87). This was not a society of petty warlords waging private wars and terrorising their localities, but an ordered state which exercised considerable control over the military power it necessarily devolved to its local agents, the aristocracy. The *fyrd* was commonly, if not exclusively, a force of noblemen under personal obligations of service to their lord (Abels 1988, 175-9). When they assembled under their leader, ties of lordship and obligation were negotiated and affirmed, which was vital to the maintenance of Anglo-Saxon structures of duty and authority (Williams 1999, 122).

The focal places of Anglo-Saxon military power were mustering-places, fortifications and sites of military watch and communication, discussed below in turn.

2.9.1 *The focal places of Anglo-Saxon military power: the mustering-place*

The *fyrd* mustered and probably deployed on a hundredal basis, with the lord of each hundred its captain in battle (Abels 1988, 149, 182; Williams 1999, 121): he was the personification of the host (Strickland 1992, 55). The central role of lords in the *fyrd* is strongly visible in contemporary literary sources (A. Williams 2008, 70). It is likely that

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\(^1\) For a pre-11th century date see Harvey (1993).
mustering took place at hundredal assembly-places (Brooks 1978, 83). In Asser’s *Life of King Alfred* (55), forces are mustered prior to the battle of Edington:

> [Alfred] rode to Egbert’s Stone, which is in the eastern part of Selwood forest… and there all the inhabitants of Somerset and Wiltshire and all inhabitants of Hampshire – those who had not sailed overseas for fear of the Vikings – joined up with him…. They made camp there for one night. At the break of the following dawn the king struck camp and came to a place called Iley, and made camp there for one night.

(Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 84).

The location of Egbert’s Stone is unknown, but Selwood forest survives as Penselwood on the border between Wiltshire and Somerset. A hundred assembly-place lies on the eastern side of the forest at Moot Ford, in the parish of Mere and Zeal (Gover *et al.* 1939, 484). Further forces presumably then gathered at Iley Oak, the assembly-place of the hundreds of Warminster and Heytesbury in Wiltshire (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 248-9 n.). This rare description of the circumstances of the mustering of a large late Anglo-Saxon army appears to corroborate Brooks’ (1978, 83) link with hundred assembly-places.

It seems plausible that the lord with greatest authority at the hundredal assembly would have been responsible for mustering and leading it in the *fyrd*. Mustering of troops was conducted by all ranks of the Anglo-Saxon nobility (DeVries 1999, 214), and the prevalence of autonomous hosts under local lords has been suggested by Powicke (1962, 13-14) and Abels (2001, 22). In a larger force too, the operation of the hundred as a military unit with a war-banner would have been a powerful affirmation of social identity, invested in the person of its lord (Campbell, 2000, 24-5). The presence of a prominent symbol of that lord, such as a tower-nave, at the muster would have emphasised his presence further, particularly if it flew the lord’s banner from its summit (discussed in section 6.6.4). Christianity did much to legitimise secular warfare in Anglo-Saxon England (Powicke 1962, 2; Cross 1971; Nelson 1986, 130; Abels 1988, 50-1; Halsall 1998, 11-13): a tower-nave church at a muster may have been additionally symbolic of this.

The *fyrd* was significant of royal as well as aristocratic authority, since the lords who mustered and led it would have been doing so in fulfilment of their royal obligation of military service (Abels 1988, 146). Just as the members of the *fyrd* were practising their obligation to their lord, the hundredal lords were practising their obligation to their king, an articulation of the local and the royal spheres of power. However, the higher
nobility seems to have on occasion reserved the power to call it to arms without recourse to the king (Baxter 2007, 121), in a local appropriation of a royal sphere of power. The presence of the tower-nave of an ealdorman or sheriff at the mustering of the fyrd may have been symbolic of this appropriated power.

2.9.2 The focal places of Anglo-Saxon military power: watch and communication

The Rectitudines Singularum Personarum (section 2.9) mentions the responsibility of the lord for military watch. The possession of a tower, including a tower-nave, would have been of obvious utility in this, particularly if it was prominent in the landscape. The role of church towers as watchtowers is an old idea (section 2.5.1), and they could have flown signals and rung bells to communicate any threat.

Military watch also involved the lighting of beacons, identified by place-name evidence (Hill and Sharp 1997; Gower 2002; Baker 2011) and excavation (Reynolds 2000).¹ The construction of beacons (rogi) is specified amongst the military responsibilities of Sherborne Abbey in 998 (S 895; Keynes 2005a, 12). There is even evidence for medieval church towers incorporating beacons (Johnson 1912, 127-31; Davies 1968, 94), which may be applicable to tower-naves.

It is worth broadening functional interpretations of the role of lordly towers in military watch. Fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Rectitudines was fulfilment of duty to one’s lord (Abels 1988, 116-8), so it would have been important to be seen to be carrying them out. Thus, symbols of military power sustained lordship in Anglo-Saxon social structures (Saunders 2000, 215). Prominent beacons and watchtowers would have been a potent demonstration of lordly power and responsibility beyond their immediate function.

2.9.3 The focal places of Anglo-Saxon military power: fortifications

The third key spatial aspect of Anglo-Saxon military power – mentioned in the Rectitudines (section 2.9) – were the fortifications constructed and maintained across the landscape. The most famous of these were the late 9th or early 10th century system of thirty-three fortified settlements listed in the Burghal Hidage, which are associated with the military supremacy of the kingdom of Wessex under Alfred the Great and his successors (Hill 1969; Hill and Rumble 1996). An earlier, Mercian, system has been postulated (Basset 2007; 2008), and additional fortified places have been identified

¹ See also the Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age project, hosted by the Institute of Archaeology, University College London [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/directory/burghal_hidage_reynolds_brookes].
archaeologically (e.g. Alcock 1995; Rainbird 1998; Haslam 2011) and through place-names (Cox 1994b; Draper 2008). Linear earthworks (Hill and Worthington 2003; Reynolds and Langlands 2006), bridges (Watson et al. 2001, 52-5; Harrison 2004, 41-2; Cooper 2006) and naval centres (Hollister 1962, 103-126; Hooper 1989) were also places of later Anglo-Saxon defence and fortification. However, the role of private aristocratic fortifications in landscape defence has been entirely neglected, in contrast to the study of post-Conquest lordly residences and castles. This study examines whether tower-naves articulated with these defensive landscapes, as watchtowers, refuges or the ‘proto-keeps’ of Anglo-Saxon fortified lordly residences.

2.10 Ideological power

Ideological power legitimises ruling elites. It is often underpinned by organised religion and the public performance of rituals, and manifested in material culture, particularly buildings. The embodiment of age and history in this material culture may serve to further legitimise the ideological construct it represents, by implying the permanence and inviolability of that construct (Mann 1986; Earle 1997). In early medieval society the major sources of ideological power were the king and Christianity, which became symbiotic in early medieval northern European society as the king became a sacred Christian figure (Loomis 1971; Brink 1998, 22). Christianity was adopted and propagated by Anglo-Saxon kings in the post-Roman period. It lent new forms of legitimacy to their royal dynasties, and it was effective in cementing their overlordship of neighbouring kingdoms (Yorke 1990, 173-7; essays in Carver 2003).

At a local level, the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy legitimised their social position through their allegiance to the king. The ideology of serving one’s lord was central to Anglo-Saxon society (Hyams 2003, 80); the very term for lord – thegn – meant ‘one who serves’, which was central to their identity (Loyn 1983, 47). From the time of Alfred, every man had to swear an oath of allegiance to the king, the potency of which has been emphasised by Wormald (1999). This social bond was reinforced by the king’s circuit about his kingdom, bestowing his presence and legitimacy upon the local nobility and receiving their sons into service in return (Charles-Edwards 1989, 29). In the late Anglo-Saxon period the king seems to have rarely left his power-base in Wessex and London (Campbell 2000, 47-8): this may imply the relative freedom of the northern earls from direct royal influence, although not from the need to have their power as agents of the state legitimised by the authority of the king.
The social position of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy was also legitimated through the doctrines of Christianity. This has been widely discussed elsewhere (Godfrey 1979, 65; Morris 1983, 46; Bisson 1995, 746-7; Hodges and Moreland 1988, 83; Saunders 2000, 224; Baxter 2007, 196-200). The royal legitimisation of the local nobility was primarily expressed through intangible acts of fealty; material culture had an arguably greater role to play in the legitimising influence of the Church.

2.10.1 The material culture of Christian ideological power
The urge to control a church was seemingly ubiquitous for the aristocracy of medieval Europe (Blair 2005, 370-4; Wood 2006). When ideology has physical form it can be codified and controlled, the more so if the physical form is one unavailable to the population at large, thus conveying exclusivity and high status (DeMarrais et al. 1996, 15-17). The rise of proprietary churches in late Anglo-Saxon England would have been the most potent physical manifestation of lordly ideological power. Ownership of a church seems to have been something of a definition of thegnly status itself by the late Anglo-Saxon period (Wood 2006, 600), to the extent that churches were on occasion named after their lordly founders (Barlow 1963, 205).

Lordly churches can be interpreted in terms of social control as well as the legitimization of social status (Faith 1997, 167; Blair 2005, 385, 452; Turner 2006, 153-5). Church towers made prominent the Christian ideology that was so important for the legitimization of the aristocratic elite in late Anglo-Saxon society (Saunders 2000, 224; Howe 2002, 215). The clearest manifestation of this ideological form of lordly power is the close spatial relationship between church and manor in the late Anglo-Saxon period (Dumville 1992, 147; Faith 1997, 167; Saunders 2000, 222-4). Hansson (2006, 175) interprets this as the conceptual unification of the two controlling groups in medieval society: the Church and secular lordship. Morris (1989, 166-7) takes a less Marxist view: whilst Anglo-Saxon churches were ‘symbols of feudal power’, they were also an expression of the transfer of the allegiance of the lord to his locality. Whilst the actual integration of the church into the confines of the manorial residence is thought to have been exceptional in this period (Blair 2005, 387): tower-nave churches are a significant exception.

The high status of medieval church towers can be seen in their architecture. Churches seem to have been conceptually organised in similar fashion to the medieval hall: the chancel was the ‘high’ end of the church and the tower the ‘low’ end, hence church towers maintained secular associations (Grenville 1997, 90-1). This is visible in
the *westwerke* of early medieval England and Europe: *westwerke* were high-status western towers containing private chapels and often a gallery – a ‘lord’s pew’ – overlooking the church nave for the use of the founder and his family (Stalley 1999, 47; see section 5.4). This is a likely use for the above-ground doorways in the east wall of many of England’s Saxon churches, particularly of the richly-decorated openings at Deerhurst (Gloucestershire), Brixworth (Northamptonshire) and Bosham (Sussex) (Taylor 1978, 889-91). Hansson (2006, 171) has interpreted this as the elevation of lords above the common ranks of society, and the increased ideological legitimation of their social position.

2.10.2 The secular/religious dichotomy

Interpretation of medieval society invariably draws boundaries between the secular and the religious. This can be traced to Durkheim’s assertion that “man’s notion of the sacred is *always* and *everywhere* separated from his notion of the profane” (2001 [1912], 39; emphasis added). Our largely secular western society is in part responsible for this mindset (Eliade 1959, 12-13; Brück 1999, 314-9; R. Bradley 2002; 2003, 11; Insoll 2004, 16-17), as is our prioritisation of written sources over material culture. In prioritising written sources we impose a contemporary world-view upon the past that takes little account of other, equally valuable, sources such as landscape, material culture and standing buildings (Austin 1990, 33; Moreland 2001, 33-40). This is particularly true given the huge ecclesiastical bias of Anglo-Saxon written sources (Williams 2002, 2). We should be wary of imposing contemporary models upon the past in archaeology (Shanks and Tilley 1987): the possibility that tower-naves were both chapels and lordly towers, both secular and religious buildings, requires that we analyse this assumption.

The majority of relevant work on this topic stems from anthropological study of the false dichotomy between ritual and domestic life (Brück 1999, 319; Bradley 2003, 12; Mills and Walker 2008, 21), which is often absent in historical archaeologies (Garwood *et al.* 1991, v-vii). Although ritual is not the same thing as Christianity (Insoll 2004, 10-12), and although we should be wary of seeking a totality of religion in all aspects of past life, most aspects of life and all material culture can be structured by religion (Eliade 1959, 12-13; Binchy 1970, 3; Insoll 2004, 13). This is particularly true for a religion as fundamentally important as Christianity was to Anglo-Saxon society, although this may of course be another bias of the documentary evidence.
The prioritisation of documentary evidence by historians may be as unhealthy as the prioritisation of material culture by archaeologists. Nevertheless, this is foremost a study of material culture in the form of tower-naves, albeit informed by written sources. It has long been emphasised that material culture can hold several different meanings depending on the audience and the situation (Bourdieu 1977; Barrett 1988). Hence, we should be wary of imposing a modern dichotomy between utilitarian and ritual functions onto past material culture (Brück 1999, 317; Bradley 2003, 16): it is the transitory use or audience of an object (or building) that determines its sacred associations (Mills and Walker 2008, 22). A good example of this is the continuing debate over whether it is possible, or even sensible, to ascribe a royal or a monastic function to high-status Anglo-Saxon sites such as Flixborough and Northampton (Blair 1996a; Loveluck 1998; Pestell 2004, 59-63, 224; Draper 2008, 243). In short, a tower-nave would not have been an objectively religious structure, but rather a product of the views and uses of the society that constructed it. If that society was as soaked in religion as Anglo-Saxon England, then it is surely dangerous to separate the secular and ideological functions of its material culture.

Modern conceptual divisions between secular and religious buildings in medieval society is largely a product of modern academic study (surveyed in Wheatley 2004, 78-111). Coulson (2003, 57) similarly bemoans the “dogmatic separation” of the study of military, domestic and religious architecture. He argues that in the medieval mind God was a lord, and His buildings were akin to the buildings of secular lordship and power (Coulson 1982, 72). After all, churches originated in private Roman houses, and private houses continued to be used for worship into the later middle ages (Webb 2005, 27-8). The very basis of church architecture was the Roman basilica, a secular assembly-place (Hansson 2006, 163-4). Davies (1968, 95) has further detailed how church buildings were used for almost every type of secular activity in the medieval period. The creation of sacred space within secular buildings is also apparent: there is record of a late Anglo-Saxon bishop having a room within his residence, not thought to have been a separate chapel structure, reserved for prayer (A. Williams 2008, 95). In all, it is worth considering that Anglo-Saxon tower-naves may hold both secular and religious significance as a chapel and a lordly tower, depending on the immediate situation, with no essential conflict between the two.
2.11 The Norman period: a question of continuity?

Tower-nave churches built in England in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest is included in this study. ‘Anglo-Saxon vs Norman’ is a bastion of simplistic culture history in the study of early medieval England, and ‘1066’ remains the arbitrary fault-line dividing study of early medieval English society (Bates 2000, 615). This is particularly true amongst political historians (e.g. Clanchy 2006; Garnett 2007), but even social historians and archaeologists continue to produce books with fallacious titles such as *Costume: 1066 to the Present* (Peacock 2006; see also Brooks and Harrington 2010; Rollison 2010; Mayr-Harting 2011). The Conquest itself can be seen as merely another occasion in the later Anglo-Saxon period when a king took the throne by force and attempted to impose his will upon the local aristocracy (Bates 2000, 618). The considerable shadow cast by the *Domesday Book* means that far more weight is given to the conquest of William than that of, for example, Cnut (Sawyer 1985b).

Horace Round (1895) first set out the view that English society changed profoundly after the Norman Conquest, and emphasised the imposition of the feudal system on English society by the Norman conquerors. ‘Feudalism’ is itself a modern term, with origins in the seventeenth century, and its usefulness has been questioned in the study of the Norman Conquest (Brown 1974, esp. 1077-8; Reynolds 1994). The issue turns on the suggestion that tenurial structures and obligations were similar in England either side of the Conquest (Sawyer 1985a, 72; Faull 1988, 278; Green 1997, 49). Robin Fleming (1991, esp. 112-120) is more sceptical, proposing a greater degree of regional variation in tenurial continuity, but her approach has been criticised (Roffe 1990b, 169). Either way, we cannot now assume that something we call the ‘feudal system’ was invented in France and exported to England in 1066 (Bates 2000, 611-6).

2.11.1 Continuity and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

Tenurial organisation aside, there are thought to have been great similarities in the aristocratic structures of English and French society prior to the Norman Conquest (surveyed in Bates 2000, esp. 621-8). Knights existed in both Anglo-Saxon England and Continental France in the 10th and 11th centuries. The word ‘knight’ (*cniht*) is itself Old English, and the social roles of French and English knights were similar (Gillingham 1995; Wareham 2005, 96-7). Traditionally, French knights are thought to differ from English *cnihts* chiefly in that their possession of castles and cavalry (Coss 1993, 5-30). The importance of Norman cavalry has been downplayed in recent years (summarised...
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in Strickland 1997, 359-66); the distinctiveness of the Norman castle is discussed below (sections 2.11.3–2.11.7).

The Norman Conquest of England did make itself felt in the personnel of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. William I set about breaking the power and appropriating the land of the higher Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, and the incoming Norman lords did the same at a local level (Faith 1997, 178-9). The resulting replacement of the Anglo-Saxon nobility was comprehensive (Warren 1987, 55; Richardson and Sayles 2007, 370), although below the level of sheriff most native officials survived (Golding 1994, 113). The process only began in earnest following the rebellion of 1069, and Anglo-Saxon sheriffs were still in power into the reign of William II (Golding 1994, 36, 113; Liddiard 2000, 26).

Continuity of Anglo-Saxon aristocratic society into Norman England has also been argued in terms of the military organisation (Reynolds 1994, 342-52), legal practice, governance and aspects of material culture (Golding 1994, 90-1; Reynolds 1999, 181; Bates 2000, 626-9). There were changes in aristocratic culture. Stone domestic halls became common (Impey 1999) and fallow deer were introduced for hunting (Sykes and Carden, 2011), although hunting and game-parks had previously been important to the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy (Liddiard 2003; Gautier 2006). This is a slight summary of a vast topic which has been dealt with elsewhere (e.g. Chibnall 1999; Harper-Bill and van Houts 2003), but it is enough to firmly make the point that we can no longer assume that Anglo-Saxon society and lordly practice suddenly changed after the Battle of Hastings. This bears upon the two aspects of this debate most relevant to tower-nave churches: continuity in respect of the lordly residence and the proprietary church.

2.11.2 Continuity and the proprietary church

The late 11th and 12th centuries saw the thorough, if gradual, rebuilding of England’s cathedrals and great monastic churches (Fernie 1994a; 1999). This did not happen at the level of local, proprietary churches, which were modified and rebuilt regardless of the Conquest (Gem 1988; McClain 2011). Attempting to label churches as either ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or ‘Norman’, or trace their construction either side of 1066, is unhelpful and largely doomed to failure (Randall 1982, 22–3; Gem 1988, 24; Blair 1996b, 13; 2005, 412), not least as many aspects of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical architecture continued at all levels well into the 12th century (Thurlby 2003, 119-124).
Local elites used local churches and church monuments either side of the Conquest to express their identity and negotiate their social position (Golding 1994, 165-7; Wood 2006, 601; McClain 2011). Norman elites constructed churches at the entrances to manorial enclosures and twinned their castles with churches and monasteries in a continuation of the Anglo-Saxon practice of placing churches at lordly aristocratic residences (Creighton 2002, 116-124; Pestell 2004, 199-200; McDonagh 2007, 192). This provides a context for the construction of tower-nave churches into the Norman period.

2.11.3 Continuity and the lordly residence

Traditional historiography holds that the inadequate defences of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy contributed to their defeat by the Normans. The secure colonisation of England was effected by the rapid construction of heavily fortified castles in the Continental style, which had hitherto been known in England only in the small numbers built by the Norman companions of Edward the Confessor. This model is vocally ingrained in the literature (e.g. Stenton 1960; Brown 1969), and still finds favour (e.g. Campbell 2000, 196; Baxter 2007, 123). Nevertheless, the Norman Conquest viewed as clash of nation-states is anachronistic, and undermines the interpretation of castles as the means of conquest of one country by another. Castles are better seen as an aspect of the material culture of a new elite ruling within an existing social structure (Liddiard 2000, 5; Thomas 2003, 3-19). The physical difference between Saxon lordly burhs and Norman castles may in most cases have been small. The Norman aristocracy overwhelmingly lived in halls surrounded by earthwork enclosures – ‘ringworks’ – prior to 1066. These ringworks, rather than the popular image of the stone keep, comprised the lordly buildings of the Conquest (Green 1997, 173). The great majority of early castles were not rebuilt in stone until the 12th century (English 1995, 51-55). Anglo-Saxon lordly residences, with their enclosed hall, gate and tower, were in many cases sufficiently similar to the usual Norman arrangement as to undermine the distinctiveness of the Norman castle (Crouch 1992, 259; Wheatley 2004, 10).

The two elements of the Norman castle that traditionally made them ‘special’ are the motte and the keep (Strickland 1997, 369-70; Fernie 2000, 50-2). Artificial mottes are found in the Low Countries and the Rhineland from at least c. 1000 (Aarts 1994), but were not generally a feature of the Norman Conquest and its aftermath in England, and there is considerable doubt that they were prevalent in France at this time either
(Pounds 1990, 12; Higham and Barker 1992, 93-106; English 1995). Turning to keeps, there is a parallel for the construction of towers at the Anglo-Saxon lordly residences of Bishopstone, Bury St Edmunds, West Cotton and possibly Ketton Quarry (fig. 2.1). These were all of timber, like the majority of early Norman keeps (Higham and Barker 1992): Anglo-Saxon timber towers are summarised in appendix II and discussed in section 6.2. It has been suggested that Anglo-Saxon tower-naves such as Earls Barton were the origin of the stone keeps of Norman England (Wilson 1976, 443). This is considered in detail in chapter 7.

Anglo-Saxon lordly residences are argued to have been functionally different from Norman castles, since they were not centres of public administration or justice (Williams 1992a, 240; Liddiard 2000, 5; Wareham 2005, 98). Interestingly, it has now been suggested that towns, rather than castles, were central to legal practice in 10th and 11th century France (Martindale 1995, 43-6), which undermines the distinctiveness of early Norman castles in England. Equally, Anglo-Saxon residences may have had a role in settling feuds, providing sanctuary and administering the extra-judicial execution of thieves (sections 2.3 & 2.7.3).

There is also some evidence for the effective defence of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 757 recounts the attack on the king at a residence (*burh*) by a disgruntled nobleman and his troop, and its subsequent defence against the king’s revenging companions (Swanton 1996, 46-50). The text was probably composed c. 900, and can be taken as a reflection of late 9th century society (Kleinschmidt 1996); the battle took place at ‘Merton’, possibly Merdon (Hampshire), the site of a later castle (Hughes 1989, 31-2). The successful defence by an Anglo-Saxon nobleman of his residence at Balsham (Cambridgeshire) against a Viking army is recorded in the early 12th century *Chronicle* of Henry of Huntingdon (vi. 6; Greenaway 1996, 348-9; see section 6.8.1). We should be very careful divorcing the social from the military roles of medieval lordly residences (Creighton and Liddiard 2008): this should count as strongly for the military roles of Anglo-Saxon residences as it should for the social roles of Norman ones.

There is good spatial continuity between Anglo-Saxon lordly residences and Norman castles. Many Anglo-Saxon lordly residences became the sites of castles (summarised in Davison 1967, 205; Hughes 1989, 31-3; Higham and Barker 1992, 38-61; Williams 1992a, 230-2). This was also the case in towns (Drage 1987, 119; see now Bradley *et al.* 1999, 273; Roberts 2002; Cuttler *et al.* 2009). Study of Norfolk has shown that all the rural Norman castles were associated with pre-Conquest lordly
residences (Liddiard 2000, 36). In the east midlands, around one-third of castles were constructed at existing Anglo-Saxon manorial centres, and there was only one occasion in which a known manorial centre did not attract a Norman castle (Lowerre 2005, 70-8). A wider study of 45 lordly residences archaeologically dated to pre-1200 reveals no evidence for desertion in the late 11th century, despite a relatively dynamic settlement pattern at other times (Gardiner 2007, 177-8). The incidence of castles on Anglo-Saxon lordly residences has been interpreted as both a statement of continuity, and therefore legitimacy of rule, and a symbol of domination and social power (Speight 1998, 168-9; Liddiard 2000, 37; Creighton 2002, 118; Lowerre 2005, 79).

2.12 Conclusions
The capacity of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave church indicates that it was a private architectural form rather than public or congregational. Anglo-Saxon church towers have been suggested as having several non-ecclesiastical roles, including defence, dwelling and military watch. It has also been suggested that they were architectural demonstration of lordly status, which is the present interpretation of tower-naves: that they were incorporated into Anglo-Saxon lordly residences to fulfil the architectural requirements of lordly status. Lordly residences, like post-Conquest castles, were not utilitarian military structures but had an important social role in the practice of local lordship.

The social power of the Anglo-Saxon nobility can be resolved into, political, military, economic and ideological forms, each of which had focal places in the landscape whereat this social structure was negotiated and expressed. This analysis provides social and spatial contexts for the interpretation of the tower-nave form as an aspect of the material culture that maintained the place of the aristocracy in the structure of Anglo-Saxon society. The seemingly joint secular and religious nature of tower-naves has also questions our divisions between secular and religious activity in Anglo-Saxon society. Finally, along with Anglo-Saxon lordly sites, the tower-nave form may have been appropriated by the Norman aristocracy to legitimise their assumption of power.

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1 A second occasion, Earls Barton, is suggested here as the site of a Norman castle (appendix I.8).
Chapter 3: Aims and Methodology

3.1 Research questions
The foregoing review of literature on Anglo-Saxon tower-naves raises five main research questions. The methodology to tackle them is discussed below.

1. *How many tower-naves are known from early medieval England?*
2. *What is the origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?*
3. *What is the ecclesiastical context of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?*
4. *What is the manorial context of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?*
5. *What was the impact of the Norman Conquest upon tower-naves and the tower-nave form?*

3.2 The study period and area
This is a study of the context of tower-naves in Anglo-Saxon society, meaning that England will be the geographical focus. Tower-naves found outside this area are not studied in detail, no attempt is made to be exhaustive. This is not intended to be a general study of tower-naves in Christendom. However, non-English examples are invaluable for answering the second research question, the origins and influences of the free-standing tower-church form. They also provide a useful comparison for the interpretation of the social and religious contexts of the Anglo-Saxon examples.

Although this is a study of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves, it is taken up to c. 1100, a generation or so after the Norman Conquest. As discussed in section 2.11, society did not suddenly change in 1066, and there is thought to have been significant continuity in lordly practice either side of this date. The construction and use of tower-naves in the early Norman period also informs the interpretation of late Anglo-Saxon examples.

3.3 Recording tower-naves
3.3.1 The identification of tower-naves
The first research question asks how many tower-naves are known from Anglo-Saxon England, whether standing, excavated, or known from documentary or antiquarian sources. The starting-place for this is the published gazetteers of sites contained in Audouy et al. (1995), Shapland (2008, 509-15) and Rodwell and Atkins (2011, 313-25). For extant tower-naves, the Anglo-Saxon period is blessed with Taylor and Taylor’s (1965) corpus of churches. Each of these for which the relationship between the tower
and the rest of the church is unclear was visited, and a campaign of fabric recording undertaken where necessary. There is no comparable architectural survey for the Norman period, but general works include Clapham (1934), Fernie (2000) and the Pevsner *Buildings of England* series.

In terms of excavated examples, the starting place is the sites mentioned in syntheses of Anglo-Saxon settlements (Hamerow 2002; Reynolds 2003). Attention is focussed on published reports: there is not time to trawl of unpublished ‘grey’ literature. Manorial settlements listed by Gardiner (2007) are given the most attention, as are high-status ecclesiastical sites such as cathedrals and the greater monasteries.

The main sources of pictorial material for tower-naves is the corpus of Anglo-Saxon textual illustrations (Ohlgren 1992), the Bayeux Tapestry (Wilson 1985) and coin iconography (North 1960; Blunt *et al.* 1989). The Anglo-Saxon tendency to depict ‘stock’, Classical buildings rather than those from contemporary life (Carver 1986) may have limited depictions of tower-nave churches.

A site is only included here as a tower-nave where it can be demonstrated that a tower pre-dates any previous nave. It is not sufficient to only that a tower is earlier than the present nave, since that nave may have been rebuilt. Only those written, antiquarian or pictorial sources that seem cogent, reliable or are sufficiently detailed are relied upon. Where a tower is extant or has been excavated, only those for which the tower is stratigraphically proved to be earlier than any previous nave are included.

The height of excavated buildings is unknowable, removing their certain ascription as towers. The average surviving Anglo-Saxon tower wall thickness is c. 0.90 m (Fisher 1969, 87–8), which serves as a guide for excavated stone examples (*e.g.* Blair 1998). In the case of timber examples, corner post-holes of unusual diameter (*e.g.* Larsson 2004) and foundation-trenches of unusual size (*e.g.* Tyler and Major 2005, 127) have been used to infer that excavated buildings were unusually tall for their size.

In the case of standing examples, there are two main indicators of former tower-nave status, where this is not demonstrated by excavation. Firstly, scars of a narrower structure on the east wall of a tower indicates the former presence of a chancel. This indicates that the tower was the main congregational space, and therefore a tower-nave. This is also demonstrable by a tower’s northeast and southeast quoins being visible at ground-floor level, which would not be the case if any contemporary nave was either the same width or wider than the tower. Secondly, in cases where a nave and tower abut, it is often the case that the nave is the later building. This is because a tower added to a pre-existing nave invariably uses the west wall of that nave as a foundation and
stand upon it, as is the case with many examples in Lincolnshire (Stocker and Everson 2006).

Support for these indicators takes a number of forms. The tower-arch communicating a tower with a present nave might be more elaborately decorated on the side facing into the tower, invisible from the church’s present congregation. This usually means that the tower was formerly the main focus and congregational space of the church; it may also mean that the tower-space was a particular focus for some other reason, such as the conjectured courtroom at Barnack (Northamptonshire) (Baldwin Brown 1925, 282). Where a tower lacks a tower-arch entirely, and either communicates with the nave via a door or not at all, it is likely that this was formerly the end-wall of the church and that any door was formerly an external one. Since eastern towers are almost unknown in Anglo-Saxon church architecture, this probably indicates that the tower was originally free-standing. A tower may also be at a dramatically higher level than the rest of the church, necessitating steps to awkwardly make up the difference. On undulating ground, a free-standing tower built upon a peak or a hilltop has no thought given to any future nave. Since it is far more secure to dig down to provide level foundations for a heavy stone building than to attempt to make up a level platform, the pre-existing tower would be left marooned higher than the newer buildings around it. Finally, a tower might be on a different alignment to the rest of its church, a common indication of multiple building phases. If the tower dated earlier than the rest of the church, it probably comprises the original extent of the building, since there is little reason why, upon rebuilding a nave, the footprint of the original would not be used.

3.3.2 Recording methodology

Stone-by-stone drawings are undertaken at each site in order to elucidate construction phases and interrogate the physical evidence for their tower-nave form. This is dispensed with where the tower is clearly of one phase, or obscured by plaster. Each site is also accurately planned, revealing differing alignments and changes in wall thickness. Both plans and elevations are undertaken using a total station, and the results drawn up in AutoCAD. In the case of elevation drawings, the total station is used to fix the points necessary for the rectification of a digital photograph of that elevation, whereby all distortions are ‘flattened’ out and fitted to the known scale and reference points of the subject. The wall is then drawn directly from the photograph. This method has not the overall accuracy or interpretive power of hand survey, but it can be undertaken from ground level, requiring no specialist access.
3.3.3 Dating methodology

Dating each tower-nave is vital to the second research question, the development of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave form. This is chiefly undertaken through analysis of each building’s construction sequence using fabric recording, and the anchoring of this sequence with traditional architectural dating, or with dateable sculpture. There are several qualifications for the dating of the tower-naves in this study:

1. No effort is made to date churches either side of 1066. As discussed in section 2.11.2, architecture cannot be so easily haltered to the grand narrative of history; nor should it be.
2. Architectural style often results in a general ‘snapshot’ of overall date. Every effort is made to take the full sequence of a building’s subsequent development into account.
3. Architectural fragments were commonly re-used from previous, often Roman, contexts, which can lead to misleading dates. Also, the practice of re-using masonry can be socially and ideologically meaningful (Stocker and Everson 1990; Eaton 2000).
4. That architectural influence went from greater churches to lesser is the uncertain foundation of much stylistic dating. This is particularly true for the Anglo-Norman period, which often carries the assumption that the technologically inferior Anglo-Saxons were grateful of instruction from the advanced churches of their new masters. Not only was Norman architecture not imported wholesale into England (Fernie 1994a, 111-116; Thurlby 2003, 119-124), but the whole question of ‘influence’ is a feeble basis for investigating architectural dating or changes in social practice. There is no easy solution outside of wholesale excavation, but every attempt is made to allow each building to speak for itself.

3.4 Interpreting tower-naves

3.4.1 The manorial context of tower-naves

The present interpretation of tower-nave churches is that many were lordly towers, combining a chapel with a status-affording tower of aristocratic rank (section 2.2). They may have acted as a burhgeat, a gate-tower of a lordly residence. The nature and extent of this activity comprises the fourth research question: what is the manorial context of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave? The identification of manorial sites and enclosures adjacent to each site has been undertaken.
3.4.2 The identification of manorial sites

The starting point for the identification of early manorial sites is the existence of a later manor-house on early OS maps, HER data or volumes of the *Buildings of England, Victoria County History* and the RCHME. In the absence of excavation, place-names, architectural evidence and documentary sources are used to investigate medieval origins. Charters, wills or the *Domesday Book* may record the location as being the chief place of a lord’s estate in the early medieval period. It may also indicate the identity of the builder or subsequent owner of a tower-nave, particularly where that tower-nave is associated with a manor-house.

The location of each tower-nave in its settlement are studied using ‘plan-form’ analysis, first developed by Michael Conzen (1960) and applied to rural settlements by Brian Roberts (1987, 20-32). The roads and boundaries of each settlement plan are scrutinised for the fossilisation of early elements, particularly the relationship between the church and manorial *curia*, based on first edition OS maps. This was used to good effect in the recent study of early Norman towers in Lincolnshire (Stocker and Everson 2006, 62-70), which has been advocated as a basis for future work on later Anglo-Saxon church-community interactions in England (Morris 2011, 175). The Lincolnshire study was able to establish in fifty-seven out of sixty cases whether a church was located within or adjacent to a manorial *curia*, in an area of lordly planning, in a village green or other public open space, or with no obvious relationship to its settlement’s plan. In this last instance, the church was likely to have pre-dated the development of its settlement. Following Stocker and Everson (2006, 68), where a church is located within a manorial *curia* belonging to a superficially later manor-house, there is no reason to think that the house did not have early medieval origins.

Place-names and charter-bounds sometimes preserve lost enclosures. The *burh* place-name element has been extensively studied (Gelling 1989; Cox 1994b; Draper 2008). It commonly denotes an enclosure, a fortification or a manorial site, but this cannot be assumed in all cases (Draper 2008, 241; Baker 2011). The OE *haga*, *wōrd* and *eodor* can all also denote enclosures, particularly in charter-bounds. An ‘enclosure’ may only have been a pen for livestock; in all cases, each site is taken on its merits.

The majority of Anglo-Saxon public worship may have taken place at churchyard crosses, following a long tradition of Anglo-Saxon outdoor worship (Blair 2005, 160-6, 471-89). Even the smallest church may have been the spiritual focus of a community (Blair 2005, 456-7). Perhaps congregational churches of any type were rare in this period, which would undermine any interpretation of the tower-nave form, with
its limited capacity for worshippers, as especially private or aristocratic. It is therefore
telling that tower-naves lay wholly within manorial curiae, which is thought to have
been exceptional for churches of this period (Blair 2005, 387).

3.4.3 Settlement layout and nucleation

Following the work of Roberts (1987), plan form analysis is used to assess the layout of
the settlement of each tower-nave. As discussed in section 2.8.2, Anglo-Saxon villages
are thought to have undergone a ‘second phase’ of planning, bounding and greater
delineation of space from the 10th century onwards. This coincides with the appearance
of proprietary churches, lordly residences, the peak in granting bookland estates to
lords, and first appearance of tower-nave churches. It has therefore been established
whether Anglo-Saxon tower-naves were constructed in areas of nucleated or dispersed
settlement, based on Lewis et al. (2001, 4).

Where a settlement is nucleated it may bear evidence of regular planning, which
is indicative of lordly agency. The place of churches in the planned settlements of
Lincolnshire was used effectively by Stocker and Everson (2006, 62-70). If a tower-
nave is not directly associated with a manorial curia, it may have been imposed by a
lord nonetheless.

3.4.4 The ecclesiastical context of tower-naves

The ecclesiastical context of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves comprises the third research
question. Several tower-naves were constructed at monastic sites rather than rural
settlements and lordly residences. Unlike lordly residences, major Anglo-Saxon
monastic sites survive well in the documentary record, which elucidates the date, nature
and purpose of tower-naves at these sites. An important aspect of this research question
is whether any tower-naves were of minster status, commonly the ancient mother-
churches pre-dating the division of the landscape into lordly estates with proprietary
churches. Minster status may therefore preclude a tower-nave from having been the
proprietary church of a lord, and demand an alternative interpretation.

Minster churches commonly had dues traditionally owed by other churches in a
region, and may possess unusually large or disparate parishes. The terminology of the
Domesday Book has also been used to establish minster-status (Blair 1991, 92).
Presence of a crossing and transepts is a good, although not certain, indication of a
minster (Fernie 2000, 225). A gazetteer of minster-churches has been prepared by John
Blair (1985, esp. 109-111), and the Wessex counties have been studied in detail by Hase (1994, 53).

In the absence of evidence for minster status, the likely capacity of Anglo-Saxon churches has been used to determine whether they were private chapels. This is an important point, as elaborate or lavish churches that lacked the capacity to house their local community are unlikely to have been public or congregational. Tower-naves were of intrinsically elaborate construction, even where their original form is now irrecoverable. Effort was expended to make them tall when effort could instead have been expended to make them large. David Parsons (1996a, 64) calculates that a maximum of three worshippers per square metre is sensible for the standing capacity of a church. Peter Sawyer (1998, 166) has estimated that Anglo-Saxon churches with a nave area of less than 45 m² should be considered private chapels for landowners.

3.4.5 Tower-naves into the Norman period
The fifth research question concerns the impact of the Norman Conquest upon tower-naves and the tower-nave form. This study includes early Norman tower-naves, and traces the post-Conquest development of the Anglo-Saxon examples. Intriguingly, it has been suggested that the Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-nave formed a basis for the development of the Anglo-Norman keep (section 2.11.5). All known stone and timber keeps constructed in England for a generation after the Conquest, until c. 1100, are compared with the Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves. The existence and development of any tower-naves or related structures after this date is also investigated.

3.5 The landscape context of tower-naves
No building can be sensibly understood without reference to its landscape context (Dyer 2006 for a recent discussion). This is central to our understanding of churches and society, particularly since the seminal work of Richard Morris (1989). As discussed in section 2.3.4, the landscape approach has revolutionised study of post-Conquest lordly residences, although it has not previously been applied to Anglo-Saxon manorial sites, despite their many similarities. Each tower-nave is studied in terms of its prominence in the landscape, its potential as a territorial marker and its utility as a strategic place. This is central to the fourth research question, the manorial context of tower-naves.

It has been suggested that tower-naves were demonstrations of aristocratic power and status (section 2.2.2). It is discussed here whether tower-naves were built in prominent places, atop hills or within sight of major roads, navigable rivers, river
crossings and the sea. Particular attention is paid to the ‘focal places’ of Anglo-Saxon social power: towns, greater monasteries, execution-sites, assembly-places, fortifications and places of military watch or communication (sections 2.6 & 2.7.4). This ‘tests’ the hypothesis that tower-naves were more than oddly-shaped aristocratic chapels, and were active in the practice of Anglo-Saxon lordship.

3.5.1 The focal places of Anglo-Saxon social power: towns

The majority of towns are thought to have become strategically, economically and socially important in England only from the 10th century onwards (summarised in Astill 2000). There are exceptions, such as the middle Anglo-Saxon trading emporia (Hill and Cowie 2001), 8th century Mercian towns (Bassett 2007), and certain large monasteries, which may have functioned as towns from the 7th century (Blair 2005, 246-90). For the late Anglo-Saxon period, the starting-place is Hill’s (1981, 134-42) maps of towns, those mentioned in the Domesday Book and the regional studies edited by Haslam (1984a). Other places are included according to circumstance. This is not the place to revisit the fraught question of urban definitions: only ‘important’ settlements are relevant to the relationship of tower-naves to focal places of Anglo-Saxon social power, of which the above works provide an essential list.

3.5.2 The focal places of Anglo-Saxon social power: communications

For roads, there is presently no countrywide study of major Anglo-Saxon routes. Limited studies are available (Hill 1981, 115-16, 134-42; Taylor 1979; Pelteret 1985; Hindle 1998), which can be augmented for the late Anglo-Saxon period by including the roads linking Anglo-Saxon towns and larger monasteries. Roman roads are included – with their Margary (1973) identification number – only where there is evidence for their continued use into the medieval period, or they are followed by modern routes. The intention here is to place tower-naves in landscapes of regional travel and communication, and to assess their role as watchtowers and their prominence in the supra-local landscape. Minor roads and track-ways are not included. The same applies for rivers: navigable rivers are drawn from studies by Hill (1981, 10) and Blair (2007).

Beacons are identified with the following place-name elements: OE weard, ‘watch/beacon’, ON varði, ‘beacon’, OE *tōt or *tote and OE *præ(w)hyll or *prā(w)hyll, both ‘look-out place’, by extension a beacon (Ekwall 1960, 373; Hill and Sharp 1997; Gower 2002). Lone ‘beacon’ place-names and post-medieval beacon-systems can fill gaps in early medieval systems (e.g. White 1934; Kitchen 1986; 1987).
3.5.3 The focal places of Anglo-Saxon social power: assembly-places

Early medieval assembly sites were focal places of political and economic power, and were the likely mustering-places of troops (section 2.75). They are identified in the regional studies of the English Place-Names Society and in the early work by Anderson (1934; 1939a; 1939b). The Electronic Anderson database of assembly-places will appear too late for this study. Within a particular parish, assembly-places were commonly located on a boundary adjacent to a crossroads, river crossing, earthwork or other prehistoric site (Gelling 1992, 142; Meaney 1997; Pantos 2003, 38).

3.5.4 Tower-naves as territorial markers

Where known, the landholdings of the lordly or monastic builder of a tower-nave church will be plotted for each tower-nave. Using viewshed analysis (section 3.5.5), it can then be established whether a particular tower is visible from the estates in its locality, and could therefore have acted as a territorial marker. Reference will be made to existing studies of Anglo-Saxon monastic estates (e.g. Abrams 1996; Barker 2005) and lordly estates (e.g. Foard 1985). Where these are lacking, relevant charters and Domesday Book evidence will be consulted.

Estates are mapped using parish boundaries from first edition OS maps. Despite their late date, these boundaries are relatively stable due to the Church’s proprietary nature and early removal from the land market (Roffe 1984, 116). Parishes commonly preserve pre-Conquest estates (Roffe 1984, 115-117; Reynolds 2009a, 203), even though the parochial system was not formalised until the 12th century (Pounds 2000, 4; Blair 2005, 369). Study of surviving late Anglo-Saxon charters in Wessex has found a high degree of agreement between known estates and parish boundaries, albeit with a marked variability between counties (Costen 1994). In Berkshire, of the c. 75 estate charters with bounds, only four bear little relation to modern boundaries, and 36 are identical to modern parishes (Gelling 1976, 617-8).

It has been suggested that tower-nave churches marked the entrances to estate boundaries in a continuation of their proposed role as burhgeats at the thresholds of manorial enclosures (Audouy et al. 1995, 89). Study of aristocratic and monastic estates addresses this theory.

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1 http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/assembly/ElectronicAnderson
2 Downloaded from the Edina UKBorders service [http://edina.ac.uk/ukborders/]
3.5.5 Landscape analysis and viewsheds

The landscape context of each tower-nave is analysed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, based on modern OS digital terrain models at 1:50,000 scale. On this is plotted roads, rivers, parish boundaries and estates, and the focal places of social power relating to each tower-nave.

Viewshed analysis is central to relate the tower-naves to this contextual information: it has recently been hailed as a promising method to get beyond simplistic statements such as ‘dominating the landscape’ in the study of early medieval lordly sites (Creighton and Liddiard 2008, 166). In each case, the view from each tower is calculated, so 1.5 m will be added to the height of each tower to represent a person. The landscape terrain model is raised by 1.5 m to represent the token height of people, fortification walls, beacon-mounds and earthworks, and to avoid the ‘speckling’ effect that can imply excessive accuracy in this technique. The view to each tower has been calculated by removing the 1.5 m person from its summit, but retaining the 1.5 m ‘figures’ in the surrounding landscape. In practice, at the regional scale of this study there is an imperceptible difference in the resulting viewshed, so for clarity’s sake only the views from each tower are shown here.

Where the original height of a tower is not known, a conservative figure of 10 m has been assumed. This is substantially less than the mean height of 16.15 m of the forty-eight Anglo-Saxon and early Norman towers with known heights listed by Taylor (1978, 892), and so should avoid exaggerated results.

Visibility of five miles is assumed for most features, including road and river traffic. In the case of beacons, intervisibility is assumed at up to 17 miles, which is the maximum distance in the Armada beacon chain in Hampshire (Hill and Sharpe 1997, 159). In terms of lines of sight, the former presence of trees is a problem. It has been suggested, from Domesday Book evidence, that Anglo-Saxon England was comparatively lightly wooded, and that woodland was generally distributed in discrete ‘islands’ with clear breaks in between (Rackham 1990, 48-54). Attempts have been made to reconstruct coverage (Hill 1981, 16, Rackham 1990, 49), but without detailed local pollen analysis this is of limited use. Overall, this is a study of the potential of tower-nave churches to have been prominent in the landscape and to have been useful in war. It is not a reconstruction of past reality. If a tree had blocked sight of a beacon or assembly-place, it would surely have been cut down.

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1 Downloadable from the Edina Digimap service [http://edina.ac.uk/digimap/index.shtml]
3.6 The distribution of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves

3.6.1 Regional variation of tower-naves

Since the original population of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves is unknown, and the sample of known sites is not large, regional variation in tower-nave construction is difficult to assess. Comparison can be made both with *Domesday Book* evidence for churches (Blair 2005, 418) and extant buildings (Taylor and Taylor 1965, frontispiece) to provide a degree of ‘control’ for any patterns which emerge. A particular region may preserve little evidence for Anglo-Saxon churches, for example, meaning that not too much should be read into the absence there of tower-naves. Late Anglo-Saxon England was not a uniform place despite its unification under a single king by the mid-10th century.

3.6.2 Tower-naves and land quality

The economic potential of the landscape is part of the fourth research question, the manorial context of tower-naves. Medieval lordly occupation is only ever partially explicable in crudely practical or economic terms (Hansson 2006, 104). Nevertheless, it has been interesting to establish whether tower-naves are limited to lowlands or areas of estimated high population density or agricultural land quality, even if coastal zones or marginal upland areas were of greater strategic importance. Population density has been crudely estimated from the *Domesday Book*, and is therefore only relevant to later sites; land fertility has been back-projected from 20th century Ministry of Agriculture surveys (Hill 1981, 7, 19). Both are used here with caution.
Chapter 4: Synthesis of Results

- Research question 1: How many tower-naves are known from early medieval England?
- Research question 2: What is the origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?

4.1 Summary of sites

This study has identified thirty-five tower-nave churches, ranging in date from the early 8th century to c. 1100 (fig. 4.1). They neither represent a known sample of the original population of this building-type, nor can we assume that they give us even coverage in space and time of tower-naves in early medieval England. Nevertheless, some important patterns in their form, location and social and landscape contexts can be observed.

The thirty-five tower-naves are summarised here in terms of the probable date and social context of their construction, and their relationship to centres of social power in their locality. The sites are referred to throughout this study by their number in bold square brackets (e.g. Abingdon [1]): see appendix I for full description and discussion of each site.

1. Abingdon Abbey, Oxfordshire (St Mary)

A turriiform rotunda was constructed at the royal vill of Abingdon at the end of the reign of King Eadred (946-55), and under his personal guidance. It was one of a number of churches at the site, which subsequently underwent monastic reform under Abbot Æthelwold, later Bishop of Winchester, who completed work on the tower. Although it would have made a serviceable watchtower, it had no obvious role marking the approaches or the estates of the abbey. Given both the agency of the king in its construction and its location at a royal vill, it may have been intended as a royal chapel. It was in use as a high-status burial-chapel by 977, and collapsed during the Norman rebuilding of the abbey.

2. Athelney Abbey, Somerset (St Æthelwine?)

The tower-nave at Athelney was constructed at a defended royal vill and minster during its re-foundation as a monastery by King Alfred (871-99). It appears to have consisted of a square timber tower surrounded by four apses, and may have been inspired by Carolingian architecture. The existing minster-church was presumably retained for congregational use. Athelney was significant in the West Saxon imagination as the location from which Alfred mounted his campaign to regain his kingdom and lay the
foundations for the further conquest of England. Alfred’s tower would have increased Athelney’s visibility along the major routes of communication in the locality, but it was not meant to mark ownership over the Abbey’s late 9th century estates. It was still standing into the 12th century.

Fig. 4.1 – The distribution of known tower-naves. The numbers refer to the sites listed below; see also appendix I.

3. Barton-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire (St Peter)

St Peter’s was constructed in the early-mid 11th century in the context of the secular fragmentation of a monastic estate. It stood adjacent to the earthwork enclosure of an
aristocratic residence, which it served as a chapel. It was well-placed to act as a watchtower over the Humber estuary as well as an adjacent beacon-system, although it had little visibility inland and none of its hundred meeting-place. A nave was added in the early Norman period.

4. **Broughton, Lincolnshire (St Mary)**

St Mary’s is a rectangular tower-nave with a stair-turret, of probable mid-11th century date. It may have been raised from a single-storey chapel. It stands adjacent to the later manor-house, and may have been incorporated into a large manorial *curia*. This is supported by the settlement’s status in 1066 as the chief place in the county of the powerful Sherriff of Lincolnshire. The tower-nave lay adjacent to an assembly-place and a major long-distant route, along which it was prominent from the south. However, its usefulness as a watchtower was limited by its lack of visibility with the Humber beacon-system. A nave was added to the tower in the early Norman period.

5. **Bury St Edmunds Abbey, Suffolk (St Benedict)**

St Benedict’s tower was constructed at Bury St Edmunds abbey shortly before 1044 by Earl Ælfric, a powerful regional magnate and a reeve of the abbey’s estates. His family used the tower as a dwelling; another lordly tower is known to have been constructed at the nearby residence of a knight of the abbey at this time (see appendix II.B). St Benedict’s tower gained a *porticus* chapel dedicated to St Michael in the late 11th century and became the high-status mortuary-chapel of the abbots of Bury St Edmunds. It would have made a poor watchtower, but lay adjacent to its hundredal meeting-place. It survived, probably rebuilt, into the late medieval period.

6. **Caistor, Lincolnshire (St Peter and St Paul)**

The church of SS Peter and Paul was probably built in the mid-11th century in a fortified Roman enclosure, an important estate centre belonging to the Earl of Mercia, and later a Norman castle. It had commanding views over the valley to the west, including over the regional road network and an isolated beacon-site. It was also intervisible with its hundredal meeting-place. However, it was not positioned with visibility in mind, and would have made a poor territorial marker. A nave was added to the tower in the early Norman period.
7. **Canterbury, St Augustine’s Abbey (St Mary)**

St Mary’s tower was constructed c. 1047 a short distance southwest of the abbey church. A massive vaulted structure of stone of undoubted height, it nevertheless would have made a poor watchtower and territorial marker, although its hundredal meeting-place lay adjacent. It stood in the abbey cemetery and was used as a high-status mortuary chapel, before its partial demolition in the late 11th century.

8. **Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (All Saints)**

This impressive early-mid 11th century free-standing tower stands at the centre of the estate of a powerful local lord within his probable manorial curia enclosure. Its hundred meeting-place lay adjacent. It would have made a useful watchtower over regional communications and a beacon-system. A motte-and-bailey castle may have been built on the site after the Conquest, and a nave was added to the tower in the 12th century.

9. **East Dean, East Sussex (St Simon and St Jude)**

The tower was constructed in the mid-11th century with a small eastern apse. At the time of the Conquest it lay in a minor estate, probably in royal hands, which was fragmented and sub-let by a Norman magnate. The location of the local manor-house is unknown. The tower lies in a valley and would have made a poor territorial marker and watchtower despite the adjacent presence of a beacon-system and harbour. It was also not intervisible with its hundredal meeting-place. A nave was added to the tower in the early Norman period.

10. **East Teignmouth, Devon (St Michael)**

St Michael’s was probably constructed in the mid-11th century at the private estate of Leofric, Edward the Confessor’s chaplain and later Bishop of Exeter. It replaced an existing church. Although there is no known manor-house nearby, it does appear to have lain within a defensible enclosure. The tower may also have had a role as a watchtower over the seaward approach to the vulnerable Teign estuary, and over a regional beacon-system, although it had little visibility inland. The location of its hundredal meeting-place is unknown. By the 13th century the bishops of Exeter had their residence in nearby Bishopsteignton and East Teignmouth dwindled in importance, although the date of the addition of its nave is unknown. It was ignominiously demolished in 1820.
11. **Fingest, Buckinghamshire (St Bartholomew)**
This impressive tower was constructed in the late 11th or early 12th century whilst it was in royal or noble ownership, although the documentary record here is poor. It lies adjacent to an early manor-house and to the probable site of its hundred meeting-place. However, it is almost wilfully hidden in the landscape despite beacon-sites to the east, which the tower could have watched had it been located elsewhere in its parish. A nave was added to the tower in the 12th century.

12. **Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset (St John)**
St John’s tower was constructed soon after 959, when the abbey was undergoing reform under St Dunstan. It lay on an axial alignment west of the abbey church and acted as the gate-tower to a walled cemetery, the abbey’s inner enclosure. Described at the time as a ‘little beacon’, it would have made a poor territorial marker in the regional landscape but a superb guide and metaphorical gateway to the City of God for those approaching the abbey along the main route from the west. It was not a watchtower or marker for the abbey’s estates in the landscape, and probably destroyed by fire in 1184.

13. **Guildford, Surrey (St Mary)**
St Mary’s was constructed as tower-nave church in the mid-11th century. It stands in a probable high-status enclosure, suggested as royal residence. An Anglo-Saxon royal park and an execution site lay adjacent. The tower stands in a strategic place, adjacent to a ford at which most of the major routes of western Surrey converged. It would have made a poor watchtower, but it did have sight of an adjacent link in an extensive early medieval beacon-system. No known hundred meeting-places are in the vicinity. A nave was added in the early 12th century.

14. **Hastings, Sussex (St Mary)**
St Mary’s church was constructed as a tower-nave church within the Norman castle at Hastings soon after the Conquest. Documentary evidence suggests that it was the direct successor of an Anglo-Saxon foundation, constructed in honour of the brother of Edward the Confessor. Hastings Castle may have been pre-existing fortification, possibly a *Burghal Hidage* fort, adapted as a castle by William the Conqueror. The church lay at the gate of this fortification. It would have made a poor an inland watchtower but an excellent one over the sea, which is perhaps unsurprising considering Hastings’ strategic maritime importance in late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England.
This said, it was intervisible with its nearby hundred meeting-place and could have kept watch over a probable early beacon system in the area. It would have made a poor territorial marker. It was a collegiate church by the early Norman period, and gained a nave in the 12th century.

15. Hereford Cathedral (St Katherine and St Mary Magdalene)
The Bishop’s Chapel was a square, free-standing chapel two stories in height with a central lantern tower. It was constructed by Bishop Robert (1079-1095) as a private chapel adjacent to his cathedral, in explicit imitation of the imperial chapel at Aachen. It may also follow a Continental tradition of two-storey centrally-planned royal and episcopal chapels. It would have made a poor watchtower and territorial marker and would not have been visible from its hundredal meeting-place. It survived until demolition in 1737.

16. Hexham, Northumberland (St Mary)
The church of St Mary was constructed in the early 8th century by St Wilfred in the form of a circular tower with four porticus surrounding it. Potentially unique in England at this time, it is likely to have been inspired by Continental modes of thought, which would fit with Wilfred’s experience and sympathies. It was probably constructed at the main entrance of the abbey precinct where it would have acted as a landmark to those approaching from the east. It was located adjacent to an Anglian cemetery, suggesting that it served as a mortuary chapel. It was rebuilt as a parish church in the 13th century.

17. Jevington, East Sussex (St Andrew)
St Andrew’s was constructed in the mid-11th century on the edge of a probable medieval manorial curia. It lay a few miles from the sea at the intersection of two regional routes, although its location in a valley would have made it a poor watchtower and territorial marker. Despite this, it would have had sight over its adjacent hundredal meeting-place and early regional beacon-system, which would have been invisible at ground level. It gained a nave in the early 12th century.

18. Langford, Oxfordshire (St Matthew)
St Matthew’s is a remarkable example of an Anglo-Saxon ‘survivor’ lord constructing a tower-nave church after the Conquest in a distinctively transitional style, incorporating both Anglo-Saxon and Norman architectural elements and sculpture. It lay in his most
valuable estate within a probable manorial curia, and would have made a useful watchtower over strategic places in the local landscape, although was not a landmark over its lord’s estates. It gained a nave in the 12th century.

19. Morland, Cumbria (St Lawrence)
St Laurence’s tower was built in the mid-11th century within a medieval manorial curia. It stands outside the Anglo-Saxon controlled regions of England, and seems to have been built under the auspices of a powerful Anglo-Scandinavian lord of Westmorland. Located in a place of long-standing and persistent high-status occupation, it has little visibility over its wider landscape and would have been a poor watchtower over the local road network. It would nonetheless have been intervisible with the region’s beacon network. A nave was added to the tower in the 12th century.

20. Oxford (St Michael)
St Michael’s church was constructed in the first half of the 11th century at the north gate of Oxford, and appears to have been incorporated into the burh’s defences, like St George’s at the west gate [21]. There does not appear to have been space for a nave until the later medieval period. It is likely to have been constructed by one of the several lords whose residences characterised late Anglo-Saxon Oxford, and who were responsible for the upkeep of the town defences. In this respect it would have made a useful watchtower over the routes leading north of the town as well as over a regional beacon-system through Berkshire to the south coast. A nave had been added by the 13th century.

21. Oxford Castle (St George)
St George’s tower was constructed on a scale matched in this study only by towers at important monastic centres. It probably marked the west gate of Oxford from the mid-11th century, just as the tower-nave of St Michael [20] marked the north gate; the south and east gate may have been similarly adorned. It may have been part of an urban lordly residence: the walls and gates of Oxford were an aristocratic responsibility in this period, and the tower was incorporated into a Norman castle soon after the Conquest. It was refounded as a college of secular canons in 1074.
22. **Ozleworth, Gloucestershire (St Nicholas of Myra)**

This unusual hexagonal tower-nave of St Nicholas was built in the years around 1100 by the Norman magnate Roger II de Berkeley. It is paralleled only by the hexagonal tower-nave at Swindon [27]. It is located in a probable Anglo-Saxon lordly enclosure adjacent to a later manor-house, but its location deep in a valley would have made it useful neither as a watchtower nor as a landmark for the Berkeley estate. It was given to the priory at Leonard Stanley in 1131, around which time it was heightened with a belfry stage; a nave did not follow until the early 13th century.

23. **Portchester Castle, Hampshire (unknown dedication)**

A late 10th century tower-nave was excavated at Portchester Castle, which was a late Anglo-Saxon lordly residence and estate centre. It was probably adjacent to, and intervisible with, a hundred meeting-place; the tower would have made a valuable watchtower over the region’s harbour and coastline. Following the Conquest the Anglo-Saxon lordly residence on the site was replaced by a Norman castle. The tower was curated as a chapel until an Augustinian priory was constructed on the site in 1133.

24. **Sherborne Abbey, Dorset (All Hallows’)**

Archaeological and other evidence suggests that a substantial tower-nave chapel was constructed immediately to the west of the old Cathedral church of Sherborne, possibly under the episcopacy of Wulfsige III (c. 993-1002). It seems to have had a west porch and flanking porticus, and may have been dedicated to All Hallows; it was remodelled and joined to the main Cathedral church c. 1045-58. It was probably constructed under the auspices of the Monastic Reform, and so it can be placed amongst the similar tower-naves at Glastonbury [12] and Winchester [30]. Its immediate function was probably as a high-status burial-chapel for Wulfsige, but its location in the landscape also suggests that it acted as a marker for those approaching the cathedral along the main road from the west, which again echoes the arrangement at Glastonbury [12]. It had little obvious use either as a watchtower or a territorial marker.

25. **South Cadbury, Somerset (unknown dedication)**

A tower-nave church was planned, but apparently never built, in Æthelred II’s short-lived burh at South Cadbury hillfort in the late 10th century. Little is known of the relationship between the tower and the layout of the burh, since no other structures
relating to this period of occupation have been uncovered. The tower would also have been redundant as a watchtower, given the view provided by the hillfort itself.

26. *Springfield Lyons, Essex (unknown dedication)*

The site excavated at Springfield Lyons is probably the residence of the Domesday manor of Cuton, which was owned by a minor thegn in a fragmented landscape of similar petty landholdings. The first, 10th century, phase of its late Anglo-Saxon occupation was suggested by the site’s excavators to have consisted of a tower, interpreted as a church, together with a hall and kitchen. The building’s identification as a tower is uncertain, but it is included here for the sake of debate and comparison with other sites. The settlement may have lain within a curated Bronze Age ditched enclosure. The suggested tower was neither highly visible nor an exceptional watchtower, although it would have been intervisible along major road and river routes to the east. This is in keeping with its interpretation as a primarily local gesture positioned within the constraints of a small estate as the symbol of a minor thegn. It was demolished prior to the final, 12th century, phase of the settlement.

27. *Swindon, Gloucestershire (St Lawrence)*

The modest hexagonal tower-nave at Swindon closely resembles that at nearby Ozleworth [22], and was also built around 1100. The circumstances of its construction are obscure, but it seems to have been built by the Norman tenants of the estate, which was held by the Archbishop of York, and lies within their probable manorial curia. It was relatively prominent in the landscape, and would have made a useful watchtower over regional roads, rivers and beacons. The date of the addition of its nave, wholly rebuilt in the 19th century, is unknown.

28. *Thorney Abbey, Cambridgeshire (unknown dedication)*

The Thorney tower-nave was constructed c. 973-984 as the private chapel of Bishop Æthelwold, one of the highest ranking ecclesiastics in the land, at his refounded and Reformed abbey. It was presumably located on Thorney Island itself, although its exact location is unknown. It would have made a superb landmark in the flat landscape of the Fens, including over much of the Abbey’s estates, although the same can be said for any building in this location. The date of its demolition is unknown.
29. Wickham, Berkshire (St Swithun)
The late 10th or early 11th century tower at Wickham is convincing as a refuge, with its above-ground opposing doorways, as well as a chapel, which would fulfil two of the requirements of the Promotion Law. It probably stood within a Roman enclosure adjacent to a manor-house, and may have been built by Earl Ælfhere of Mercia. It stands in a highly strategic location, on high ground adjacent to a Roman road and near a hundred meeting-place, surrounded by major beacon-chains, with a commanding view of the surrounding area. It may even itself have been crowned by a beacon. A nave was added in the later 11th century.

30. Winchester Old Minster (St Martin)
St Martin’s tower was the earlier of two tower-nave churches present in the ecclesiastical quarter of late Anglo-Saxon Winchester. It was constructed prior to 971 in axial alignment west of the Old Minster, framing the route from the adjacent royal palace. It was located in a cemetery and may have had a funerary function. Between 974 and 980 it was incorporated into the Old Minster as a royal chapel and westwerk which enabled king Edgar to sit in splendour over his people, possibly to mark his elevation to emperor of Britain and his reforms of the Church. It also housed the tomb of St Swithun, former bishop of Winchester. Despite its undoubted scale it was not particularly prominent in the local landscape. Its construction was overseen by Bishop Æthelwold (963-984), also responsible for a number of the other towers in this study. It was demolished with the construction of the early Norman cathedral.

31. Winchester New Minster (St Mary, the Holy Trinity, the Holy Cross, All Saints, St Michael, and the four evangelists)
This elaborate tower containing many chapels was the later of the two monastic tower-nave churches of late Anglo-Saxon Winchester. It was constructed between 979 and 988 at the New Minster, the burial-church of the late Anglo-Saxon town, by Edgar’s successor Æthelred. Its construction was overseen by Bishop Æthelwold (963-984), like several of the other towers in this study. It had a mortuary function but no obvious landscape role, and was demolished with the construction of Winchester’s early Norman cathedral.
32. **Woodeaton, Oxfordshire (Holy Rood)**

Excavations at Holy Rood, Woodeaton revealed what appears to have been a late 11th century tower-nave church, constructed on the site of an earlier timber church and cemetery. The identity of the church’s builder is uncertain, but it may have lain within a former manorial curia. The tower-nave would have made a relatively poor watchtower, the more so given the presence of an adjacent hilltop. It was gradually enlarged into a congregational church through the 12th and 13th centuries.

33. **Worcester Cathedral (St Michael)**

The detached belltower at Worcester Cathedral does not survive, but the pictorial evidence is consistent with an Anglo-Saxon or Norman date of construction. The 12th or 13th century church of St Michael abuts the belltower; this church appears to have originally been housed within the belltower itself. St Michael’s was the medieval cathedral’s burial-chapel, implying that if the belltower had indeed been constructed as a tower-chapel dedicated to St Michael then it would have fulfilled this role. It lay too far from the medieval Bishop’s Palace to have served as a chapel, and it would not have been vital to the town’s ability to keep military watch. Despite the potentially Anglo-Saxon origin of its enormous spire, it would have made a surprisingly poor marker for the Cathedral’s extensive home estate. It was demolished in the 1750s.

34. **York (St Mary Bishophill Junior)**

St Mary Bishophill Junior is a 11th century tower-nave, built in the aftermath of the secular fragmentation of the adjacent abbey of Christ Church/Holy Trinity. It lies within an apparent ovoid enclosure, which may mark the former location of its putative lord’s urban residence. The tower was constructed on high ground overlooking the rest of the city, adjacent to a possible place of military muster. It had an exceptional view over the surrounding landscape, including over the numerous communication routes converging on York, and over a possible early beacon system. It was intervisible with the meeting-place of the city, as well as with other meeting-places in the surrounding area. It passed into the ownership of the archbishop of York around 1080, and gained a nave in the mid-late 12th century.

35. **York (St Michael-le-Belfry)**

The church of St Michael-le-Belfry seems to have originated as the free-standing timber belltower of the adjacent Anglo-Saxon cathedral, potentially as early as the 8th century.
It guarded the main entrance to the cathedral precinct, formerly the entrance to York’s Roman *principia* building, along the main Roman road through the town. It may have imitated the 8th century gate-tower of St Peter’s in Rome. Its location adjacent to the cathedral’s early medieval cemetery further suggests a mortuary function. It became part of a congregational church at an unknown date, and was finally demolished in the 15th century.

### 4.2 Synthesis of the development of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves

#### 4.2.1. The earliest tower-naves

The first known Anglo-Saxon tower-nave was constructed by Bishop Wilfred in the very early 8th century at Hexham abbey [16], in fulfilment of a sick-bed promise made on the threshold of his slow rehabilitation into Northumbrian politics. It stood apart from the main abbey church, adjacent to a cemetery flanking the probable entrance to the monastic precinct. The second, St Michael-le-Belfry [35], was built in York perhaps a century later, also adjacent to a cemetery guarding the entrance to the cathedral precinct. The third tower-nave was constructed at the end of the 9th century by King Alfred at the royal *vill* and re-founded abbey at Athelney [2]. The tower-nave of St Martin [30], constructed before c. 971, may also date to this period. It stood in a cemetery and marked the entrance to Winchester’s Old Minster precinct from the probable royal palace adjacent. Together, these sites pre-date a mid-10th century upsurge in known tower-naves. They prefigure many of the themes common to later examples: royal agency, the marking of boundaries and entrances, and a mortuary context.

#### 4.2.2 Tower-nave churches c. 950-1000

The turriform rotunda at Abingdon [1] was laid out by King Eadred (946-55), possibly as a chapel for his royal *vill* in the style of the imperial chapel at Aachen (see section 5.4.1). It was completed by Æthelwold c. 962, who had re-founded Abingdon under the incipient Monastic Reform movement. This had begun in the early 940s at Glastonbury under Æthelwold’s mentor Dunstan, who had also been sponsored by King Eadred. At Glastonbury, Dunstan constructed the tower-nave gatehouse of St John [12] c. 959 to mark the main entrance of the inner enclosure and cemetery of his abbey. Together, Abingdon and Glastonbury mark the start of a dramatic rise in the construction of tower-naves.

Dunstan’s other disciple in the Monastic Reform, Oswald, may have constructed a tower-nave at Worcester Cathedral [33] soon after, in 966, as a mortuary chapel and
bell-tower. Æthelwold instigated Reform at Thorney abbey [28] c. 972, where he also constructed a tower-nave as his private chapel. Around this time also, Æthelwold oversaw the conversion of St Martin’s tower at Winchester [30] into a chapel-cum-westwerk for King Edgar, architect and sponsor of the Monastic Reform. It also housed the tomb of St Swithun, former bishop of Winchester. In part due to his support, King Edgar had recently been created emperor by Dunstan. Fittingly, Edgar’s new westwerk may have been inspired by the imperial church at the palace of Aachen. The adjacent royal burial church, the New Minster, gained a tower-nave of its own soon after [31]. The sudden spate of tower-nave construction in the middle decades of the 10th century appears to have been intimately related to the Monastic Reform movement.

At the end of the century, a tower-nave was constructed at Sherborne cathedral [24] by Bishop Wulfige III, a late proponent of the Monastic Reform. It consisted of a detached westwerk-chapel, echoing nearby Glastonbury [12] and the rival Wessex see at Winchester [30]. It echoed Worcester [33] and those at Winchester’s Old and New Minsters [30 & 31] in its use as a mortuary chapel: that at Glastonbury [12] may also have a funerary role due to its location in a cemetery.

The late 10th century also saw the appearance of tower-nave churches away from monastic contexts, at Portchester [23] and probably Wickham [29]. The suggested example at Springfield Lyons [26] is loosely dated to the 10th century, and may pre-date the other lordly examples. Each is located at a lordly residence, and Portchester [23] and Wickham [29] appear to lie within the defended enclosures of high-ranking lords. The enigmatic tower-nave at the burh of South Cadbury [25] also belongs to the late 10th century, but it lacks contextual data for interpretation.

4.2.3 Tower-nave churches in the 11th century

Lordly tower-nave construction continued through the early-mid 11th century. Those at Barton-upon-Humber [3] and Earls Barton [8] were associated with lordly enclosures. St Michael’s in Oxford [20] flanked the north gate of the fortified town, whilst St George’s [21] flanked the west. Both Oxford towers are thought to have been constructed under lordly patronage.

The middle decades of the century saw a spate of the construction of tower-naves at lordly residences, at Caistor [6], Broughton [4] Jevington [17], York [34], Guildford [13], Morland [19] and Bury St Edmunds [5]. The latter, which lay within the abbey precinct, appears to have doubled as a residential tower for the family of its aristocratic builder. Also dating to this period is the tower-nave at East Dean [9], which
has no obvious manorial context. Tower-naves continued to be built at lordly residences until the end of the century: at East Teignmouth [10], Woodeaton [32], Fingest [11], Langford [18], Ozleworth [22] and Swindon [27]. The example at Hastings [14] is harder to interpret, but echoes the two in Oxford [20 & 21] in being located at the gate of a probable burh. It also echoes the lordly towers at Earl’s Barton [8], Portchester [23], Caistor [6] and St George’s, Oxford [21] in being incorporated into a Norman castle. Interestingly, both Langford [18] and East Teignmouth [10] are thought to have been constructed by Anglo-Saxon lords who had endured and prospered after the Norman Conquest.

In contrast, only three tower-naves are known to have been constructed in a monastic context during the 11th century. In 1047 a tower-nave was completed in the cemetery of St Augustine’s abbey, Canterbury [7]. It presumably had a funerary purpose, and was used as a royal mortuary chapel soon after. The second comprised the Bishop Robert’s (1079-1095) chapel at Hereford [15], which was constructed from Continental influence in explicit emulation of the imperial chapel at Aachen (see section 5.4.1). At the end of the century the lordly tower-nave and residence at Bury St Edmunds abbey [5] was converted into a high-status mortuary chapel.

There is little evidence for the construction of tower-nave churches in the 12th century. A turriform Templar church was constructed at Ludlow castle (Shropshire) in the mid-12th century (see section 7.2.2). A second turriform, apparently Templar, church was constructed at West Thurrock, possibly as late as c. 1300. It is only known from excavation (Hayes 1963, 4-6; Milton 1984). Free-standing belltowers continued to be built in both parochial and monastic contexts, but there is no evidence they contained chapels (McAleer 2001 & 2003; section 7.3.1 & fig. 7.18).

4.3 Categorisation of sites
All but two of the thirty-five towers can be divided into two major categories (fig. 4.2). Thirteen are found in a monastic context, as secondary chapels amongst a wider complex of churches. Twenty-one are found associated with a manorial curia, albeit often with a manor-house of substantially later date. Of the two remaining sites, South Cadbury [22] was never completed and its setting is poorly understood, and East Dean [9] is unrelated to any known manorial site.
These categories are artificial. St Benedict’s, Bury St Edmunds [5] lies within the monastic precinct, but was apparently used as a seigneurial residence, and so has been counted as both a lordly and a monastic tower. High-ranking Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics were powerful lords in their own right: Bishop Leofric’s tower at East Teignmouth [10] has been classed as lordly, since it lay on his private estate, yet the private towers of Bishop Æthelwold at Thorney [28] and Bishop Robert at Hereford [15] are associated with monastic sites.

Nevertheless, it is striking that thirty-three of the thirty-five tower-naves can be divided into two clear categories, and that such a large proportion of the non-monastic tower-naves have a seigneurial context. A study of fifty-seven local churches in the Tees Valley, for example, found that only half of the churches with pre-Conquest origins had manorial sites associated with them (Daniels 1996, 109-110). The categories of ‘lordly’ and ‘monastic’ tower-naves will therefore frame the forthcoming discussion. The number of monastic sites is also surprising, given the emphasis on secular lordship that has hitherto characterised discussion of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves (section 2.1).

4.4 The development of the tower-nave form

4.4.1 The development of monastic tower-naves

The earliest tower-nave churches are all monastic, and it is unfortunate that we are ignorant of their dimensions and, in the case of St Michael-le-Belfry [35] Winchester’s New Minster [31] and Thorney abbey [28], of their form as well. Hexham [16] (early 8th century) and Athelney [2] (late 9th century) are not dissimilar in their documented form,
comprising of central turrisform spaces with four smaller, apsidal, porticus. The rounded form and apsidal chancel of the mid-10th century tower-nave at Abingdon [1] may be traceable from Hexham [16]. The unique hexagonal tower at Worcester [33] is also arguably closer to Hexham [16] and Athelney [2] than the hexagonal churches at Swindon [27] and Ozleworth [22]. The first tower-nave whose plan is known may be the rectangular tower of St Martin, Winchester [30], which is of uncertain date. Its rectangular form and apparent function as a gateway is paralleled at Glastonbury [12]; however, Glastonbury [12] is orientated differently to St Martin’s [30] and has distinctive projecting antae.

Moving into the late 10th century, the axial location and flanking porticus of the westwerk at Sherborne [24] was probably copied from the development of St Martin’s tower [30] into a westwerk for the adjacent Old Minster. In the mid-11th century, the massive square vaulted foundations of St Mary’s in Canterbury [7] are quite different from the preceding monastic tower-naves. They are best paralleled by the massive vaulted tower of St Benedict at Bury St Edmund’s abbey [5], also mid-11th century in date. St Benedict’s seems to have been constructed in the first instance as a seigneurial residential tower, and was only converted into the abbey burial-chapel at the end of the century. There is doubt as to the reliability of the plan of St Benedict’s shown on fig. 4.3, and whether or not this plan represents the tower’s initial, seigneurial, phase of construction. Finally, the massive square structure of the late-11th century Bishop’s chapel at Hereford [15] is also best paralleled at St Benedict’s [5], although it was also an exemplar of Continental episcopal chapels. Compellingly, its construction made explicit reference to the late 8th century imperial chapel at Aachen, whose round form (described in section 5.4.1) is in turn thought to share a similar tradition to Hexham [16], Athelney [2] and Abingdon [1], whilst its function as a westwerk may have inspired those at Winchester [30] and Sherborne [24].
Fig. 4.3 – Simplified plans of the first phases of tower-nave churches through time, where known.
4.4.2 The development of lordly tower-naves

The earliest lordly tower-nave may be the poorly-dated, but probably 10th century, uncertain example at Springfield Lyons. Its scale and possible timber construction is much closer in form and scale to the excavated lordly timber towers at Bishopstone [A], West Cotton [D] and possibly Ketton Quarry [C] than it is to the majority of tower-nave churches (see appendix II and section 6.2.1). The pilaster-strip decoration at Earls Barton [8], Barton-upon-Humber [3] and, to a lesser extent, the later lordly tower-naves at Guildford [13] and Langford [18] may also refer to the timber origins of these towers (discussed in section 6.2.3).

Portchester [23] and probably Wickham [29] date to the late 10th century. They are both small and square, characteristic of the majority of subsequent lordly tower-nave construction (fig. 4.3). There are variations within this group. Broughton’s [4] rectangular plan may be the result of its having been heightened from an existing church; it also gained a newel stair by the end of the century, present also at East Teignmouth [10] and Hastings [14]. Hastings [14] is unusual in its southern porticus; both Barton-upon-Humber [3] and probably Langford [18] have western porticus, possibly baptisteries. St George’s [21] is unusual in its vast scale, otherwise known only from monastic contexts, potentially including the great aristocratic tower of Earl Ælfric at Bury St Edmund’s abbey [5]. Nevertheless, St George’s [21] differs from them all in its simple, square form and its lack of elaborate vaulted foundations (as at Bury St Edmund’s [5] and Canterbury [7]). Finally, both Swindon [27] and Ozleworth [22] are comparable to the other lordly tower-naves despite their octagonal form: their similarity in date and location suggests a local ‘school’ of construction, perhaps drawn from nearby Worcester [33].

Comparison of the elevations of the lordly tower-naves, where known, shows a greater variation in form (fig. 4.4). Earls Barton [8] and St Michael’s, Oxford [20] have an unusual number of above-ground openings. Langford [18], Fingest [11], and St Mary’s, York [34] have large, elaborate belfry-openings, whilst Guildford [13] and Caistor [6] appear to lack them altogether. Similar two-light belfry-openings are shared by Wickham [29], Morland [19], Jevington [17], Swindon [27] and Ozleworth [22] but not by the other towers. The pilaster-strips of Earls Barton [8], Barton-upon-Humber [3], Guildford [13] and Langford [18] have been mentioned, as has the hexagonal form of Swindon [27] and Ozleworth [22]. Overall, there does not seem to be a particular ‘type’ of lordly-tower-nave architecture beyond their common modest, usually square, form. It is unfortunate that the elevation of only one of the monastic tower-naves is
known – that of Hereford [15] – but they are likely to have displayed much greater variation.

Fig. 4.4 – Tower-nave elevations, where known. The most elaborate elevation of each is shown.

4.4.3 *The ‘orphan’ tower-naves*

Two of the tower-naves, South Cadbury [25] and East Dean [9] were constructed neither in an explicitly monastic nor an apparently lordly context. They are different in
both form and scale (figs 4.3 & 4.5). The modest square tower at East Dean [9] is comparable with many of the lordly tower-naves, particularly nearby Jevington [17]. However, the location of East Dean’s [9] manor-house is unknown. South Cadbury [25], on the other hand, is one of the largest known tower-naves: its scale and *porticus* bear comparison with monastic towers such as Sherborne [24], Hexham [16] and Athelney [2]. It was located in a *burghal* fort, but the context of its construction is otherwise unknown.

4.4.4 *Tower-nave development: some conclusions*

Thirty-three out of the thirty-five tower-nave churches can be characterised as either lordly or monastic context. Comparison of the form and scale of monastic versus lordly tower-naves bears this out. Lordly tower-naves are overwhelmingly small and square in plan, often with a chancel, whereas monastic tower-naves are far more varied in form (fig. 4.3).

![Fig. 4.5 – The internal ground-floor areas of tower-naves through time, excluding chancels.](image)

There is less evidence allowing for the scale of lordly and monastic tower-naves to be compared, but enough to indicate that lordly tower-naves are generally smaller and far more consistent in size than the monastic tower-naves (fig. 4.3). The internal areas
of the ground floor of the tower-naves also bears this out (fig. 4.5). Internal rather than external areas have been calculated to allow for variations in wall-thickness between the towers, and chancels have been excluded due to their equally inconsistent presence, size and survival. Figure 4.5 shows that the lordly tower-naves were consistently c. 10 – 40 m$^2$ internally, whereas the five monastic tower-naves – for which information is available – were between 13 and 164 m$^2$ internally. Bury St Edmunds [5] is also unusually large, at 95 m$^2$, but it is neither a wholly lordly nor a wholly monastic tower-nave, and there is doubt as to the accuracy of its plan (see appendix I.5). It has been estimated that Anglo-Saxon churches with a nave of less than 45 m$^2$ were private rather than congregational (section 3.4.4), which supports the interpretation of lordly tower-naves as private, status-affording chapels.

4.5 Construction of tower naves through time

The earliest tower-naves in this study are all monastic. Lordly tower-naves appear in numbers relatively suddenly towards the end of the 10th century, following a possible upsurge in the popularity of the form around the time of the mid-10th century Monastic Reform (fig. 4.6). Only three or four tower-nave churches$^1$ date to before the Monastic Reform. These few, evenly spread through the centuries, do not themselves survive, and

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$^1$ Depending on the uncertain date of St Martin’s, Winchester [30].
must represent the emissaries of a larger original population that remains unrecorded in
the archaeological or documentary records. Nevertheless, figure 4.6 probably shows a
genuine pattern: tower-nave numbers dramatically increased in the mid-10\textsuperscript{th} century,
and there is little reason to think that this is the result of bias in the evidence for tower-
nave identification. This evidence consists of three principle sources: standing fabric,
documentary sources and excavation (fig. 4.7), which will be discussed in turn.

<table>
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<th>DATE</th>
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<th>PRINCIPLE EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Athelney</td>
<td>late C9th</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
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<td>lordly/monastic</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Caister</td>
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<td>lordly</td>
<td>Standing fabric</td>
</tr>
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<td>7. Canterbury</td>
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<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
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<td>8. Earls Barton</td>
<td>early C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Standing fabric</td>
</tr>
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<td>9. East Dean</td>
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<td>Standing fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. East Teignmouth</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>18. Langford</td>
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<td>Standing fabric</td>
</tr>
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<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
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<td>32. Woodedaton</td>
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<td>33. Worcester</td>
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<td>Monastic</td>
<td>Standing fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. York: St Mary</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>Lordly</td>
<td>Standing fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. York: St Michael</td>
<td>early C9th?</td>
<td>Monastic</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.7 – The main source of evidence for the identification of each tower-nave.
Documentary sources:

- The passage of time has doubtless affected the survival of documents, meaning that there is more chance of later tower-naves being mentioned than early ones. The mid-10th century upsurge in monastic life may therefore explain the apparent upsurge in documented tower-naves. On the other hand, the decline in monastic life and literacy in the 9th and earlier 10th centuries is now thought to be exaggerated (Blair 2005, esp. 291-2).

- In the Anglo-Saxon period, the Church was responsible for the bulk of descriptive written sources of the type which preserve mention of tower-naves: individual buildings are more likely to be described in chronicles and saints’ lives than laws and charters. This means than monastic tower-naves are far more likely to survive in the documentary record than lordly ones. No tower-naves constructed outside of monasteries could have been included in this study if physical and excavated evidence is disregarded.

Standing fabric:

- The great majority of standing pre-Conquest fabric survives in small local churches. This is due to the twin effects of the massive rebuilding of English cathedrals and abbey churches in the early Norman period and the equally profound effects of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This means that we are far more likely to identify lordly tower-naves from standing evidence than monastic ones. Hereford [15] and Worcester [33] are the only monastic tower-naves that could have been included in this study on the evidence of standing fabric alone; even then, both survive only in antiquarian descriptions.

Excavated evidence:

- The archaeological record is biased towards uncovering monastic tower-naves. Far more excavation has been undertaken at great and famous Anglo-Saxon monasteries than at local churches over the past century or so, although the balance has shifted back in recent decades (discussed in Rodwell 2005, 11, 25-8). Given the small number of monasteries compared to local churches, a greater proportion of monastic tower-naves have been identified through excavation. Of the eight excavated tower-naves, four lie at major monastic sites.

- Archaeological evidence is less affected by the passage of time than the evidence of standing buildings or documentary sources. The foundations of a 7th
century tower-naves are just as likely to be identified as those dating to the 11th century. It is therefore striking that the incidence of tower-naves identified through excavation does indeed increase from the mid-10th century onwards.

![Fig. 4.8](image)

**Fig. 4.8** – Main sources for the identification of lordly and monastic tower-naves (based on fig. 4.7). Bury St Edmunds [5] has been counted in both categories.

In all, despite their relative strengths and weaknesses, the documentary, archaeological and structural evidence all combine to suggest that the dramatic increase in the construction of tower-naves after the mid-10th century is a genuine pattern (fig. 4.8). This upsurge is mainly due to the construction of tower-naves in non-monastic contexts from this date, but there was also a modest increase in monastic tower-naves. We would not expect the identification of either lordly or monastic tower-naves through excavation to be greatly affected by the passage of time. Taken by itself, this source corroborates the mid-10th century upsurge in tower-nave church construction.

4.6 The distribution of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves

4.6.1 Tower-naves and Anglo-Saxon churches

The total original population of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves is unknown; the thirty-five sites in this study represent a random and presumably unrepresentative sample. Plotting distribution maps can therefore only provide us with the positive evidence of where individual tower-naves were built, rather than indicating where they were not built (fig. 4.1). Having said this, the distribution of known tower-naves broadly follows the distribution of known Anglo-Saxon architecture (fig. 4.9). One exception is the relative
absence of tower-naves in East Anglia, a region known for its distinctive round-towers. This reinforces the view that there is something ‘different’ going on in this region, perhaps that its round towers were an alternative local expression of lordship.

Fig. 4.9 – The distribution of tower-naves compared to extant Anglo-Saxon architecture (data from Taylor and Taylor 1965).

4.6.2 The spread of tower-naves through time
We can be confident that neither monastic nor lordly tower-naves originated from one place to spread across England (fig. 4.10). Although only three sites are known from before c. 900, each is located at a monastery in a different part of the country. The apparent boom in tower-nave construction in the 10th century, including at lordly sites, seems also to have had no pattern. This liberates us from culture-historical narratives, such as the spreading power of the 10th century House of Wessex. We can instead
interpret tower-naves in their own terms as individual manifestations of an accepted architectural form in particular social and landscape contexts.

4.6.3 Tower-naves, topography and demographics

Plotting known tower-naves against relief maps, maps of estimated population at Domesday and mid-20th century agricultural land-quality indicates that they were invariably to be found in wealthy lowland areas (fig. 4.11). None are in highland areas, and all are associated with rich agricultural land. With the notable exception of East Anglia, they are also common to all the estimated major population centres of late Anglo-Saxon England, with the strong caveat that neither is the evidence for population in the Domesday Book reliable, nor can it be reliably projected back through the
centuries. Broadly speaking, tower-nave churches were associated with wealthy, populous areas: they were not lonely watchtowers on remote frontiers, nor were they symbols of eremitic monasticism. For a more fine-grained analysis, it is necessary to look at the local landscape setting of each site.

Fig. 4.11 – The distribution of tower-naves against relief, estimated population in 1086 and mid-20th century land-quality (after Hill 1981, 6, 7, 19).

4.7 The monastic tower-naves in context

4.7.1 The builders of monastic tower-naves

All of the monastic tower-naves were built under the patronage of powerful and high-status individuals (fig. 4.12). In a monastic context, no tower-nave is found at a petty
local house, and all but one was constructed by a bishop or a king, or both. The exception is St Benedict’s, Bury St Edmund’s [5], which was constructed by an earl and later converted into the mortuary chapel of the powerful abbots of that house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>[ARCH]</th>
<th>BISHOP</th>
<th>KING</th>
<th>EARL</th>
<th>MONASTIC REFORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>2. Athelney</td>
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<td>5. Bury: St Benedict</td>
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<td>7. Canterbury</td>
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</table>

Fig. 4.12 – The patrons of the monastic tower-naves.

Six out of the thirteen monastic tower-naves are found at houses which were prominent in the 10th century Monastic Reform. This is unlikely to be accidental: five out of the six were apparently constructed with the personal involvement of Bishops Oswald, Æthelwold or Dunstan, the chief agents of the movement. Overall, monastic tower-naves were the product of the richest and most powerful monastic houses, often under the auspices of the Reform movement and often with the direct involvement of the king.

4.7.2 The functions of monastic tower-naves

Twelve of the thirteen monastic tower-naves appear to have one or more of three specific functions (fig. 4.13). The exception is the poorly-understood example at Athelney [2]. Five tower-naves were private chapels: Abingdon [1], Hereford [15] and Thorney [28] for bishops, Bury St Edmunds [5] for an Earl and the westwerk constructed around the tower of St Martin, Winchester [30] for the king. Ten had a funerary context, often high-status in character. Abingdon [1], Bury St Edmunds [5] and Sherborne [24] became mortuary chapels for abbots and bishops; Canterbury [7] lay in a cemetery and was used as a mortuary chapel for numerous kings, bishops and abbots; in Winchester, the Old Minster westwerk [30] housed the relics of St Swithun, a former
bishop, and the New Minster tower [31] was a funerary chapel for a royal burial-church. Glastonbury [12], Hexham [16] and St Michael’s, York [35] all lay in cemeteries, as did Worcester [33], which was also a known mortuary chapel. Finally, five of the thirteen monastic tower-naves flanked or acted as gateways: Glastonbury [12] functioned as a cemetery gatehouse, Hexham [16], St Michael’s, York [35] and St Martin’s, Winchester [30] stood at entrances to precincts, and Glastonbury [12], St Martin’s, Winchester [30] and Sherborne [24] framed the main west entrance to their main monastic churches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWER-NAVE</th>
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<th>MORTUARY/CEMETERY CHAPEL</th>
<th>GATEWAY CHAPEL</th>
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<td>5. Bury: St Benedict</td>
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</table>

Fig. 4.13 – The functions of the monastic tower-naves, where known.

4.8 The lordly tower-naves in context

4.8.1 The builders of lordly tower-naves

The identities of many of the likely patrons of the lordly tower-naves is uncertain. A number of builders can be tentatively identified (fig. 4.14), although reference should be made to appendix I for the degree of certainty in each case. Guildford [13] may have been built by the king, his reeve, or possible Earl Godwine. Three other earls – Ælfric, Morcar of Mercia and possibly Ælhere of Mercia – may have constructed the tower-naves at Bury St Edmunds [5], Caistor [6] and Wickham [29] respectively. Sherriff Maerle-Sveinn of Lincolnshire may have been responsible for that at Broughton [13], and Eltreth – head of one of the chief families of Westmorland – for Morland [19]. After the Norman Conquest, Count Robert at Hastings [14] and the Berkeley family at Ozleworth [22] were in the first rank of local lords, and Bishop Leofric of Exeter at East Teignmouth [10] was a man of obvious status. Leofric is also interesting in being a
‘survivor’ of the Norman Conquest, an Anglo-Saxon who prospered under William I, which is also true for Ælfsige of Faringdon at Langford [18]. Both men may have been using this Anglo-Saxon building type as an architectural statement of continuity.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TOWER-NAVE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>POSSIBLE PATRON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Springfield Lyons</td>
<td>C10th?</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Portchester</td>
<td>late C10th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Wickham</td>
<td>late C10th</td>
<td>Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Earls Barton</td>
<td>early C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Barton-upon-Humber</td>
<td>early C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Oxford: St Michael</td>
<td>early C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Broughton</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>Sherriff of Lincolnshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Caistor</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>Earl Morcar of Mercia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Oxford: St George</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bury: St Benedict</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>Earl Ælfric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Guildford</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>The king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Jevington</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>Cola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Morland</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>Eltreth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. York: St Mary</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. East Teignmouth</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>Bishop Leofric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fingest</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hastings</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>Count Robert of Eu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Langford</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>Ælfsige of Faringdon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Woodeaton</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>Fulk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Ozleworth</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>Roger II de Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Swindon</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>Moryn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.14 – The possible lords of each tower-nave at the time of their construction. Several are speculative: for the merits of each case, see appendix I.

Not all the lordly tower-naves were constructed by such high-ranking lords. ‘Cola’ may have built Jevington [17], but his identity is uncertain. The Moryn family, obscure Gloucestershire tenants of the Archbishop of York, may have built Swindon [27]. Woodeaton may have been built by one Fulk, a petty subtenant, but this is uncertain. Overall, however, the great majority of lordly tower-naves appear to have been constructed at the behest of the top rank of the early medieval aristocracy.

In addition, most tower-naves were located at the most important manor in a lord’s estate. This is true for Jevington [17], Broughton [4], Caistor [6], Langford [18], and Count Robert’s castle at Hastings [14]. Guildford [13], the Oxford tower-naves [20 & 21], Bury St Edmunds [5] and St Mary’s in York [34] were presumably located with urban residences in mind, and the evidence is lacking for the other sites. There are two exceptions. Woodeaton [32] appears not to have been constructed at an important estate, and Ozleworth [22] was constructed at an existing Anglo-Saxon lordly enclosure rather than the new Norman manorial centre at Berkeley Castle.
4.8.2 Lordly tower-naves and manorial sites

Nineteen of the twenty-one lordly tower-naves were located within or adjacent to suggested manorial curiae (fig. 4.15). The two exceptions are the tower-naves at the west and north gates of Oxford [20 & 21]: since maintenance of the walls of Oxford was a lordly responsibility it is likely that both towers are seigneurial in origin. This is supported by the construction of a castle at St George’s tower [21] in the early Norman period. Of the nineteen manorial curiae, nine are secure from archaeological or documentary evidence: Barton-upon-Humber [3], Caistor [6], Earls Barton [8], Hastings [14], Ozleworth [22], Portchester [23], Springfield Lyons [26] and Wickham [29], also Bury St Edmunds [5] where the lord dwelt within his tower. There is good evidence in later maps for circular curiae fossilised around Jevington [17] and Morland [19], which both contain medieval manor-houses, and Guildford [13] on the accepted site of a documented royal residence. Clear circular boundaries also surround both Langford [18] and St Mary’s in York [34], but both have only indirect evidence for a manor-house. The evidence for curiae is less clear at Broughton [4], Fingest [11], Swindon [27] and Woodeaton [32], but in each case a later manor-house lies adjacent to the tower-nave church. The enclosure at East Teignmouth [10] is also uncertain, but it appears to be mentioned in contemporary charter-bounds. More archaeological study is needed, but the manorial context of these twenty-one tower-naves is accepted for the purposes of this study.

In most cases it is not possible to establish the relative chronology of the tower-nave and its suggested manorial curia. This is due to the often late evidence for the associated manor-house and curia. In the six cases with sufficient data, the tower-nave appears to have been added to the lordly site. This is demonstrated archaeologically at Portchester [23], and is also likely to be the case at the suggested tower-nave at Springfield Lyons [26] despite the site’s uncertain stratigraphy. At both Guildford [13] and Ozleworth [22] a combination of topographic, documentary and place-name evidence indicates that their respective manorial curiae pre-existed the extant tower-nave. Hastings [14] appears to have been (re-)built during the construction of its Norman castle. Finally, there is good evidence at St Mary’s, York [34] that the site had been divided up amongst secular powers before the tower-nave was constructed. Overall, it appears that tower-naves were constructed to augment existing lordly residences, rather than lordly residences coalescing around tower-naves.
4.8.3 Lordly tower-naves and the Promotion Law

It has been suggested that tower-nave churches were constructed in fulfilment of the late Anglo-Saxon *Promotion Law* (section 2.2). This indicates the suite of buildings, aside...
from a hall, that may have been expected of a lord: a burhgeat (a gatehouse, by implication also an enclosure), a bellhus (a bell-house), a church and a kitchen, all of which have been attested archaeologically at late Anglo-Saxon lordly sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tower-nave</th>
<th>Wholly within manorial curia?</th>
<th>Burhgeat?</th>
<th>Bellhus?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Barton-upon-Humber</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Broughton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bury St Edmunds</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Caistor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Earls Barton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. East Teignmouth</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fingest</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Guildford</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hastings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Jevington</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Langford</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Morland</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Oxford: St Michael</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Ozleworth</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Portchester</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Springfield Lyons</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Swindon</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Wickham</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Woodeaton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. York: St Mary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 4.16** – The utility of lordly tower-naves according to the thegnly requirements of a bell-house and a burhgeat.

Each tower-nave could clearly have fulfilled the requirement for a chapel, albeit a private chapel rather than a congregational church, in view of their limited capacity (fig. 4.5). The one exception is Bury St Edmunds [5], but this is known to have been the residential tower of a lord and so is unlikely to have been a public church. Tower-nave churches would neither have been suitable for public worship nor, significantly, is it likely that the majority would have been accessible for this purpose. Fifteen of the twenty-one lordly tower-naves are wholly integrated into their manorial curiae, in private rather than public space (figs 4.15 & 4.16).

The interpretation of lordly tower-naves as burhgeats is less certain, since in only a quarter of cases do they flank a probable entrance (fig. 4.16). The towers of St George and St Michael in Oxford [20 & 21] are strong candidates to be considered as burhgeats since they seem to have been incorporated into two of the four gates of a known burh, even (in the case of St Michael’s) acting as a possible pedestrian entrance.
There is also a good case to be made for Hastings [14], which flanks the gatehouse of a Norman castle on a highly defensible headland, itself a likely site for the Burghal Hideage fort of Haestingaceastre. Jevington [17] flanks the presumed entrance to its presumed manorial curia, although it is unknown whether this was ever a defensible earthwork.

A related concept is David Parson’s suggestion that lordly tower-naves may have stood on territorial boundaries marking the entrances to estates, that is acting as burhgeats in a wider landscape sense (Audouy et al. 1995, 89). However, there is no correlation between parish or, where known, estate boundaries and tower-naves in a non-urban setting. Only three tower-naves lie less than c. 500 m from boundaries: Fingest [11] (50 m), Wickham [29] (125 m) and East Teignmouth [10] (adjacent). Of these, Wickham [29] does not lie near the intersection of its parish boundary and nearby Ermine Street, and so did not mark any sort of transition for traffic along this busy route. Fingest [11] is a more convincing candidate since it lies on the parish boundary across which traffic would have passed to continue up the admittedly remote valley in which it lay. There is also no evidence that the parish boundaries at either Fingest or Wickham were those of an estate. East Teignmouth [10] lies on a demonstrable estate boundary near the mouth of a busy estuary, but it appears to be an isolated case.

The interpretation of lordly tower-naves as belhus (bell-house) is more convincing. Of the fifteen with surviving evidence, twelve had belfry openings in each face of their upper stages (figs 4.4 & 4.16). Guildford [13] and Caistor [6] lack any original belfry openings; Wickham [29] only has two, which may have emphasised the ecclesiastical usage of its upper stage, where no bells were ever hung. Additionally, the Bayeux Tapestry does not indicate any former belfry openings at Hastings [14].

Overall, there is little evidence that tower-nave churches combined more than one seigneurial building into a single status-affording structure (contra Audouy et al. 1995, 87-90). The Promotion Law should not be taken literally, but as a broad indication of the use of architecture to manifest lordly status in the Anglo-Saxon period. In this sense alone is it useful for the interpretation of lordly tower-nave churches.

4.8.4 Lordly tower-naves as funerary structures

One role that a lord’s tower-naves may have fulfilled at their residence is the marking of the appropriation of burial-rights from minster-churches (discussed in section 2.8.3). This would be in continuity with the significant number of monastic tower-naves which seem to have marked burial places and acted as mortuary chapels (section 4.7.2).
## Chapter 4: Synthesis of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tower-nave</th>
<th>Belfry-openings?</th>
<th>Earlier/contemporary burial?</th>
<th>Nature of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barton-upon-Humber</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Preceded by aristocratic(?) cemetery</td>
<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broughton</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Preceded(?) by aristocratic cemetery</td>
<td>Two late C10th/early C11th grave-covers in church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury St Edmunds</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Becomes burial-chapel soon after construction</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caistor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Contemporary aristocratic burial?</td>
<td>Five C11th grave-covers in church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earls Barton</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Preceded by probable late Anglo-Saxon cemetery</td>
<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Teignmouth</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guildford</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>No(?)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jevington</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langford</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morland</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford: St Michael</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford: St George</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Preceded by a cemetery</td>
<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozleworth</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portchester</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Cemetery precipitates rebuilding of tower</td>
<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield Lyons</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Suggested tower appears to attract a burial</td>
<td>Excavation; chronology imprecise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swindon</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickham</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>No later cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodeaton</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Preceded by late Anglo-Saxon cemetery</td>
<td>Excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York: St Mary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Preceded by aristocratic(?) cemetery</td>
<td>C9th-C11th funerary sculpture in church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.17 – The funerary evidence for lordly tower-naves.

Of the eleven tower-naves for which information is available, only Wickham [29] has no evidence for funerary activity. Interestingly, it is also one of the few tower-naves to lack a convincing belfry. At five sites a cemetery is established prior to the construction of the tower-nave, possibly many years before. Of the remaining five sites, the sculptural evidence at Caistor [6] is poorly-dated, and Earl Ælfgar’s tower at Bury St Edmunds was located inside a monastic precinct which already had burial-rights. This leaves Portchester [23], the suggested example at Springfield Lyons [26] and possibly St George’s, Oxford [21] for which a link can be made between the construction of a tower-nave and the commencement of burial. The tower at Portchester [23] was rebuilt when a cemetery was established adjacent, and a chancel appears to have been added to
the suggested tower at Springfield Lyons [26] containing the only burial associated with the settlement. Two late 10th/early 11th century burials post-date the construction of St George’s [21], but their relationship with the tower is presently uncertain. Overall, a general interpretation that lordly tower-naves were demonstrations of burial-rights is unsustainable without more evidence; each site must be taken on its merits.

4.9 The landscape contexts of the tower-naves
This study seeks to understand the landscape context of Anglo-Saxon tower-naves as well as their social context: their utility as watchtowers and territorial markers, and their relationship to focal places of Anglo-Saxon social power.

4.9.1 Monastic tower-naves in the landscape (fig. 4.18)
All the monastic tower-naves were located at pre-existing institutions, which alone determined their place in the landscape. Only the Thorney [28] tower-nave could have acted as a marker for its monastic estate, but the local topography is so flat that this need not have been deliberate. They are little better as watchtowers: again, only Thorney [28] had a view over both a local beacon-system and over regional routes of communication. Despite this, there is high ground in the vicinity of nine of the thirteen monastic tower-naves which would have increased their prominence. The most dramatic example is Glastonbury [12]: St John’s tower would have been visible from most of Somerset had it been located a few hundred metres to the east atop the Tor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tower-nave</th>
<th>Estate marker?</th>
<th>Intervisible with major routes?</th>
<th>Beacons visible?</th>
<th>Higher ground in vicinity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abingdon</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Athelney</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bury St Edmunds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Canterbury</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Glastonbury</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Hereford</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Hexham</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Sherborne</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Thorney</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Winchester Old Minster</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Winchester New Minster</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Worcester</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. York: St Michael</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1/13</strong></td>
<td><strong>4/13</strong></td>
<td><strong>n/a</strong></td>
<td><strong>9/13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig. 4.18 – The landscape contexts of the monastic tower-naves.*
The monastic tower-naves therefore seem to have been located with regards to their immediate setting rather than their local landscape: at a threshold, within a cemetery or to serve as a private chapel, as discussed above (section 4.7.2).

4.9.2 Lordly tower-naves in the landscape (fig. 4.19)

Only half of the lordly tower-naves are located at the most lofty or prominent part of either their parish or, where this is known, an adjacent parish also belonging to the same lord. The same proportion – of different tower-naves – would have made reasonable watchtowers for three or four miles over most of the major routes of communication in their locality. Three-quarters of the tower-naves with beacons in their vicinity would have had visibility over them, but four do not. Turning to their potential as territorial markers, only Earls Barton [8] could have acted as a landmark broadly visible from all the lord’s estates in a locality, although St Mary’s in York [34] and Wickham [29] are sufficiently prominent for this to have been probable. This is a mixed bag, but it compares favourably with the usefulness of the monastic tower-naves as watchtowers and landmarks (section 4.9.1).

Overall, lordly tower-naves were located with their manorial residences in mind, rather than for sheer prominence. In the six instances for which information is available, the tower-nave was added to a pre-existing lordly site (section 4.8.2): this determined their location, just as monastic tower-naves were located at existing monasteries. In some cases these manorial residences were themselves prominent in the local landscape, but in the absence of a thorough analysis of known Anglo-Saxon lordly residences we remain ignorant of how unusual this was. Certainly, regional studies of Norman castles have also found that visibility was a secondary consideration in their siting (Liddiard 2000; Lowerre 2005). The construction by a lord of a tower-nave at his residence may have been motivated by a desire for greater landscape prominence, but the lordly residence was the determining factor in their location.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tower-nave</th>
<th>Estate marker?</th>
<th>Intervisible with major routes?</th>
<th>Beacons visible?</th>
<th>Higher ground in parish?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Broughton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bury St Edmunds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Caistor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Earls Barton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. East Teignmouth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fingest</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Guildford</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hastings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Levington</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Langford</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Morland</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Oxford: St Michael</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Oxford: St George</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Ozleworth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Portchester</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Springfield Lyons</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Swindon</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Wickham</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Woodseaton</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. York: St Mary</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1/11</strong></td>
<td><strong>11/21</strong></td>
<td><strong>15/19</strong></td>
<td><strong>11/21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 4.19** - The landscape contexts of the lordly tower-naves.

4.9.3 Tower-naves and assembly-sites

Assembly-sites were focal places of Anglo-Saxon social power (section 2.7.5). They were centres of political manoeuvring, legal judgement, religious debate and military muster, and provided the setting for aristocratic competition and display. Of the twenty tower-naves whose hundredal assembly-site is known, twelve are intervisible, of which ten lie in the same parish (fig. 4.20).
### Chapter 4: Synthesis of Results

#### TOWER-NAVE CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWER-NAVE</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>ASSEMBLY-SITE KNOWN?</th>
<th>ASSEMBLY-SITE VISIBLE?</th>
<th>ASSEMBLY-SITE IN PARISH?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abingdon</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Athelney</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Barton-upon-Humber</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Broughton</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bury St Edmunds</td>
<td>lordly/monastic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Caister</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Canterbury</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Earls Barton</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. East Dean</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. East Teignmouth</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fingest</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Glastonbury</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Guildford</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hastings</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Hereford</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Hexham*</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Jevington</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
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<td>18. Langford</td>
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<td>lordly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Oxford: St Michael</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Oxford: St George</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Ozleworth</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Portchester</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Sherborne</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. South Cadbury</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Springfield Lyons</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Swindon</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Thorney</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Wickham</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Winchester Old Minster</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Winchester New Minster</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Woodeaton</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Worcester</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. York: St Mary</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. York: St Michael*</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 4.20** – The relationship between tower-nave churches and hundred meeting-places. *Excluding Hexham and St Michael-le-Belfry due to their early date.

A greater proportion of lordly to monastic tower-naves were related to their assembly-sites (fig. 4.21). Nine lordly tower-naves were at least visible whilst six were not; only two monastic tower-naves were visible whilst six were not. The lordly tower-nave at a monastic centre – Bury St Edmunds [5] – was both adjacent and intervisible.
with its assembly-site; the ‘orphan’ tower-nave at East Dean [9], which resembles a
lordly tower, was unrelated.

![Diagram: Tower-naves and assembly-sites]

**Fig. 4.21** – The relationship of lordly and monastic tower-nave churches to their
assembly-sites, where known. Bury St Edmunds [5] is both a lordly and a monastic
tower-nave.

Again, it seems that the decisive factor in the location of a tower-nave church was the
pre-existing lordly residence or monastery, rather than a landscape factor such as an
assembly-site. The bishop of Hereford, for example, held estates which bordered its
assembly-place, but he chose to site his tower-nave [15] out of sight at his residence.
Nevertheless, it is significant that a greater proportion of lordly than monastic tower-
naves were associated with their assembly-sites, although this presumably reflects the
pre-existing siting of that lord’s residence rather than his decision as to where to build
his tower.

### 4.9.4 The ‘orphan’ tower-naves

The landscape contexts of the two ‘orphan’ tower-naves (section 4.4.3) offer few clues
as to their purpose (fig. 4.22). That at East Dean [9], which architecturally resembles the
lordly tower-naves, was almost perversely hidden in the landscape. It could, from within
its parish, have had a commanding view of the sea from Beachy Head, or have been
intervisible with its assembly-site and the a regional beacon-system. Lack of place-name
and other contextual evidence affects our understanding of South Cadbury [25], whose
location in a prominent hillfort ensured its general visibility.
4.10 Tower-nave dedications

The dedication of an early medieval church, when used with other evidence, can illuminate the social or religious context of its construction. Of the thirty-five tower-naves, seventeen have either unknown or unique dedications (fig. 4.23). Two lordly tower-naves are dedicated to St Lawrence, which may be coincidence. This leaves four churches dedicated to St Michael and a remarkable eight to St Mary. St Michael was the guardian of heaven and commander of the armies of God. He was the bringer of souls to heaven is associated with high places, including towers. Mary was regarded as both a means of access to Heaven and as its queen; she was also a protector of cities.

4.11 The fates of the tower-naves

No tower-nave church survives in its original form, although Worcester [33] and Hereford [15] survived into the 18th century. These are the exceptions: the great majority of both lordly and monastic tower-naves had either been demolished or had become the conventional towers of congregational churches by the middle of the 12th century (figs 4.24 & 4.25).
Fig. 4.24 – Analysis of the end of tower-naves through demolition or the addition of a congregational nave, where known.

There was a move away from tower-nave construction in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. Many monastic tower-naves were demolished with the early Norman rebuilding of their institutions, and most lordly tower-naves were provided with congregational naves in the early Norman period. Interestingly, there is little evidence for the destruction or conversion of tower-naves in the Anglo-Saxon period, just as there is little evidence for the continuation of the form into the 12th century (section 4.2.3). Tower-naves were primarily an Anglo-Saxon building tradition which came to an end in the decades after the Norman Conquest, when surviving structures were mostly either demolished or put to other uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>FATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon</td>
<td>mid C10th</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>Collapsed (late C11th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athelney</td>
<td>late C9th</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>Survived into C12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barton-upon-Humber</td>
<td>early C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (late C11th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broughton</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (early Norman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury St Edmunds</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>lordly/monastic</td>
<td>Survived into C15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caistor</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (early Norman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>Part. demolished &amp; incorporated into Norman church (late C11th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earls Barton</td>
<td>early C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (late C12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Dean</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>Nave added (early Norman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Teignmouth</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (unknown date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingest</td>
<td>late C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (early-mid C12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury</td>
<td>mid C10th</td>
<td>monastic</td>
<td>Burned down (late C12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guildford</td>
<td>mid C11th</td>
<td>lordly</td>
<td>Nave added (early C12th)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Hastings  late C11th  lordly  Nave added (early Norman)
15. Hereford  late C11th  monastic  Demolished 1737
16. Hexham  early C8th  monastic  Rebuilt as parish church (C13th?)
17. Jevington  mid C11th  lordly  Nave added (early C12th)
18. Langford  late C11th  lordly  Nave added (C12th)
19. Morland  mid C11th  lordly  Nave added (C12th)
20. Oxford: St Michael  early C11th  lordly  Nave added (by C13th)
21. Oxford: St George  mid C11th  lordly  Nave added (late C11th)
22. Ozleworth  late C11th  lordly  Nave added (early C13th)
23. Portchester  late C10th  lordly  Demolished (mid C12th)
24. Sherborne  late C10th  monastic  Incorporated into cathedral (mid C11th)
25. South Cadbury  late C10th  neither  Never built?
26. Springfield Lyons  C10th?  lordly  Demolished (11th century?)
27. Swindon  late C11th  lordly  Nave added (by C13th)
28. Thorney  late C10th  monastic  Unknown
29. Wickham  late C10th  lordly  Nave added (late C11th)
30. Winchester Old Minster  early C10th?  monastic  Demolished (late C11th)
31. Winchester New Minster  late C10th  monastic  Demolished (late C11th)
32. Woodeaton  late C11th  lordly  Nave added (C12th)
33. Worcester  mid C10th  monastic  Nave added (C12/13th)
34. York: St Mary  mid C11th  lordly  Nave added (mid-late C12th)
35. York: St Michael  early C9th?  monastic  Nave added (unknown date)

Fig. 4.25 – The fates of the tower-naves.

4.12 Conclusions

Thirty-five tower-nave churches are known from early medieval England, starting in the early 8th century and finishing around 1100. They are found across England in wealthy, lowland areas, and do not appear to have ‘spread’ from any one location. Twelve were found at monasteries and twenty at lordly residences; a further tower functioned as a lordly residence within a monastery. The context of the construction of the final two is uncertain. This categorisation of monastic and lordly tower-naves frames the forthcoming discussion chapters.

The monastic tower-naves are more heterogeneous in size and form than the lordly examples, which are almost uniformly small and square. Both can be related to the highest ranks of early medieval society. The great majority were constructed at the behest of powerful secular and ecclesiastical lords, either at their residence or at the front rank of early medieval monasteries. Monastic tower-naves were funerary structures, high-status private chapels or burial-chapels, as gateways, or as a combination of these functions. They had little wider role in the early medieval
landscape. The lordly examples, on the other hand, have no clear suite of functions within their manorial residences, other than as private chapels. The majority would have made useful watchtowers and have been prominent from assembly-sites and communication routes, but the pre-existing lordly residence determined their location.

There appear to have been few tower-naves – all of them monastic – before the mid-10th century. The upsurge in their construction at this time appears to have been due to the influence of the Monastic Reform movement. This may have sparked the construction of lordly tower-naves from the late 10th century until their rapid decline and demolition or incorporation into congregational structures at the end of our period.

Tower-nave churches were high-status buildings, as befitted their elaborate form and limited capacity. They were undoubtedly religious structures, but even those in an explicitly monastic setting had a strong vein of secular influence. Their landscape setting was important, but it is the architectural form of the buildings themselves which seems to hold the key to the way they were used and perceived by the society that built them.
Chapter 5: Monastic tower-naves and tower-nave origins

- Research question 2: What is the origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?
- Research question 3: What is the ecclesiastical context of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?

If you could build the highest church tower in the world, I thought to myself, then surely you’d be able to arrange some kind of kingdom or other.


5.1 The origins of English tower-naves

England’s earliest known tower-nave is Wilfred’s church of St Mary at Hexham [16], which prefigures much of what the tower-nave form would come to represent over the following four centuries. Wilfred was a prominent ecclesiastic as well as a powerful lord with an armed retinue, and his tower-nave was constructed c. 705 adjacent to a cemetery at the entrance to his monastic precinct (fig. 5.1). Why was such a distinctive building type constructed by such a prominent figure a century after the reintroduction of Roman Christianity into England?

![Hexham abbey map](image_url)

**Fig. 5.1** – Hexham abbey in the early 8th century (based on the 1st edition OS map; data from Cambridge and Williams 1995).
The first possibility is that Wilfred was simply engaging with an existing tradition of tower-naves in England. There is no firm evidence for ecclesiastical towers – aside from the examples in this study – in England until the early 10th century, and no evidence at all before the early 9th century (summarised in Gem 1995, 40-44). Therefore, Wilfred was either engaging with a broader European Christian tradition or with a pre-existing architectural form current in Anglo-Saxon society.

The landscape of middle Anglo-Saxon England was dotted with towers to an extent that is rarely appreciated. Many of were Roman and would have been several centuries old by the early 8th century, but Dover’s pharos survives intact into modern times, and several Roman lighthouses may have been in operation until at least the time of Bede (see appendix I.34). ‘Towers in ruins’ (hreorge torras) occurs in line three of The Ruin (Bradley 1982, 402): Roman watchtowers on Hadrian’s Wall stood adjacent to Hexham. Bede’s Life of St Cuthbert (ch. 40; Colgrave 1940, 286-7) mentions ‘the watch-tower of the island of Lindisfarne’ (specula Lindisfarnensis insulae), the possible foundations of which have been identified through geophysical survey (O’Sullivan and Young 1995, 46-7).

Turning to towers with an explicitly religious function, Roman Britain abounded with ‘Romano-Celtic’ temples, which were centrally-planned square, round or polygonal, structures typically surrounded by a portico or enclosing wall (fig. 5.2). The height of these structures is debated. Although they are unlikely to have been excessively tall in proportion to their width, that at Autun in Saône-et-Loire, eastern France, survives to a height of twenty-five metres. Fifty-five examples are known in Britain, with their origins in the pre-Roman Iron Age. Of those subjected to modern excavation, several were used into the 5th century. Timber versions continued to be constructed in Rhineland areas into the early medieval period, and they have even been suggested as a model for Scandinavian stave-churches (Lewis 1966; Wilson 1980).
The construction of sacred towers by the pagan Anglo-Saxons is also possible. In his late-1st century *Histories*, Tacitus mentions a Germanic priestess, Veleda, of the Bructeri tribe, who lived in the Rhineland around AD 70. ‘She herself lived in a high tower and one of her relatives used to transmit questions and answers as if she were a messenger between a god and his worshippers’ (IV: 65; Wellesley and Ash 2009, 226-7). She is mentioned again in Tacitus’ *Germania* (8.2): ‘Veleda was long esteemed by many as a supernatural power, and they have in the past revered Aurinia also, and many others: not like sycophants, though, making them gods’ (Mattingly and Handford 1970, 140).

In his survey of possible pre-Christian English shrines, John Blair (1995) reviews the evidence for a distinctive group of square structures of probable Iron Age origin. Although their superstructures are unknown, that at New Wintles Farm (Oxfordshire) had postholes up to c. 0.5 m in diameter and may have been in use as late as the 8th century, although its dating is uncertain (Hawkes and Gray 1969; fig. 5.3). The type has recently been interpreted as excarnation platforms, albeit of unknown height (discussed in Redfern 2008, 283).
Overall, the case for an insular origin to Wilfred’s tower-nave at Hexham [16] is weak, and the evidence for the construction of Pagan or Germanic sacred towers is thin. Roman turrisiform structures in England may have survived to influence Wilfred, but none are known to have had the distinctive cruciform plan of St Mary’s church. More profoundly, there is no obvious reason why Wilfred would have chosen to copy these towers in the first place. Famous as an advocate of the Roman Church in England, he was a comparatively frequent visitor to the Continent and to Rome, and conceived of the construction of St Mary’s whilst in France (discussed in appendix I.16). He had founded the abbey at Hexham in the early 670s as an explicitly ‘Roman’ diocese to rival ‘Irish’ Lindisfarne, and constructed its main church along Roman basilican lines using re-used Roman masonry and craftsmen brought from the Continent. It is therefore likely
that Wilfred adopted Continental Roman Christian architecture for his new English
tower-nave.

A Continental origin for Wilfred’s tower is not a new idea, but hitherto it has
been handled simplistically. The model may have been the mid-5th century church of S.
Stefano Rotondo in Rome (see appendix I.31), but this does not explain why Wilfred
chose to build in this way. Nebulous processes of ‘influence’ and ‘diffusion’ are
commonly used to explain the spread of architectural styles in the medieval period, but
without investigating the underlying ideas behind these changes this approach is
simplistic and unhelpful.

Richard Gem (1983a, 9-12) has a more promising approach. He suggests that
Wilfred was engaging with the iconography of centrally-planned churches dedicated to
St Mary, including Mary’s Tomb as described in Adamnan’s De Locis Sanctis and the
Pantheon in Rome. Archaeology has grappled with the idea of meaningfully constituted
material culture since the 1980s (Hodder 1982; 1986), but this has been current in the
interpretation of medieval architectural iconography since the mid-20th century.

5.2 Architectural iconography

The iconographic approach, summarised by Crossley (1988), stemmed from the work of
Richard Krautheimer (1942). He suggested that medieval buildings copied one another
not as an attempt at verisimilitude, but to replicate the essential features of the prototype
in order to evoke its meaning. The form and the meaning did not have to precisely
correlate, only be recognisable: a cruciform church was a cruciform church with all the
obvious attendant symbolism, regardless of its size and execution. Günter Bandmann
(2005 [1951]) attempted to systematise this idea across early medieval Europe with
some success, although he is criticised for his reliance on single, monolithic meanings
when many meanings may have been ascribed to a particular architectural form. Earl
Baldwin Smith (1956) made a similar attempt, for which he drew upon Antique
exemplars to trace sometimes tenuous lines of meaning across time and space. The
approach was also applied by Erwin Panofsky (1951; 1979) to the Gothic period:
similar criticisms that apply to Bandmann can be made of both these attempts.
Krautheimer (e.g. 1971), on the other hand, was more sensitive to multiple and half-
formed meanings and was more aware of the need to study particular buildings in
context rather than trying to construct a pan-European scaffolding of interdependent
iconography.
Parallel studies of early medieval art support the iconographic approach. In contrast to the aesthetic naturalism of Classical art, by c. 600 early medieval art had tended towards: ‘describing relationships of status and power in the temporal and spiritual worlds and on the making of images which are capable… of communicating mysteries of a meaning beyond the physical and material level’ (Onians 1980, 1). This includes early medieval depictions of buildings, often reduced to their essential elements, wherein a part of a building stands for the whole. Parts of the building which were symbolically important were included in depictions, and unimportant or non-meaningful elements were often left out, since it the mental concept of the building rather than its actual form was important (Lampl 1961; Krautheimer 1971, 126).

The iconographic approach has been questioned, and the argument made for a return to the study of direct architectural copying from one site to another, albeit in terms of individual elements rather than complete buildings (Crossley 1988; Böker 1998). Kunst (1981) argued that the copying of these elements stemmed from political rivalries rather than ideological meanings, but the precariousness of basing such a broad statement on the back of such a fallacious distinction is obvious. The idea that medieval buildings were constituted from meaningfully imbued architectural types is still applied (e.g. Hansen 2003, esp. 197-9), and has been usefully related to aspects of Anglo-Saxon architecture (Gem 1983a). The meanings of these architectural types may have had a political as well as a more explicitly religious dimension, and the elucidation of multiple meanings for a given context or group of buildings rather than a single monolithic solution is the only sound approach. For this study, an understanding of the iconographic meanings of centrally-planned churches and towers is required.

5.3 Monastic tower-naves as gates the Heavenly City

5.3.1 The iconography of church towers
Amongst the earliest evidence for a Christian tower is at the church of St Martin of Tours, western France. Constructed c. 470, St Martin’s consisted of a long basilica with an axial western tower-porch and a second tower above a crossing at its east end (fig. 5.4).
Although the church does not survive, written sources enable us to reconstruct the journey pilgrims would have made from the profane world outside the church to the saint’s tomb within. On the tower-porch was the following inscription:

As you enter the church, lift your eyes upward;  
A deep faith recognises the lofty entrances.  
Be humble in your conscience, but in hope follow the one who calls you;  
Martin opens the door that you venerate.  
This tower is protection for the timid and an obstacle to the proud;  
It excludes the arrogant and defends the meek at heart.  


The inscription goes on to describe the crossing-tower that pilgrims would meet having progressed along the nave:

More lofty still is that [tower/dome] that has taken Martin to the citadel of heaven  
And that rises through starry roads.  
From there he summons the people, he who as guide to Christ’s rewards  
Has travelled on and sanctified that journey through the stars.  

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Underneath the crossing itself was a second inscription, a version of Jacob’s dream of a ladder to heaven (Genesis 28: 10–19):

How awesome is this place! Truly it is the temple of God and the gateway to heaven.


The iconographic meaning of the two towers at Tours is clear. A century after its construction, Gregory of Tours described the church as ‘the doorway to the garden of paradise’ (Van Dam 1993, 128-32): the first tower acted as the outer gate to this garden and as its protector, the second as the ladder to heaven itself. However, it would be simplistic to apply this to tower-nave churches remote in space and time without a fuller understanding of the common meanings that underlay church buildings in this period.

5.3.2 Churches and the Heavenly City

Medieval churches were not sacred in themselves – which would be akin to idolatry – but were sacred as metaphors for the Heavenly City. This concept underpins medieval church architecture. For its first three centuries of existence the Christian Church had no architecture of its own, and worship was discretely practiced in private houses. The Church was its congregation, not its buildings: the original meaning of ecclesia was ‘congregation’. It was only when the Church allied itself with the Emperor Constantine and adopted the civic architecture of the Roman empire that the basilica, the building of popular assembly, was chosen to house the ecclesia – the congregation (Bandmann 2005 [1951], 3, 61, 160-1, 250).

Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire and of the Imperial Cult. The Church raised Constantine near the level of Christ himself, with whom he was frequently and explicitly compared, and blessed his empire as a reflection of heaven on earth. Rome, at its centre, replicated the City of God (Smith 1956, 74; Lavin 1962, 16-17). This conception was disseminated throughout early medieval Europe, including Anglo-Saxon England (Van Oort 1991, 129-131, 157-9; O’Daly 1999, 8-9). The idea of church buildings as earthly manifestations of the Heavenly City is ‘great antiquity and all-encompassing’ (Bandmann 2005 [1951], 88), is present in what is thought to be the earliest description of a Christian church by Eusebius around 325, and is foremost in medieval church dedication liturgy (Doherty 1985, 47). The concept stems from Biblical descriptions of the Day of Judgement (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12, 21:2, 21:10):
And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

(Revelation 21:2).

The Church – *ecclesia* – thus consisted of a congregation populating church buildings which anticipated the Heavenly City on earth. This city was modelled on the Roman ideal of a walled city with a triumphal arch and processional way leading up to a palace. This was reimagined as the monastic gatehouse or church west entrance, set within its walled precinct, leading onto the nave which processed up to the crossing or chancel where dwelt the Lord of Heaven (Bandmann 2005 [1951], 92-3, 278-9).

5.3.3 *Church towers as gates to the Heavenly City*

Wilfred’s tower-nave at Hexham [16] flanked the main entrance to its monastic precinct (fig. 5.1). The next tower-nave to be constructed in England was probably the church of St Michael-le-Belfry in York [35], possibly in the early 9th century. This appears to have comprised the belltower of St Peter’s cathedral, and flanked the main entrance to the cathedral precinct, which may have been framed by York’s Roman principia building (fig. 5.5). It was approached from the ‘great gate’ (Mikel lith) of the city northwest along its main Roman road (fig. I.35.2). York itself was an ecclesiastical city dominated by its powerful archbishop. The cathedral precinct was the inner sanctum of this holy city within its Roman walls.
The undated tower-nave of St Martin at Winchester [30] also marked the transition to an episcopal precinct, possibly from a the royal palace to the east. Built before c. 971, the tower is axially aligned with the west front of the Old Minster, and is interpreted by its excavator as having acted a gatehouse between the two (fig. 5.6).
Fig. 5.6 – Winchester’s Old Minster and possible palace site in the first half of the 10th century (adapted from Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 1993, 14).

Similarly, the tower-nave of St John [12], constructed c. 959, is interpreted as acting as a gatehouse to the inner cemetery enclosure of Glastonbury abbey. As at Winchester, it lay in axial alignment with the west end of the abbey church, along the line of a possible Roman road (fig. 5.7).

Fig. 5.7 – Early medieval Glastonbury, based on Ellis (1982, 25), Rodwell (1984, 19) and Rahtz (1993, 70), with additional vallum excavation data from Hollinrake and Hollinrake (1992) and Woods (1994, 64-5).
Described as a ‘little beacon’ (*facunculi*) in the early Norman period, St John’s was chiefly visible along the main approach to the abbey from the west, serving to guide pilgrims through the abbey’s outer precinct towards its inner levels of sanctity (fig. 1.12.6).

At the end of the 10th century, a *westwerk*\(^1\) tower was constructed by Bishop Wulfsige III (c. 993-1002) to frame the west entrance to Sherborne cathedral [24]. It was probably flanked by *porticus*, one of which became Wulfsige’s burial-chapel. The tower was probably dedicated to All Hallows, and was liturgically distinct from the cathedral church of St Mary, to which it was connected in the mid-11th century. Interestingly, the tower was accessed through a triple-entrance porch reminiscent of a Roman triumphal arch, the significance of which is discussed below.

![Fig. 5.8](image)

**Fig. 5.8** – Sherborne cathedral c. 993-1002 (adapted from Gibb 1975, 99).

Many Anglo-Saxon monastic tower naves were used to frame entrances, either to monastic precincts or to main abbey or cathedral churches (section 4.7.2). This is corresponds to the iconography of the tower of St Martin of Tours as a gate to the Heavenly City. At Hexham [16], York [35], Winchester [30], Glastonbury [12] and Sherborne [24], abbots and bishops marked the gates of their Heavenly Cities with towers, which at Sherborne [24] may even have taken the form of a Roman triumphal arch.

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\(^1\) See section 5.3.2, below.
5.3.4 The construction of gates to the Heavenly City

The five monastic tower-naves with a gateway function were part of an existing tradition of the use of churches to mark the transition between sacred and profane space (see also section 2.3.3). In Continental Europe, chapels occupied town gates from at least the 6th century (Parsons 1988, 19); this would characterise many town gates in early medieval England (Creighton and Higham 2005). Bandmann (2005 [1951], 209) notes the construction of towers with chapels, often dedicated to St Michael, above the gates of European monasteries as early as the 7th century. In England, the mid-late 7th century church of St Peter-on-the-Wall at Bradwell (Essex) stands across the west wall of the former Roman shore fort. It is thought to have originated as a gate-chapel for the monastery within (Rigold 1977, 72-3; Blair 1992, 239). At the monastery of Whithorn (Dumfries and Galloway), the early 8th century Northumbrian phases saw the construction of a mortuary chapel-cum-gatehouse marking access between the inner and outer precinct enclosures (Hill 2005, 45).

The turriform gate-chapels of early medieval Europe also carried associations of martial power and defence. This is echoed in the dedications of many Anglo-Saxon tower-naves, including the two earliest at Hexham [16] and York [35], to St Mary or St Michael (section 4.10). As early as the 6th century, Mary was associated with protection and guardianship, especially of cities (Dewing 1940, 39-41). St Michael was renowned in the Christian tradition as guardian of heaven and commander of the armies of God.

A strong indication of this military association is visible in perhaps the earliest known example of a tower-chapel acting as a gatehouse in western Europe, at the palace of Bishop Nicetius of Trier (525-566) in the Moselle Valley, southwest Germany. The palace was described c. 565 by the poet Venantius Fortunatus:

A defensive wall flanked by thirty towers surrounds the mountain on which stands a building occupying the site formerly covered by a forest…. The tower that overlooks the ramp leading up to the castle contains a chapel consecrated to the saints, as well as the weapons kept there for the use of the warriors. There is also a double ballista whence projectiles fly forth, spreading death and havoc on their course.

Turribus incinxit ter denis undique collem, praebuit hic fabricam, quo nemus ante fuit…. Turris ab adverso quae constituit obvia clivo, sanctorum locus est, arma teneda viris. Illic est etiam gemino ballista volatu, quae post se mortem linguit et ipsa fugit.

Carmina III.12 (Leo 1881, 64-5; trans. Parsons 1988, 14).
At this time, Trier was isolated and vulnerable on the edge of Christendom, and its bishop was effectively the secular lord of the diocese with powerful administrative control over it (Herbert 1969, 22-4; George 1992, 116). The use of tower-nave chapels by powerful individuals as gatehouses conveying military power is a theme running through the history of tower-nave churches in Anglo-Saxon England (sections 4.7.2 & 4.8.3).

The iconography of tower-churches as gates is also visible at St Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Built c. 752-7, a tower flanked the main entrance to the atrium, in effect the outer precinct enclosure, through which pilgrims would have approached to access the main east front of the church of St Peter (Gem 2008; figs 5.9 & 5.10).

Fig. 5.9 – Reconstruction of St Peter’s Basilica, Rome, showing the location of the atrium tower of St Mary (modified from Calkins 1998, 18).
A chapel dedicated to St Mary was constructed adjacent to the gate-tower in the following decade, significantly in the form of a Roman triumphal arch. Despite Gem’s (2008, 13) misgivings it seems likely that the tower itself comprised the original chapel. The tower is described – albeit in later sources – as being ‘of St Mary’, and the chapel as a whole was referred to as ‘St Mary in Turre’ in 1053. Either way, the atrium of St Peter was described as ‘paradise’ in the same passage of the Liber Pontificalis that mentions the construction of the tower, so again we have an explicit early example of a church tower acting as the gate of the Heavenly City (Smith 1956, 28). This is a doubtless influential continuation of the iconography of towers first recorded at St Martin of Tours (section 5.3.1).

5.4 The early medieval westwerk

St Martin of Tours (section 5.3.1) is arguably the prototype not only of the idea of church towers marking the gate to the Heavenly City, but also of the westwerk. This denotes a tower, or pair of towers, at the west end of a church which had a distinct liturgical identity, often with separate above-ground chapels. Balconies commonly provided intervisibility with the main body of the church and the world outside. The westwerk is exemplified at a number of 9th century and later Carolingian churches, but most are 10th century and later in date (listed in Bandmann 2005 [1951], 201). Aside from their common role as thresholds, they have been variously interpreted as defensive structures, baptismal spaces and chapels for the Easter liturgy (summarised in
McClendon 2005, 186-8); many are also documented as imperial and high-status proprietary chapels for private prayer and burial (Smith 1956, 84; Bandmann 2005 [1951], 201-6). However, westwerke are not a unified architectural tradition: they are referred to in contemporary sources as ‘tower’ (turris), ‘work’ (opus), ‘oratory’ (oratorium), ‘fortress’ (castellum) or simply ‘church’ (ecclesia) (Bandmann 2005 [1951], 201-6). ‘Westwerk’ is a modern term, leading to the suggestion that the concept be abandoned altogether (De Reyes 1999, 110-13). Nevertheless, it remains useful shorthand for a group of buildings which essentially manifest the combination of a turriform chapel – with all the accompanying liturgical, iconographic and proprietary associations of this building-type – with a congregational basilica.

The surviving westwerk at Corvey Abbey in the Rhineland (fig. 5.11) is one of the best understood examples of the type, and is relevant to understanding early medieval towers as metaphors of gates to the Heavenly City.

![Fig. 5.11 – Reconstruction of Corvey Abbey in the late 9th century (Calkins 1998, 76).](image)

Built onto a pre-existing royal basilica c. 873-885, the Corvey westwerk had a two-storey upper chapel with a gallery over the nave. Its entrance alluded to the triumphal arches of Roman cities: as at Sherborne [24], this reflected the role of triumphal arches as entrances to the ideal Roman city (section 5.3.3). The tower bore an inscription asking the angels to ‘protect this, His [i.e. God’s] city’ (Calkins 1998, 77-8): the church was perceived as the Heavenly City, with the westwerk as its gate.

Along with St Martin of Tours, two other churches anticipate the westwerk’s Carolingian and Ottonian heyday, as exemplified at Corvey. Clovis (c. 466–511) was elevated to kingship at St Gereon’s Basilica in Cologne, where he had a western gallery from which could overlook the services and present himself to crowds outside...
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( Bandmann 2005 [1951], 195). At the royal church of St Denis in Paris a turriform porch was constructed c. 775 as the backdrop for the burial of King Pepin the Short (d. 768). This second example is interesting in that its construction was presumably overseen by Pepin’s son (768-814) as one of several royal chapels for his peripatetic court (Smith 1956, 81-2; Calkins 1998, 74-5). Charlemagne was responsible for the best-known and most influential westwerk of all, the imperial chapel at Aachen.

5.4.1 The imperial church at Aachen

The emperor Charlemagne’s centrally-planned polygonal chapel at Aachen, constructed c 786-798, is described elsewhere (Kleinbauer 1965; McClendon 2005, 108-19). Briefly, it consisted of a tall octagonal central space surrounded by a sixteen-sided ambulatory, with an upper gallery and a chancel (fig. 5.12). Its entrance was dominated by a monumental rectangular westwerk consisting of a double-height recessed archway flanked by a pair of stair-turrets. This western structure housed the emperor’s private chapel and throne, allowing him to both survey the main body of the church below and to make appearances to the populace in a colonnaded atrium outside. The chapel communicated with Charlemagne’s royal hall and residence to the north.

Fig. 5.12 – Plan and reconstruction of the imperial chapel at Aachen (Calkins 1998, 68; Bandmann 2005 [1951], 110).

The direct influences and underlying iconography behind the main, centrally-planned body of Charlemagne’s chapel are discussed below (section 5.5); of relevance here is his use of the westwerk as a ‘royal pew’ or gallery, and as a private royal chapel. Although Charlemagne was anointed emperor in Rome two years after the completion of Aachen, the chapel was clearly a structure intended to convey royal status and was fit for a Roman emperor.
5.4.2 Aachen and the westwerk at Winchester

Kleinbauer (1965) has surveyed the considerable influence of Aachen on western European architecture, including at other royal and episcopal palaces. The church has been suggested as the ultimate inspiration for the adoption of tower-naves in England (section 2.1). In 971, King Edgar began to transform the tower of St Martin, Winchester [30] into an elaborate westwerk. It had previously guarded the western approach to Winchester’s Old Minster from the putative site of his royal palace (fig. 5.13). Over the next decade the tower-nave was transformed into a vast and liturgically distinct turriform structure which, like Aachen, contained a royal throne overlooking the main body of the church to the east (fig. I.30/31.4). It was constructed in the context of the proclamation of Edgar as Emperor of Britain, just as Charlemagne gained his westwerk in the context of his imperial coronation. It expressed Edgar’s imperial status at the capital of the ascendant Kingdom of Wessex as part of a wider complex of buildings including the New Minster [31] and the royal palace, just as Aachen’s chapel was part of an ostentatious complex of royal buildings. Kings of late Anglo-Saxon and early Norman England seem also to have used Edgar’s westwerk for the annual crown-wearing ceremony at Winchester, a fit stage for a public demonstration of royal authority (Hare 1997, 48).
Carolingian art was highly influential at the Wessex court (Gameson 1999). Edgar is therefore likely to have copied Charlemagne’s influential westwerk and its imperial iconography (discussed in Gem 1983a, 7). As discussed above, the intention here is to establish the underlying meaning behind the architectural forms of Anglo-Saxon tower-nave churches, rather than tracing superficial lines of imitation. The potency of Edgar’s use of the westwerk is obvious. The western structures of churches
had been used for royal proclamations since the mid-5th century (section 5.4); under Charlemagne they came to represent the height of imperial ambition. The links between the Anglo-Saxon and Ottonian kings in the 10th century were profound (surveyed in Deshman 1976, esp. 390-1), meaning that Edgar would have been fully aware of how the Ottonian dynasty used buildings to manifest its imperial status. Just as Charlemagne’s westwerk gave rise to numerous liturgically distinct proprietorial tower-churches across the Carolingian and Ottonian worlds, albeit attached to the west front of congregational churches, Edgar’s westwerk may have precipitated the construction of lordly tower-naves across Anglo-Saxon England (section 6.1.1).

5.5 Monastic tower-naves as high-status chapels

We know that the Anglo-Saxons built palaces, but we know very little about them and nothing about the chapels with which they must have been supplied.

(Fernie 1999, 5).

5.5.1 Anglo-Saxon royal tower-naves in the imperial tradition

Edgar was not the first king to undertake the construction of a tower-nave church in England; Alfred the Great had constructed one at Athelney before 893 [2]. Aachen’s westwerk aside, the main centrally-planned turriform rotunda of Charlemagne’s chapel (fig. 5.12) was part of a tradition of imperial centrally-planned churches dating to the time of Constantine. Alfred seems to have engaged with this when, at Athelney [2]:

...he constructed a church, of only moderate size because of the confined site, but put together in a new architectural style: four posts fixed in the ground hold up the whole fabric, and four apses surround it in a circle.

Fecitque aecclesiam, situ quidem pro angustia spatii modicum, sed nouo edificandi modo compactam. Quattuor enim postes solo infixi totam suspendunt machinam quattuor cancellis opera sperico in circuitu ductis.

(Gesta Pontificum Anglorum 92; Thomson 2007a, 312-3).

11th century accounts describe the church as a tower, which is also indicated by the use of the term machinam (discussed in appendix I.2). Alfred installed there an abbot from Saxony and populated it with Continental monks in adherence to Carolingian monastic life. It was located at a royal vill, the place from which Alfred mounted his resistance against the Viking threat, laying the foundations for the supremacy of the kingdom of Wessex and earning him the sobriquet ‘the great’. Although he must have had this triumph in mind when selecting the location of his abbey, Alfred did not seek to style
himself as emperor, unlike great tower of his descendent Edgar, and of Charlemagne himself.

Alfred’s grandson Eadred (946-55) personally laid out the foundations of a tower-nave church at what was then the royal vill of Abingdon [1]. Although it was not completed until after his lifetime, it took the form of:

A round chancel, a round nave twice the length of the chancel, and a round tower also.

*Cancellus rotundus erat, ecclesia et rotunda, duplicem habens longitudinem quam cancellus: turris quoque rotunda erat.*

(Stevenson 1858b, 277-8; trans. Fernie 1983, 108-9).

The *Abingdon Chronicle* (ii. 28) further indicates that the round nave was the same structure as the tower – that it was a turriform rotunda – and that it had at least one high-status burial porticus on its north side. The personal involvement of the king in the design of this church and its location at a royal residence are in keeping with the earlier examples at Athelney [2] and Aachen, from which its design may well have been drawn.

The iconography of these royal turriform rotundas is present at Aachen (Gem 1983a, 8-9). Here, Charlemagne sought continuity with the *westwerke* of his royal Merovingian predecessors (section 5.4.1), but to justify his imperial ambitions he modelled himself on the Christian emperors of Rome. In this he was tireless: he produced Roman-style coinage, his courtiers spoke Latin, were given Roman names and dressed in the Roman style, and Aachen was chosen as the site for his palace due to its Roman origins and the presence there of thermal baths (Carver 1993, 73; Nelson 2001).

The immediate origin of his chapel at Aachen was the church of San Vitale in Ravenna (built c. 527), which lay at the capital of the Western Roman Empire from AD 402 (Kleinbauer 1965, 3). Charlemagne visited Ravenna as construction work at Aachen began, and he took away building materials including imperial porphyry and bronze statues from Ravenna for use in his new church. This was a deliberate attempt to demonstrate his imperial majesty (Carver 1993, 73; Raff 1995, 67). San Vitale is similar in form and scale to Charlemagne’s chapel, although it lacks the latter’s *westwerk* (fig. 5.14); San Vitale had in turn been directly copied from palace chapels across the great capital cities of the Roman empire (surveyed in Calkins 1998, 25-38).
5.5.2 Roman imperial chapels

The origin of the of these distinctive centrally-planned churches lies with the emperor Constantine himself, upon whom Charlemagne sought to model himself. At Antioch, Constantine constructed the ‘Golden Octagon’ (c. 327) adjacent to his imperial palace (Downey 1961, 342-60). Constantine attended services in his palaces, but the churches he built adjacent – as at Constantinople, Antioch or Trier – would have been powerful imperial statements nonetheless (McLynn 2004, 237, 244). Antioch is the only example whose form recoverable, from contemporary descriptions, and from a surviving mosaic (fig. 5.15): it is regarded as the origin of San Vitale in Ravenna and Charlemagne’s church at Aachen (Krautheimer 1986, 76).

Fig. 5.14 – The early 6th century church of San Vitale, Ravenna (Calkins 1998, 36). Compare with fig. 5.12.

Fig. 5.15 – The only known depiction of Constantine’s Golden Octagon in Antioch, from a 5th century mosaic found in the city (Elderkin 1934, 145).
In turn, the origin of Constantine’s Golden Octagon is held to be the great domed centrally-planned circular or polygonal throne-rooms of the Roman emperors stretching back into the pre-Christian period. As discussed in section 5.3.2, Christianity was fashioned after the Imperial Cult in the late Roman Empire, with Constantine as Christ: the conversion of the imperial throne-room into the imperial chapel was simply another example of the meaningful adoption of the existing architectural language by the parvenu religion (Smith 1956, 139, 166; Lavin 1962, 16-21; Krautheimer 1986, 77-80). By the time of the construction of the chapel at Aachen, the extent to which turriform rotunda churches were indicative of imperial status is worth laboring: this was their iconographic message, and it would be employed at numerous royal and episcopal palaces across Europe throughout the early middle ages (summarised in Krautheimer 1986, 318-20).

When Wilfred constructed his tower-nave of St Mary at Hexham in the twilight of his career, he had become a great secular lord as well as a powerful ecclesiastic. He may have been inspired during his several travels to Rome and the Continent to bolster his declining status with a new church whose iconography conveyed the power and authority of the emperor at Milan or the Archbishop of Ravenna. When King Alfred constructed his turriform church in ‘a new architectural style’ at the royal vill of Athelney, he was heralding a resurgence in his royal power and laying the foundations for the dominion of Wessex over England. King Eadred laid out the foundations for a centrally-planned turriform chapel at his Abingdon residence. This example is less obviously a manifestation of kingly triumph, but is notable because the king laid out its foundations himself.

To these examples can be added the rotunda of SS Mary and Edmund at Bury St Edmunds (see appendix I.5). It was commissioned by King Cnut c. 1021-32 at the site of a former royal vill, in which sense it is in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon royal tower-naves at Athelney, Abingdon and Winchester. Constructed to house the relics of King Edmund of East Anglia, it took the form of a centrally-planed round church with an ambulatory, but it is unknown whether it took the form of a tower. When Cnut constructed his rotunda he had become master of an empire stretching across much of England and Scandinavia, and his church can be interpreted as an architectural statement of his imperial pretentions (Gem 1983a, 8-9). Cnut’s rotunda, Athelney, Abingdon and Edgar’s westwerk at Winchester (section 5.4.2) were all constructed in emulation of the imperial iconography of Aachen and its august predecessors at Ravenna (fig. 5.14), Antioch (fig. 5.15) and elsewhere.
5.5.3 Episcopal chapels and the iconography of Aachen

Centrally-planned turriform rotundas were not limited to kings and emperors, although it was they who gave the form its iconographic power. At Thorney [28], Bishop Æthelwold constructed, for the purpose of private worship:

A small church of stone in the fashion of a tower, divided into chambers by most delicate little screens with a double floor dedicated with three very small altars.

*Lapideam ecclesiolam in modum piramidis, delicatissimis cameratam cancellulis, et duplici area tribus dedicatam altaribus permodicis.*

(Birch 1892, 290, trans Gem 1983a, 15).

At the end of our period, Bishop Robert of Hereford (1079-1095) constructed a chapel [15], dedicated to SS Katherine and Mary Magdalene, at his residence, presumably for private worship (fig. 5.16). Soon after it was built, William of Malmesbury (*Gesta Potificum* iv.164) noted he had modelled this chapel ‘so far as he could, on the basilica at Aachen’ (*Aquensem basilicam pro modo imitates suo*; Winterbottom 2007, 458-9). Although the chapel was not a rotunda, it shares Aachen’s tall central lantern and *westwerk* flanked by stair-turrets.

![Fig. 5.16 – Reconstruction of the Bishop’s Chapel at Hereford [15] (Drinkwater 1954, 134). Compare with fig. 5.12.](image-url)
5.5.4 Monastic tower-naves as private chapels

Several monastic tower-naves also functioned as private chapels: Thorney [28], Hereford [15] and Edgar’s westwerk at Winchester [30]. Abingdon [1], laid out by King Eadred at his residence, may also have been intended for this function. The monastic tower-nave at Bury St Edmunds [5] acted as the private chapel and residence of Earl Ælfric (section 4.7.2). Bishop Leofric of Crediton, later Exeter (1046-1072) constructed a tower-nave at his manor of East Teignmouth [10], on the south coast of Devon, presumably as his private chapel. This function of private worship is also argued to have been common to the twenty-one lordly tower-naves (section 4.8.3), and was the natural continuation of the imperial and high-status iconography of the tower-nave form (see sections 5.4.2, 5.5.2 & 5.5.3).

One other monastic tower-nave was constructed as the private chapel of a king in this period, the church of the Holy Trinity at Dunfermline Abbey, Fife, Scotland (fig. 5.17). Excavated beneath the nave of the present abbey church in 1916, and again in 1975, it consisted of a square tower and small chancel on substantial and well-built foundations; a modest apsidal extension lay to the east (Baldwin Brown 1925, 451-2; Taylor and Taylor 1965, 710; Robertson et al. 1981).

Fig. 5.17 – The late 11th century tower-nave at Dunfermline Abbey, with its pre-1093 eastern extension (Fernie 1994b, 26).

Dunfermline was the court of King Malcolm III of Scotland (1058-93), and the excavated tower-nave appears to have functioned as his palace chapel (Ritchie 1954, 13). The contemporary Life of Malcolm’s queen, Margaret, states that she built (aedificavit) a church of the Holy Trinity on the site of her marriage to Malcolm in 1070. This could mean either that she built the tower-nave as a de novo marriage-
chapel, or that she was responsible for the eastern extension, in which she was buried in 1093. Thereafter, the church became burial-place of both the Scottish kings and exiled members of the Anglo-Saxon royal family, before being demolished in 1128 to make way for the present Abbey nave (Cruden 1986, 36; Fernie 1994b, 26-7).

Although Holy Trinity is not strictly an Anglo-Saxon tower-nave, it was constructed with considerable Anglo-Saxon influence. Queen Margaret was daughter of the Edward the Exile, son of King Edmund Ironside (1016). Recalled to the English court in 1057, she fled to Scotland in the aftermath of the Battle of Hastings and married King Malcolm III of Scotland (1058-93). Malcolm (b. 1031) had spent the years 1040-53 in the Anglo-Saxon royal court, and gained his throne an invasion of Scotland sponsored by Edward the Confessor. Following his accession, Malcolm retained his close links with the English court and held significant estates in England, which he retained after the Norman Conquest. Four of his five sons would spend time in exile in the English court after 1093, and his daughter Maud went on to marry King Henry I in 1100 (Ritchie 1954, 3-7, 60-1, 385-8).

5.6 Monastic tower-naves as high-status mortuary chapels

While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

(Edgar Allan Poe, The City in the Sea).

Ten of the thirteen monastic tower-naves had a funerary context, of which five functioned as specifically high-status mortuary chapels (section 4.7.2). King Eadred’s rotunda at Abingdon [1], St Benedict’s tower at Bury St Edmunds [5] and the westwerk at Sherborne [24] (fig. 5.8) were in use as the mortuary chapels of either bishops or abbots within a few decades of their construction. The westwerk at Winchester’s Old Minster [30] (fig. 5.13) stood in the monastic cemetery and was constructed over the tomb of St Swithun, a former bishop. Turning to Canterbury [7] the tower of St Mary at St Augustine’s abbey – completed c. 1047 – stood in the monks’ cemetery (fig. 5.18). At the end of the 11th century it housed the remains of four kings, several queens and royal children and a number of bishops and abbots, transferred there during building work in the 1070s.
To these examples can be added Queen Margaret’s tower-naves at Dunfermline, used as a mortuary chapel for members of both the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon royal houses (section 5.5.4), and Cnut’s mortuary rotunda at Bury St Edmunds, built for the remains of the sainted East Anglian king (appendix I.5). The use of tower-naves as high-status mortuary chapels has a parallel history to their royal and imperial associations (section 5.6), and was underpinned by an iconography of high-status burial stretching back to the Roman Empire.

5.6.1 Roman imperial tombs

Roman imperial tombs were centrally-planned structures, comparable to the centrally-planned imperial chapels discussed in section 5.5.2. Johnson (2009) surveys their development from the circular revetted mound of the first emperor, Augustus (d. AD 14), to two-storey circular or octagonal domed mausolea from the mid-3rd century AD onwards (Johnson 2009, 158). The mausoleum of Theodoric the Great (d. 526) in Ravenna is the best preserved example (fig. 5.19). The mausoleum of the first Christian emperor Constantine, in Constantinople, is also notable for containing a chapel of the Holy Apostles: it is therefore the earliest known turriform church. This distinctive form of turriform imperial tomb was considered sacred throughout the Christian period.
Charlemagne’s imperial chapel at Aachen (section 5.4.1), which was also his mortuary chapel, shares the iconography of these imperial tombs, and became an influential model for early medieval high-status mausolea (Gem 1983a, 9).

Fig. 5.19 – The mausoleum of the Emperor Theodoric (d. 526), Ravenna (Calkins 1998, 24).

As with much early Christian architecture, the existing architecture of the Roman Empire was employed to harness the new religion to the imperial regime (section 5.3.2). We should therefore be unsurprised that these imperial tombs gave their form to the tombs of Jesus and Mary, regarded as the King and Queen of Heaven. The empty tomb of Jesus lies within the Anastasis Rotunda at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (fig. 5.20), probably constructed during the rule of Emperor Constantius II (337-361) in the manner of the great Roman imperial mausolea (Coïasnon 1974, 35-6; Krautheimer 1986, 74-5; Gibson and Taylor 1994, 77).

Fig. 5.20 – Reconstruction of the original form of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Anastasis Rotunda lies on the left of the image (Calkins 1998, 30).
This iconographic scheme is also visible in Gallican liturgy, which was practised over much of early medieval Western Europe. The 8th century *Ordo Romanus XV* states that the bread and wine of the mass were to be placed on ‘towers’ (*turres*) which signified the Tomb of Christ. Thus, the bread – the body of Christ – would be laid within its tomb, awaiting Resurrection. This has been used to explain why Carolingian *westwerke* were equated with Christ’s tomb and usually incorporated a chapel of the Passion and Resurrection (Ó’Carragáin 2010, 170). Certainly, in manuscript illumination and ivory carving from the early medieval period, the Tomb of Christ was frequently depicted as a tower (Forsyth 1950, 314; Heitz 1986) (*e.g.* fig. 5.21).

**Fig. 5.21** – A 10th century Italian ivory of Christ’s Tomb (redrawn by O’Keeffe 2004, 127).

Mary’s tomb is mentioned by St Jerome (c. 347-420), and appears to have been rebuilt under imperial guidance during the later 5th or 6th centuries. According to Adamnon’s *De Locis Sanctis* (c. 686), it took the form of a round tower, with the tomb-chamber on the upper of two stories. It therefore resembles the later type of turriiform Roman imperial tombs (*e.g.* fig. 5.19). Although its probable site has been found, and
foundations of the correct date uncovered, they have not yielded a plan of the building (Meehan 1958, 6-9, 23).

Whether they were the tombs of terrestrial or of celestial emperors, these tombs and mortuary chapels provided the iconographic basis for high-status burial structures in the early medieval period. The form was used for the mortuary chapel of the Emperor Charlemagne at Aachen (fig. 5.12), and was adopted in Anglo-Saxon England at Abingdon [1] and for Cnut’s rotunda at Bury St Edmunds (section 5.5.2). The octagonal funerary chapel of St Michael at Worcester [33] (fig. 5.22) may also have been modeled on this form, but there is no direct evidence it was a specifically high-status burial-chapel. Prior to the 8th century, church burial in England was reserved only for the highest ranks in society, and was confined to auxiliary structures such as porticus or crypts (surveyed in Deliyannis 1995; Blair 2005, 228-9). The use of detached mortuary towers was arguably an extension of this practice, and may be why Canterbury [7] (5.18), Sherborne [24] (5.8), St Benedict’s tower at Bury St Edmunds [5] and Queen Margaret’s tower-nave at Dunfermline (fig. 5.17; section 5.5.4) were suitable structures for royal and high-status burial.

Fig. 5.22 – A mid-17th century engraving by Wenceslas Hollar of the mortuary chapel-cum-belltower tower of St Michael, Worcester Cathedral (McAleer 2001, 57).
5.6.2 Monastic tower-naves as mortuary chapels

Ten of the thirteen monastic tower-naves had a funerary context: they functioned as mortuary chapels or they were associated with cemeteries (section 4.7.2). Of these, only Abingdon [1], Hexham [16], Worcester [33] and Cnut’s rotunda at Bury St Edmunds (appendix I.5) bear resemblance to the imperial tombs described above (section 5.6.1). There are two interwoven strands of architectural iconography at play here, of which only one is the iconography of imperial burial. The second is the inherent suitability of towers, regardless of form, to serve the Christian dead.

One of the themes of this chapter is the appropriation of Roman imperial architectural forms by the early Christian Church, both to house a religion lacking its own architectural tradition and to make Christianity a fit state religion of the Roman Empire (section 5.3.2). A few architectural meanings, however, were inherent in early Christianity. One is of churches as metaphors of the Heavenly City (section 5.3.2); another is the conception of the ladder to heaven. The story of Jacob’s Ladder is in the Book of Genesis (28:12-17):

And he [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it…. How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

In early medieval architecture, Jacob’s ladder was manifested as a tower. The height of towers doubtless allowed the faithful to feel closer to heaven: the Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis (11:4) is described as a building ‘whose top may reach unto heaven’. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon Genesis A text (line 1676) interpolates that the Tower of Babel is ‘a ladder up to heaven’ (heofnum up hlædrae) (Liuzza 2003, 2). A further Anglo-Saxon conception of the height of a church allowing the ascent from the sinfulness of earth towards heaven is present in Bede’s description of the Temple in Jerusalem (De Templo 6.1; discussed by Connolly and O’Reilly 1995, 22). It is in this tradition that the central tower of St Martin at Tours (discussed above, section 5.3.1 and fig. 5.4) bore its inscription alluding to Jacob’s Ladder and the ascent to heaven.

Monastic tower-naves may have provided the deceased with a conceptual ladder to heaven. This would accord with the recent theory that the late 11th century belltowers of Lincolnshire were constructed for funerary liturgy, based partially on the role of St Michael in carrying souls to heaven (Stocker and Everson 2006, 79-91). Similarly, the Virgin Mary was perceived as a gate to heaven in a number of early medieval and Anglo-Saxon texts (Clayton 1990, 58, 77, 88; Gem 2008, 26). St Michael and St Mary...
are by far the most common dedications for Anglo-Saxon tower-nave churches (section 4.10): of the monastic tower-naves associated with cemeteries or high-status burials, Abingdon [1], Canterbury [7], Hexham [16], Worcester [33], York Minster [35] and Winchester’s New Minster [31], as well as Cnut’s rotunda at Bury St Edmunds (appendix I.5) are dedicated to one or both of these two saints. Indeed, the New Minster’s Liber Vitae, compiled c. 1020-30 from earlier sources, says of the tower:

May those most glorious princes of the eternal king and supreme citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, under the primacy of the all-surpassing mother of God, Mary, assist most benignly in the course of this life him who zealously honours their memory, and happily introduce him to the heavenly kingdom.

(Quirk 1961, 39; added emphasis).

5.7 English monastic tower-naves in the context of the Reform

The frequency of Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves in England dramatically increased from the middle of the 10th century, following a spate of examples constructed by the chief agents of the contemporary Monastic Reform movement (section 4.2.2 & fig. 4.6). It is significant that the functions of monastic tower-naves offered above – that they were high-status chapels, mortuary chapels and gates to the Heavenly City – are in keeping with the chief tenets of the Monastic Reform movement.

5.7.1 An introduction to the Monastic Reform

The Monastic Reform has been amply studied elsewhere (summarised in Blair 2005, 341-354 & note 281). The first stirrings of a late Anglo-Saxon regularisation of monastic life can be detected in the reign of King Alfred, who (re-)founded a monastery along strict lines at Athelney [2] with an abbot and monks brought from the Continent. Some decades later, under the reign of King Edgar, what we know as the ‘Monastic Reform’ gained momentum due to the agency of three aristocratic churchmen: Dunstan (abbot of Glastonbury [12] c. 944-70; archbishop of Canterbury 959-88), Æthelwold (abbot of Abingdon [1] c. 955-64; bishop of Winchester [30 & 31] 963-84; abbot of Thorney [28] 972-84) and Oswald (bishop of Worcester [33] 961-92; archbishop of York [35] 971-92). They attempted to regularise England’s monasteries under the Rule of St Benedict, and free them from perceived secular interference and corruption. Dunstan initiated the movement at Glastonbury [12], where Æthelwold was a monk, before it was introduced at Abingdon [1] by Æthelwold, and spread thence to many houses across England by the end of the century (Hill 1981, 151). One of the most
significant of these was Worcester [33], which was reformed by Oswald, another of Dunstan’s protégés, after he had been granted the bishopric by Dunstan. All this was undertaken under the patronage of King Edgar, in the context of whose impending imperial coronation the Council of Winchester was held in 970. This resulted in a document known as the *Regularis Concordia*, in which Dunstan set forth the new Benedictine Rule under the strong influence of Carolingian practice (Symons 1953, xi, xxiii).

Three tenets of the Reform are particularly relevant here:

1. The enhanced status afforded to the king.
2. The increased emphasis on the sanctity of monastic space.
3. The regularisation of monastic burial.

In terms of enhanced royal status, the spread of monasticism in England had hitherto been intimately fused with aristocratic practice. The Reform sought instead to place monastic patronage in the hands of the king (Dales 1992, 46-53; Foot 2006, 17, 285), in exchange for which he would gain an ‘almost theocratic’ position and benefit from the enhanced legitimisation of his position (Gransden 1989, 164). This seems to have included Edgar’s imperial coronation of 973, since Dunstan penned the *Coronation Rite* soon after the *Regularis Concordia*, and the Reform Movement’s ideas about the new relationship of the king regarding the Church are contained in both (Dales 1992, 45, 50).

The second relevant tenet of the Monastic Reform is contained within the *Rule of St Benedict* itself:

The monastery should, if possible, be so constructed that within it all necessities, such as water, mill and garden are contained, and the various crafts are practiced. Then there will be no need for the monks to roam outside, because this is not all good for their souls.

*Monasterium autem, si possit fieri, ita debet constitui ut Omnia necessaria, id est aqua, molendinum, hortum, vel artes diversas intra monasterium exerceantur, ut non sit necessitas monachis vagandi foris, quia omnino non expedit animabas eorum.*


This is seconded by the prologue of Dunstan’s *Regularis Concordia*: 

...
The brethren shall not go forth visiting the properties of the monastery unless either great necessity or reasonable discretion require it.

*Villarum autem circuitus, nisi necessitas magna compulerit et necessariae rationis discretio hoc dictauerit, uagando nequaquam frequentent.*

(Symons 1953, 8).

This was part of a general effort to define monastic space more clearly, not only to emphasise its sacred character but also to limit the worldly influence of the aristocracy upon monastic life (Dales 1992, 54). Far from being a documentary conceit, this was manifested in the precinct walls and boundaries of many Reformed monasteries (Gittos 2011, 831).

The third of the Reform’s relevant tenets, the regularisation of monastic burial, occupies much of the final chapter of the *Regularis Concordia*. For example:

When the sick brother is nearing his end, the *tabula* shall be struck and all shall assemble.... The body shall then be borne into the church with the chanting of psalms and the tolling of bells. And of the brother died before dawn, in the night or after the dark hours, in the early morning, let him be buried before the brethren have their meal, when the Masses have been celebrated, provided that those things necessary for a burial can be prepared: otherwise let the brethren be appointed by turns to chant psalms unceasingly by the body throughout that day and the following night until early morning when it shall be committed to the earth.

*Eo igitur in extremisagente, pulsetur tabula conueniantque omnes.... Inde defertur in ecclesiam, psallentibus cunctis motisque omnibus signis. Quod si ante lucem nocte aut, finitis tenebris, in matutino obierit, si sepulturae impendenda praeparari possunt, ante refectionem fratrum sepeliatur, peractus Missam celebrationibus; si minus, ordinentur fratres qui sine intermissione psalmodiae uacent, residentes circa corpus die noctuque sequenti, donec mane facto corpus terrae commendetur.*

(Symons 1953, 64-5).

Although doubtless built on earlier liturgical practice, this formalised the requirement for bells and for dedicated mortuary space suitable for uninterrupted mortuary ritual.

### 5.7.2 The Monastic Reform and monastic tower-nave churches

The first tower-nave to be constructed in the context of the Reform, Abingdon [1], was laid out by King Eadred and completed by Æthelwold. It may be that the royal origin of this church made it fitting in the context of the Reform, which owed its chief support to the king. It was used as a high-status burial-chapel, but it is unknown whether it had the
bells required by the *Regularis Concordia* for the new funerary liturgy. The Glastonbury tower-nave [12], constructed by Dunstan c. 959, is an excellent example of the increased emphasis on the integrity of monastic space demanded by the *Regularis Concordia*. It marked the transition from the outer to the inner enclosure of the monastery and acted as a focal point for pilgrims approaching along the main route from the west (see section 5.7 & fig. 5.7). The tower also marked entry to the monk’s cemetery, so was capable of acting as a funerary chapel or belltower for monastic burial.

Æthelwold may have overseen the construction of the tower of St Martin at Winchester [30] (fig. 5.6) – whose date is uncertain – which later developed into the Old Minster *westwerk*. Like the Glastonbury tower-nave [12], it marked a place of transition, from the royal palace to the sanctity of the Old Minster, whose precinct would be brought into a single ditched and fenced enclosure with the New Minster and the Nunnaminster during the Reform. Under Æthelwold, the tower of St Martin would be converted into a great *westwerk* for king Edgar (fig. 5.13). The Reform enhanced the role of the king: the Old Minster *westwerk* is the clearest example of this being manifested in tower-nave construction. Edgar’s *westwerk* was converted from the pre-existing tower of St Martin into a fitting architectural embodiment of his new imperial status, at the capital of both his new empire and of the Reform movement. The construction of the *westwerk* at Sherborne [24] by Bishop WulfSIGE at the end of the century, in the context of the Reform of that house, made obvious reference to this great structure (fig. 5.8). The *westwerk* form itself is further evidence of the enormous influence of Carolingian practice on the Reform movement (Blair 2005, 346).

Two further tower-naves were constructed by the chief agents of the Reform. Firstly, Oswald may have overseen the construction of the tower of St Michael at Worcester [33] (fig. 5.22) as a mortuary chapel capable of fulfilling the requirements of the tolling of bells and spaces for the private services and laying-out of the dead required by the *Regularis Concordia*. Secondly, Æthelwold the tower-nave at Thorney [28] as his private chapel (see section 5.5.3). Like Abingdon, ignorance of its location precludes any interpretation of this tower as a marker of sanctity, although its dedication to St Mary accords with the Reform Movement. Æthelwold regarded Mary as his patron; as a symbol of purity and incorruptibility it was fitting that a number of newly founded and re-founded houses of the Reform were also dedicated to her (Clayton 1990, 132-5). A similar interpretation could be made of Æthelwold’s tower-naves at Abingdon [1] and (probably) Winchester’s New Minster [31], both of which contained chapels to St Mary, and the latter of which also acted as a mortuary chapel.
Queen Margaret’s late 11th century tower-nave and royal burial-chapel at Dunfermline provides a useful analogy to the English examples, particularly in view of the considerable Anglo-Saxon influence in its construction (see section 5.5.4). Under her influence, the Scottish church underwent reform according to the Rule of St Benedict analogous to that of mid-10th century England (Barrow 1973, 166; Fernie 1994b, 27-8). Margaret enlisted help from Durham and Canterbury, including Benedictine monks from Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury to serve at Dunfermline (Fawcett 1985, 14). The Dunfermline tower-nave had been completed and extended by 1093 (fig. 5.17); unfortunately, it is uncertain whether it had previously been constructed by King Malcolm III and was simply extended by Margaret, whether it was built for Margaret’s marriage to Malcolm c. 1070, or whether both phases of the structure date to the period of Margaret’s Benedictine reforms. Nevertheless, this is another example of a royal tower-nave at the focus of a regally-sponsored Benedictine reform, built under Anglo-Saxon influence and used as a mortuary chapel.

5.7.3 The Monastic Reform and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

It is remarkable that the known total of tower-naves increased from three or four to nine during the few short decades of the Monastic Reform (fig. 4.6), and that the construction of each was overseen by one or more of the four chief agents of the movement. Furthermore, all six appear to have fulfilled at least one aspect of monastic life demanded by the Regularis Concordia (section 5.7.2).

By 992 the last of the movement’s leaders was dead and the process of founding and re-founding monasteries under its auspices was dwindling: Sherborne [24] is a late example of a Reform tower-nave. One important lasting effect of the Reform was the reduction of lay aristocratic influence on monastic life and patronage. This caused a degree of upheaval in late Anglo-Saxon society. The premature death of King Edgar in 975 led to the ‘anti-monastic reaction’, a period of strife lasting through the brief reign of the murdered Edward the Martyr (975-8) and into that of Æthelred II (978-1016). In the most recent survey of the subject, Jayakumar (2009) follows Eric John (1966, 178-9) in ascribing this tension to the increased power and wealth of the Reform monasteries at the expense of the nobility, including several ealdormen, whose influence had been curtailed.

After the Reform, tower-nave churches continued to be built at monasteries, albeit in apparently declining numbers (section 4.5). They were high-status chapels and/or mortuary chapels, in keeping with the functions of the other monastic tower-
naves in this study (sections 5.5 & 5.6). From the late 10th century onwards, tower-naves were constructed by local lords at their residences, and in larger numbers than are known from monastic sites. During the Monastic Reform the patronage of local lords had been channelled away from the great regional monasteries, and was instead concentrated at a local level. This period saw the rise of local proprietary churches as well as lordly tower-naves (section 2.4).

The abbey of Bury St Edmunds is an exception. It rose to prominence after the Monastic Reform had arguably run its course, and benefitted from the patronage of King Cnut, who as an usurper needed all the legitimacy that the post-Reform Church could provide (Gransden 1989, 184-5). The abbey came to rule half of Suffolk: as described in appendix I.5, it exercised significant legal powers over its territory, minted coinage, and was the lord of the local aristocracy. None of the great secular landowners in the county had any significant holdings or influence where the abbey held sway. Essentially, the local aristocracy in this half of Suffolk belonged to the abbey, meaning that the barriers between the abbey and the local aristocracy that had been raised elsewhere since the Reform did not apply here. It is in this context that Earl Ælfric, one of two reeves who had run the abbey’s half-shire prior to 1043, constructed his residential tower of St Benedict within the abbey precinct itself rather than at his aristocratic residence, at which the great majority of tower-naves were now being constructed.

It will be argued in the next chapter that the monastic tower-naves were a key influence on the new local, lordly tower-nave churches. Several lordly tower-naves stood at the gates to towns or aristocratic enclosures, in the manner of monastic examples, and several likewise appear to have had a mortuary function. But what is common to all but two non-monastic tower-naves is their apparent association with aristocratic residences, indicating their use as high-status secular chapels. The underlying iconography of turriform churches was one of high-status secular power, which was exemplified by King Edgar with his great western tower-chapel at Winchester’s Old Minster, which lay adjacent to the royal residence. In their thousands, all England’s most important noblemen would have witnessed Edgar and his successors enthroned in his great tower during the annual crown-wearings and other ceremonies that occurred at what was effectively England’s capital until the rise of Westminster at the end of the 11th century (Hare 1997). Indeed, the presence of ‘lords’ pews’ in the western towers of local churches such as Deerhurst has been linked to exemplars such as the Winchester westwerk (Morris and Roxan 1980, 184). Whether via
this direct route or not, lords began to construct towers of their own at their residences across the country.

5.8 Conclusion (fig. 5.23)

Fig. 5.23 – The models and influences behind Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-nave churches.

Approximately half of England’s known tower-nave churches occur in a monastic context from the early 8th century onwards; this appears to be the origin of the form in Anglo-Saxon society. They were not built in a vacuum: the Continental Saxons had a tradition of ritual tower construction as early as the 1st century AD, and towers of Roman origin dotted the Anglo-Saxon landscape. Nevertheless, there are no known church towers in England prior to the introduction of tower-nave churches. From the earliest known example – that of Wilfred at Hexham – every indication is that tower-naves were of Continental origin, although not as the result of simplistic diffusion or copying. From their roots in the time of the earliest Christian emperors, turriform churches had a very particular set of architectural meanings related to high-status secular power and burial, which became evident in Carolingian Europe. Thus, many
monastic tower-naves in England were constructed as private, often royal, chapels and burying-places, as a result of the articulation of this meaning by their builders. More generally, from the earliest Christian examples in Europe, towers were conceived as in terms of gates to the Heavenly City whose form, like Jacob’s Ladder, brought mankind closer to God.

From the mid-10th century, monastic tower-naves appear to have been constructed in significant numbers. This coincided with the Monastic Reform, whose leaders were personally responsible for this spate of tower-nave construction. These tower-naves were built in seeming fulfilment of key tenets of the Reform movement: the patronage of the king in monastic life, the regularisation of burial practices and the increased emphasis on the integrity of monastic space. Monastic tower-naves continued to fulfil the roles of high-status worship and burial, and the marking of precinct gates.

One further impact of the Reform was the channelling of aristocratic patronage away from regional monasteries and into local churches. This elides with the growth of local church construction at this time. One of the great architectural symbols of the Reform was the royal turriform chapel and westwerk linking the palace at Winchester with the Old Minster [30]: the late 10th century witnesses the emergence of local tower-naves at lordly residences, perhaps based on the underlying iconography of turriform churches and high-status secular worship. These local, lordly tower-naves are the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter 6: Towers, tower-naves and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

- Research question 2: *What is the origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?*
- Research question 4: *What is the manorial context of the Anglo-Saxon tower-nave?*

There many a man urged his dear kinsman, one single-minded noble to another, that for their glory, before this multitude would afterwards have to scatter across the surface of the earth in search of land, the people of this tribe, they should build a fortress, and a tower as a sign, raise it up to the stars of heaven.

(The Old English *Genesis A*, 1649-1701; trans Liuzza 2003, 3).

Twenty-one of the thirty-five known early medieval tower-nave churches in England are argued to have been constructed by the local aristocracy at their rural and urban residences from the later 10\textsuperscript{th} century onwards (fig. 4.6 & sections 4.3 & 4.8.2). Sections 6.1-6.4 of this chapter will explore the proposed threefold origins of these churches (fig. 6.1):

1. Monastic tower-nave churches, used as royal and episcopal high-status chapels (section 5.5).
2. The existing practice of constructing timber towers at Anglo-Saxon lordly residences (section 2.11.5 & appendix II).
3. The western towers of ‘typical’ Anglo-Saxon churches (section 2.5).

![Fig. 6.1 – The proposed threefold origin of Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves through time.](image)

Sections 6.5-6.10 then discuss lordly tower-naves in the context of late Anglo-Saxon aristocratic practice.
6.1 Monastic tower-naves and lordly tower-nave origins

Many monastic tower-naves were constructed by kings and high-ranking ecclesiastics adjacent to their residences for private, status-affording worship and burial (sections 4.7.1 & 5.5). The origins of this practice are argued to have lain in the deep-rooted iconographic associations between centrally-planned turris form churches and imperial grandeur (section 5.5.2). The monastic tower-nave was a deeply appropriate form for the Anglo-Saxon nobility to aspire to copy. This is not simply because they wished to emulate the material culture of their king and bishops, although this was certainly a factor. The social position of the lesser late Anglo-Saxon nobility was legitimised by both the Church and by the king (section 2.10): the monastic tower-nave was therefore a means by which the nobility could expressing their legitimacy in material form.

6.1.1 Towers and the iconography of royal authority

The association of towers with the image and authority of the Anglo-Saxon royalty is visible in a series of coins minted in Chester around the year 915. They were produced by Æthelflaed, the ‘lady of the Mercians’ (d. 918), in the name of her brother King Edward the Elder (899-924), and bear the image of a tower on their reverse (fig. 6.2).

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Fig. 6.2 – Tower and church coinage, from Dolley 1970. Compare with fig. 6.3.
The known examples bear variants of a freestanding three-stage church tower with one or more arcades, often topped by finials and a probable spire. The towers have distinct voussoirs above their arcades, indicating stone rather than timber construction (fig. 6.2, nos 3-6). Two other contemporary coin issues, apparently from the same workshop, are relevant here. One depicts an entire church with a central tower whose spire is reminiscent of the tower-coins (fig. 6.2, nos 7-8). The other depicts a simple, squat tower with no arcades or spire, copied from Roman coinage of the 4th century Emperor Constantine (fig. 6.2, nos 1-2), which is thought to be the origin of the series (Dolley 1970; Blackburn 1999).

It is informative to compare the fully developed Chester tower-coins (fig. 6.2, nos 3-6) with other known Anglo-Saxon illustrations of towers (fig. 6.3). Of these, the closest analogue is the turriiform superstructure of Noah’s Ark from the Junius 11 manuscript of c. 1000. It shares the coins’ round-headed arcades on three levels, the impost-mouldings of these arches, its hatched indication of ashlar masonry construction and its pyramidal roof-structure topped by a finial (see esp. fig. 6.2, no. 6). The images on the Junius 11 manuscript are thought to have been copied from earlier, possibly Carolingian originals (Raw 1976). The Ark itself was conceived by the Anglo-Saxons as a church (Gatch 1975, 9; Karkov 2001, 90). The Chester coins are sufficiently similar to the Junius 11 ark to indicate that their tower iconography was not based on lifelike towers in the Anglo-Saxon landscape (contra Morris 2011, 180). This corroborates the suggestion that the coins’ ultimate origin was Roman imperial iconography (fig. 6.2, no. 1).

The Chester tower-coins were issued during the West Saxon domination of Mercian territory by Æthelflaed, who also refounded one of Chester’s two ancient minster churches as St Werburgh’s – a Mercian royal saint – and promoted the church and cult as a means of legitimating her authority (Thacker 1982). Æthelflaed’s unusual issue of coins bearing church buildings can be interpreted as an extension of this policy of using the church a means of legitimisation. Her use of Constantinian originals (fig. 6.2, no. 1) further suggests that she sought to draw upon Roman authority to legitimate her role in the formation of the new West Saxon empire: the practice of using Roman coin designs to bolster imperial ambition has a long history in Anglo-Saxon royal practice (G. Williams 2008, esp. 31-36).
It was suggested in the previous chapter (section 5.5.2) that early medieval kings drew upon the architectural iconography of towers to express their imperial ambitions. Æthelflæd’s father King Alfred constructed a tower-nave at Athelney [2] as he lay the foundations for the dominion of Wessex over England, and the great westwerk tower at Winchester [30] would become a symbol of her great-nephew King Edgar’s imperial status (section 5.4.2). Æthelflæd may therefore have sought to appropriated imperial power twice over: numismatically, by copying Roman coinage, and architecturally, by copying the turriform churches of antique and early medieval emperors. Such a public use of the iconography of towers would have in part been aimed at the burgeoning Anglo-Saxon aristocracy.

6.2 Timber towers and lordly tower-nave origins

We must not assume that the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy blindly copied royal towers, that material culture simply ‘trickles down’ from the upper echelons of society to the lower. One reason for assuming that lords were receptive to the potency of the tower-nave form is the prior existence of free-standing lordly towers made of timber. The existence of such towers was suggested as long ago as 1986 (Rodwell 1986, 174); they are not thought to have functioned as churches.

6.2.1 Non-ecclesiastical lordly timber towers

Three, possibly four, lordly timber towers are known, none of them churches, ranging in date from the later 9th to the end of the 11th centuries (see appendix II). The earliest was excavated at Bishopstone [A], and consisted of a substantial cellared timber tower whose destruction by burning is dated to the late 9th or early 10th century. It lay at an enclosed estate centre and minster complex, and was aligned with other comital buildings on the site (fig. 6.4). The tower was evidently an important structure; at the end of its life it was dismantled and provided with a termination deposit which seemingly referring to aspects of the economy and wealth of the estate at whose centre it stood. The tower is therefore interpreted as an architectural manifestation of lordship.
The next tower known is at West Cotton [D], constructed in the mid-10th century (fig. 6.5). One of the earliest buildings on its site, it lay within a timber palisade at the estate centre of a minor thegn, associated with his hall. It was demolished by c. 1000.
A further possible tower has been excavated as part of a high-status residential complex at Ketton Quarry [C], which also consisted of several halls and a church (fig. 6.6). The site was occupied during the 10th and 11th centuries, which provides a broad date for the construction of the possible tower.

![Fig. 6.6](image-url) – The lordly complex at Ketton Quarry [C] (adapted from Blair 2005 381).

Finally, according to the late 12th century Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds a ‘wooden belfry 140ft high’ (berefrido ligneo septies xx pedum in altitudine) was constructed within the town at the residence of the wealthy Cockfield family during the later 11th or early 12th centuries [B]. The Cockfields were Anglo-Saxon aristocratic ‘survivors’ of the Conquest and military knights of the abbey.

To these examples can be added the English free-standing towers depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (Renn 1994, 178-9). That at Hastings [14] is discussed in appendix.
I, leaving two unidentified examples which occur at Harold’s landfall from Normandy (Wilson 1985, plate 27; fig. 6.7). That to the right of the mounted Harold and his retainer has no obvious context and goes unremarked in the Tapestry, implying that free-standing towers were not unknown in the late Anglo-Saxon landscape. That to the left is three stories in height with a large ground-floor doorway, several upper openings and a balcony facing the sea. It has been suggested as a town-house (Brown 1965, 83) but is clearly a tower (Wilson 1985, 216-7; Renn 1994, 178; Lewis 1999, 44; Musset 2005, 156). A carved beast-head on the balcony implies it is constructed from timber.

Fig. 6.7 – Harold makes landfall in England and sets off for Westminster, as depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (Wilson 1985, plate 27).

There is some question as to whether the buildings of the Bayeux Tapestry were pro forma representations of standard types rather than accurate representations (Lewis 2005, 21-39). It has even been suggested that the several towers on the Tapestry were no more than elaborate ‘scene breaks’ (Brown 1965, 84), although this does not work in practice and is an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the evidence. Martin Carver (1986, 120, 132) instead argues that the Tapestry is a more reliable source of real-life depictions than many contemporary manuscripts: it is a novel work rather a rehearsal of well-worn Biblical events copied from earlier sources, its buildings are not found in earlier illustrations, and there is self-referential uniformity throughout the Tapestry. There is also a consensus that the Tapestry was designed and manufactured in Southeast England shortly after the Conquest (summarised in Owen-Crocker 2006, 243-5), implying that its scenes may have been copied from life.

Dover has been suggested as the location of the three-storey watchtower (fig. 6.7), since Harold was travelling between Normandy and Westminster during this scene.
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(Lewis 1999, 44; Musset 2005, 156). A better candidate is Bosham (West Sussex; Renn 1994, 179), from where Harold had sailed to Normandy earlier in the Tapestry (Wilson 1985, plate 3; see fig. 6.27). Bosham was a valuable manor and an important Godwine family residence, which they used as their Channel port (Williams 1980; Gem 1985). It was also convenient for Westminster, along Stane Street (Margary 1973, 64-7). The tower is depicted crowded with figures looking out expectantly for the arrival of Harold’s ship, implying that he was entering his home port. Speculatively, therefore, Bosham is another example of a late Anglo-Saxon lordly residence with a timber tower.

The evidence therefore points to a tradition of the construction of towers at Anglo-Saxon lordly residences from at least c. 900, which may have also included the uncertain tower-nave at Springfield Lyons [26] (fig. 6.8). The Bury St Edmunds tower [B] demonstrates that these could be highly impressive structures; Bishopstone [A] indicates the potential symbolic importance of these towers within a lord’s estate. However, only a handful of examples are known, too few to refine their date or distribution, but this does not necessarily mean that they were rare in late Anglo-Saxon society. Stone towers survive above ground from this period whereas timber towers do not: if lordly tower-naves known solely from excavation or documentary sources were included in this study, they would also number only four, rather than the twenty-one identified largely from standing fabric (figs 4.7 & 4.8). The OE term stantorr (‘stone tower’) implies the parallel existence of both traditions: it is notable that there is no known equivalent term for ‘timber tower’ (Grundy and Roberts 1997, 106). This implies that timber was the Anglo-Saxons’ prior, ‘default’ mode of construction: the OE verb ‘to build’ was timber.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig. 6.8** – The three excavated possible timber lordly towers and the suggested excavated tower at Springfield Lyons [26].
6.2.2 Pilaster strips on lordly tower-naves

Available evidence indicates that lordly tower-nave churches were built in earnest from the late 10th century onwards (section 4.5 & fig. 4.6). The majority were stone, although this may be biased by the greater survivability of this material compared to timber. Nevertheless, there was an existing tradition of timber towers at late Anglo-Saxon lordly residences prior to the construction in stone of lordly tower-nave churches (section 6.2.1). It is therefore notable that the lordly tower-naves at Earls Barton [8] and Barton-upon-Humber [3] exemplify freestone pilaster stripwork (fig 6.9).

Thirty-two churches with dressed stone (as distinct from flint rubble) pilasters are known from Anglo-Saxon England, dating from the mid-9th century onwards (Taylor 1978, 915-927). Interpretation of these pilasters is broadly divided into their being copies of Continental church decoration, or that they echo timber building techniques (summarised in Schapiro 1959; Taylor 1970). Subsequent study questioned the similarity of the form with Continental exemplars (Taylor 1978, 915-927); it is now thought that they were indeed timber skeuomorphs (Audouy et al. 1995, 89; Rodwell and Atkins 2011, 329).
In a rare attempt to tackle the social meaning of these pilaster strips, Michael Bintley (2009, 247-8) argues that they echoed timber building practice not due to a lack of imagination or competence on the part of the builder. Instead, they can be ascribed to a desire for continuity with existing timber-building practices that fundamentally underlie Anglo-Saxon architectural traditions. Recent research emphasises the rigidity of the Anglo-Saxon distinction between building in timber, which encompassed nearly all known secular buildings, and building in stone, which was almost exclusively confined to ecclesiastical structures (Shapland, forthcoming). If lordly tower-naves were essays in stone of existing secular timber towers, early examples may have used pilaster stripwork to emphasise these origins, and to underline that these ecclesiastical towers retained their established secular dimension.

6.2.3 The hubris of aristocratic stone tower construction
The practice of reserving stone for ecclesiastical structures goes some way to explaining why no great secular towers of stone are yet known from Anglo-Saxon England: all the examples identified in this study appear to have functioned as churches. The construction of stone towers by lords may have involved an unacceptable degree of hubris, unless these stone towers were dedicated in the service of God. This is indicated by OE versions of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 1-9). The original recounts how the people of the world come together:

And they said, ‘Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’

(Genesis 11: 3).

The tribes are punished for their impertinence by being inflicted with many languages and scattered across the face of the earth. The story is retold in Alfred’s version of Boethius’ *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. Here, the giant Nimrod was responsible for the construction of the tower of Babel:

Because he wished to learn how far it was to heaven…. But it turned out, naturally, that divine power destroyed it before they could complete it, and knocked over the tower…. So it happens to anyone who struggles against divine power; they win no honour in it, but lose that which they had previously.

þæt hi dydon for þam ðingum þe hi woldon witan hu heah hit were to ðam heofone…. Ac hit gebyrede, swa hit cynn was, þæt se godcunda wald hi
The mid-10th century Junius 11 manuscript contains an Anglo-Saxon version of the story – Genesis A – which has a number of interesting interpolations (Liuzza 2003, 2-3). Here, the tribes have become ‘famous warriors… sons of noblemen’ (rofe rincas… æðelinga bearn) who seek to erect their tower from stone ‘for their glory’ (hie him to mærðe). They were guided in their task by their lords: they sought tuition ‘where the most mighty and eldest rulers of the people often and frequently dwelt in joy’ (swa þa foremeahtige folces ræswan, þa yldestan oft and gelome liðsum gewunedon).

According to this work, the Anglo-Saxon imagination perceived the construction of a great tower as befitting the work of noblemen seeking glory, rather than as an expression of popular will. It may be no coincidence that this retelling of the story dates from the later 10th century, the period when tower-nave churches began to be constructed by local lords, which are suggested below to have been statements of aristocratic power and authority (sections 6.5-6.10). It is also striking that the tower-building lords in Genesis A seek inspiration from ‘the most mighty and eldest rulers of the people’, just as lords in later 10th century England may have been inspired by the great towers of their kings and bishops (section 6.1). If Genesis A was meant as a warning then it did not succeed: lordly tower-naves on the scale of St George’s in Oxford [21] rivalled anything at England’s great monastic houses (fig. 4.3). Prior to the late 10th century stone towers were built at monasteries, thus adorning the City of God rather than defying it, even if the circumstances of their construction were worldly or political. The relevance of this model to Anglo-Saxon society cannot be assumed on the basis of fragments of Old English literature whose currency and popularity must remain unknown. However, unlike the noblemen who left ‘the sturdy stone tower and the high fortress, together, half-built, on the plain of Shinar’ (Genesis A), the Anglo-Saxon lords who began to construct great stone towers across England away from monasteries made sure to consecrate them, and to dedicate them to the service of God.

6.3 Western church towers and lordly tower-nave origins

Together with royal tower-naves and lordly timber towers, the third likely source for lordly tower-nave construction is the western towers of conventional Anglo-Saxon churches. As discussed in section 2.4, the present consensus is that the majority of what
would become England’s parish churches were founded from the 10th to the 12th centuries by lords on their private estates. Many of these local churches had towers, frequently suggested as lordly status-symbols beyond their ostensible function of housing bells (section 2.5). Indeed, several western towers are reminiscent of miniature *westwerke*, with private chapels and views over services in the church below (surveyed in Taylor 1978, 887-91). This raises the question of whether tower-naves were part of a parallel tradition to these western towers, or whether church western towers were derivative of the aristocratic tower-nave form, adopted by a wider set of local lords and incorporated into general-purpose church plans (suggested by Morris 1989, 255).

### 6.3.1 The development of Anglo-Saxon western church towers

Unfortunately, no synthesis and gazetteer of Anglo-Saxon church towers has been attempted since the work of Fisher (1969) and Taylor (1978, 887-901), neither of whom satisfactorily track their development. There is not scope in this study to rectify this, but an attempt is made below to summarise the construction of Anglo-Saxon western towers. Crossing-towers have been excluded on the grounds that they were a turris form adornment integral to the main body of a church rather than a discrete structure appended to it. They are therefore less convincing candidates to have been added by a lord for his personal use or aggrandizement. The Lincolnshire group of western towers are not included due to their recent re-interpretation as a coherent Norman assemblage (Stocker and Everson 2006). The round towers of East Anglia have also been excluded due to deep confusion over their date and development (*e.g.* Messent 1958; Goode 1982; Heywood 1988; Hart 2003).

The thirty-seven towers in fig. 6.10 are predominantly drawn from the list in Taylor (1978, 900), with the exclusions noted above. This does not claim to be an exhaustive list of sites, and no attempt has been made to incorporate examples discovered since 1978. However, every effort has been made to reference more recent discussions of each tower, particularly if these have involved survey work or reliable attempts at dating their construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Date of tower</th>
<th>Manor-house?</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Appleton-le-Street</td>
<td>All Saints</td>
<td>950-1000</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 28-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bardssey</td>
<td>All Hallows</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>Castle across road</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 39-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barnack</td>
<td>St John the Baptist</td>
<td>Early C10th</td>
<td>In manorial <em>curia</em></td>
<td>Cramp 1975, 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location/Presumably timeline</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Billingham</td>
<td>St Cuthbert</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 58-60</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Bolam</td>
<td>St Andrew</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>Dispersed settlement; manor and camp nearby</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 66-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bosham</td>
<td>Holy Trinity</td>
<td>Early-mid C11th</td>
<td>Associated with Godwine residence</td>
<td>Tatton-Brown 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brigstock</td>
<td>St Andrew</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 100-105</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brixworth</td>
<td>All Saints</td>
<td>c. 900</td>
<td>Manorial curia nearby</td>
<td>Parsons and Sutherland forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bywell</td>
<td>St Andrew</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>Dispersed settlement; in manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 121-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>St Benet</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 129-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Carlton-in-Lindrick</td>
<td>St John the Evangelist</td>
<td>Mid C11th</td>
<td>Situated away from later stately home</td>
<td>Hare 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Caversfield</td>
<td>St Laurence</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Clapham</td>
<td>St Thomas á Becket</td>
<td>Later C11th</td>
<td>Episcopal residence? Within earthwork</td>
<td>Taylor 1982</td>
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<td>St Mary</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 192-3</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Deerhurst</td>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>c. 900</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Rahtz and Watts 1997</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hornby</td>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>Later C11th</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 319-20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hough-on-the-Hill</td>
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<td>950-1000</td>
<td>In manorial curia; adjacent to castle</td>
<td>Everson and Stocker 1999, 180-2</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>1050-1100</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 326-8</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Kirk Hammerton</td>
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<td>Mid C11th</td>
<td>Manorial curia across road</td>
<td>Morris 1976</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Lavendon</td>
<td>St Michael</td>
<td>1050-1100</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
<td>Cramp 2006, 215-6</td>
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<td>Little Bardfield</td>
<td>St Katherine</td>
<td>Later C11th</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 37-8</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Middleton-by-Pickering</td>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>950-1000</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 418-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Monk Fryston</td>
<td>St Wilfred</td>
<td>1050-1100</td>
<td>Manorial curia across road</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 431-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Monkwearmouth</td>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>Later C10th- C11th</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
<td>Cramp 2005, 71-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ovingham</td>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 478-9</td>
</tr>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Singleton</td>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>Later C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Aldsworth 1989</td>
</tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Skipwith</td>
<td>St Helen</td>
<td>C11th</td>
<td>Manorial curia adjacent</td>
<td>Hall et al. 2008</td>
</tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Sompting</td>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>Later C11th</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Aldsworth &amp; Harris 1988; Cramp 2006, 62-3</td>
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<td>950-1100</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 571-2</td>
</tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Stowe-Nine-Churches</td>
<td>St Michael</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor 1965, 594-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Swanscombe</td>
<td>SS Peter and</td>
<td>950-1100</td>
<td>In manorial curia</td>
<td>Taylor and Taylor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 6.10 – The development of Anglo-Saxon square western towers, and their relationship to manorial *curiae*, using data from 1st edition OS maps.

One interesting aspect of this analysis is the fact that, where known, around 80% of local churches with square western towers are either incorporated into manorial *curiae* or are located adjacent to them (fig. 6.11). The uncertainty of using 1st edition OS maps to study early medieval settlement patterns applies here as firmly as it does to the study of local tower-nave churches (see section 3.4.2). Crude as this picture is, it is indicative of a close relationship between the aristocracy and the construction of western towers in the late Anglo-Saxon period, although far greater study is needed into the dating of these towers and any adjacent manorial residence. For present purposes, it allows us to pursue Richard Morris’ (1989, 255) theory that Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-nave churches instigated the spread of western towers at proprietorial churches across England.

Fig. 6.11 – The relationship between Anglo-Saxon churches with square western towers and manorial *curiae*, where known (based on fig. 6.10).

Unfortunately, very few Anglo-Saxon western towers have been securely dated (fig. 6.10). Of these, the three earliest are Brixworth, Barnack and Deerhurst, all built c. 900. Until modern dating techniques are applied to more sites, these comprise the earliest known western church towers in England, although they are later than the earliest Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves, discussed in the previous chapter.
6.3.2 West tower origins: Brixworth, Deerhurst and Barnack

The west tower at Brixworth minster (fig. 6.12) appears to have originated as a stone structure with a timber upper storey contemporary with the construction of the church c. 800. It may have served as a ‘lord’s pew’ from to this date, which would be in keeping with the minster’s presumed aristocratic foundation, or it may have had a liturgical function. Either way, the timber superstructure was replaced with the existing stone tower and integral stair-turret, recently radiocarbon dated to c. 900 (Parsons and Sutherland forthcoming). The new first-floor chamber communicated visually with the nave via an elaborate three-light opening.

Fig. 6.12 – All Saints’, Brixworth, with its early 10th century tower, from the south.
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Fig. 6.13 – The settlement of Brixworth. Note the extensive enclosure and manor-house adjacent to the church (based on 1st edition OS map).

The function of Brixworth’s new tower is uncertain: it may have been a modest westwerk and lord’s pew, although the forthcoming report favours a liturgical function associated with bell-ringing. A considerable enclosure centred on a pre-18th century manor-house lies close to the church (Salzman 1937, 150), but the church, enclosure and manor-house are not obviously related (fig. 6.13).

The west porch at Deerhurst minster (fig. 6.14) appears to have been heightened in two stages, once to create a two-storey porch in the 9th century, and again to form a tall belltower c. 900. Both phases have been radiocarbon-dated, supported by sculptural evidence (Rahtz and Watts 1997, 173-9). The earlier phase of heightening may have incorporated a substantial timber balcony, whose function is uncertain (Hare 2009). Although Deerhurst – like Brixworth – was certainly a monastic church rather than a lordly chapel, it’s precinct was ‘invaded’ by a seigneurial curia at an uncertain date, probably during the early medieval period (fig. 6.15). This may have been under Earl Odda (c. 993-1056), who constructed a chapel in the manorial half of the former precinct (Parsons 2000; Blair 2005, 286). The minster west tower contained an upper chapel and a ‘lord’s pew’ looking over the nave, in the manner of a lordly westwerk.
Fig. 6.14 – St Mary’s church Deerhurst with its tower of c. 900, from the south.

Fig. 6.15 – Earthworks showing the substantial minster precinct of St Mary’s, Deerhurst, ‘invaded’ by a manorial curia (Blair 2005, 286).
The tower of St John the Baptist, Barnack (fig. 6.16) has been dated through sculptural evidence to the early 10th century (Cramp 1975, 192; Gem 1995, 44). Unlike Brixworth and Deerhurst, it is a local church with a contemporary western tower, rather than a tower added to an early minster church. The Barnack tower appears to have been a distinct liturgical space with aumbries and a stone seat set into its west wall (fig. 6.16), interpreted as either a seat of justice (Baldwin Brown 1925, 282) or a clergy seat (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 46). The church appears to be located within a manorial curia (fig. 6.17) at the centre of which is a manor house with a 12th century great hall (Pevsner 1968, 210), which is good evidence for the manorial curia’s early origins. Wilson’s (1976, 443) assertion that ‘a later motte runs up against the tower of the Anglo-Saxon church, demonstrating the continuous defensive nature of the site’ is not clear on the ground. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that the stone seat in the tower was the seat or ‘gift-stool’ of the lord to whom the church apparently belonged, akin to the thrones of early medieval royal westwerke (section 5.4).

Fig. 6.16 – The early 10th century tower at Barnack, Northamptonshire. Left: general view from the southwest. Right: view of the stone seat in the tower from the present nave, ignoring modern intrusions (Baldwin Brown 1925, 278).
Church western towers in England appear to have pre-dated the construction of local, lordly tower-naves, which belies Richard Morris’ (1989, 255) theory that Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-nave churches instigated the spread of western towers at proprietorial churches. Of the three firmly-dated examples, Deerhurst and Brixworth were monastic in character when their towers were constructed, although the Deerhurst tower in particular may have had seigneurial associations. Leaving them aside, the tower at Barnack was constructed as part of a local church within an early manorial curia, indicating that it was lordly in origin.

Lordly tower-nave churches therefore seem to have grown out of an existing milieu of lordly timber towers, local church western towers, and the great royal and episcopal tower-nave churches discussed in chapter five (fig. 6.1). Barnack is a lone ‘missing link’ in this picture, although other examples of comparable date may yet come to light. Compellingly, Barnack can be associated with the timber lordly towers through its striking use of pilaster stripwork (fig. 6.16; compare with fig. 6.9), argued above to represent continuity between lordly tower-naves and lordly timber towers (section 6.3.3).
6.4 Lordly tower-nave origins: some conclusions

Early 10th century England seems to have witnessed a varied picture of lordly towers from which lordly tower-nave churches developed (fig. 6.1): towers of timber at seigneurial residences (section 6.2), royal and episcopal tower-nave chapels (section 6.1), and towers attached to the west end of proprietary churches (section 6.3). The motor for their development is clear: lordly tower-naves and western church towers were part of the growth of local churches in 10th-12th century England, primarily as a result of lordly agency (section 2.4).

The evidence for early lordly timber towers and western towers is presently too slender to allow speculation as to whether it was these or the monastic tower-naves which were the primary influence in the development of lordly tower-naves by the end of the 10th century. Indeed, to ask this question may be to make a false distinction between local, lordly towers and monastic tower-naves. The late Anglo-Saxon foundation of local churches can be seen as a later replication of the close entwinement of secular and religious power at English monasteries from the 7th century onwards. Just as many early monasteries were at royal estate centres, forming part of the ideological legitimation of kingship, so many local churches from the 10th century onwards lay at manorial residences and augmented the authority of their lords (Morris 1989, 163; Pestell 2004, 62). We should not be surprised that high-status private tower-nave chapels originated at early monastic sites and were later built at a local level, just as the Anglo-Saxon Church itself was fragmenting from a system based around regional minsters to one characterised by local churches. But the growth of these churches, which drove the growth of lordly tower-naves, did not happen in isolation. It was part of the increasing localisation of social power in the hands of the aristocracy that came to characterise the later Anglo-Saxon state (section 2.7.1).

6.5 Lordly towers in relation to forms of social power

Although the establishment of local lordly residences, proprietary churches and planned settlements lay behind the spread of lordly tower-naves and timber towers (section 4.8.2; see also section 6.8.1), these towers were not casually erected by lords with an eye for architectural panache. Tower-naves were meaningfully-imbued structures, long built by kings and bishops to adorn their monasteries and palaces, even to mark imperial triumph (section 5.5.2). Towers appeared on royal coinage (section 6.1.1) and in the Bible (section 6.3.4), and Roman towers would have dotted the late Anglo-Saxon landscape (section 5.1). Towers would have been built by lords aware of this
significance and potency as they set about asserting their authority over their newly-acquired estates. As discussed in section 2.6, forms of power in Anglo-Saxon society can conveniently be divided into the political, the military, the economic and the ideological. These will be discussed in turn.

6.6 Lordly towers as symbols of political power (section 2.7)

6.6.1 Lordly tower-naves and timber towers at lordly residences

The ability of a lord to exercise political power was primarily dependent upon his ability to convince others of his status. In Anglo-Saxon England, this was focussed on his residence (section 2.3.2). Nineteen or twenty of the twenty-one lordly tower-naves in this study are argued, with vary degrees of certainty, to have been constructed at lordly residences (4.8.2), as are the lordly timber towers (section 6.2.1). Furthermore, the great majority of lords appear to have constructed their tower-naves at their most important estate in a given region (section 4.8.1). As the tallest and most prominent buildings at a lord’s residence, lordly tower-naves and timber towers would have been best placed to impress his status on the surrounding landscape.

Nevertheless, analysis of the twenty-one lordly tower-naves shows that only half were located at the most lofty or prominent part of either their parish or an adjacent parish belonging to the same lord (see section 4.9.2). Few tower-naves would have been highly visible in their local landscapes. This mixed picture accords with that from the lordly timber towers. Those at Bishopstone [A] and West Cotton [D] were not placed for maximum visibility, whilst the possible example at Ketton Quarry [C] is relatively prominent in its local landscape. The urban tower at Bury St Edmunds [B] is not highly visible, but is constrained by its town’s topographical setting. Perhaps surprisingly, there is little evidence that lords used their towers as a means of proclaiming their status as widely as possible, although this may have been true in some cases.

Location at a lordly residence is therefore to be the key to understanding the placement of non-monastic tower-naves and towers. The exceptions are East Dean [9], the location of whose manor-house is unknown, and the abandoned tower-nave at South Cadbury [25], the context of whose construction is uncertain. Where known, lordly tower-naves and timber towers were all added to an existing residence (section 4.8.2 & 6.8.1). Towers and tower-naves would have increased the visibility of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences in the landscape, but they were primarily constructed to augment the architecture of the residences themselves (section 4.9.2).
Chapter 6: Towers, tower-naves and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

This does not mean that Anglo-Saxon lordly residences themselves were located regardless of any potential to display status, only that this was not necessarily a primary consideration. Amongst the sites for which the presence of an early medieval lordly residence is known (rather than being assumed from later evidence: see section 4.8.2), there were other concerns which appear to have trumped sheer landscape prominence. Portchester [23], Ozleworth [22], Hastings [14] and possibly Springfield Lyons [26] took advantage of existing enclosures or fortifications, Guildford [13] was located at an important river crossing, the towers at York’s Bishophill [34], Bury St Edmunds [5 & B] and Bishopstone [A] were built at residences serving an existing town or minster, and West Cotton [D] was designed to incorporate a mill. The possible example at Ketton Quarry [C] may have been located with visibility in mind, or proximity to its hundred meeting-place.

Lordly tower-naves and towers were overwhelmingly built to enhance lordly residences, which were themselves positioned in the landscape according to a variety of factors, of which general visibility was but one. This does not mean that Anglo-Saxon lordly residences were not fundamental to the demonstration of status, simply that its conveyance to the largest possible audience was not always prioritised. Further research on the landscape contexts of lordly residences of this date is needed, but a comparable regional study of Norman castles has shown that sheer visibility was not a prime concern then either (Lowerre 2005). To understand how lordly tower-naves and timber towers may have embodied aristocratic status we must look at their potential roles within the residences at which they stood. This can be approached through the so-called Promotion Law (section 2.2), their potential as platforms for lordly display, their potential to have flown seigneurial banners and their proximity to hundred meeting-places (section 4.9.3).

6.6.2 Lordly towers and the ‘Promotion Law’

The so-called Promotion Law may indicate how status was actually expressed through the architecture of late Anglo-Saxon lordly residences. It relates the suite of buildings that a thegn was expected to possess to be worthy of his status: a burhgeat (a gatehouse, by implication also an enclosure), a belhus (a bell-house), a church and a kitchen (section 2.2). As discussed in section 4.8.3, the Promotion Law should not be taken literally, and there is nothing relating the lordly tower-naves to the specific functions of a belhus and a burhgeat. Nevertheless, the Promotion Law is a useful indication that
architecture was used in this period to manifest aristocratic status, specifically in its requirement that a lord should have a chapel.

The lordly tower-naves were all private chapels rather than congregational churches, in view of their limited capacity (section 4.8.3 & fig. 4.5). Significantly, the majority are unlikely to have even been accessible for public worship, since fifteen out of twenty-one were wholly integrated into their suggested manorial curiae (figs 4.15 & 4.16). The integration of the church into the manorial residence in this way is thought to have been exceptional in the Anglo-Saxon period, and indicative of high status (Blair 2005, 387). For three-quarters of lordly tower-naves to have been fully integrated in this way is testament to their high-status associations, strengthening their interpretation as the ‘reserved architecture’ of the late Anglo-Saxon elite.

6.6.3 Tower-naves as platforms for lordly display
The suggestion that tower-nave churches bore above-ground external doorways for the lordly display of people or relics was made by Derek Renn (1994), who had been struck by the occurrence of buildings with upper doorways on the Bayeux Tapestry. He cited Wickham [29], Guildford [13], Earl’s Barton [8] and St Michael and St George in Oxford [20 & 21] as examples of tower-naves – which he termed burhgeats – bearing above-ground doorways, together with Warblington (Hampshire) and Barnack (fig. 6.16). He went on to suggest that a number of early Norman gatehouses also bore upper doorways, indicating a degree of continuity either side of the Conquest in the construction of aristocratic entrance structures.

Renn’s thesis has become common currency in discussions of pre-Conquest lordly residences (e.g. Strickland 1997, 369; Creighton 2002, 123-4; Wheatley 2004, 9), but it needs revision in the light of this study. Barnack cannot be considered a tower-nave, and there is insufficient evidence that Warblington was originally free-standing. However, both are situated in close association with early lordly sites: Barnack with a 12th century or earlier manorial curia (fig. 6.17) and Warblington with a fortified medieval manor-house (Goodall 2011, 411, 426-7). Additionally, this study has increased Renn’s list of confirmed lordly tower-naves from five to twenty-one, of which sixteen retain good evidence for their original elevations (fig. 4.4). Of these, only three had above-ground doorways: Earl’s Barton [8], Wickham [29] and St Michael’s, Oxford [20]. The ‘upper doorways’ at St George’s, Oxford [21] are better interpreted as belfry-openings, and measured survey at Guildford [13] failed to reveal Renn’s suggested upper doorways. Also problematic is Renn’s (1994, 183) conflation of the term
‘burhgeat’ with free-standing lordly tower-naves when few could have acted as such (section 4.8.3). Renn supports this conflation by referring to the Bayeux Tapestry’s depiction of towers with above-ground doorways. However, only one of his three suggested depictions of towers with these doorways is convincing: the coastal watchtower structure which meets Harold’s return from Normandy (section 6.21; fig. 6.7). The Tapestry appears to show the tower at Hastings [14] with an apse rather than an upper doorway (Wilson 1985, plate 51); the burning house does have an upper doorway (Wilson 1985, plate 50), but it is labelled on the Tapestry as a domestic house (domus) rather than a tower.

Despite this, Renn’s idea that Anglo-Saxon lords used the upper doorways of their towers to display either themselves or relics is credible. The imperial towers at Winchester [30] and Aachen (section 5.4.1) contained above-ground thrones with galleries allowing the emperor to present himself to the people, so the use of such doorways on local, lordly tower-naves may represent the appropriation of royal material culture by the aristocracy. Although above-ground doorways were present on only three of the tower-naves in this study, they seem to have been located with their immediate landscape context in mind. That at St Michael’s in Oxford [20] faces north along the main approach road to the town. Those at Wickham [29] and Earls Barton [8] face north and south towards the focal points of their respective settlements. Overall, the putative practice of using above-ground doorways for lordly display seems not to have been widespread.

6.6.4 Tower-naves and lordly banners

Anglo-Saxon leaders carried flags into battle for identification and as focal-points for rallying troops. There is little evidence that ‘proper’ heraldry – where a design common to banner, shield, horse and seal would be passed down from father to son – was introduced in England before the mid-12th century (Ailes 1992). However, men would still have needed a means of recognising their lord on the battlefield. The Bayeux Tapestry comprises the earliest surviving evidence of the consistent use of a single banner by a lord (Crouch 1992, 220-1), and the impracticability of a lord changing his identifier between battles is a persuasive argument in favour of their consistent use (Jones 2004, 104-5). King Harold’s ‘fighting man’ banner, for example, was described by William of Poitiers as ‘famous’, so it must have been flown regularly and prominently (Jones 2007, 157).
The difference between Anglo-Saxon banners and later medieval heraldry is that these banners were personal to each lord, ‘an extension of its owner, advertising his presence’ (Jones 2004, 106), rather than the insignia of a house or family. Harold’s ‘fighting man’ banner differed from the dragon banner of the House of Wessex, depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (Jones 2007, 156-7). In his early 12th century account of the Battle of Ashingdon (1016), Henry of Huntingdon distinguishes between the dragon banner of Wessex and the personal standard of King Edmund Ironside, which he does not describe (Historia Anglorum vi. 13; Greenaway 1996, 358-9). Later, Henry of Huntingdon recounts ealdorman Æthelhun carrying the ‘golden dragon’ (draconem aureum) banner of King Cuthred of Wessex against King Æthelbald of Mercia in 752 (Historia Anglorum iv. 19; Greenaway 1996, 242).

The fyrd mustered and deployed on a hundredal basis, organised and led by a lord. There is some evidence that each hundredal unit comprising an Anglo-Saxon army displayed its own banner (Campbell, 2000a, 24-5). Personal allegiance to a lord was one of the fundamentals of Anglo-Saxon society: each hundredal unit of the fyrd invested its identity in its lord (section 2.9.1), and it presumably carried his banner into battle. This begs the question as to what was done with these banners in peacetime. If a lord’s banner was to become ingrained upon the minds of his men, it is likely to have remained on display. If we conceive of these banners as part of the material expression of lordly identity, to see one fluttering over a locality would have been a potent symbol of the lord’s presence. The 10th and 11th century phases of the royal palace at Cheddar have what has been interpreted as a flagstaff prominently at its entrance (Rahtz 1979, 58), and literary sources from the 12th century onwards tell us that banners were used to demonstrate ownership of a place (Jones 2004, 107).

The summit of a lord’s tower is an obvious place for his banner to have flown, and there is linguistic evidence to support this. The Old English term for ‘banner’ or ‘standard’ is fana, which was corrupted in Middle English to our modern word ‘vane’, in the sense of the weather-vanes that top church towers. The sight of flags and banners flying from church towers may have been sufficiently common for the terms to have become unified in this way.

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2 Oxford English Dictionary.
6.6.5 Tower-naves at hundred meeting-places

Whether or not they had above-ground doorways or aristocratic banners were flown from their summits, a lord’s tower-nave or timber tower would have been a firm statement of political power in the landscape. They seem to have been constructed with existing residences in mind, rather than to best advantage in terms of visibility (sections 4.9.2 & 6.8.1). Nevertheless, where known, ten out of sixteen lordly tower-naves were intervisible with their hundred meeting-place, of which eight were located in the same parish (section 4.9.3). Of the timber towers, only the hundred meeting-places of Bury St Edmunds [B] and Ketton Quarry [C] are known: both towers lay adjacent.

The potential importance of this is considerable. Lords were at the centre of the local networks of power which exercised of the king’s will and the working of the late Anglo-Saxon state (section 2.7). Local lords possessed limited legal powers, but the chief theatre for the practice of this political power was at the hundred court (section 2.7.5). It has been suggested that the proximity of a lord’s residence to the hundred meeting-place would have significantly bolstered his authority (Stafford 1985, 162; Williams 1992b, 39). The proximity of his tower – discussed above as a potent manifestation of Anglo-Saxon lordship and authority – can only have emphasised this. The way that the hundred-court worked may tell us something of the nature of this message: the freemen who attended were not ‘free’, they were not there for their own opinions. The law required them to be commended as somebody’s ‘man’ and to support him during assembly (Warner 1996, 182-3). The lord’s tower would have served as a reminder of this duty, particularly if his banner flew from the summit.

6.7 Lordly towers as symbols of military power

Long before we neared
The foot of this great tower, my gaze was drawn
Towards its distant summit: on whose heights
Two tiny flames were placed; still further off,
So faintly that the eye could scarcely see,
Another blinked a message in return.

(Dante, Inferno, canto VIII; trans O’Brien 2006).

The importance of military power to the Anglo-Saxon nobility was twofold (see section 2.9). On the one hand it was of practical importance: the aristocracy comprised the heart of the fyrd and had key responsibilities in keeping watch, mustering troops and defending their localities, which they presumably administered from their residences. On the other hand, military power was of symbolic importance. Lords maintained their
authority by projecting their military power in their localities, and legitimised their place in society, in part, by being seen to undertake the military responsibilities on which their position depended. Their towers therefore need to be discussed with both practical and symbolic military roles in mind, moving beyond the simplistic ‘church tower as refuge’ topos that has hitherto dominated debate (section 2.5.1).

6.7.1 Lordly tower-naves as refuges

There is some evidence that some Anglo-Saxon lordly residences were defensible strongholds, akin to post-Conquest castles (section 2.11.6). This may cast Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves and timber towers in the role of castle ‘keeps’.

The Anglo-Saxon residence at Balsham (Cambridgeshire) is an excellent example of an Anglo-Saxon church tower functioning as a defensible refuge. Henry of Huntingdon’s early 12th century *Chronicle* recounts for the year 1010 that the Danes were returning from destroying Thetford and Cambridge, and attacked Balsham:

> But one man, worthy of widespread renown, climbed the steps of the church tower which still stands there, and strengthened both by the place and by his prowess, defended himself, one against the whole army.

*Quidam uero fama dignus extenta in gradus turris temple, quod adhuc ibidem stat, ascendit. Et tam loco quam probitate munitus, ab omni solus exercitu se defendit.*

(Henry of Huntingdon vi. 6; Greenaway 1996, 348-9).

This church is now gone, but its 13th century replacement does indeed stand within a probable former manorial enclosure (fig. 6.18).

Fig. 6.18 – 1st edition OS map of Balsham, Cambridgeshire.
The lord whose name Henry of Huntingdon had forgotten was probably Oswi. Balsham was granted to Ely abbey by Leofflæd, wife of Oswi and daughter of the famous Earl Beorhtnoth, by a will dated 1017 x 1035, only a few years after the Viking attack (S 1520; S 1051; Whitelock 1930, 142). Interestingly, the Domesday Book records that five hides of the valuable Balsham estate was held in demesne by sokemen in exchange for cartage-due and escort-service for the Bishop of Ely (Williams and Martin 2002, 523). This may perpetuate the military responsibilities of Balsham’s early 11th century lord.

The landscape context of Balsham fits well with the documented siege (fig. 6.19). Balsham lies near the Icknield Way on the Thetford to Cambridge Roman road (Margary 24), guarded by the adjacent Fleam Dyke, a Roman or early medieval linear earthwork (RCHME 1972b, 144-7). The point at which the Dyke and the Way intersect was the site of a hundred meeting-place. A second linear earthwork, the Devil’s Ditch, of likely early medieval date, runs six miles to the northeast (RCHME 1972b, 139-44). Although Balsham’s tower would have made a poor watchtower, it did have sight of a beacon with a view over the Icknield Way. The tower was also intervisible with its hundred meeting-place. A system may therefore have operated whereby the lord at Balsham commanded a tower at his defensible residence near where a highly strategic route was guarded by a system of linear earthworks. A beacon warned him of danger, whereat he assembled the fyrd at the hundred meeting-place within sight of his tower, to which he could turn for refuge. It is unfortunate that nothing is known about the form of this tower, but replace ‘tower’ for keep and one could be describing the operation of a post-Conquest castle.
1. Balsham is in Radfield hundred, which met at Rutlow Hill, Great Wilbraham (Reaney 1943, 114).
2. Wadloo (ward(e)lou(h)(e)feld 1250), West Wratting (Reaney 1943, 122-3).

**Fig. 6.19** – The landscape context of Balsham.
Interpreting lordly tower-naves as refuges along the lines of Balsham is dependent on several characteristics. They would need to have small lower windows, thick stone walls, to be within a defensible enclosure, and ideally to have an above-ground entrance (fig. 6.20). Portchester [23], Hastings [14] and Woodeaton [32] have been excluded due to their incomplete survival, and Springfield Lyons [29] due to its uncertain ascription as a tower-nave.

<table>
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<th>Site</th>
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<th>Secure lower windows?</th>
<th>Defensible enclosure?</th>
<th>Av. wall thickness</th>
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<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingest</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1.2 m</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>York: St Mary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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</table>

Fig. 6.20 – The defensive characteristics of the surviving lordly tower-naves. Apparent *burhgeat* towers (see fig. 4.16) are italicised.

The tower-naves best placed to have had a significant defensive function are the gate-towers, Jevington [17] and St Michael’s and St George’s in Oxford [20 & 21]. The massive tower of St George [21] would have been formidable, although it is unknown whether its original chancel had vulnerable windows. However, Jevington [17] and St Michael’s in Oxford [20] do not convince as defensible structures due to their vulnerable lower windows.

Of the fifteen other lordly tower-naves, Caistor [6], Earls Barton [8], Guildford [13], Morland [19] and Wickham [29] are known to have had either small lower windows or none at all. This makes them, along with St George’s in Oxford [21], the most apparently defensible towers, although their wall-thicknesses – around a metre – are less than half that of St George’s tower. They are each also associated with probable enclosures. Turning to Wickham [29], its entrance was above ground level, and indeed it would have made a useful refuge and watchtower, with the possible presence of a
beacon at its summit. Security of access is questioned by the probable existence of two above-ground doorways where one would have done. It is unfortunate that so little is known about East Teignmouth [10], with its adjacent ‘great ditch’ mentioned in 1044, since it is the only other tower whose sole means of access may have been above the ground. This leaves Broughton [4], Barton-on-Humber [3], Fingest [11], Langford [18], Ozleworth [22], Swindon [27] and St Mary’s in York [34], of which only Ozleworth and St Mary’s probably lay within enclosures. It is unknown whether their lower windows were secure.

The non-ecclesiastical lordly tower at West Cotton [D] is in keeping with this confused picture. Although constructed of timber, it was secure within a stockade and one of the earliest buildings of its settlement. Its stockade was surrounded in turn by a ditched and banked enclosure open on its eastern side, suggesting that the site was intended for show rather than defence. This undermines any functionalist military interpretation of the tower.

With the exception of St George’s in Oxford [21], we should be rightly sceptical of lordly tower-naves as refuges. It is hard to see how a tower-nave could have protected its occupant from concerted attack, even if it had an above-ground doorway, thick walls and secure windows. As with later castles, by the time the enemy had breached the enclosure and was knocking on the tower door, the game was generally up. Parallel interpretations of the freestanding round towers of Ireland as refuges, based in part on their above-ground doorways, have been similarly questioned in recent years (O’Keeffe 2004, esp. 107-8). Vulnerable to fire, once alight they would have acted like chimneys, killing anyone within.

6.7.2 Lordly towers in landscapes of defence

Whilst the lordly tower-naves and timber towers are largely unconvincing as defensible structures, they would have been useful for keeping military watch and, in many-cases, for mustering the fyrd (fig. 4.2.3). Three quarters of lordly tower-naves with early known beacon place-names in their vicinity had visibility over them (section 4.9.2). Only half of the lordly tower-naves had intervisibility with major routes such as roads, rivers, harbours and river crossings (section 4.9.2). Where known, two-thirds of lordly tower-naves lay adjacent to their hundred meeting-place (section 4.9.3), aiding the mustering of troops. Whilst this is not an overwhelming picture, it compares favourably with the one-third of monastic tower-naves which would have made adequate
watchtowers over beacons or major routes (section 4.9.1), and the one-quarter which lay adjacent to their hundred meeting-places (fig. 4.21).

It is informative to compare this with the lordly timber towers. Of these, only the possible example at Ketton Quarry [C] would have made a good watchtower; Bishopstone [A] was able to watch a nearby beacon-system but otherwise had little landscape visibility. Both Bury St Edmunds [B] and West Cotton [D] had little intervisibility with their landscapes. Of the timber towers, only the hundred meeting-places of Bury St Edmunds [B] and Ketton Quarry [C] are known: both towers lay adjacent. This is a small sample, but it indicates a similarly mixed picture to the lordly tower-naves.

Overall, lordly tower-naves would have been strategically valuable in a number of cases, but were apparently not deployed solely with this in mind. Some lordly tower-naves would have made exceptional watchtowers: Wickham [29] had a fine view in every direction and may even have incorporated a beacon into its structure; Caistor [6] dominated passage along Ermine Street; St Mary’s in York [34] could have kept watch over traffic passing into the town. Some tower-naves would have made poor watchtowers but lay in strategic locations: Guildford [13] guarded an important river-crossing, East Teignmouth [10] watched a harbour-entrance, and Jevington [17] lay on a key long-distance route. In each case a beacon lay adjacent, enabling these towers to communicate with the wider landscape despite their relative seclusion. Some tower-naves, on the other hand, were almost perversely badly-placed for strategic advantage: Woodeaton [32] and Barton-upon-Humber [3] make serviceable watchtowers, but lay at the foot of hills crowned by beacons. Again, the over-riding consideration in the location of lordly timber towers and tower-nave churches seems to have been the lord’s residence, and not all these residences were in strategic places.

6.7.3 Lordly towers and military power: some conclusions
Possession of a tower could only have improved a lord’s military effectiveness. The late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy were required to keep watch and to muster troops (section 2.9): a tower would have improved the most strategically unpromising residence. However, as with the interpretation of tower-naves as refuges (section 6.7.1), this may be missing the point. Norman castles were as much concerned with the expression of military power as they were about defensive utility, and were not necessarily located strategically in the landscape (section 2.11.6). The show of the thing, in other words,
Military power and combat was of great ideological and social significance to
the Anglo-Saxon nobility (section 2.9). This extended to the places where battles were
fought and the weapons, especially swords, that were used to fight them, all of which
transcended Clausewitzian notions of military logic (surveyed in Reynolds,
forthcoming). A lord’s residence was a prime theatre of social and symbolic expression
(section 2.3.2). The construction there of a tower would have aided his ability to keep
watch and – particularly if an assembly-site was adjacent – to muster troops; equally
important would have been the demonstration that these responsibilities were being
fulfilled, that the social contract was being met, and that the lord’s social position was
therefore legitimated.

The lordly tower-naves in this chapter appear to have been the great
status-affording towers of the martial aristocracy of early medieval England, much like
post-Conquest keeps. The similarities between lordly tower-naves and Norman keeps
are discussed in chapter seven, and the valuable lesson from recent castle studies is that
the simplistic military effectiveness of keeps and their ability to project the military
power of their lords were not necessarily one and the same (section 2.11.6). Norman
keeps may have been as much of a message in stone of martial power as they were safe-
houses in a rebellious conquered nation, something indicated in the rarity of their actual
use in war. The Anglo-Saxon tower-naves may have conveyed a similar message with
their strong stone walls, small windows and above-ground doorways, perhaps with an
aristocratic standard fluttering above.

6.8 Lordly towers as symbols of economic power
Anglo-Saxon lordly residences were theatres for the display of aristocratic wealth and
material culture. The construction there of lordly tower-naves and timber towers would
have been particularly ostentatious, lavish aspects of this practice (section 2.8.3). Many
lordly tower-naves are notably elaborate, such as the pilaster stripwork at Earls Barton
[8] and Barton-upon-Humber [3] (fig. 6.9), the chequer pattern of Roman brick at
Guildford [13] and the external sculpture at Langford [18].

Lordly tower-naves and timber towers may also articulated with wider
landscapes of economic power. They may have signified their lord’s interest in markets,
which were commonly held at hundred meeting-places (section 2.8.3): ten out of sixteen
lordly tower-naves were intervisible with their hundred meeting-place, of which eight
were located in the same parish (section 4.9.3). Both timber towers whose hundred meeting-places are known (Bury St Edmunds [B] and Ketton Quarry [C]) lay adjacent to them. Lordly towers may also have been related to landscapes of nucleated settlement.

6.8.1 Lordly towers and nucleated settlement

There is no reason to believe that lordly tower-naves and timber towers originated in a particular place and ‘spread’ from there through diffusionism (section 4.6.2). They were not distributed evenly over England: there are few in the north and west midlands, the southwest of England, East Anglia and Kent (fig. 4.9). We cannot know whether this is a genuine pattern or an artefact of evidence bias. The absence of sites in the southwest of England and the north and west midlands is in keeping with the lack of evidence in those places for Anglo-Saxon church architecture in general (figure 4.9). The absence of lordly towers from East Anglia\(^1\) and Kent is more significant, since the survival of early churches in both regions is otherwise good. East Anglia may be a ‘special case’ due to its distinctive round towers, which may be indicative of a particular tradition of seigneurial church architecture in that region; longstanding confusion over the date and development of these towers (section 6.3.1) means that this will be not be pursued here. The absence of lordly towers in Kent may simply be an accident of survival. Put together this begins to sound like special pleading, so we should provisionally assume that the present distribution is genuine. If so, it is significant that lordly towers are largely confined to areas characterised by early medieval nucleated settlement (fig. 6.21).

\(^1\) Aside from at Bury St Edmunds, where the towers of Aelfric [S] and the Cockfield family [B] were built at the monastery these lords served.
Not only does the distribution of lordly timber towers and tower-nave churches correspond with early medieval nucleated settlement in England, but that the rise of these towers during the 10th century coincides with the ‘second phase’ of settlement nucleation. Whilst there was no monocausal explanation for the rise of nucleated settlements in the mid-9th century, the 10th century and later ‘second phase’ of settlement nucleation is thought to have been characterised by aristocratic planning, bounding and management of their estates (section 2.8.2). All but two of the twenty-five lordly tower-naves and timber towers in this study lie in nucleated settlements, the
exceptions being the remote Norman towers of Fingest [11] and Ozleworth [22], two of the latest in this study. At only six of these twenty-four sites does excavation allow us to refine this picture: at the tower-naves at Barton-upon-Humber [3], Portchester [23] and the suggested example at Springfield Lyons [26], and the timber towers at Bishopstone [A], West Cotton [D] and possibly Ketton Quarry [C] (for the detail of what follows, see appendices).

The 9th century tower at Bishopstone [A] was constructed in a planned settlement aligned around a courtyard, dated to the early 9th century (fig. 6.4). The enclosed hall and tower at West Cotton [D] (fig. 6.5) were constructed in the mid-10th century, shortly after the settlement had been laid out on a rectilinear alignment. The late 10th/early 11th century tower-nave at Portchester [23] was inserted into an existing later 10th century complex of halls arranged around a courtyard. At Barton-upon-Humber [3], the tower-nave was added to a pre-existing settlement which appears to have been re-planned prior to the construction of the church, probably in the 10th century.

Difficulties in phasing the uncertain 10th/11th century tower at Ketton Quarry [C] and the suggested 10th century tower-nave at Springfield Lyons [26] render them less certain. Ketton Quarry [C] is aligned both with its adjacent hall and the settlement boundary (fig. 6.6), but their place in the settlement development is unknown. The suggested Springfield Lyons tower-nave [26] broadly belongs to the first phase of the site, which was probably bounded at this time and which would soon be characterised by linear alignments of halls. Further investigation is needed at the remaining rural sites, but so far the broad picture is that lordly tower-naves and timber towers are established at planned, nucleated settlements, either at their conception or within a few decades of their inception.

Barton-upon-Humber [3] is a particularly illuminating example of the ‘second phase’ of nucleation discussed in section 2.8.2, whereby an existing nucleated settlement underwent a subsequent episode of sustained seigneurial planning. Here, the tower-nave appears to have been constructed in the aftermath of the 10th century replanning of a settlement of much earlier origins. Overall, towers and tower-naves appear to have been desirable additions at each planned settlement’s conception or soon after it was firmly established. If nothing else, we can say that these towers were prominent physical expressions of the rise of local lordship in Anglo-Saxon England.

This is not a new idea. Some decades ago Robert Dodgshon (1987, 135) argued for a ‘revolution in spatial order’ as early medieval society went from a kin-based social
structure to one where social relations were defined by landed property and bounded territories. The rise of the local aristocracy was integral to this process (section 2.7.1). As settlements nucleated in England’s ‘central zone’, lords increasingly came to live beside their peasants, who now found themselves living in the shadow of the lord’s residence (Fleming 2011, 22-29). Economic resources from the fields to the mill were managed and controlled from the lord’s residence, which – together with their churches – embodied and legitimised the new social order (Morris 1989, 166-7; Saunders 2000). Towers and tower-naves would have been a prominent material aspect of this process.

Whilst lordly timber towers and tower-naves can be related to settlement nucleation, they seem to have had no role in marking economic power through the ownership of land. By the 10th century this had become an essential aspect of lordship, with bookland becoming almost a prerequisite of nobility (section 2.8.1). Few tower-naves would have been visible throughout their lord’s local estates (section 4.9.2). This is in contrast to the intervisibility of a sample study of Norman castles in the southeastern midlands with their local estates (Lowerre 2005, 171-2). As with other aspects of the landscape context of lordly tower-naves and timber towers, location at the seigneurial residence seems to have been the paramount consideration.

6.9 Lordly towers as symbols of ideological power

Anglo-Saxon lords are argued throughout this chapter to have used their tower-nave churches and timber towers to augment and demonstrate their social status and their political, economic and military power. Their ability to assume status and wield power depended on the legitimacy of their social position, which came primarily from the king, and from God (section 2.10). There are three proposed strands influencing the construction of lordly tower-naves: monastic tower-naves, lordly timber towers and church western towers (section 6.4; fig. 6.1). Each of these provides a different strand to the ideological power and legitimacy generated by lordly tower-nave churches. First, the ideological message behind the close spatial association between a lord’s hall and his tower-nave or timber tower will be considered.

6.9.1 The spatial association between halls and lordly towers

The close spatial association between seigneurial churches and residences emphasised the Christian basis of a lord’s social position, legitimising his social power (section 2.10.1). There is no evidence that this spatial association was taken to the extremes of a
lord’s church being integrated into his hall, or that he would live in his church,\(^1\) which would have been a formidable ideological statement indeed. This may, however, be true for tower-nave churches, which are argued to have been sacred versions of the timber towers of seigneurial residences (section 6.3). These timber towers would have embodied lordship at the residence perhaps no less powerfully than the hall itself. The blurring here of secular and sacred buildings of lordship is emphasised by the documented example of a lord choosing to actually reside within his tower-nave at Bury St Edmunds abbey [5].

There is limited archaeological evidence to support the close spatial association between a lord’s tower – whether secular or consecrated – and his hall. The relationship between tower-naves and their halls can been demonstrated at only Portchester [23] and the suggested example at Springfield Lyons [26], both of which lay immediately adjacent (fig. 6.22). This is in contrast to conventional lordly churches, which seem to lie apart from their halls, often outside the manorial enclosure (Blair 2005, 388). This is reminiscent of royal westwerke such as Winchester [30] (section 5.4), and elides with Grenville’s (1997, 90-1) discussion of church naves, towers and chancels embodying respectively the public, seigneurial and private divisions of medieval secular halls. The sample is small, but the association between tower-naves and seigneurial architecture is clear, and would have generated considerable ideological power for the lord as a result.

Fig. 6.22 – Lordly tower-naves with a known spatial relationship with their halls (simplified from left: Tyler and Major 2005, 195; right: Cunliffe 1976, 125).

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\(^1\) The best case for a secular hall incorporating a chapel is Odda’s Chapel in Deerhurst (Gloucestershire), which has been convincingly dismissed by David Parsons (2000).
6.9.2 The ideological influence of lordly timber towers

The rendering of lordly timber towers into stone tower-nave churches may have embodied the ideological message of permanence. The arguments for what follows are laid out more extensively elsewhere (Shapland, forthcoming). Briefly, there is persuasive literary and archaeological evidence that the Anglo-Saxons perceived stone as a material of permanence, even eternity, as opposed to timber which was the perishable material of the cyclical natural world and transient human life. Numerous poetic texts conceive of humans in terms of trees and anthropomorphise timber objects (Bintley 2009, 63–75, 203-5). Timber buildings do not appear to have been repaired or replaced in any sort of pragmatic fashion, but were abandoned at the end of their ‘natural’ life (Hamerow 2006, 29). Stone, on the other hand, was the material of the ‘giants’ of the past. The ‘work of giants’ (enta geweorc) was used in relation to ancient stone architecture, in works whose common theme is that man can vainly strive for, but not attain permanence and eternity on earth (Franks 1973; Howe 2002, 97–8). It is attainable only in heaven and God destroys such follies (the Old English account of the Tower of Babel is a good example of this: see section 6.3.4). The only proper context for stone, the material of permanence, on the earth was in God’s house – the church – and it would have been impertinent to imply earthly permanence in one’s secular buildings. These were of timber, as befitted the transitory human body, whereas only the human soul was eternal. This is backed up by the near-absence of Anglo-Saxon stone secular buildings compared to the relative abundance of stone churches.

Despite this, the attraction of stone buildings for Anglo-Saxon lords would have been considerable. The rise of the local aristocracy and the division of the landscape into bookland estates was a feature of the late Anglo-Saxon period, and given the comparatively fluid nature of aristocratic status (Yorke 1995, 285-90; Senecal 2001) parvenu families may only have held their position for a generation. The need to legitimise this by implying, or manufacturing, permanence of position and land tenure would have been pressing, just as generations before the upstart kings of Anglo-Saxon England had claimed descent from Caesar and constructed or re-used anachronistic burial-mounds. Ruling elites often underpin their legitimacy by using material culture to imply the permanence and inviolability of the social contract (Mann 1986; Earle 1997; section 2.10). The prominent construction of stone buildings at their residences would have been a potent statement of this, akin to Richard Bradley’s (1987) idea of the ‘creation of continuity’ using monumental material culture.
However, as discussed above, for lords to have turned their timber halls and towers to stone would have been unacceptable, unless these buildings also became churches. The idea that the congregational nave is an essay in stone of the Anglo-Saxon hall – just as the basilican church was a version of the Roman assembly hall – is intriguing, but will not be pursued here. Lordly timber towers, on the other hand, may have been executed in stone as tower-nave churches; as discussed in section 6.2.2, the pilaster strips of tower-naves may have been a statement of this ancestry. The new stone tower-naves would have been imbued with messages of lordly power, just like their timber predecessors, with additional connotations of piety and permanence.

6.9.3 The ideological influence of church western towers

A message of social control may be added to that of permanence and legitimisation in the construction of tower-nave churches, through their role as belltowers. The popular perception of time in the middle ages was cyclical, agricultural and genealogical, determined by reference the passing seasons and the accumulated generations of a family. This was distinct from Christian, linear time, which the masses had no independent means of measuring. The imposition of linear time on society by church towers and bells has therefore been suggested as ‘an instrument of social domination’ (Le Goff 1988, 177) akin to the ‘factory time’ imposed on the workers of the Industrial Revolution (Thompson 1967). The ringing of the curfew bell in towns is recorded from the late 9th century; it has also been regarded as an instrument of Norman repression (Andrews 1891, 227-33).

In an unpublished paper, David Petts notes the proliferation of monumental sundials in Anglo-Saxon England after the 10th century, and their association with private churches rather than major monastic sites. Several bear inscriptions relating aristocratic foundation and patronage. Petts relates this to the contemporary rise of bells and towers, including the bells demanded by the Promotion Law (see section 2.2.1). He sees this as part of the late Anglo-Saxon elaboration of the material vocabulary of lordship, which sought to create and control feudal space and time. These ideas can be applied to aristocratic tower-naves, of which the great majority of examples have belfry-openings (section 4.8.3 & fig. 4.4) and one – Langford [18] – has a prominent surviving sundial. However, we cannot assume that any social domination

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2 Aldborough (E. Yorks); Old Byland (N.Yorks); Weavethorpe (E. Yorks); Kirkdale (N. Yorks); Warnford (Hants).
through the imposition of time originated with lordly tower-naves churches, which post-date the earliest evidence for conventional church western towers in manorial contexts.

6.9.4 The ideological influence of royal and episcopal towers

We can now turn to the third aspect of the suggested origins of lordly tower-naves: the royal and episcopal chapels of the great monasteries of later Anglo-Saxon England (section 5.5). In simplistic terms, the late Anglo-Saxon local nobility may have sought to copy the material culture of private, high-status worship of kings and bishops at the very top of society. As discussed in chapter five, Bishop Æthelwold constructed a turriform chapel at Thorney abbey [28] for private worship, Bishop Robert of Hereford [15] constructed a chapel in the manner of the imperial palatine chapel at Aachen at his residence, and the tower-naves at East Teignmouth [10] graced a possible residence of the Anglo-Saxon bishop of Crediton (later Exeter). The Anglo-Saxon nobility may have copied their bishops, and in developing his personal estate rather than his episcopal property, the bishop of Crediton was acting as a local lord. This is in common with the aristocratic spheres of life in which most late Anglo-Saxon bishops operated (Giandrea 2007, 35-69). More compellingly, the Anglo-Saxon nobility may have been copying their king. King Eadred (946-55) laid out the foundations for a chapel at his residence of Abingdon [1], again in possible imitation of Aachen, and King Edgar (959-75) rebuilt an existing tower-naves adjacent to the probable site of his royal palace at Winchester into a great imperial westwork [30]. King Alfred (871-899) had previously constructed a tower-naves at the royal vill of Athelney [2] as part of its refoundation as a monastery, but there is no evidence it was intended for private worship. To this iconography of royal towers we must add the early 10th century ‘tower’ coinage issued by the West Saxon royal house (section 6.1.1).

In constructing tower-naves at their own centres of power, the late Anglo-Saxon nobility were doing more than blindly copying their social betters. Their act can instead be linked to the rise of the Anglo-Saxon state and the transfer of royal power away from the personal involvement of the king (discussed in section 2.7.1). Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, the king increasingly ruled the country through his nobles, granting them estates and devolving royal power to the local aristocracy. Public defensive systems centred on burhs had been superseded by private armies by the 10th century (Abels 2001, 21-3, 30). Lords exercised local networks of power devolved to them by the king, who legitimised their power. This devolution of power was manifested in the network of dispersed functions of the Anglo-Saxon state, dependent
on ‘focal places’ of power in the landscape such as execution sites and meeting-places (section 2.7.4). The residences of the local aristocracy, with their great halls and tower-nave churches akin to those found at royal palaces, were arguably part of this infrastructure. This is supported by the observation that late Anglo-Saxon lords were firmly rooted in their localities (Morris 1989, 166-7): in contrast to Norman magnates, their lands had a coherent regional focus rather than being distributed across England (Lowerre 2005, 59). In turn, these lords legitimised their own power and social position through royal, as well as celestial, authority through the construction of great tower-nave churches.

6.10 Meaningful landscapes of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills on the right,
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;
While to the left, a tall scalped mountain....
What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
Built of brown stone, without a counter-part
In the whole world.

(Robert Browning, *Childe Roland To The Dark Tower Came*)

It has been argued that lordly tower-naves had a political, military, economic and ideological role to play in late Anglo-Saxon society (sections 6.6 – 6.9). Not all of this discussion is relevant to every tower-nave – some made useful watchtowers whilst others lay next to meeting-places – but what each has in common is its location within or adjacent to the probable site of a manorial curia (section 4.8.2). Before moving on to the place of tower-naves in early Norman society (chapter 7), an attempt will be made to combine together many of the above ideas drawing on a model developed for post-Conquest castles, that of the aristocratic designed landscape. According to this model, the castle and its landscape was a ‘stage-set’ for aristocratic identities, in which each element – from the fishpond to the dovecote – comprised a vocabulary of seigneurial power and social meaning (section 2.3.4).

It has been emphasised throughout this study that Anglo-Saxon lordly residences were meaningfully constituted and socially expressive. Did Anglo-Saxon lords also manage the landscapes of these residences to be similarly meaningfully constituted as part of the expression of aristocratic social identity? Like castles after them, were Anglo-Saxon lordly residences ‘stage-sets’ for the negotiation and performance of lordship? There follows a brief discussion of the articulation of Anglo-Saxon lordly
residences with their landscapes, and a case-study of this approach for the lordly tower-
 nave at Guildford.

6.10.1 Burhgeats and landscapes: the example of Shillington

The Promotion Law (discussed in section 2.2) is a valuable tool for reconciling Anglo-
 Saxon lordly residences with their landscapes. This document states the suite of
buildings necessary for thegny status – the church, kitchen, bell-house and burhgeat –
be accompanied by five hides of land: both buildings and landscape were expressive of
lordly identity. This crude observation can be refined by deeper consideration of the
term burhgeat, ‘the gate of a protected enclosure’, thought to be shorthand for the whole
fortified residence. Through this term we catch a glimpse of the articulation of Anglo-
Saxon lordly residences with their estates. A contemporary description of what seems to
be a burhgeat exists in the manor of Shillington (Bedfordshire), which was in the hands
of the powerful Ealdorman Æthelwine of East Anglia in the second half of the tenth
century. Shillington passed to Ramsey Abbey, which had he founded, in 1016, at which
time it was described in the Abbey Chronicle:

In the region of Bedford is the estate of Shillington, which is said to be of
some antiquity, where formerly and presently is recorded the remains of a
fortification in the woodland, a beneficial atmosphere, fertile soil and
plentiful produce, a spacious hall and Lord’s house [church] situated at a
high place on the edge of the forest, where looking out from the entrance
of the hall courtyard, almost all of the territory is revealed as visible lying
underneath.

In pago Bedef[ordie] est villa quædam Schittingdone antiquitus dicta,
olim, sicut hodieque extantes indicio sunt relique, vallata nomoribus, aere
salubris, ubere glebæ et frugum feracis, curiam spaciosam et penates
dominicales ad oram nemoris in loco edito habens sitos, ubi ab ostio aulæ
tota fere villa, et late patens ager arabilis, oculis subjacet intuentis.

(Macray 1886, 143-4).

Judging by this description, Shillington’s manorial buildings, including a proprietary
chapel, were surrounded by an enclosure with a gatehouse, or burhgeat. Æthelwine’s
residence probably lay on a hill a mile north of Shillington, at Shillington Bury (Page
1908, 293-99). Assuming Æthelwine’s gatehouse to have been c. 10 metres tall, then
almost all of the present parish of Shillington would indeed have been visible lying
underneath (fig. 6.23).
This can be interpreted as a statement in the landscape of lordly domination: the residence lay apart from the village and elevated above it. What is also interesting about this passage is the direct association between the territory of the estate and the possible *burhgeat* at its metaphorical centre, the one bound to the other. This is in keeping with documentary evidence for Anglo-Saxon manorial buildings as a material culture shorthand for a whole estate (discussed in Gardiner 2007, 170-1), of which the tower at Bishopstone [A] is a good archaeological example (Thomas 2008; see here appendix II.A).

### 6.10.2 Meaningful landscapes and the tower-nave at Guildford

The preceding brief discussion (section 6.10.1) indicates that Anglo-Saxon lordly residences articulated with their landscapes as part of their lords’ expression of identity.
and status. Whilst it has been suggested that the fully-blown aristocratic designed landscapes studies for the post-Conquest period also existed in Anglo-Saxon England (section 2.3.4; Liddiard 2000, 65-6), was originally developed for eighteenth century stately homes and it would be simplistic to apply it directly to this early period. Nevertheless, this method introduces the idea that particular aspects of the landscape surrounding a significant place – in this case a lordly residence and tower-nave church – elaborated the power, belief and social significance of the place itself. This is a valid approach, familiar to prehistorians and paralleled elsewhere in early medieval studies (e.g. Gleeson 2012), but rarely applied to Anglo-Saxon sites.

An example of a meaningful Anglo-Saxon aristocratic landscape may be found at Guildford, centred on the tower-nave of St Mary within the suggested royal residence at the western entrance to the town (for the detail of what follows, see appendix I.12). It was approached from the west along the Harrow Way, a major long-distance route of ancient origins which, to the Anglo-Saxons, was ‘potentially imbued with a sense of a quasi-mythical past’ (discussed in Reynolds and Langlands 2011, 417). Beacons were visible for miles along this route, which were a potent demonstration of royal military power in the landscape. One beacon lay on the Hog’s Back ridge at Guildown, adjacent to Guildford and overlooking the tower-nave at its west entrance (fig. 6.24).
Chapter 6: Towers, tower-naves and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

A royal deer-park of probable Anglo-Saxon origin lay along the final mile of the road to Guildown (fig. 6.25). Recent studies have demonstrated the prevalence of game-parks and hunting before the Norman Conquest (Liddiard 2003; Gautier 2006; Richardson 2007, 33-4; Sykes and Carden 2011, 153). Hunting was central to the status
of medieval kings and aristocrats, and to the landscapes they created (Creighton 2009, 122-5). Always an inefficient and laborious means of stocking game, it was a social practice indicative of great wealth, a preparation for war and a statement of the separateness between lords and commoners in the landscape. At an ideological level, deerparks demonstrated the ability of great men to tame and order the natural world (Mileson 2007; 2009).

An early medieval execution site and cemetery also lay at Guildown, adjacent to the beacon and deer-park (fig. 6.25). This was a powerful symbol of Anglo-Saxon royal judicial power. From the late 7th century in England, execution sites marked national and regional boundaries: ‘there can have been few stronger exhibitions of secular power’ than gallows at a gateway location such as this (Reynolds and Langlands 2011, 423; see also Reynolds 2009b). The tower-nave of St Mary would have been prominent here, perhaps with a royal banner flying above (section 6.6.4), marking the presumed site of the king’s residence and dominating the ford into the town. Churches were a common element of medieval aristocratic designed landscapes; they were also a material aspect of the legitimation of the social order (section 2.10.1; also Creighton 2009, 56-7).
From this elevated place it would have been apparent that Guildford was a planned town, a royal *burh* laid out on a grid pattern. This was another message of royal ambition, of the power to order people’s lives, even a conscious evocation of Roman authority by Anglo-Saxon kings (Armitage 1912, 28; Lilley 2009, 44; Carver 2010, 143–5). The royal castle with the planned town laid out around it is a familiar image of royal power in later medieval designed landscapes (Fradley 2006; Creighton 2009, 156-160). We can perhaps see its origins in the royal planned towns of late Anglo-Saxon England.

![Fig. 6.26 – The external west elevation of St Mary’s tower-nave, Guildford](image)

At the ford into Guildford, where the king’s residence fronted the river, were water-mills, mentioned in the *Domesday Book* (fig. 6.25). These were symbol of economic power, and were commonly located adjacent to medieval lordly residences, denoting one of the medieval aristocracy’s most crucial monopolies (Liddiard 2007, 106; Creighton 2009, 57). Dominating both the ford and the town’s western entrance was the king’s residence with its great stone tower-nave. Its dedication may be significant: the Virgin Mary was perceived in Anglo-Saxon England as a gate to the Heavenly City (Clayton 1990, 58, 77, 88; Gem 2008, 26). St Mary’s tower originally
had a chequerboard effect of red Roman brick and white flint around its upper stage, which partially survives (fig. 6.26). This evoked Romanitas; the re-use the past in medieval designed landscapes served to appropriate legitimacy and imply the permanence of one’s lordship (Creighton 2009, 4; 217-18).

Guildford [13] is one possible Anglo-Saxon aristocratic landscape centred on a residence with a tower-nave church. There is not space here to speculate in these terms about each lordly tower and tower-nave in this study, and most are still too poorly understood to merit such attention. As Robert Liddiard (2007, 207-10) warns, we must be careful to take each such landscape on its own terms and interpret it within the particular context of its constitution. We should also not seek fully-blown designed landscapes where they did not exist, whilst being mindful that many of the lordly tower-naves in this study may have impressed some degree of social meaning upon their landscapes as part of a conscious design. The suggested structured approach to the aristocratic residence at West Cotton, with its lordly tower, is a case in point (Chapman 2010a, 47; Gardiner 2011). Bosham also appears promising (section 6.2.1; fig. 6.7). It is unfortunate that its apparent tower cannot be confidently related to the wealthy Godwine residence there, which had a church, several mills and fisheries, and an unusually well-understood Anglo-Saxon hunting infrastructure (Williams and Martin 2002, 37; Gautier 2006) which combined into an aristocratic landscape evocatively depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (Lewis 1999, 46-9; fig. 6.27). Nevertheless, this approach may help combine many of the social and ideological meanings of lordly tower-naves suggested in this chapter.

Fig. 6.27 – Harold Godwineson’s residence at Bosham, as depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry. Harold (depicted holding a bird of prey) returns from the hunt to pray and feast with his comitatus. Note the close conceptual, and perhaps spatial, relationship between the hunt, the church and the hall (Wilson 1985, plate 3).
6.11 Conclusions

From the late 10th century Anglo-Saxon lords constructed tower-naves churches at their residences. They are likely to have been inspired in this by the example set by their bishops and kings, who constructed tower-naves at their residences for private worship. The West Saxon royal family issued coins bearing towers in the early 10th century, which is further evidence for the potency of this architectural form for secular authorities. Lordly tower-naves also developed in an existing context of aristocratic tower construction at a local level, both the timber towers of lordly residences and the western towers of local churches (fig. 6.1). Tower-naves were not general all over England, however, but almost wholly confined to areas characterised by nucleated settlement. The twin engines for their construction were the contemporary spread of local churches and the localisation of power that would characterise the later Anglo-Saxon state.

The new lordly tower-naves can be interpreted both as the meaningfully-imbued material culture of the late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, and as useful structures in the practice of Anglo-Saxon lordship. They were symbols of aristocratic status and may have flown their lord’s banner. Many lay adjacent to hundred meeting-places, acted as watchtowers or guarded fortified places. However, their locations were not determined by their ability to project these messages to the widest possible audience, or to operate most effectively with existing military or political landscapes. The lordly residence was the overriding factor in their location, within which they were powerful manifestations of ideological power. They legitimised the social position of their lords by referencing the material culture of the king, and were as eloquent a statement of the union between church and manor as can be found in early medieval England. Their stone construction implied the permanence of their lord’s position in the social order, and their bells regulated the lives of the population. Furthermore, some tower-naves may have articulated with landscapes of aristocratic social power and authority such as have been identified at the castles of later medieval England. The focus of this chapter has been aristocratic practice and the Anglo-Saxon lordly residence: the next will reconcile tower-naves with the castles and lordly practice of early Norman England.
Chapter 7: Tower-nave churches into Norman England

- Research question 5: What was the impact of the Norman Conquest upon tower-naves and the tower-nave form?

Separating ‘castles’ from the ubiquitous array of turriform and castellated buildings appeals to the soldier in us all, but it is like a keen aviator insisting that ostriches, kiwis and penguins are not really birds.

(Coulson 1996, 186).

Tower-nave churches continued to be built in England after the Norman Conquest. As discussed in section 2.11, there is an increasing appreciation of the continuity in English society either side of 1066. While there was a general replacement of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy by incoming Norman lords, this is no longer widely thought to have been accompanied by a tenurial or ‘feudal’ revolution (section 2.11.1). The practice of law and governance altered little in the aftermath of the Conquest, as did most aspects of architecture and material culture (sections 2.11.1 & 2.11.2). Two pertinent exceptions are the general rebuilding of England’s cathedrals and greater monasteries, and the construction of great stone keeps such as those at London and Colchester. The scope for the endurance of the tower-nave form into Norman England in lordly and monastic contexts is discussed here, concentrating on the period up to c. 1100, i.e. within a generation of the Norman Conquest.

7.1 Castles and tower-naves: a question of continuity?

Any tower with a wall around it is called a castle.

*Castellum enim dicitur quaelibet turris, et murus in circita eius.*


The late 11th century Norman aristocracy constructed tower-nave churches at their residences in the manner of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, as at Fingest [11], Ozleworth [22], Swindon [27] and Woodeaton [32], and apparently Hastings Castle [14], although the tower-nave there may have origins before 1066. Significantly, Langford [18] and East Teignmouth [10] were built after the Conquest by Anglo-Saxon lordly ‘survivors’: Ælfsige of Faringdon and Bishop Leofric of Exeter, both of whom flourished under the new regime. There is no compelling reason to treat this group of c. 1066-1100 lordly towers differently to those constructed prior to the Battle of Hastings,
especially in view of the Anglo-Saxon patronage of two out of the six known examples: Anglo-Saxon and Norman lordly tower-naves are discussed together as a group in chapter six. The salient point here is the continued use of tower-naves as an architectural embodiment of lordship and authority either side of the Norman Conquest.

7.1.1 *Norman castles at Anglo-Saxon lordly residences*

The continuity of lordly tower-nave construction after 1066 can be placed in the context of Norman lords appropriating Anglo-Saxon urban and rural lordly sites for the construction of castles and residences (surveyed in section 2.11.3). Tellingly, four of the thirteen pre-Conquest lordly tower-naves became the sites of castles: Portchester [23], Earls Barton [8], Caistor [6] and St George’s, Oxford [21], rising to five if the Hastings [14] tower-nave has pre-castle origins (fig. 7.1).

![Fig. 7.1 – Norman castles on the site of tower-naves. For detail of each site see appendix I.](image)

This is unlikely to be a complete list; these examples being either excavated or survivors of the imposition of their castles. Anglo-Saxon tower-naves are argued in chapter six to have been statements of aristocratic status: their replacement by castles appears to be a deliberate act of appropriation (Speight 1998, 170). Several structures found beneath or within castle mottes may be pre-Conquest towers, and it is hard to think of a more
ostentatious act of domination than a Norman lord planting his keep directly on top of the status-affording buildings of his Anglo-Saxon predecessor.

Beneath the motte at Groby (Leicestershire) the remains of an undated stone tower c. 7 m square, with walls c. 2.2 m thick surviving to a height of 2.1 m, were excavated in the 1960s. It rests on a natural knoll underlying the artificial motte, which was built before 1176 (Creighton 1997, 22-5). A Time Team excavation undertaken in 2011 failed to resolve its origins (Wessex Archaeology 2011). At Great Somerford (Wiltshire), antiquarian excavation beneath the Norman motte revealed a building with a round-headed doorway and windows, and walls c. 0.6 m thick. Nothing of its plan is known, although the wall thickness suggests that it was not a defensive structure (Goddard 1930), being too slender also for Creighton’s (1997, 25) theory that this was a church tower. Beneath the 12th century keep at Chilham (Kent) lies a two-bay stone structure – a possible tower – with a stair leading to a former upper storey. Chilham was the residence of Sired, a notable thegn of Edward the Confessor, but the surviving structure is probably Norman (Clapham 1928; Williams 1992a, 237). The Norman Castle at Caerleon (Monmouthshire) was established in 1085 on the site of existing defences. Antiquarian excavations encountered substantial rubble foundations within the motte, perhaps the undated ‘gigantic tower’ mentioned in the late 12th century by Gerald of Wales (Dimock 1868, 55; Renn 1973, 127). Limited excavation beneath the early 12th century keep within an Anglo-Saxon enclosure at Middleton Stoney (Oxfordshire) revealed a stone building, but no plan or date of it was recovered (Rahtz and Rowley 1984). An early 11th century stone structure beneath the low motte at Eynsford Castle (Kent); its interpretation as a tower (Rigold 1971) has been questioned in the light of further excavation (Horsman 1989). These examples are tantalising, but further excavation is needed to properly establish the nature and scale of the appropriation of Anglo-Saxon lordly architecture by Norman castles.

7.1.2 The similarity between Norman castles and Anglo-Saxon lordly residences

The great majority of early Norman castles resembled Anglo-Saxon lordly residences, whose locations they commonly appropriated (section 2.11.3). They were overwhelmingly ringworks with halls and fortified gates, and they lacked mottes and keeps. What detains us here is the potential similarity of Norman castle keeps to Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves.

As long ago as 1976, David Wilson (1976, 443) wrote:
It is perhaps a wild flight of fancy to suggest that church towers [such as Earls Barton and Barton-upon-Humber] were the origin of the stone keep of the Conquest period, but their solidity and their similarity to the primitive keep makes such a relationship attractive.

Norman keeps were symbols of lordship (Williams and Martin 2002, 1435; Coulson 2003, 51; Ashbee 2008, 138-9); is argued in this study that Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves were also symbols of lordship. The recent discovery that St George’s tower in Oxford [21] is not a Norman keep but a tower-nave of probable Anglo-Saxon date marks a paradigm shift in our perception of the size and ambition of Anglo-Saxon architecture outside a handful of great monastic and cathedral churches. It sets a precedent for the re-dating of certain other comparably vast towers long assumed to be Norman on the basis of scale or limited documentary evidence (fig. 7.2). It must also erode the present conceptual and methodological boundary which divides the study of seigneurial architecture either side of the Norman Conquest.

Recent discussion of by Dixon (2008) helps us to pursue Wilson’s (1976, 443) ‘wild flight of fancy’ that the origin of Norman keeps may lie in Anglo-Saxon tower-naves. Dixon makes an important distinction between great double-pile ‘palatial towers’ such as Colchester and London, and ‘tall towers’ such as West Malling (Kent) and Bramber (Sussex). ‘Palatial towers’, typically of royal construction, trace their origins to the double-pile keeps of early 11th century France, particularly Ivry-la-Bataille
(Normandy). ‘Tall towers’ were better suited to the modest aristocracy, who aspired to manifest their lordship with a tower. Dixon argues that their ancestry lies in early 11th century French keeps, such as Loches and Loudun (Inre-et-Loire). English ‘tall tower’ keeps are, however, arguably more reminiscent of Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-nave churches (fig. 7.3).
Known lordly tower-naves, 11th century English 'tall tower' and 'palatial tower' keeps, and pre-1060 French keeps.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Construction date</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Construction date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Wickham [29]</td>
<td>Late C10th</td>
<td>26. Totnes</td>
<td>Pre-1087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Portchester [23]</td>
<td>Late C10th</td>
<td>27. West Malling</td>
<td>Late C11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Langford [18]</td>
<td>Late C11th</td>
<td>40. Langeais</td>
<td>c. 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Woodeaton [32]</td>
<td>Late C11th/early C12th</td>
<td>41. Ivry-la-Bataille</td>
<td>c. 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Swindon [27]</td>
<td>Late C11th/early C12th</td>
<td>43. Avranches</td>
<td>Early C11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Ozleworth [22]</td>
<td>Late C11th/early C12th</td>
<td>44. Beaugency</td>
<td>1013-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Exeter</td>
<td>c. 1068</td>
<td>45. Montbazon</td>
<td>Early C11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Okehampton</td>
<td>c. 1068</td>
<td>46. Montoire</td>
<td>Mid-C11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Selsey</td>
<td>Pre-1075?</td>
<td>47. Broue</td>
<td>Mid-C11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Bramber</td>
<td>c. 1075</td>
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**Fig. 7.3** – Known lordly tower-naves, ‘tall tower’ keeps and ‘palatial tower’ keeps from 11th century England, and known French keeps from before c. 1060. Only those sites with recoverable plans are included. Plans and dates of nos 1-20 taken from appendix I; nos 21-30 from references cited here in section 7.1.3; no. 31 from Stocker and Vince 1997; nos 32-47 from Impey 2008 and Dixon 2008. Plans not north-orientated.

### 7.1.3 The earliest English keeps

Surprisingly few stone keeps appear to have been built in England in the decades after the Norman Conquest. At this time the majority of castles consisted of halls and ringworks, whilst some had mottes supporting timber towers. Out of the approximately
670 known medieval masonry castles in England, only seven ‘palatial towers’ and ten ‘tall towers’ can be confidently dated to before c. 1100 (fig. 7.3, nos 20-35).

Starting with the ‘tall towers’, the earliest surviving example is that at Exeter Castle, an earthen ringwork with no motte, constructed in 1068 and entrusted to Baldwin de Meules, Sherriff of Devon. The keep comprises the southern gatehouse to the inner bailey, and is noteworthy for its merging of Anglo-Saxon and Norman architectural styles (fig. 7.4): Anglo-Saxon long-and-short quoins and triangular-headed openings, with characteristically Norman cushion capitals, billet ornaments and upper impost (Blaylock 1991; Filmer-Sankey et al. 2004). The Norman castle may be the site of Exeter’s Anglo-Saxon royal residence; in view of its architecture, it may have been a display of ‘partnership between the old order and the new’ (Higham 2008, 188, 201).

Fig. 7.4 – Exeter Castle gatehouse, from the southeast

Three other gatehouse-keeps date from this period: Ludlow (Shropshire), Baynard Castle (Northumberland) and Bramber (Sussex). Ludlow – the ‘Great Tower’ – was heavily modified as a keep throughout the medieval period, but its initial phase seems to have included at least one upper chamber above the entrance-passage. It is dated to c. 1080, soon after the foundation of the castle (Renn 2000). Although the

\(^1\) Source: http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/home.html [accessed 05 July 2012].
gatehouse at Baynard Castle (fig. 7.5) is only known from excavation, its considerable wall thickness implies it took the form of a tower (Austin 2007, 182-9). The gatehouse at Bramber castle (fig. 7.5) was constructed c. 1075, and converted into a keep at a later date, probably in the late 11th century. The 3.0 m wall thickness of the phase I gatehouse implies an upper storey from the outset. One other stone gatehouse is likely to date from 11th century England, at Prudhoe (Northumberland), but since its walls had been robbed there is insufficient evidence that they supported a tower (Keen 1983, 176-7).

**Fig. 7.5 – Left:** Baynard Castle in the late 11th century (Austin 2007, cover image). **Right:** reconstruction of the phase I gatehouse of Bramber Castle from the south, later converted into a keep (phase II) (Barton and Holden 1978 37).

Potentially the same date as Exeter, the keep of Okehampton Castle (Devon) was also founded by Sherriff Baldwin of Devon in 1068 (fig. 7.6). It stands on a natural rock outcrop sculpted into a motte with which the keep is contemporary, so it has been dated to the first phase of the construction of the castle. The spur on which the castle stands appears to have been a fortified Anglo-Saxon estate centre, but there is no suggestion that the motte and keep date to the pre-Conquest period (Higham 1977; Williams and Martin 2002, 297; English Heritage 2004).
Church Norton, on the Selsey peninsula (Sussex), was the centre of the Anglo-Saxon see of Sussex until 1075. A ringwork lies adjacent to the cathedral site, containing the excavated foundations of a substantial tower and chamber associated with mid-11th to mid-12th century pottery. Despite being used as a church belfry in the later medieval period, there is no evidence that it was anything other than a secular tower (Salzman 1912; Aldsworth 1979; Aldsworth and Garnett 1981) (fig. 7.6). The tower was probably part of a pre-1075 episcopal residence rather than a later Norman castle. The secular tenants of the site following the removal of the see to Chichester are too petty to be likely castle-builders (Williams and Martin 2002, 39): the few early Norman castles in the county were each built by wealthy magnates (listed in Jones 2003, 173).

Totnes castle (Devon) has an early stone keep (fig. 7.7) which is contemporary with, or earlier than, its motte. It lay within Totnes’ Anglo-Saxon *burh*. The excavator suggested these foundations supported a timber rather than a stone superstructure (Higham 1977, 30), but their depth makes this unlikely: many of the stone towers in this study have thinner walls. Totnes castle is mentioned in a later copy of a 1087 document, providing a *terminus ante quem* for its construction (Rigold 1954).
The keep at West Malling (Kent) is believed to have been constructed under the patronage of Bishop Gundulf of Rochester (1077-1108) – architect of the Tower of London – at the administrative centre of an estate belonging to the bishopric since before the Conquest (fig. 7.8). Known as ‘St Leonard’s Tower’ after an adjacent Norman church, there is no evidence it was anything other than a secular tower. The manorial curia of the Norman bishops may have lain immediately north of the tower, where a medieval manor house now stands (McAleer 1998, 149; North 2001). Gundulf is also likely to have been responsible for the construction of keep on the north side of the choir of Rochester Cathedral (fig. 7.8). Similar in appearance to West Malling, it has few windows and a probable first-floor entrance, and appears to have been a secular keep rather than a belltower (McAleer 1998). Recent excavation has demonstrated that it post-dates the construction of the Cathedral’s late 11th century crypt, indicating a date near the end of Gundulf’s episcopacy (Ward 1999/2000). Comparable is the motte and residential stone tower constructed north of the nave of Norwich Cathedral immediately following the establishment of the see in 1096 (Gilchrist 2005, 150-1).
Considerably more famous than these ‘tall towers’ are the seven ‘palatial towers’, which are of an entirely different order of magnitude (fig. 7.3): Colchester (c. 1176) the Tower of London (c. 1075-9), Chepstow (c. 1081), Castle Acre (1080s), Norwich (c. 1095) and Canterbury (late 11th century). The seventh is Bishop Remigius’ formidable westwork tower at Lincoln Cathedral (c. 1072-92), which is thought to have stood detached from the church and housed the bishop’s domestic accommodation (Stocker and Vince 1997). In this respect it is comparable to the ‘tall tower’ episcopal keeps at Norwich, Rochester and perhaps Selsey. The footprint of even the smallest ‘palatial tower’ – at Castle Acre – is three and a half times greater than the largest ‘tall tower’, at Norwich Cathedral, and would have incorporated an exponentially greater volume of stone (fig. 7.3). The ‘palatial towers’ are argued to have been statements of royal, ducal or episcopal authority rather than practical residences, and were almost certainly adopted from France (Dixon 2008, 244).

The ‘tall towers’ are quite different to the ‘palatial towers’, and their modest size and simple form closely resembles Anglo-Saxon and Norman lordly tower-apses (fig. 7.3). Several differ architecturally from the Anglo-Saxon tower-apses, particularly in their use of clasping buttresses and ashlar masonry (e.g. fig. 7.8). On the other hand, the
Chapter 7: Tower-nave churches into Norman England

Exeter gatehouse (fig. 7.4) provides an excellent example of continuity between the Anglo-Saxon and Norman traditions. Of the ten ‘tall towers’ discussed above, all – excepting the cathedrals – appear to have been at former Anglo-Saxon estate centres, and there is evidence that both those at Exeter and Okehampton occupy pre-Conquest fortifications or seigneurial residences. The keeps at the cathedrals of Rochester, Lincoln, Norwich and possibly Selsey may simply be perpetuating the tradition of private high-status tower-naves at Anglo-Saxon monasteries (discussed in section 5.5.4).

Overall, there is little evidence that stone keeps were at all common before the 12th century (Dixon 2008, 260). Late 11th century castles were predominantly ringworks with halls and gatehouses, differing little from Anglo-Saxon lordly residences. Timber keeps may have been common at this time, but the surviving archaeological evidence (surveyed in Higham and Barker 1992) is too fragmentary or poorly-dated to recover the form of any firmly 11th century examples. As at Bury St Edmunds [B], Anglo-Saxon ‘survivor’ lords continued to build very substantial timber towers at their residences after the Conquest: these were, essentially, timber keeps. However, to support David Wilson’s (1976, 443) suggestion that Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves were the origin of Conquest period stone keeps it is necessary to briefly examine the development of early keeps in France. English ‘palatial towers’ were without question imported with the Norman Conquest, but whether pre-Conquest French keeps resemble English ‘tall towers’ requires examination.

7.1.4 The earliest French keeps

The development of pre-1066 keeps in France is summarised by Edward Impey (2008, esp. 233). Private fortified residences are mentioned as early as 864, but the earliest stone keeps to survive are Doué-la-Fontaine (Maine-et-Loire) and Mayenne (Pays-de-la-Loire), both early 10th century in date. The former began as a single-storey hall, heightened to two storeys by c. 950; the latter comprised a two-storey hall with an attached turret. Ivry-la-Bataille (Normandy) and Langeais (Indre-et-Loire), both of c. 1000, represent other significant early examples. The earliest surviving tower-like keep is probably that at Beaugency (1013-39); there is good evidence for a further seven keeps built before c. 1060 (summarised in fig. 7.3). Despite their height, ‘palatial towers’ are in origin elaborations of the aristocratic hall (Impey 2008).

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1 Including Goltho (contra Higham and Barker 1992), where a tantalising masonry basement was excavated at the summit of the early Norman motte. There is no direct evidence for Beresford’s (1987, 103-7) reconstructed tower.
Dixon (2008) argues that, in France, ‘tall towers’ were a separate tradition to ‘palatial towers’, as in Anglo-Norman England. He traces the origins of French ‘tall towers’ to keeps at Loches and Mountbazon (Indre-et-Loire) and Loudun (Vienne) (fig. 7.10). However, these towers are of a different order of magnitude to the earliest English ‘tall tower’ keeps at Exeter, Okehampton, Bramber and Totnes (figs 7.4-7.8). These English ‘tall tower’ keeps are far more comparable with the Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves: it is unfortunate that of the earliest English ‘tall tower’ keeps only Exeter survives relatively intact and unmodified (fig. 7.4), but its use of many aspects of Anglo-Saxon architecture is startling (section 7.1.3). The clasping buttresses of the slightly later English ‘tall towers’ at West Malling and Rochester clearly owe something to French keeps (fig. 7.8), but their rubble construction is still quite different from the ashlar at Loches and Loudun (fig. 7.10).
It would be untenable to argue that English keeps in general and Anglo-Norman ‘tall towers’ in particular developed wholly from Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves; equally, it may now be untenable to argue that they developed wholly from earlier French practice. Instead, a new scheme is suggested whereby the later medieval English keep derives from seigneurial towers on both sides of the Channel (fig. 7.11).
Many early documented French keeps incorporated chapels (summarised in Impey 2008, 228-30), as did many English keeps after the Conquest, while lordly tower-naves continued to be built by both Anglo-Saxon and Norman aristocrats. In both England and France the construction of towers in stone and timber was part of the material culture of early medieval lordship, a prominent aspect of private lordly architecture. The general replacement of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy by Normans after 1066 had a profound and enduring influence on the construction of these towers, and led to the introduction of new forms such as the motte and the palatial tower. However, we must challenge the simplistic and longstanding assumption that medieval castles in England owe everything to the companions of William the Conqueror and nothing to Anglo-Saxon practice.

7.1.5 Cross-channel influence before 1066

In support of this assertion is the considerable degree of contact between the aristocracies of England and France before the Conquest (Lewis 1994). Normans had been present in the English court since at least the marriage of Æthelred II to Emma, sister of Duke Richard II of Normandy, in 1002. Their son, Edward the Confessor (b. 1003-5) spent most of the years from 1013-1041 in exile in Normandy, and returned with many Norman followers (including Leofric, builder of the tower-nave at East Teignmouth [10]). A surprising number of lords of all ranks with Norman names are visible in the Domesday Book holding land before the Conquest; many of them sided against William in 1066, indicating they were more than an incidental veneer on a thoroughly native aristocracy. The pre-Conquest English court was a cosmopolitan place which had strong links with France.

There was also a degree of cross-Channel influence in the construction of lordly residences and fortifications throughout the late Anglo-Saxon period. In the early 10th century Henry the Fowler, Duke of Saxony, may have copied Anglo-Saxon burhs in his campaign against the Magyars (Strickland 1997, 371). Castles were constructed by Norman lords in England before 1066 (Higham and Barker 1992, 42-3), and Anglo-Saxon lords continued to build them after that date (section 2.11.1). One form of aristocratic architecture – the proprietorial church – saw striking continuity either side of the Conquest (Thomas 2003, 371-2; Thurlby 2003, esp. 124), and Edward Impey (1999) has argued that the Normans copied the Anglo-Saxon practice of ‘hall-and-chamber’ seigneurial domestic planning identified by Blair (2003). Interestingly, the ‘hall-and-chamber’ may first be visible at the 10th century Anglo-Saxon lordly towers at
Bishopstone [A] and West Cotton [D], and the tower-nave at Portchester [23], providing further evidence on the influence of these buildings on late 11th century seigneurial architecture.

7.2 Lordly tower-naves into the Norman period

7.2.1 The fates of the lordly tower-naves

Although this study concentrates on the period up to c. 1100, there is intriguingly little evidence for the construction of English lordly or monastic tower-naves into the 12th century. It is therefore instructive to trace the fate of the tower-naves already in existence by this date (see section 4.11): whilst many monastic tower-naves continued in use, lordly tower-naves were overwhelmingly either demolished or converted into the western towers of congregational churches in the century after the Norman Conquest, effectively nullifying them as manifestations of private aristocratic worship (figs 4.24 & 4.25).

In a rare discussion of this topic, it has been suggested that, as symbols of Anglo-Saxon lordship, tower-naves were deliberately destroyed by the Normans as part of their colonisation of post-Conquest England (Speight 1998, 170). This may be true in some cases, and the available evidence is of course biased towards those tower-naves which survived the Conquest: many may lie shattered beneath the churches and manor-houses of the early Norman aristocracy. Nevertheless, it has elsewhere been shown that Norman castles were constructed adjacent to existing Anglo-Saxon churches, as an attempt to appropriate and perpetuate the ideological control of society (Creighton 2002, 116-117). All of the Anglo-Saxon tower-naves in this study were permitted to survive the Conquest, with the probable exception of the uncertain example at Springfield Lyons [26]. Although their former private, high-status associations may have been ostentatiously nullified by the addition of a public, congregational nave, in most cases there is no evidence that this happened until a generation or more after 1066. Furthermore, Norman lords continued to build tower-naves at their residences until at least c. 1100 (section 4.5), and it is argued in section 7.1 that Anglo-Saxon tower-naves and lordly towers formed a partial basis for the development of the Norman keep in England. By the 12th century the lordly tower-nave form had fallen out of favour and existing examples were gradually converted or demolished, but there is little evidence that this was a direct result of the Norman Conquest. It can more readily be seen as a natural development in aristocratic material culture.
The downfall of the lordly tower-nave may be linked to the slow end of the proprietary church in England. From the 12th century the days were passing when a lord had control over a single church fabric (Blair 1988, 15; Harper-Bill 2003, 165). The parish rather than the lord increasingly manifested local identity, as local churches ‘acquired some of the stability and formality of the old minsters’ (Blair 2010, 175-7). This would doubtless have involved the addition of congregational naves, which were added to the majority of lordly tower-naves through the late 11th and 12th centuries. Manorial lords were encouraged to grant away their private churches to monasteries; in many cases their attention turned instead to the foundation of castle chapels (Pounds 1991).

7.2.2 Continuity and the early Norman castle chapel

Interestingly, some early Norman castle chapels do resemble tower-nave churches. The so-called ‘Robin Hood Tower’ of Richmond Castle (Yorkshire) is a late 11th century mural tower, two stages in height, containing a chapel to St Nicholas in its lower stage (Ministry of Works 1953, 13-14). Its modest, square plan and proximity to the bailey gate is reminiscent in scale and context to the tower-nave of St Michael’s, Oxford [20] (fig. 7.12).

Fig. 7.12 – Plan of Richmond Castle, indicating the ‘Robin Hood Tower’ and chapel of St Nicholas. Modified from the Ministry of Works (1953).
The chapel of St Mary Magdalene in the bailey of Ludlow Castle (Shropshire) was constructed in the mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century in the form of a round tower (fig. 7.13). It is argued to have been constructed by Gilbert I de Lacy, a member of the Knights Templar, providing the obvious explanation for its unusual plan (Coppack 2000), but its form is simpler and more tower-like than other known Templar churches in England (surveyed in Clapham 1934, 109-111).

![Fig. 7.13 – Left: View of St Mary Magdalene’s chapel, Ludlow Castle, from the west, dated 1777 (Whitehead 2000, 113). Right: Plan of the chapel (Coppack 2000, 146).](image)

### 7.2.3 Continuity and the ‘great western’ tower

The tower-nave form may have had an afterlife in the ‘great western’ towers which characterised the chapels of many episcopal and abbatial residences during the Norman period, as well as the residences of some secular magnates (fig. 7.14). These towers are of an unusual scale, often wider than the naves which accompany them (\textit{e.g.} fig. 7.15) (Blair 1989; Fernie 2000, 238; see now Secker 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Patron</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bampton (Oxfordshire)</td>
<td>Mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Bishop of Exeter</td>
<td>Crossley and Currie 1996, 48-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brabourne (Kent)</td>
<td>Mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Prior of Horton</td>
<td>Berg and Jones 2009, 69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brook (Kent)</td>
<td>Late 11\textsuperscript{th}/ early 12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury</td>
<td>Berg and Jones 2009, 72-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borden (Kent)</td>
<td>Mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>Berg and Jones 2009, 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clapham (Bedfordshire)</td>
<td>Late 11\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Abbot of Ramsay</td>
<td>Page 1912, 128-32; Taylor 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumnor (Oxfordshire)</td>
<td>Late 11\textsuperscript{th}/ early 12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Abbot of Abingdon</td>
<td>Blair 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eaton Bishop (Herefordshire)</td>
<td>Early-mid 12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Bishop of Hereford</td>
<td>Pevsner 1963, 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hougham (Kent)</td>
<td>Early 12\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>Berg and Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Architect/Role</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lympne (Kent)</td>
<td>Late 11th century</td>
<td>Archbishop of Canterbury</td>
<td>Page 1932, 213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (Derbyshire)</td>
<td>Early 12th century</td>
<td>Bishop of Carlisle</td>
<td>Page 1907, 87-92; Fernie 2000, 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minster Court (Kent)</td>
<td>Late 11th/early 12th century</td>
<td>Abbot of St Augustine’s</td>
<td>Kipps 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Elmham (Norfolk)</td>
<td>Late 11th/early 12th century</td>
<td>Bishop of Norwich</td>
<td>Heywood 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Elmham (Suffolk)</td>
<td>Late 11th/early 12th century</td>
<td>Bishop of Norwich</td>
<td>Heywood 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stambourne (Essex)</td>
<td>Late 11th century</td>
<td>Sheriffs of Kent?</td>
<td>Secker 2012, 12-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tollesbury (Essex)</td>
<td>Early 12th century</td>
<td>Abbess of Barking</td>
<td>Page and Round 1907, 115-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Malling (Kent)</td>
<td>Late 11th/early 12th century</td>
<td>Bishop of Rochester</td>
<td>Lawson and Stockley 1904; Page 1932, 219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7.14 – A preliminary list of ‘great western’ tower churches at the probable estates and residences of ecclesiastical and lay lords. From Blair 1989; Fernie 2000, 238 and Secker 2012, with additions.

Fig. 7.15 – Left: 1807 view of St Mary’s church, Brook (Kent), from the northwest (Kent Archaeological Society). Right: Plan of the church (Berg and Jones 2009, 74).

The ‘great western’ towers were constructed as adjuncts to conventional two- or three-cell churches and so cannot be considered as tower-naves. Many are relatively squat compared to the generally tall, slender Anglo-Saxon towers. Nevertheless, the architectural emphasis of these chapels was invested on their western towers to an exceptional degree, which may be a later echo of the tower-naves constructed for private worship by ecclesiastical and lay lords throughout the period of this study.

7.3 Monastic tower-naves into the Norman period

The great cathedral and monastic churches of England saw an architectural revolution in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. Every single Anglo-Saxon cathedral or great
monastic church was rebuilt, albeit at a gradual rate through the later 11th and 12th century rather than the ‘spasm of destruction’ with which this process is sometimes caricatured (Fernie 1994a; 1999). There was also a dramatic upsurge in the foundation of new monastic houses, although this was overwhelmingly a 12th century phenomenon (Daniell 2003, 153). It was accompanied by continuities in many aspects of Anglo-Saxon monastic life, traditions and architecture (Gransden 1989, 202-7; Thurlby 2003, 119-124).

This gradual, if thorough, Norman replacement of Anglo-Saxon great churches is echoed in the fates of the known pre-Conquest monastic tower-naves (fig. 7.16). Of the twelve examples, the probable fates of eleven are known, of which only one – at Winchester’s Old Minster [30] – was deliberately demolished in the decades after 1066 to make way for a new Norman church. That at Winchester’s New Minster [31] was also demolished at this time, but incidentally, in the context of the wholesale relocation of its monastic community. Although many of the other monastic tower-naves are thought to have been in close proximity to their main abbey or cathedral church, they were either left standing, incorporated into Norman churches, or accidentally demolished. There was not a concerted attempt by the Normans to destroy Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves, and one was built – at Hereford [15] – after 1066.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Probable location in 1066</th>
<th>Fate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hexham [16]</td>
<td>c. 60 m east of abbey church</td>
<td>Incorporated into parish church (13th century?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York: St Michael’s [35]</td>
<td>c. 60 m south of abbey church</td>
<td>Incorporated into parish church (unknown date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athelney [2]</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Survived into the 12th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon [1]</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Accidentally demolished 1084x1097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury [12]</td>
<td>West of abbey churches</td>
<td>Accidentally burnt in 1184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester Old Minster [30]</td>
<td>Incorporated into west front of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral</td>
<td>Demolished 1093-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester [33]</td>
<td>c. 10 m north of cathedral church</td>
<td>Joined to post-Conquest cathedral (12th/13th century?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorney [28]</td>
<td>At abbatial residence?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester New Minster [31]</td>
<td>West front of abbey church</td>
<td>Demolished c. 1109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherborne [24]</td>
<td>Incorporated into west front of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral</td>
<td>Incorporated into cathedral church (mid-11th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bury: St Benedict [5]</td>
<td>c. 80 m NE of abbey churches</td>
<td>Survived beyond 1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury [7]</td>
<td>10 m SW of cathedral church complex</td>
<td>Partially demolished 1095: remains incorporated into Norman cathedral church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7.16 – The fates of known pre-Conquest monastic tower-naves in England (see also figs 4.24 & 4.25).
Overall, the Normans left a remarkable legacy of rebuilt Anglo-Saxon great churches, but they did not deliberately seek to efface these buildings from the landscape as a symbol of their conquest. More pertinently, they appear to have had little interest in destroying Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves, or even – at least in the short term – ceasing their construction. Indeed, two of the curated Anglo-Saxon tower-naves were honoured by the Normans with high-status burials after the Conquest: St Mary’s tower at Canterbury [7] was used in the early 1070s as a royal mortuary chapel, and St Benedict’s tower in Bury St Edmunds [5] was the burial place of three 12th century abbots. This leaves the potential for tower-nave continuity at Norman monasteries and cathedrals: an obvious place to look is the Norman and later phenomenon of detached monastic belltowers (fig. 7.17).

Fig. 7.17 – Examples of medieval detached monastic belltowers. **Left:** View of the mid-12th century belltower of the church of St James, Bury St Edmunds, from the west. **Middle:** The later 13th century belltower of Tewkesbury Abbey in 1732 (McAleer 2001, 64). **Right:** Cross-section of the mid-13th century belltower of Salisbury Cathedral in 1774 (McAleer 2001, 61).

### 7.3.1 Detached monastic belltowers

Detached belltowers at medieval monasteries have been studied as a group (McAleer 2001). McAleer surveys sixteen English examples, from the early 12th to the early 16th centuries. He found their existence difficult to explain, as most of their accompanying churches had pre-existing belltowers. He was also unable to trace their origin, but finding few parallels with contemporary Continental practice he suggested that they were an insular tradition. McAleer’s sixteen examples are summarised below (fig. 7.18), modified to include St James’ tower at Bury St Edmunds, which served as a belltower.
for the adjacent church of St James, and an excavated example at Abingdon Abbey.
That at Worcester Cathedral [36] is argued in this study to have originated as an Anglo-
Saxon tower-nave and so has been removed from McAleer’s list, as has ‘Gundulf’s
Tower’ at Rochester Cathedral, which appears to have been a domestic keep converted
into a belltower at a later date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Gate location?</th>
<th>Cemetery location?</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Canterbury: St Augustine’s</td>
<td>Early C12th</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Tatton-Brown 1991, 78-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bury St Edmund’s</td>
<td>1121-46</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Whittingham 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Abingdon</td>
<td>C12th</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Allen 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evesham Abbey</td>
<td>1209 (rebuilt C16th)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Cox 1990, 129; McAleer 2001, 67-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Canterbury Cathedral</td>
<td>Mid C12th</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>McAleer 2001, 55-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Glastonbury Abbey</td>
<td>Mid C12th</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>McAleer 2001, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. St Paul’s Cathedral</td>
<td>Early C13th</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Schofield 2011, 175-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Salisbury Cathedral</td>
<td>Mid C13th</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>RCHME 1993, 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Norwich Cathedral</td>
<td>Pre-1272</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gilchrist 2005, 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Tewkesbury Abbey</td>
<td>Later C13th</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>McAleer 2001, 64; Eisel 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Lichfield Cathedral</td>
<td>Pre-1315</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>McAleer 2001, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Chichester Cathedral</td>
<td>c. 1300</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Hobbs 1994, 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Romsey Abbey</td>
<td>Pre-1457</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Scott 1996, 95-7; McAleer 2001, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Elstow Abbey</td>
<td>Late C15th</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>McAleer 2001, 67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7.18 – Known detached monastic belltowers in medieval England. Data adapted from McAleer (2001).

In her study of Norwich Cathedral, Roberta Gilchrist (2005, 190) observed that
detached monastic belltowers were commonly sited at public entrances or in cemeteries,
and on the side of the church away from the cloister. She suggested that they served to
summon the faithful into the precinct, and to sound death-knells. Of the fourteen monastic belltowers whose locations are known (i.e., excluding Glastonbury), thirteen are either located adjacent to a precinct gate or a known monastic cemetery, or both
(figs 7.19 & 7.20). The exception, Westminster, lies on the north side of its church, away from the conventual building, invariably the location of monastery lay cemeteries in medieval Britain (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005, 32).

Unlike monastic tower-naves, there is no evidence that detached monastic belltowers contained chapels: they were not tower-nave churches. Nevertheless, Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves seem to have functioned as funerary chapels and belfries, and to have stood at precinct entrances as architectural manifestations of the gateway to the Heavenly City (section 7.7.2; figs 4.15 & 7.21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure type</th>
<th>Used as funerary structures?</th>
<th>Used as gate structures?</th>
<th>Used as private chapels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monastic tower-naves</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastic detached belltowers</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7.20 – The contexts of the fifteen detached monastic belltowers known from medieval England, as listed in fig. 7.18.

The Norman period saw a seismic change in the architectural style of greater Anglo-Saxon churches, which were rebuilt on a grand scale as homogenous structures, replacing early medieval churches of various dates and forms in close spatial or linear association. These new churches often contained many chapels, but now they were under one roof. Monastic tower-naves that survived the Conquest were incorporated into the new churches, at Canterbury [7], Sherborne [24] and Worcester [33]. Free-standing monastic belltowers continued to be built throughout the Middle Ages to service cemeteries and mark entrances, but they no longer contained chapels like the tower-naves of old. McAleer’s (2001) suggestion that medieval detached monastic
belltowers had insular origins may be correct, since they seem to replicate the form and function of Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-nave churches.

7.4 Conclusions

English society did not suddenly change in 1066. Many Anglo-Saxon lords and high-ranking ecclesiastics were replaced by Norman incomers, but they were only the latest influx from a century of cross-channel aristocratic migration and influence. The decades after the Conquest saw dramatic changes in the construction of aristocratic residences and great monastic and cathedral churches, but this was not devoid of continuity with Anglo-Saxon practice. The majority of castles were little different from the timber buildings and earthen enclosures of pre-Conquest lordly residences. A small number of stone keeps appeared, including a few great Norman-style ‘palatial towers’, most built by the king in important cities. The majority of keeps, however, appear little different from existing Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves, and resemble Anglo-Saxon towers more than contemporary keeps in France. There is every reason to believe – as would make sense – in a high degree of continuity of lordly architecture on both sides of the Conquest, in which Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves played a significant part.

Lordly tower-naves continued to be built into the Norman period by both Anglo-Saxon and Norman lords, and were incorporated into several Norman castles. The form seems to have dwindled in the 12th century, and the surviving examples were demolished or converted into conventional western towers of congregational churches. This may be ascribed to the decline of the private, proprietary church. In many cases aristocratic attention turned to castle chapels, two of which echo the tower-nave form. The ‘great western towers’ of some Norman churches, many of which served as episcopal and abbatial chapels, may also have continued the Anglo-Saxon iconography associating towers with secular power and high-status devotion.

Monastic tower-naves also dwindled in the 12th century, although many were left standing or incorporated into the substantial churches that characterise Anglo-Norman practice. These replaced the Anglo-Saxon habit of curating several heterogeneous churches on one site, including tower-nave churches. Monastic tower-naves may nevertheless have had an afterlife inspiring the detached monastic belltowers of the 12th century and later in England. Like tower-naves, these seem to have been variously constructed to mark entrances and serve as funerary structures, but they lacked their earlier function as high-status chapels.
Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Anglo-Saxon tower-nave churches

Thirty-five tower-nave churches are known from early medieval England, built between the late 8\textsuperscript{th} century and \textit{c}. 1100. Their limited capacity and elaborate form suggests an elite or specialised function. Twenty tower-naves occur at lordly residences and thirteen at important monasteries, of which one appears to have acted as the residential tower of a lord. Two further tower-naves have neither an obvious lordly nor monastic context.

The lordly tower-naves were mainly during the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, whereas monastic tower-naves occur throughout the period, with an upsurge in the mid to late 10\textsuperscript{th} century Anglo-Saxon Monastic Reform. English tower-naves are therefore conjectured to have originated at great institutional monasteries and then been adopted by local lords at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, which parallels the establishment of local proprietorial churches at this time.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig8_1}
\end{center}

\textit{Fig. 8.1} – Summary of the influences and development of English tower-naves. Synthesised from figs 5.23, 6.1 & 7.11.
8.1.1 Monastic tower-naves

Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-nave churches are argued in chapter six to have originated in Continental ecclesiastical architecture, with three particular functions stemming from these suggested origins:

- Monastic tower-naves marked gateway locations. Early medieval monasteries were metaphors for the City of God, and from their apparent origins in the Christian West in the later 5th century, church towers were perceived as the gate-towers to the Heavenly City whose soaring form brought the terrestrial closer to God.

- Monastic tower-naves were high-status chapels. The imperial tradition of turriform chapels across Western Europe stemmed from the centrally-planned churches of the late Roman emperors and the Frankish construction of royal westwerke from the later 5th century onwards. These traditions joined at the Emperor Charlemagne’s great palatine church at Aachen. Private royal and episcopal tower-nave chapels and westwerke were constructed at Anglo-Saxon monasteries, several modelled on Aachen.

- Monastic tower-naves were mortuary chapels. This function stems in part from the metaphor of the earliest Christian towers as ladders to heaven, again recorded from the later 5th century. Echoing their function as high-status chapels, several Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves served as burial-chapels for kings, abbots and bishops, a tradition which can be traced to late Roman centrally-planned turriform imperial burial-chapels, as later manifested at Aachen.

England’s mid to late 10th century Monastic Reform saw an upsurge in the building of monastic tower-naves by the four key players in the movement. Each monastic tower-nave had functional continuity with the others – as high-status chapels, mortuary chapels and/or gate-towers – in which sense they manifested central tenets of the Reform: an appreciation of royal patronage, regularisation of monastic burial and increased segregation of monastic space. Thus, many Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves can be interpreted as a material expression of the Monastic Reform.

8.1.2 Lordly tower-naves

Increased emphasis on royal patronage during the 10th century Monastic Reform diverted aristocratic patronage away from the great regional monasteries and towards
local proprietorial churches. Anglo-Saxon lords constructed tower-naves at their residences, beginning in the late 10th century, but centred on the mid-11th century. For this, they had three main contemporary models:

- Anglo-Saxon kings constructed tower-naves at their residences, in several cases for private worship and burial. In the early 10th century, tower iconography made its way onto West Saxon royal coinage, potentially as a symbol of their imperial ambition in the aftermath of their conquest of the Danelaw.
- There was an existing tradition of timber tower construction at Anglo-Saxon lordly residences, dating to at least the later 9th century. These towers were probably not churches, but they appear to have influenced the architecture of early lordly tower-naves, several of whose pilaster strips evoke timber construction.
- There is evidence that western towers were constructed at Anglo-Saxon churches from c. 900, including at churches apparently constructed or appropriated by local lords.

Lordly tower-naves were not necessarily the inevitable result of these three traditions: royal tower-naves, lordly timber towers and lordly church western towers. The rise of lordly tower-naves beginning in the late 10th century coincides with an increasing localisation of power in Anglo-Saxon society: the beginnings of the medieval ‘rise of the gentry’. This saw proprietorial churches established by local lords on their estates, and the middle of the century witnessed the apogee of the known granting of these estates through bookland to the local aristocracy. The century witnessed the beginning of the ‘second phase’ of nucleated settlement, argued to have been characterised by the aristocratic planning and management of their estates: lordly tower-naves are confined to areas of nucleated settlement in England, and all but two appear to be located in nucleated settlements. Lordly tower-naves can be interpreted both as material expressions of the burgeoning local aristocracy, and as legitimising statements of the allegiance of the aristocracy to their king and to God.

The available evidence indicates that lordly tower-naves were constructed at existing lordly residences, rather than residences being established around a lord’s tower-nave. Many lordly tower-naves articulated with focal places of social power in the landscape. Where known, two-thirds of lordly tower-naves lay adjacent to hundred meeting-places and three-quarters had visibility over local beacon-systems, which compares favourably with the landscape contexts of monastic tower-naves. Lordly
tower-naves can be understood as the material culture of seigneurial residences, and in some cases may have lain at the centre of designed landscapes, ‘stage-sets’ manifesting aspects of Anglo-Saxon aristocratic power and status. In both respects they prefigure the keeps of later medieval English castles, whose form they are argued to have influenced.

8.1.3 Tower-naves into Norman England

Lordly tower-naves were built in England for a generation after the Norman Conquest by both Anglo-Saxon and Norman lords, and were influential in the developing architecture of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy.

- Several lordly tower-naves were constructed at or incorporated into early Norman castles. They can be interpreted as the appropriation of Anglo-Saxon lordly architecture by the Norman aristocracy.
- Many of the earliest Norman keeps built in England resemble Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves far more than keeps in Norman France. It is likely that there was continuity in aristocratic architecture either side of the Conquest, from Anglo-Saxon tower-nave to Anglo-Norman keep.
- The tower-nave form is echoed by several 12th century Anglo-Norman castle chapels, and in the ‘great western’ towers of many episcopal and abbatial chapels.

The decline of the lordly tower-nave in England cannot be directly ascribed to the Norman Conquest, but instead to the 12th century decline of the proprietary church in England. Lords turned their attention to the construction of castle keeps and castle chapels, in which the influence of tower-nave is clearly visible.

The construction of monastic tower-naves also continued in the generation after the Norman Conquest. It ceased with the great rebuilding of Anglo-Saxon cathedrals and great monastic churches in the later 11th and 12th centuries, which was characterised by the replacement of groups of smaller, heterogeneous churches with single churches on a grand scale. This left little scope for the construction of distinct tower-nave churches, although there was no concerted attempt to demolish Anglo-Saxon tower-naves, many of which survived in their former roles.

Although the construction of monastic tower-naves had apparently ceased by the 12th century, their influence can be traced in the detached belftowers of later medieval cathedrals and monasteries. Although these later belftowers were not chapels, they
marked gateway locations and stood in cemeteries, echoing the functions of Anglo-Saxon monastic tower-naves.

8.2 The wider implications of this study

The study of Anglo-Saxon tower-nave churches touches upon several wider aspects of the period:

1. The origins of church towers in England
2. The architecture of the 10th century Monastic Reform
3. Anglo-Saxon palace architecture
4. The development of the proprietary church in England
5. The architecture of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences
6. The development of the castle in England

These will be discussed in turn.

8.2.1 The origins of church towers in England

The tower-nave at Hexham [16] appears to be the earliest known church tower in England. This, of course, does not mean that Hexham was England’s earliest church tower, or that tower-naves were the origin of church towers in England. Other early Anglo-Saxon towers are known, such as the possible early 9th century crossing tower of Canterbury Cathedral (Blockley 1997, 100-106; see also Gem 1995). The interpretation of tower-naves offered here – that they were constructed at wealthy monasteries as gateways, high-status chapels and mortuary chapels prior to being adopted as manifestations of social power by local elites – may shed light upon the vexed question of the origin and purpose of the church towers characteristic of the society and landscape of later medieval England.

8.2.2 The architecture of the 10th century Monastic Reform

It was suggested in section 5.7 that certain tower-nave churches were constructed in the context of England’s 10th century Monastic Reform by the four chief agents of the movement. This adds a further dimension to study of the architecture of the Reform movement, which has been traced elsewhere in the introduction of the monastic cloister into England (summarised by Hardy et al. 2003, 478-92) and the construction of communal facilities such as refectories and dormitories (e.g. Rahtz and Watts 1997,
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170-3; Hardy et al. 2003, 489-90). Monastic tower-naves were adopted by the Monastic Reform movement, due in part to the elision of roles between existing monastic tower-naves – gateways, high-status chapels and mortuary chapels – and three tenets of the Reform: the integrity of monastic space, increased royal patronage of the church, and the regularisation of burial practices.

8.2.3 Anglo-Saxon palace architecture

Tower-naves at Abingdon [1] and Athelney [2] were constructed by Anglo-Saxon kings on the site of royal vill. That at Athelney [1] – ‘island of the princes’ – was constructed by king Alfred as he (re-)founded a monastery on a fortified island used during his defence of Wessex. That at Abingdon [1] was laid out by King Eadred – in apparent imitation of the imperial church at Aachen – at the probable site of a fortified royal vill, monastery, execution site and meeting-place for the witan. Abingdon was re-founded as a Reform monastery before Eadred’s tower-nave was completed: it was subsequently used as a high-status burial-chapel. There has been considerable debate over recent decades over the characterisation of certain high-status Anglo-Saxon sites such as Cheddar and Northampton as palaces or monasteries (Blair 1996a; 2005, 204-12; Pestell 2004, 59-63, 224; Loveluck 2007, 144-7; G. Thomas 2010, 213-6). The tower-nave forms of Abingdon [1] and Athelney [2] are argued here to manifest both ecclesiastical and secular power, and may represent rare examples of Anglo-Saxon palace architecture.

8.2.4 The development of the proprietary church in England

Study of lordly tower-naves may help to refine our picture of the growth of the proprietary church in Anglo-Saxon England from the 10th century onwards (summarised in section 2.4). The fundamental lack of capacity of tower-naves for worship, coupled with their elaborate form, indicates that these were private, high-status churches. This is supported by the manorial context of almost all non-monastic tower-naves (the exceptions being the ‘orphan’ tower-naves at South Cadbury [25] and East Dean [9] – see section 4.4.3).

The development of the Anglo-Saxon proprietary church has been largely distilled from documentary evidence such as charters and law-codes (surveyed in Blair 2005, 368-425), and largely lacks an archaeological basis. There are only a handful of excavated proprietary churches (Graham and Davies 1993, 33-55; Boddington 1996; Meadows 1999; see also Blair 2005, 388). Textual evidence showing that a certain
church was built by a certain lord at a certain date is enormously rare (e.g. Everson and Stocker 1999, 214-216; Parsons 2000). If we accept that non-monastic tower-naves were *ipso facto* proprietary churches, this substantially increases our corpus of known examples for study.

### 8.2.5 The architecture of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences

Most of the lordly tower-naves in this study survive above ground level. There have been numerous attempts over the past century to identify standing secular structures from the Anglo-Saxon period, with no categorical success (e.g. Guermonprez and Johnston 1903; Clapham 1928; Buckland 1984; Parsons 2000; Essex County Council 2007). As argued here in chapter six, lordly tower-naves were buildings of secular aristocratic practice. Eleven standing examples of probable pre-Conquest date thus provide a valuable, and probably unique, body of extant Anglo-Saxon secular elite architecture.

### 8.2.6 The development of the castle in England

Traditionally, castles are held to have been imported into England after the Norman Conquest (discussed in section 2.11.3), although the importance of Anglo-Saxon lordly residences is increasingly recognised (section 2.3). Norman castles are nevertheless perceived as qualitatively different from Anglo-Saxon lordly residences due to their stone keeps (section 2.11.5).

This study questions this model in two main ways. Firstly, Anglo-Saxon lords constructed seigneurial towers at their residences long before the Conquest. Secondly, the majority of the earliest Anglo-Norman keeps more strongly resemble Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves than they resemble early keeps in France. Great royal palatial keeps such as the Tower of London and Colchester were clearly built imitating Continental models (section 7.1.2 & fig. 7.3), and bear little resemblance to the majority of aristocratic keeps, which were modest, square, rubble-built structures. These modest aristocratic keeps appear to have been strongly influenced by Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-nave construction.

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8.3 Directions for future research

It is likely that many tower-naves remain to be discovered amongst standing Anglo-Saxon church towers. Towers at Stevington (Bedfordshire) and Caversfield (Oxfordshire), for example, have both been suggested as tower-naves (Audouy et al. 1995, 91-2): in both cases the tower is the earliest part of the church, and both churches lie adjacent to an early manor-house, in keeping with many lordly tower-naves in this study. However, in neither case is it demonstrable that the tower was earlier than any previous nave, which is the standard for inclusion in this study (section 3.3.1). The removal of plaster to reveal the east quoins of many Anglo-Saxon church towers would doubtless add to the tower-naves presented here.

Study of England’s later medieval church towers is needed to confirm the apparent absence of tower-naves later than the early Norman period. There is no comprehensive survey of England’s post-Conquest churches to compare with the Taylors’ (1965; 1978) study of Anglo-Saxon architecture.

Better dating is needed of England’s early medieval churches through excavation and scientific dating techniques. The discipline has traditionally relied upon a floating chronology of architectural style anchored by precious few absolute dates, but advances in archaeological dating techniques are fuelling a slow revolution. The recently excavated Anglo-Saxon tower-nave of St George in Oxford [21] was long assumed to date to the 1070s: this alone questions any assumptions about the scale and ambition of Anglo-Saxon seigneurial architecture. Many of the tower-naves in this study are insecurely dated; future fieldwork will transform understanding of their development.

Several of the tower-naves in this study are known only from documentary sources, and their locations are uncertain (section 4.5). This is also true for the timber lordly towers at Bury St Edmunds [B] and possibly Bosham (section 6.2.1). Comprehensive excavation of all of the sites in this study, as at Barton-upon-Humber [3], would be revelatory in terms of their date, development, and social and landscape contexts of construction. Geophysics and targeted excavation are needed to confirm the location and plan of tower-naves at Abingdon [1], Athelney [2], East Teignmouth [10], Thorney [28], Winchester’s New Minster [31] and Worcester [33]. It could also elucidate the contexts of the ‘orphan’ tower-naves at East Dean [9] and South Cadbury [25] (see section 4.4.3), and resolve irregularities between the antiquarian excavations and fragmentary remains of the tower-nave at Bury St Edmunds abbey [5]. Additionally, keyhole excavations of the suggested manorial curiae of many of the lordly tower-naves is needed to confirm their potentially early origin (see section 3.4.2).
As discussed in section 2.3, there is no body of scholarship for Anglo-Saxon lordly residences to compare with that for Norman and later castles. As the conceptual boundary of the Norman Conquest is eroded, this picture will change and may enhance our understanding of the social roles of Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves suggested here (sections 6.5–6.10).

Finally, there is little evidence for tower-nave analogues in available summaries of early medieval western European local church architecture. Although the simplistic temptation to assume that Anglo-Saxon lords copied their Continental peers must be avoided, it would be illuminating to find Continental parallels for the construction of Anglo-Saxon lordly tower-naves, as has been attempted here in chapter five for monastic tower-naves, westwerke and chapels of the Hereford [15] type. One useful parallel may be the status-affording aristocratic towers of 10th and 11th century Italian towns (Fleming 1993, 11; Christie 2004), although there is no evidence that these towers functioned as churches.

8.4 Summary of conclusions
Anglo-Saxon tower-nave churches were buildings of secular and ecclesiastical lordship. Some were constructed by kings and bishops at the great monasteries of early medieval England, for high-status worship and burial. Others were constructed at aristocratic residences to manifest social power and status: these may have influenced the form of Anglo-Norman castle keeps. Towers of lordship rose above the English landscape long before the Norman Conquest, and continued to be built long after; this study allows us to trace a line between the two.