CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

SCULPTURE AND HISTORY

a) Introduction

Before the project reported on here began, there was a temptation to think that the stone sculpture of Nottinghamshire represented little more than a westward extension of the Lincolnshire material with which we were very familiar (Everson and Stocker 1999; Stocker and Everson 2001), both in respect of the types of monument represented, and in respect of the broader messages it might convey about the history of the county before the Norman Conquest. As work has progressed, however, it has become clear that the lessons that can be drawn from the Nottinghamshire sculpture differ importantly from those we drew from the Lincolnshire material. The basic categories of material are quite different. The Lincolnshire corpus is numerically dominated by several series of repetitive grave-cover types belonging to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, with relatively few standing shafts in percentage terms (55.5% vs. 21.5%). In Nottinghamshire, however, although one of the 'Lincolnshire' late grave-cover types is well represented (the 'mid-Kesteven covers'), there are proportionally many more shafts represented within the main catalogue collection and fewer grave-covers (both amounting to 37.5%). Furthermore, whereas the great majority of pieces from Lincolnshire were from the one hundred and fifty years before the Conquest (95%), Nottinghamshire retains evidence for a higher percentage of monuments from earlier periods and a much smaller percentage of these later pieces (15.5% vs. 84.5%), although the data-base is very much smaller. Perhaps partly because of this early date, the Nottinghamshire monuments are more individual and *sui generis*, defying — to a much greater extent than the Lincolnshire material — allocation to pre-existing categories. The sections that follow draw attention to a few cases where the recent study of individual Nottinghamshire stones, and some groups of stones, have made a contribution towards our understanding of the county's history between the seventh and the eleventh centuries.

Lincolnshire nevertheless remains a prevalent factor in the narratives about Nottinghamshire, since in respect of stone type no less than 60% of the monuments discussed in the main catalogue are sculptures carved in Lincolnshire limestone (see Chapter II). That is not simply the standard Ancaster products from the large category of mid-Kesteven covers and the two from Shelton (nos. 1 and 2) that are closely related to them; but also contemporary Ancaster shafts from Colston Bassett and Norwell, and even the distinctive pre-Viking piece at South Muskham, and highly individualistic cross-shafts Shelford 1 and Rolleston 1. By contrast, only 15% of monuments in the main catalogue are in clearly local Nottinghamshire stone types.

b) The contribution of stone sculpture to understanding the pre-Viking period in Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire is not a region greatly discussed during the pre-Viking period, a circumstance no doubt partly due to the lack of references to people or events here in the documentary sources. A fairly full outline of the known events and related locations has been given in Chapter III above. What might have turned out to be the county's most significant early church site — the chapel at Birkwood Hey where perhaps St Edwin was first buried in 633 — never developed further once the saint's relics had been removed to Whitby at the end of the seventh century (above, p. 25). The location is commemorated, at the initiative of the sixth Duke of Portland in 1912, by an iron cross; but the precise site is not known and has not been excavated, and there is no known early stone sculpture associated with it. The only other Anglo-Saxon saint whose association with the county is documented (one of the five St Ædburgas) was culted at Southwell in the eleventh century, but we find no evidence for her presence before the Viking period and the earliest stone sculpture at Southwell (nos. 1 and 2) also belongs to late pre-Conquest times.

However, our work for the present study has focused attention on other pre-Viking sites which we might suspect were Anglo-Saxon monasteries of some sort. The most tenuous is at Granby in the Vale of Belvoir (pp. 26–7). It has been known for some time that the parish of Granby contained some sort of early church site in addition to the parochial church of All Saints. It lay somewhere in the fields on a route that led from the village to Langar. It had the unusual, and perhaps early, dedication to St Æthelburga, but was more commonly known as the *Giselkirk* and Fould's view is that this name contains a memory of an Old English or Old Norse personal name *Gisel*, which belonged to the church's original founder. The church, Foulds speculates, originally served a pre-parochial estate in this region, including land in Langar, Bingham and Wiverton (1994, 338–9 etc.). The present study raises the possibility of another lost marker of potential importance to this church site. The stone, Granby 1, was found in the parish churchyard, but was formerly interpreted as a Roman altar, and has not been seen since a few years after its discovery and removal by the Bingham antiquary, Andrew Esdaile. But it may actually have been a section from a pre-Conquest cross-shaft (Appendix C, p. 212). If more specifically pre-Viking, it would be a monument of the sort commonly interpreted as being an indicator of an early monastic site (Cambridge 1984), and the emergence of this stone within a parish that also has documentary evidence pointing towards such an early church site is a suggestive conjunction. The *Giselkirk*'s dedication to Æthelburga is also suggestive. One of the many saints of that name was Æthelburga the second wife of King Edwin of Northumbria. She fled southwards with Paulinus by boat after Edwin's defeat and death at Hatfield and became abbess at Lyminge (Bede 1969, 204, ii.20). She does, then, have a tentative connection with Nottinghamshire through her husband. Furthermore, amongst her sisters was said to be one Ædburga, but John Blair is clear that this Ædburga is not to be confused with the one who was culted in Southwell in the eleventh century (Blair 2002, 526). Andrew Esdaile's careful, observant fieldwork in the early nineteenth century identified several locations in Granby and Langar that he believed relevant to the documentation surrounding *Giselkirk* and St Æthelburga's chapel (Esdaile 1845, 50; 1851, 43–5), but his main interest was in Roman remains. Renewed efforts to put this tantalizing evidence on a firmer footing by locating and investigating the early site by modern archaeological methods would be worthwhile and welcome; only this time without losing track of key sculptural evidence to enthusiastic antiquarians, no matter how well-intentioned!

In a second case, the stone sculpture — Shelford 1 — is not in itself a pre-Viking piece, but more probably dates on style-critical grounds and by traditional assessment to around 900 or the early years of the tenth century. But it is a very stylish piece and its iconography as we have newly interpreted it is complex and distinctively learned and multivalent, deploying imagery not only of the Virgin and Child but, counterbalancing it, of the divine presence as evoked by Ezekiel and the Old Testament prophetic tradition (pp. 155–8, Ills. 88–93). This in itself speaks strongly of a more-than-local parochial context. In addition, later in the Middle Ages there was a notable cross in Shelford parish known as *Gillecrosse*, sited somewhere away from the village and perhaps near the Trent crossing to Gunthorpe (Foulds 1994, 254, 281). Shelford 1 may actually be the remains of this item. The name *Gillecrosse*, too, indicates a surprising Hiberno-Norse association, which might signal, or be a reminiscence of, some form of early ecclesiastical institution and a channel for the influence of pre-Viking Irish church learning. After the Conquest, Shelford Priory was an Augustinian foundation, perhaps reviving and perpetuating an early Christian institution in the way foundations of that order commonly did. Remarkably, the iconography of the cross may have alluded to specific relics of the Virgin later held by the Augustinian Priory, and may have reinforced the special devotion to the Virgin that was undertaken here. The circumstantial evidence makes a strong case for the early presence here of an ecclesiastical institution that might be termed a monastery and, as at Granby, invites further investigation.

A rather different, though comparable, combination of factors points to a pre-Viking church and probable early monastic institution at South Leverton. Although we cannot nominate the saint(s) involved in this instance, the newly discovered early stone sculpture — comprising a major early cross-shaft (South Leverton 1) and what appears to be the remains of an early monumental rood (South Leverton 2) — has played a more direct and tangible part in identifying and characterizing the pre-Viking institution here (pp. 170, 174, Ills. 104–7, 108–10). We have already explored topographical and later documentary and architectural considerations that lend substance and confidence to this identification in a separate paper (Everson and Stocker 2007), and need not rehearse them here. In this case, too, and as already laid out in Chapter III, through defining the

special character of the site it populates, the sculpture helps elucidate the administrative framework in north-east Nottinghamshire in the pre-Viking period (p. 24). Most distinctively, the discovery of an early ecclesiastical foundation at South Leverton helps pinpoint the location of the lost royal centre or manor of 'Oswaldbeck', and completes the conjunction of early royal centre (at Wheatley), district meeting place (at Gringley-on-the-Hill) and early ecclesiastical foundation, that has been lacking only the last to bring it into line with similar landscape complexes up and down the country. The early monastic site indicated by the sculpture at South Leverton provides the significant early church site previously missing from this complex of monuments and makes it directly comparable with similar elite groupings in the Anglo-Saxon landscape.

It is interesting that the two sculptural discoveries at South Leverton, both major items in their own right, are monuments of quite different type. The cross-shaft (no. 1) is carved in a very local stone and, by the arguments we have developed, is linked in style and decoration with a range of specifically Mercian sculpture of the later eighth to early ninth century. The rood (no. 2), if correctly so identified, is fashioned in a Permian limestone and its comparanda lie in Northumbria and the wider Hiberno-Saxon world. Partly because it does stand apart, as a pre-Viking piece, and remote from the large group of late Saxon monumental roods, we have hesitated to emphasise its early date; but, whereas the shaft's Mercian affiliations and date place it clearly after the switch of hegemony from Northumbria to Mercia, just possibly the rood reflects an earlier era of Northumbrian influence. This might more definitely be the case if the substantial block of stone used for the figure is re-cycled Roman ashlar, either from York — where such blocks and their re-cycling are known (Senior 1991) — or even nearby Littleborough (the Roman small town of *Segelocum*). By the same token, it is possible that at an early period, from the seventh century, the complex of *villa regalis*, meeting place and early church site were important holdings, not of the Mercian crown as they presumably might have been at the time of the Tribal Hidage and later, but of the kings of Northumbria. The grouping lay on or close to the Roman road leading to and from the north; close to Littleborough, the most likely location of the mass baptism of the men of Lindsey near *Tiowulfingacæstir* (p. 24), under the patronage of Edwin of Northumbria and at the hands of his missionary Paulinus; yet outside Lindsey and, as the arguments of M. S. Parker demonstrate

(1992), in what was clearly perceived as the separate *regio* of Hatfield. The baptismal location resembles others reported by Bede at Yeavering and Catterick, in the proximity of a *villa regalis* but also significantly in a liminal locale, like those events on the northern boundary of Bernicia and on the northern boundary of Deira (Bede 1969, 188, ii.14). Furthermore, the later name of the half-wapentake (Oswaldbeck) and of the stream that flows through it (the Oswald Beck) not only signals a Northumbrian connection but might also suggest that Oswald, Edwin's successor, was the saint with whom the South Leverton foundation was associated.

These three proposed locations for early sites of a monastic type lie spaced out in the rich lands of the Trent valley and the Vale of Belvoir. No distinctive sculpture points similarly to locations in the poorer lands of the north and west of the county, or to an ascetic tradition favouring remote and uncomfortable places. Guthlac went east from Repton into fenland Lincolnshire to seek those conditions, not north into woodland Nottinghamshire (Colgrave 1956). But the first initiative to create a burial place and shrine for King Edwin in Birkland (above) shows that those areas need not lack early material or significant sites.

It has long been a commonplace of Anglo-Saxon sculpture studies that most pre-Viking sculpture was provided for and by early monasteries of the type we presume the three just discussed to have been. However, an even longer tradition has held that some carved stone monuments were erected in the landscape to play a variety of roles, some of which are documented; such as the cross, originally of wood, on the site of the battle of Heavenfield, which was erected to mark the site of an important 'Christian' victory over pagan armies (Bede 1969, 216, 217 n.2, iii.2; Cramp 1984, 1 n.5). Another function identified for major monuments is that of marking boundaries, including river crossings (Bailey 2010, 36–7). Two such pre-Viking monuments might have served as locational markers in the Nottinghamshire landscape: at Stapleford and South Muskham.

Stapleford 1 (p. 188, Ills. 123–40) is Nottinghamshire's best-known monument, but there has been no agreement on its date, and no consideration at all of the circumstances leading to its erection. Our account makes the case for the shaft's being a monument of pre-Viking date, and our assessment of its original function, though speculative, lays emphasis on its relationship with local geomorphological formations. But it is first recorded in the churchyard of St Helen's church, which sits on a bluff above the ancient

crossing-point over the River Erewash, which was always the boundary between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (Roffe 1986). Although it is impossible to say whether a church building was the first occupant of this auspicious location, or whether the cross dominated the location in the absence of a church building for a period of time, it must surely be the case that in some sense the Stapleford shaft was a marker of the crossing point. The place-name itself says as much (Gover *et al.* 1940, 151). Furthermore, if our identification of the carved figure on the shaft as St Michael is correct, that too might allude to its function as a protection for travellers from one side of the river to the other, as well as from the earthly realm to the next.

Although typological study has routinely assimilated the Stapleford monument into the 'Peak' group of so called 'staff-roods', which date from the Anglo-Scandinavian period (Kendrick 1949, 68, 73), parallels between Stapleford and members of this group are few. Instead the monument seems to be related, both in terms of its decorative details and especially its organisation in bands, to an earlier and geographically more disparate group of shafts, of which the Wolverhampton shaft in Staffordshire is the stand-out example (Rix 1960; *contra* Cramp 1975, 187–9; see Ill. 195). Another local instance is the section of column at Wilne, Derbyshire, whose decoration dates to the ninth century and whose location — significantly — marks the long causewayed crossing just above the confluence of the rivers Derwent and Trent (Browne 1891–2; Everson and Stocker 2007). The stone type is clearly different at Wolverhampton, where the shaft is carved from a reused Roman column thought to have been recycled from the Roman city at Wroxeter (Rix 1960, 79). Similarly, as a single massive shaft of Millstone Grit, we might suspect the Stapleford shaft was also reused Roman *spolia*, perhaps in this case brought by river from Leicester. The Wolverhampton shaft is also one of the finest pieces of sculpture to have survived that preserves the classicising imperative and imperial emulation introduced into the Mercian court by King Offa (Hawkes 2006). Although the decoration at both Stapleford and Wolverhampton might imply a date after Offa's death, he would — given his imitation of the Emperor Charlemagne in all things — have relished the prospect of reworking large pieces of Roman *spolia* in this elaborate fashion to provide landscape markers advertising Mercian piety and authority. We are a long way from claiming that the Stapleford shaft was erected by Offa, but this classicising, imperial, framework of thought and

belief arguably lies somewhere behind the erection of Stapleford 1, and certainly implies a pre-Viking Mercian cultural context.

Nottinghamshire's second, apparently isolated, pre-Viking shaft was discovered at South Muskham (p. 178, Fig. 29, Ills. 111–18), and the records of its discovery locate its find site at some distance from the local church, with which its first publication erroneously associated it. It came from gravel digging in the bend of the Trent north east of Newark and close to the line of one of the most long-lived crossing points of the braided river. Given the number of other Nottinghamshire shafts, of both pre- and post-Viking dates, that seem to be associated with river crossing sites — Stapleford 1, Shelford 1, Rolleston 1 and South Leverton 1 (Fig. 12, p. 77) — and also given the tradition that continued into modern times of bridges and ferries operating between two crosses on either bank, like those on either side of the Trent crossing at Holme and North Muskham just downstream (Stapleton 1911, 130), it seems appropriate to suggest that a crossing at South Muskham, too, might have been marked by the large composite cross-shaft that is now represented only by the recovered collar. Indeed, just as at Stapleford, it is possible that the shaft was joined as a marker of the crossing by a church at an early date. Although South Muskham church is not associated with a large Domesday estate, the archbishop of York owned the manor and the church itself is dedicated to St Wilfrid, perhaps the most pugnacious defender of the rights of the archbishopric of York. Wilfrid might for that reason have seemed an appropriate dedication to mark what was the contested boundary between Canterbury and York both in the seventh century and in the late ninth and tenth centuries.

The proposition that the main river crossings were a prime focus of interest, regulation and display for rulers and communities is not dependent solely on *a priori* conjecture or inference from this limited material. David Roffe has traced the incidence of tolls at river crossings on the boundaries of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire west of Nottingham, and their relationship to the developing organisation of boroughs and shires in the later tenth and eleventh centuries (Roffe 1986, especially 111–14). Through-toll, *theloneum* or *tolenium*, was the most important royal due, that probably related to the king's especial protection of major lines of communication and establishment of legal markets. Though evident only in the later pre-Conquest period and well illustrated only by later evidence still, these dues were evidently ancient and reveal preoccupations and royal rights that
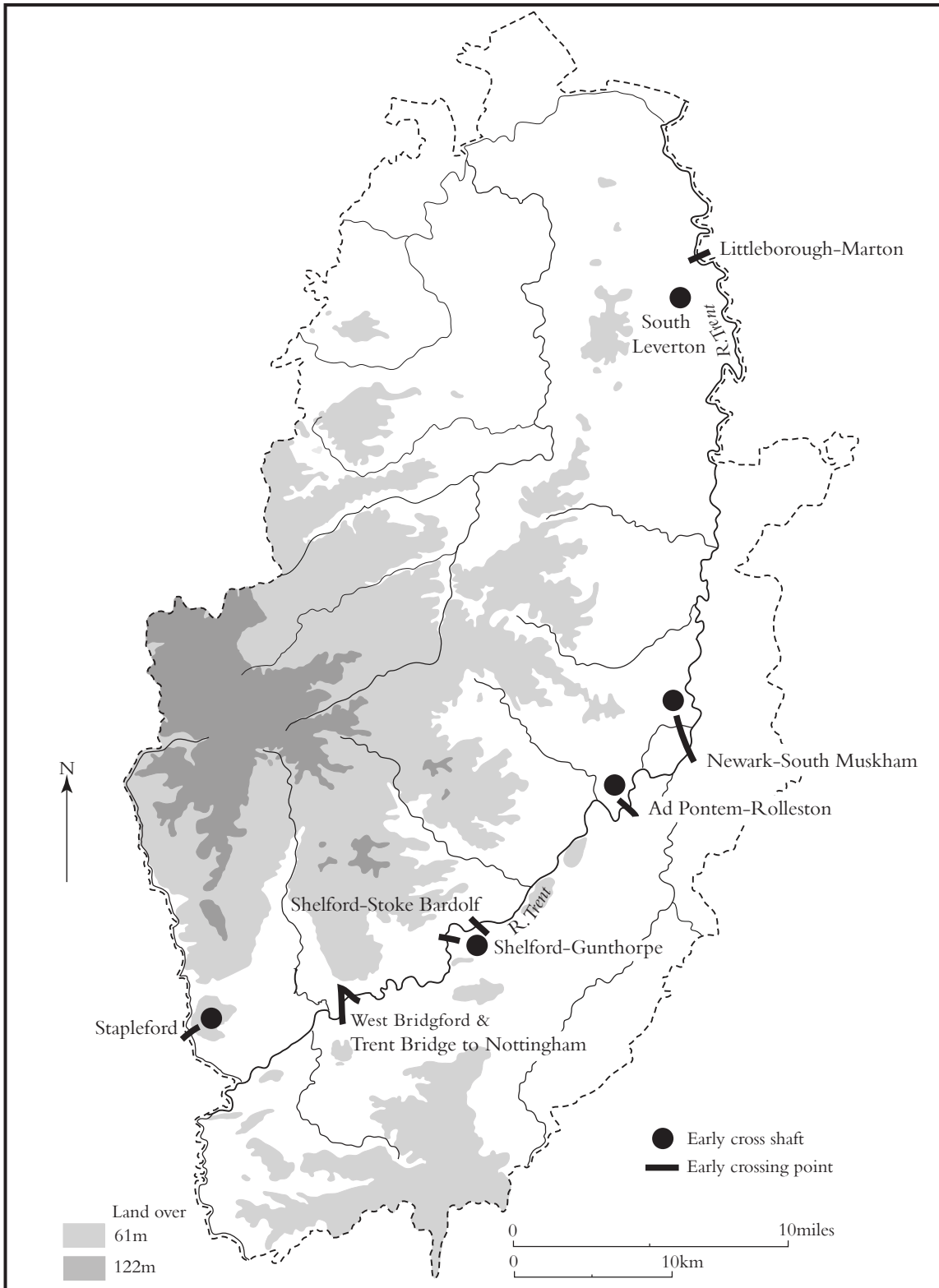
FIGURE 12
Trent river crossings and crosses potentially associated with them

pre–date the creation of the administrative structures underpinning the Five Boroughs and shires (Roffe 1987, chap. 8). Especially notable, and relevant to the sculptural evidence, is the manner in which these dues treat the Trent itself as a boundary, both in Nottinghamshire and continuing west into Derbyshire, with established crossing places that included both South Muskham and Shelford; both crossings, we now understand, with major standing crosses. The sculpture, then, adds substance and chronological depth to important documentary evidence.

c) The contribution of stone sculpture to understanding the Anglo-Scandinavian period in Nottinghamshire
The tradition of marking major Trent crossings by monumental crosses did not end with the arrival of the Vikings; the major crosses at both Shelford and Rolleston, we suspect, show that this convention continued through the tenth and eleventh centuries, as it did later, on the basis of evidence already cited at Holme and North Muskham.

In the case of Rolleston 1, we have only the sad remains of a major cross-shaft likely to be a century and a half later in date than the Shelford shaft (p. 138, Fig. 21, Ills. 70–5). In so far as the question has been raised at all, this Rolleston monument has been considered a member of the large group of shafts marking individual graves, of which many examples can be found in both Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and further south and east. Some of them clearly, either from their iconography (as at Middleton in Yorkshire: Lang 1991, 182–4) or an inscription (as at Crowle in Lincolnshire: Everson and Stocker 1999, 147–52), do just that. Rolleston 1 is somewhat different from many of these late monuments marking individual graves, however. First, as reconstructed (Fig. 21), it might have been approaching 3 metres tall and was therefore quite large in scale compared with the markers for individual churchyard burials. Secondly, it is decorated with a relatively elaborate iconography incorporating the four evangelists. Even more significantly in considering its function, the lost inscription — though hitherto understood to name the carver (Brown 1937, 215) — arguably actually records the gift of the monument by a donor, presumably to serve some communal purpose rather than to mark a burial. The evangelist iconography might suggest that its purpose was to offer a locale for preaching or instruction; but the other sculpture from Rolleston (pp. 145, 148) indicates that there was already an established church and graveyard here. Furthermore the village of Rolleston stands at the northern end

of another Trent crossing. This was no less than the former Roman crossing from the small town of *Ad Pontem* on the south bank (Patterson 2011, 171–4). Bearing in mind the existence of the pre-Viking shaft at South Muskham four miles down-stream and the early tenth-century one at Shelford six miles up-stream (Fig. 12), it is a possibility (at the least) that the Rolleston shaft's primary purpose was to mark the long-established river crossing here. Intriguingly, the form of its cross-head is not the usual ring-head typical of the East Midlands in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Instead it adopts the much more ancient 'Anglian' form (Corpus type A11 or A12: Cramp 1991, fig. 2), which Cramp notes is persistent in the diocese of Durham in the tenth century and which might even represent a revival of seventh-century styles in intellectual centres in Northumbria at this date (Cramp 1984, 9).

In the case of Shelford 1 (p. 152, Ills. 88–93), our reading of the plan form of Shelford village is unable to account for the presence of such a distinguished monument at the parochial church here (above p. 74), and we suggest that the cross might — like Stapleford and South Muskham — have been located originally at or near the ancient Trent crossing from the East Bridgford/Shelford boundary to Gunthorpe. Later in the middle ages there was a notable cross in Shelford parish known as *Gillecrosse* somewhere near the Trent crossing to Gunthorpe (Foulds 1994, 254, 281), probably near the ford and bridge that gives rise to the place-name <East> Bridgford, but perhaps pre-dating the existing settlement there. The further proposition, based on the meaning of the name *Gillecrosse*, the foundation of an Augustinian priory, and the relation-ship between the cross's iconography and a special devotion to the Virgin that was undertaken here, that there was an early ecclesiastical institution nearby has been laid out in the catalogue entry.

It is not just the local setting of this cross which demands our interest. If the interpretation, newly advanced here, of the 'angel' side (Ills. 91, 93) as an image of Yahweh, borne in Old Testament fashion by tetramorphic cherubim as described by Ezekiel, is correct, then we might recall the circumstances of Ezekiel's prophecies and note their potential resonance with contemporary England. Ezekiel's Jerusalem stood in crisis under the impact of the Babylonian invasion. Yahweh abandons the holy of holies within Solomon's great temple and is borne away by the cherubim. The very sanctuary is given over to idolatry, the land more widely to heathens and idolaters, and the leaders of the Israelites themselves acquiesce and cooperate. Was

there a parallel or resonance of this narrative with the experiences of the English of the north Midlands in the generation or so around 900? Other aspects of the sculptural style and iconography of the Shelford cross point to a similar chronological and political context. They reveal a monument with close associations to York and its immediate neighbourhood during the early years of the tenth century. Furthermore, those stylistic links indicate a quite close date bracket for Shelford 1, suggesting that it was made between about 900 and 920. If this dating is reliable, what remains of the Shelford cross might represent a tangible remnant of that period of political stability that David Roffe describes as the 'rapprochement' between the indigenous Mercians, the kingdom of Wessex and the first generation of Danish Vikings from York, following the battle of Tettenhall in 910 (Roffe 2010; see Chapter III, pp. 29–30). In terms of the cross's iconography, Yahweh did return to his temple in Jerusalem; and the main side's Virgin and Child (Ills. 89, 92) itself also emphasizes the continuing hope of redemptive salvation and points the way to it. This, too, might have been the hope and message of an archbishop grappling with difficult times in York.

This was both a period of uncertainty and considerable military and political investment in the north-east Midlands, during which Edward the Elder reorganized the burhs' defences, including those of Nottingham, and founded new ones at Tickhill and Bakewell to promote confidence and security (Roffe 1986, 113–14). Critically, at this time he also established a new bridge at Nottingham, not just to provide easy passage across the Trent, but deliberately to control passage along the river. In the light of this evidence for Edward's focusing his political and military strategy on the River Trent itself, it is perhaps to be expected that major fords down-river from Nottingham would also be marked by prominent symbols of local power. While hostilities were resumed by the Hiberno-Norse Vikings of York after 919, once they had secured control of that city, there is no evidence that they achieved a second phase of conquest as far south as the Trent at this moment; so it seems that the Shelford ford would have remained under the control of the Wessex kings even before their great victory at *Brunanburh* in 937.

Alternatively, it is just conceivable that the Shelford cross is a product of the brief period when Hiberno-Norse Vikings of York pushed as far south as the Trent after Æthelstan's death in 939, when his son Edmund ceded control of the East Midland burhs. But this was only a temporary political reversal for Wessex, before Edmund reclaimed the territories of the burhs of Stamford, Leicester and Derby as well as Nottingham and Lincoln in 942 (Whitelock 1979, 220–1). It seems unlikely, then, politically as well as in respect of sculptural style and context, that the Shelford cross was erected during this three-year window, as it represents a period both brief and of great political instability by contrast with what had gone before and, indeed, with what came afterwards. If we follow Roffe's proposal (see Chapter III, p. 30), shortly after 942 Edmund of Wessex established control over the lower Trent by creating the 'new work' at the Newark crossing-point (Roffe 1986, 30). All arguments, then — of style and iconography and association and historical context — seem to rule out the erection of the Shelford cross during this short second phase of active engagement in the Trent valley by the Vikings of York between 939 and 942, and point instead to the era of more substantial activity and impact a generation or more earlier. The Shelford cross belongs comfortably in the earlier of these two periods of York's overt engagement in the region, between about 900 and 920, and, through its sophisticated iconographic programme, has much to tell us about the Church's experiences of the period and its response to it.

For all its distinctive style, the message conveyed to most travellers by the Shelford cross was very similar to that we suggest might have lain behind the erection of the shaft at South Muskham a century earlier. Crossing the Trent meant crossing the boundary of the archbishopric of York, albeit that the secular power of that northern province might sometimes have been disputed. The earliest direct documentary evidence we have for the Northumbrian archbishopric regaining the influence in the region that it had first held in the seventh century dates only from the establishment of Archbishop Oscytel's estate at Southwell in 956. But we have also accepted the view that this grant was a political move on the part of the kings of Wessex to bind the northern province to their rule, and at the same time quite prominently to confirm York's ecclesiastical responsibility for Nottinghamshire (Chapter III, p. 32). In Oscytel, this move found a cleric with strong southern roots and powerful connexions in the southern court, and it occurred alongside long-term administrative changes designed to underpin the confederation of the Five Boroughs (p. 33). It also seems likely that the first generation of York Vikings who settled in the area after the Great Army of the 870s 'turned to the plough' would already have brought the ecclesiastical leadership of the archbishopric of York southwards with them.

Although there is scope for considerable debate about the syncretic character of the Christianity associated with the archbishopric of York during this phase of Viking settlement and in the following generations (e.g. Stocker 2000, 196–7), and how thorough or sustained that leadership might have been, we do know that the Danish Vikings in York recruited the archbishops in their own political interests. It may be, then, that the Shelford cross is the earliest good evidence we have for the re-establishment of most, if not all, of Nottinghamshire, at least north of the Trent, within the province of York.

Discussion of the date and political context of the Shelford shaft is also relevant to the series of early grave-covers that are a feature of the Trent valley and the Nottinghamshire hills to the south. Of particular interest is the much-illustrated cover from Hickling in the south of the county (p. 115, Ills. 32–52). Along with Stapleford 1 and Shelford 1, it is one of the small number of Nottinghamshire monuments to attract more than local commentary, but unfortunately posit-ioning it securely in time and context is problematic. Although this ambitious grave-cover is anomalous within the category in a variety of aspects, it is clearly of the 'hogback' type characteristic of the settlement of Viking immigrants across northern England from the end of the ninth century onwards (Lang 1984), even though Hickling is well south of their centre of distribution (p. 53). While, as a monument type, the hogback grave-cover form is undoubtedly associated with the early generations of York's Vikings, the monument type has an extended chronological development and also generated a series of regional variations. The 'beast in combat' motifs that feature prominently and stylishly in the decoration of Hick-ling find Yorkshire parallels, suggesting that it belongs to the artistic culture of Viking York, though at the same time and more specifically they associate it with a small group of East Midland monuments, the other examples of which lie outside Nottinghamshire at St Alkmund's Derby, Narborough, Breedon-on-the-Hill, Desborough and Peakirk (see p. 81). In fact, all six monuments could easily represent burials of the incoming Anglo-Scandinavian elite, settling in newly appropriated lands, following the turning of the Great Army 'to the plough' after the 870s. It sometimes seems that the proposed dating of these monuments has been dependent on the view taken of the Viking settlement in the East Midlands. Understanding this process as a violent seizure of lands by the hostile mercenaries retiring from the Great Army might result in scholars dating novel and assertive monuments of this type to

the immediate aftermath, perhaps to the final decades of the ninth century. A more collaborative view of the settlement process, by contrast, with retiring members of an international aristocracy marrying into indigenous families as opportunities arose, or purchasing lands with cash as they fell vacant, might result in the commissioning of such monuments somewhat later, perhaps in the first few decades of the tenth century, once a truly Anglo-Scandinavian culture had been established and was valued. Our catalogue account inclines to a date, between around 900 and about 930 for this monument (p. 125).

The assertion of the cover's decorative and formal links with York makes the issues of the timing and plausible political context for such influence to be in play, which have been explored above in relation to the shaft at Shelford (p. 79), relevant to Hickling too. Though they are quite different monuments in both style and function, an early tenth-century date for Hickling places it quite directly in the same context as the Shelford shaft. As the two monuments are, technically, amongst the finest pieces of Viking-age sculpture in England, we might be seeing here the flicker of a 'Five Borough Renaissance': a period of artistic achievement associated with the 'rapprochement' (as characterized by David Roffe) between the Danish settlers and the indigenous population, overseen and guided politically, it would seem, by the Wessex kings and arising out of their victory at Tettenhall in 910. The important new observations in the cata-logue that the Hickling cover is fashioned from a Roman monumental half-column (Fig. 19) and is of Millstone Grit in stone type might, interestingly, be the strongest evidence of its connexion with York, as a prolific source of *spolia* of this stone type (Senior 1991) and especially from major public buildings. If that were the source, an analogy for Hickling might be the cross-shaft at Crowle in Lincolnshire, which is similarly an artefact of this era of re-cycled Millstone Grit from York (Everson and Stocker 1999, 80–4). But the ruined public buildings of Leicester are potentially a nearer source.

Unusually, our account of Hickling offers an altern-ative date and context for the monument, in the early eleventh century (p. 121). This line of reasoning derives from viewing the monument as a coped cover, and emphasizes the mixed, derivative and eclectic nature of its decorative detailing, and its ill-ordered handling. As an ambitious and distinctive commission, with a syncretic agenda combining Scandinavian and Christian symbolism, it would still be the grave-marker of a member of the Scandinavian elite, settling and

probably converting to Christianity. But its context would be the era of Swein and Cnut, rather than a century earlier. As such, it would be rare evidence for a period little represented in the sculptural record of the region.

Neither of these lines of thought corresponds with the traditional style-critical assessment of the Hickling cover, or with the context understood for it. Kendrick also identified its close stylistic similarity with the shaft at Desborough (Northamptonshire) and conceived their similar deployment of the 'beast in combat' motif as a resurrection of the pre-Viking Mercian 'Great Beast' (Kendrick 1949, 80–1). He reasoned that the probable political context for such a renewed interest was in the wake of Edmund's definitive recovery of the East Midland burhs in 942, and dated Hickling and Desborough to the mid century, with the likes of the related Breedon (Leicestershire) and Peakirk (Soke of Peterborough) shafts somewhat later. The more recent reassessment by Steven Plunkett in the same style-critical tradition came to very similar conclusions about the Hickling cover's date and context and Midlands affiliations, within what he termed 'the Anglian tradition in the Viking-Age Midlands' (Plunkett 1984, i, 104–12). This analysis made Hickling the key to a stylistic group also including the Desborough shaft and items from Narborough and Enderby (both Leicestershire) and Derby (ibid., ii, pls. 5–7, 15–17, 23).

It is remarkable, but stimulating, that Hickling 1 might sustain three different lines of thought, and with quite different historical consequences. Does the wider framework of a sequence of more standardized grave-cover types in the East Midlands offer any resolution?

In previous studies we have suggested that the graveyard monuments of the tenth century in the Trent valley fall into two groups by their chronology (Everson and Stocker 1999, 35–6; Stocker and Everson 2001). Two of the earlier type of monument both occur at Shelton. Shelton 1 (p. 165, Fig. 25, Ills. 94–9) is the best surviving example of the monument sub-type we have christened 'Trent Valley' covers (p. 51, Fig. 7), a complex monument form which owes its origin to the classic hogback of the early tenth century, and indeed, in terms of its geometry, to Hickling 1 in particular. The other monuments in this group occur at St Alkmund's Derby (now in Derby Museum), Cranwell in Lincolnshire, and at Lythe on the north Yorkshire coast (see p. 51). The Derby monument (Lang 1984, 128, ills. on 129) represents a very direct link between Hickling and Shelton 1,

as it is decorated with sculpture very similar to the former monument on a grave-cover of the same geometrical form as the latter. The other two of the southern examples of this 'Trent Valley' type, Shelton 1 and Cranwell (Everson and Stocker 1999, 136–9, fig. 25; this volume, Ill. 189), were both produced at the same quarries at or near Ancaster in Lincolnshire, and have been dated through their evidently being complex precursors of the large mid-Kesteven cover series produced at the same quarries (ibid., 35–46, and Chapter V above).

As the latter monuments must date from the later tenth or early eleventh century, we have previously suggested that an early or mid tenth century date might be suitable for this progenitor 'Trent Valley' group. But as this monument type is clearly inspired by the hogback series itself, a distinctively Viking form of monument, it could be argued that they too represent a period when it was important for the resident elite of the Trent valley area to demonstrate their Danish or Hiberno-Norse background. Such considerations might even place both Shelton 1 and Cranwell within the same political and cultural context as Hickling 1 and Shelford 1. That is to say, from the period when the Trent valley had been settled by the Danes and pacified and secured by the Wessex crown. During this process of the creation of a genuine Anglo-Scandinavian culture, we might guess, an important section of the local elite were incomers themselves, or the children and grandchildren of incomers, and part of a process of settlement that began with the 'turning to the plough' of the Danish armies in the area in the late ninth century. Indeed, these monuments do represent an amalgamation between the two cultures: they originate in the supposedly Viking form — the hogback — which sometimes carries pagan iconography, yet they are dominated by an enormous superimposed cross. To this extent, semiotically, they might be seen as the local equivalent of the Gosforth cross in Cumbria, with its pagan iconography decorating the primary symbol of Christianity (Bailey and Cramp 1988, 100–4, ills. 288–308). Simply in style-critical terms, however, the decoration on both the Shelton and Cranwell monuments might be placed somewhat later than that on those from Hickling and Derby. The difference in date is unlikely to be great, however, and the apparent difference might have more to do with distinctions between monuments produced contemporaneously in different quarry centres. Even so, in formal typological terms, it is probably best to allocate somewhat later dates to the Shelton and Cranwell monuments than to those from Hickling and

Derby. In doing so, perhaps, we are providing further evidence that, despite the resurgent power of the Hiberno-Norse Vikings in York following Ragnall's re-conquest of the city in 919, the stability established in the East Midlands by Edward the Elder seems to have lasted through to the mid century and longer. Indeed the sculpture evidence suggests that it lasted right through into the early eleventh century, because the 'Trent Valley' monument types were succeeded by the mid-Kesteven grave-cover type, which as we have seen are derived directly from the earlier monuments and continued to be produced at the same quarry centres.

The seven mid-Kesteven grave-covers from Nottinghamshire are local representatives of the large group of highly standardized but individually varied products manufactured in the Ancaster quarries in Lincolnshire, of which more than forty examples are now known (see Table 3 and Figs. 8–9). We have discussed this group of products at length elsewhere, both in terms of their production and distribution, their date, and — perhaps most interestingly — their significance as cultural markers of a developed and negotiated Anglo-Scandinavian identity for the community leaders of the East Midlands (Everson and Stocker 1999, 36–46; Stocker and Everson 2001; and see p. 53 above). Their sheer numbers make them an especially useful and convincing basis for that discussion. That aspect — their numbers — also makes them an important factor in our proposition, developed in the study of the Lincolnshire sculptural corpus, that in most instances later pre-Conquest stone funerary sculpture occurs only in one and twos and represents 'founder's monuments', signalling the creating of churches and graveyards and the development of the parochial network (Everson and Stocker 1999, 76–9; Stocker and Everson 2001, 224–9). The density of occurrence seen around Sleaford, for example, depends greatly on the incidence of mid-Kesteven covers (Everson and Stocker 1999, fig. 19). But the monument type does also occur in those distinctively large sculptural collections that characterize trading communities, at both St Mark and St Mary-le-Wigford on the strand in Lincoln, for example (Everson and Stocker 1999, 199 [St Mark 2], 212–13 [St Mary-le-Wigford 2]; Stocker 2000). An example also occurs in the comparable, distinctively large collection from the church of St Mary the Great in Thetford (Norfolk), which arguably represents a merchant community — including resident 'foreigners' from Lincolnshire — served by a church on the strand (Everson and Stocker 2015).

In contrast, the Nottinghamshire mid-Kesteven covers mostly occur individually and at rural locations with no pretensions to a trading function. In fact, none of the Nottinghamshire sculptural sites exhibits the numbers of monuments or the location to signal this function, with the possible exceptions of Rolleston — though there we have proposed that one of the three monuments, the cross Rolleston 1, functioned as the marker of a river crossing rather than a burial (above, p. 76) — and Newark, where a minimum of six later pre-Conquest stone monuments were evidently deployed within a large graveyard pre-dating the Norman castle's eastern defences (Newark 1–6 in Appendix C, p. 214). It is especially unfortunate, therefore, that the stones themselves appear to have been reburied, making them inaccessible for assessment, and the site records from the excavations that revealed this material have proved difficult to locate or penetrate. It is not difficult to imagine — though it seems not to have been envisaged hitherto in discussions of the town's development — that there was an early riverside strand here with a church and graveyard, serving a merchant community, on or immediately behind it, of which the excavated burials formed the fringe. Minimal investigations sectioning the town wharf, downstream of this graveyard and the later castle, have even disclosed shelving levels going down to the river built up on an earlier hard or strand, in a sequence closely paralleled in excavations on the Brayford North waterfront in Lincoln (Challis 1994b; Vince 2003, 237–9).

In the case of the pair of Lindsey covers from Coates, too, where the discovery was made in a secular context and probably resulted from recycling of building rubble in the early nineteenth century (Coates 1 and 2, pp. 96, 99, Ills. 7–8; and p. 61 above), we suggest that it is reasonable to suppose that they came from a church serving the trading strand at Torksey, across the river. If the Torksey trading site is extended to include the strand at Marton to the north (Stocker and Everson 2006, 215–21), we could say that it too has been represented by an unusually large collection of burial monuments of middling type. Lindsey covers also occur distinctively at the churches on the trading strand at Lincoln (Everson and Stocker 1999, 199–201 [St Mark 3 and 4], 213 [St Mary-le-Wigford 3]), and examples have turned up similarly in churches associated with the vital East Anglian trading strands at both Thetford and Norwich in Norfolk (Everson and Stocker 2015; and see Figs. 10 and 11 above, pp. 62–5).

As grave-covers, the monument from Hickling (p. 115, Ills. 32–52) and the two from Shelton (pp.

165, 168, Ills. 94–9, 100–3) also represent important evidence for the existence of churchyards at the date of their production and deployment. Experience elsewhere in the East Midlands suggests that they may well represent examples of the founding burials of local, presumptively parochial, churchyards (Everson and Stocker 1999, 76–9; Stocker 2000, 181–3; Stocker and Everson 2001, 224–9), and if they date from the early tenth century these Nottinghamshire stones are early examples.

Shelton appears an unexpected place for a major early church. At Domesday it was part of a hundredal grouping identified by Hart as including 'Dallington', Kilvington, Staunton, Alverton and Flawborough, most of which became free-standing parishes in the medieval period (Hart 1992, 412–15). Furthermore, the main manor in Shelton was linked at Domesday with Flawborough, the vill where evidence for a Romano-British Christian site has been produced, and for an early church developing in several phases (see above p. 21); but whether the church mentioned in this Domesday account was that at Shelton or Flawborough remains unknown. Shelton was also part of an interlinked soke network that included all of the other members of this hundredal grouping except Staunton. Sculpture at Shelton of early tenth-century — or even mid tenth-century — date, then, might identify it as the ecclesiastical centre for this group of settlements at that period, and it may represent the first burial ground for this grouping, the other settlements having only split off from it during a later phase of parochialization.

Cyril Hart's analysis of the hundred within which Hickling sits, within Bingham wapentake, suggests that at Domesday it lay in a grouping with Kinoulton, and Broughton Sulney (Hart 1992, 419–22), and it is the only one of those with pre-Conquest sculpture. Rather than being evidence for the establishment of the graveyard of the initial 'mother' church for this group of settlements, however, the monumental evidence for the foundation of parish graveyards in other parts of Bingham wapentake discussed below opens the possibility that the sculptural evidence from Hickling — and Shelton — could instead represent the division of the group into a series of parochial units, one for each nucleated settlement (Fig. 13). This is unfortunately inconclusive. But if the Shelton and Hickling sculptures do represent the first establishment of churches and graveyards for parochial churches at Shelton and Hickling alone, and not the graveyards of mother churches for entire hundreds, then their dating makes them the earliest evidence

we have for parish formation in Nottinghamshire. At Hickling, there is the further evidence of a separate and putatively earlier graveyard, recorded as a group of burials some 225 metres south east of St Luke's churchyard. As observed by the archaeologist Malcolm Dean, they were inhumations in 'stone-covered' graves — evidently not covers or markers in the sculptural sense, but loose stones — and, clearly lacking grave-goods, they were assessed as part of a post-pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Nottinghamshire HER, monument no. M288; see Dean 1974, 45). Pioneering work by Professor Dawn Hadley in northern Lincolnshire has explored the phenomenon of multiple cemetery groups pre-dating and perhaps overlapping with a move to centralization of burial in a churchyard (Hadley 2000b). Hickling may apparently offer evidence of a similar development, in which the remarkable grave-cover at St Luke's had a key role.

There must be some caveats about the whole presumption that the incidence of ecclesiastical jurisdictions and the creation of parishes were aligned closely to secular jurisdictions in the first place. The fact that some major settlements like Newark do not seem to have had dominant mother churches might suggest that Nottinghamshire's parochial structure was to some extent independent of the secular estate network. So, was the process of parochial foundation largely independent of the establishment and management of the great secular estates, which are so clearly delineated in the county, or was it entirely constrained by such secular considerations? The county's Anglo-Saxon sculpture can address such questions to only a very limited extent, as we can only approach them through the relationship between sculpture and the administrative structure, which stands at one remove from the pattern of individual estate ownerships. Most importantly perhaps, in contrast to Lincolnshire, where the incidence of sculpture is so high that in some parts of that county it occurs in almost one in two parishes (Everson and Stocker 1999, 76–9, figs. 19–20), in Nottinghamshire sculpture is far more thinly spread. Only in the central southern part of the county, in the wapentake of Bingham, is sculpture sufficiently numerous within late medieval parishes to make some preliminary observations worth attempting.

In four of the Nottinghamshire wapentakes, including Bingham, Hart produced maps based on Domesday evidence that reconstructed the hundreds that formed the wapentake (1992, 387–427, esp. 419–22). For Bingham wapentake this process generated a map of nine and a half hundreds, each containing a group of medieval vills — as differentially shaded in

FIGURE 13
Distribution of stone sculpture in Bingham wapentake (after Hart 1992, map 12.4)

Fig. 13 (ibid., map 12.4). This valuable research can form the basis for questions regarding the relationship of early sculpture to parish formation. If each hundred contains only one site with sculpture, it might be a reasonable assumption that the hundred broke up into smaller parishes at a date later than the sculpture, and that the vill with the sculpture was likely to have been the 'mother church' of the hundred. Alternatively, if several vills in a single hundred retain early sculpture, this might indicate that the parochial divisions had already occurred by the date of the sculpture. In the latter case, it is likely that most of the hundreds contained many communities with their own churches

and graveyards. Unfortunately, when the pattern of early sculpture is superimposed on Hart's map of Bingham wapentake, the results are equivocal. Early sculpture is not found exclusively in one church in each hundred (Fig. 13). Only a single item is indeed found in each of those hundreds that include Granby, Colston Bassett, East Bridgford and Hickling, but there are two items of sculpture in those hundreds incorporating Screveton and Hawksworth, Shelford and Cotgrave.

We could also make an argument that the lost mid–Kesteven cover from Cotgrave (Appendix C, p. 210) represented the mother church of that hundred, as

we have seen that the Shelford cross-shaft may not represent a churchyard (p. 78), which would make only the hundred containing Screveton and Hawksworth anomalous. The evidence for Screveton and Hawksworth is more conclusive, however, since both monuments are mid-Kesteven covers and indistinguishable in date (pp. 111, 150, Ills. 28–31, 86–7). If the presumption is correct that these two monuments represent the establishment of churchyards in these vills by the date of the monuments, then we can say that any proto-parish in this hundred had already given way to the later-medieval parochial structure by the late tenth or early eleventh century — or by about the year 1000 — the date of both the relevant grave-covers. Indeed, it is possibly significant that these monuments take the form they do, since this raises the possibility — as we suggested in Lincolnshire — that this particular monument type might be characteristic of the creation of parochial graveyards, rather than those of senior churches. Away from Bingham wapentake, at Costock, we might have direct sculptural evidence for the foundation of one of these parochial churches, as it appears — if we have interpreted the carvings correctly as dedication crosses (p. 102, Ills. 14–17) — that this church was dedicated in the eleventh century.

At the very least, the results in Bingham hundred would seem to suggest that parochial church foundation does not belong to the same phase of activity as the creation of the hundreds themselves. Presumably, then, we are seeing reflected here a situation where the communities of each vill within the hundred set about establishing their parochial churches independently of the creation of the administrative structure of the hundred and the wapentake. Indeed we know that, in ecclesiastical terms, the church of Screveton was associated with the royal estate of Orston in the adjacent hundred to the south, and not with any of the other churches in its own hundred. In itself, this would seem to re-emphasize the point we have made in respect of the creation of churches in Lincolnshire; namely that the process of church foundation in some villages was not necessarily imposed from the great lords downwards, but that petty and local lords could decide to establish a church in their own vill and have themselves buried there in some style.

The simple point is perhaps the one most worth emphasising: that the surviving Anglo-Scandinavian sculptures are not uniformly spread across all the county's wapentakes themselves. Whilst there are nine such sculptures in the wapentake of Bingham, there is only one sculpture site in the wapentake of Thurgarton (apart from at Southwell), that at Rolleston; in Rush-cliffe, the site is at Normanton-on-Soar; and in Lythe, it is at Norwell. There is a single site in one of the two detached portions of Broxtowe (at Costock, since Stapleford is pre-Viking), and only two in the wapentake of Newark (at Girton and Shelton). Bassetaw, as the largest wapentake, appears only to have items at Kneesall, Carlton-in-Lindrick and Church Warsop; whilst Oswaldbeck has none since sculpture at South Leverton is pre-Viking and the pieces found at Coates were introduced to the county only in the early nineteenth century. This distribution of early sculpture in the county as a whole (Fig. 1, facing p. 1) shows that in the Trent valley and the land to its south and south east, early sculpture is quite frequently met with. It is really quite rare in the north and west. To a large extent this pattern follows population and land-use. The sculptures were commissioned most frequently by individuals and institutions occupying the populous and wealthy parts of the county. It is also noteworthy that the two graveyard monuments from the north and west, Carlton-in-Lindrick 1 and Church Warsop 1, are themselves related to each other by monument form and stone type (pp. 93, 95, Ills. 3–4, 5–6). Both are simply decorated, upright, rectangular grave-markers in the local limestone rather than highly decorated grave-covers of the type found further south and east. This perhaps also indicates a somewhat different tradition of memorialization in this part of the county, and certainly shows a smaller expenditure on personal monuments in the grave-yard. But also, according to prevailing style-critical typologies, these monuments are relatively later in date than the grave-covers of the south and east. Does this imply that the process of foundation of parochial graveyards was greatly extended across the county, with many more graveyards being founded in the tenth and early eleventh century in the south and east than in the north west?

Finally, at Southwell the significance of the single surviving baluster shaft (Southwell 2, p. 185, Ills. 120–2) — presumably the last survivor of a set from the belfry openings of a late pre-Conquest tower — in relation to an archbishop's chapel and its transformation into a collegiate minster — have been explored in Chapters III and VI (pp. 34, 68). The early church history of Southwell is deeply enigmatic and, although the early sculpture gives some assistance in understanding it, we have found that it is best approached through a comparison with the archaeology of the directly comparable churches at Ripon, Beverley and Stow in Lindsey (Everson and Stocker forthcoming). The grave-cover Southwell 1

(p. 182, Ill. 119), of course, indicates the presence of a burial ground here at the same date as the archbishop's church was being developed here, but its particular importance — aside from the fact that its stone type indicates unequivocally that it, too, is a product of the later pre-Conquest quarries at Ancaster — is its reuse. For, perhaps originating in a section of graveyard cleared for the construction of the east end and north transept of the Norman minster church soon after 1100, it was transformed into a doorway lintel decorated with a vigorous image of St Michael in his role as psychopomp or guardian of souls at the point of death and burial (Southwell 15, p. 231, Ills. 172–5). We have written about the promotion by Lanfranc and his episcopal colleagues of a burial rite built around this conception, and of its architectural expression in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Lincolnshire (Stocker and Everson 2006). Recycling of older burial monuments and their incorporation into the new church fabric that housed the rite was, we found, quite commonplace and deliberate, including the reuse of suitable stones as lintels to the doorways through which the body passed from the location of the overnight vigil to the burial ground. This surely was the function of the Southwell 15 lintel and its doorway, presumably either affording passage to or from the new north transept into the putative early baptismal place to its east (a metaphorical journey between life and death), or more prosaically simply giving access from the church to the graveyard in the same area. Our evidence in Lincolnshire was parochial and sculpturally unsophisticated. A special interest of Southwell 1/15 is seeing that conception presented with style and vigour, in a way that would impress any contemporaries who might see it and experience the large-church ceremonial which presumably accompanied its use.