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(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

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A final temporally-defined chapter provides more insight into seventeenth-century and later phases of pottery production, including the detailing of a sizeable slipware waster group, alongside a comprehensive discussion of horn working and tanning remains.

The final chapter is unsurprisingly the 'meat' of the volume and here for the first time a model of the development of Ely's medieval and post-medieval waterfront is constructed from excavated archaeological evidence. Previously only landscape and documentary data have been available. The authors here stand squarely behind their assertion, first made in Chapter 3, that the canalisation of the Great Ouse must have occurred in the twelfth century, and not perhaps in the tenth century, which has previously been suggested. All the development and activity that the volume documents stems from this point, temporally, economically and in landscape terms. This is then fleshed out in their discussion, which is wide-ranging and substantial, in particular in its consideration of the evidence for trade and industry. Here, for the first time, we are given a real archaeologically-derived picture of this emerging settlement that eventually becomes a town, but which, in common with many fenland places, exhibits a confusing set of attributes, both rural and urban, throughout its evolution.

Overall, in this very worthwhile volume there is much that is useful to the specialist pottery researcher, student of medieval archaeology and also for those with an interest in the archaeology of Ely and the Fenland generally. It is most definitely a recommended read. A few editorial oddities aside, its only major weakness is that this strong thesis is derived from the set-piece excavation of one site only, all the other evidence being gleaned from a ragbag of observations and recording exercises in this part of town. Future researchers might therefore give those of this generation two cheers only for their efforts: finally we have quality excavated evidence in the lower town at Ely, but opportunities may well have been missed to achieve a more comprehensive view.

Paul Spoerry
CAM ARC

Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia

Andrew Wareham 2005

Woodbridge: The Boydell Press ISBN 1 84383 155 4, pp. xix, 185. £45

This book was written in response to the report by English Heritage *Power of Place: The Future of the Historic Environment*, and in particular to its call for regional case studies. To a great extent, it is a study of aristocratic families; and readers, even those familiar with the early Middle Ages, may be surprised to discover how much can be known about individuals and their relationships, both to other people and to the districts where they lived and held land, in the tenth and eleventh centuries. A central theme of the book, which might be deduced by astute readers from the period covered, but is not immediately obvious from the title, is the idea of a 'feudal transformation'. The scholarly context, largely continental, of this idea, is set out in the introduction; as Dr Wareham points out, scholars working on England have tended to associate the origins of feudalism with the Norman Conquest, and not to look further back for changes that might be relevant. A regional focus allows him to look at how such changes might have worked in practice, by examining how aristocratic families related to each other, to those above and below them in society and, crucially in East Anglia, to ecclesiastical institutions.

Readers from Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire will be pleased to know that both counties are included in Dr Wareham's East Anglia; he does not confine himself to the ancient kingdom of the East Angles. His book contains a good deal of interesting local information, and features some characters who will already be familiar to many readers. The very first chapter deals with the dynasty of Ealdorman Æthelwine and the foundation of Ramsey Abbey. Chapter 2 is a companion piece on the refoundation of Ely in the tenth century and the family of Wulfstan of Dalham, a useful corrective to the usual emphasis, based on the *Liber Eliensis*, on the role of Bishop Æthelwold. The next chapter is concerned with two more patrons of Ely, Ælflæd, the widow of Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, the tragic hero of the battle of Maldon, and her sister Æthelflæd, and the fourth with Byrhtnoth's own family and their donations to Ely. Benefactions to both Ely and Ramsey also feature in Chapter 5, in this case those of emerging 'gentry' class, people who were of thegnly rank, but whose interests did not extend beyond their home region. Later chapters focus mainly on other counties, but reveal for instance that the biggest landowners in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire also held extensive estates in the other eastern counties (Chapter 8). This applies both to those who held lands all over the country and to those whose interests were purely regional. The importance of royal influence, frequently operating through patronage of the Church, also emerges clearly. Another interesting phenomenon is the development during this period of little 'central places', with both markets and churches adjacent to lords' residences.

It cannot be pretended, unfortunately, that this book is an easy read. It is in the nature of the case-study format that it is heavy with data, and, because the author uses each case study to test a particular hypothesis about the 'feudal transformation', it is heavy with theory as well. Nonetheless, the effort of grappling with the data, and even the theory, will reward readers with some fascinating insights into society in our counties at a crucial stage in its development. And writers of more popular works will find a good deal here that would be worth disseminating to a wider audience.

Debby Banham

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