

are of 10th or 11th century date and excavations beneath Crossing church (Hope 1974) have located an early predecessor. This only leaves Black Notley which, being dedicated to SS Peter and Paul, is likely to be an early foundation; Faulkbourne is a late Norman church and must surely replace a proprietary chapel of earlier date, evidence is lacking for Stisted, while Bradwell and Little Coggeshall seem to be foundations of the mid 12th and early 13th centuries respectively, but again they could be replacements of earlier buildings (in the case of Little Coggeshall perhaps on a new site). Thus, as far as it goes, the ecclesiastical evidence points towards two minsters and a near complete series of parish churches which began as proprietary chapels attached to the principal manors.

Summary of the Domesday evidence

In the block of land represented by the middle Blackwater Valley on Fig 123, an area of some 100 sq km, there were 22 manors, most of which can be identified on the ground with reasonable certainty. A similar number of holdings by sokemen or simply 'of land' are also mentioned, and the identity of some of the more significant ones has been suggested. In the same area 18 mills are recorded and at least 11 churches were in existence by the later 11th century.

Thus there are at least 50 features of the Domesday landscape capable of being mapped. Even though there may be occasional errors in detail (eg in assigning a specific mill to a manor), this does not alter the general conclusion that by the third quarter of the 11th century the basic medieval pattern of manors, churches, and mills had been established. It is also notable that the number of medium-sized farms in existence by the later medieval period (some of which were regarded as minor manors) was not substantially different from the total number of sokemen and other miscellaneous landholders in the 11th century. Although only excavations could prove which farm sites have such an antiquity, it is evident from documentary research and fieldwork that while tenements in Rivenhall came and went with bewildering frequency, both in the Middle Ages and later, changes in the sites of major buildings were rare.

There are two other classes of evidence which are worthy of consideration in the Domesday landscape. First, the survival of earlier topographical features. Two substantial Roman roads still run through the area and it has been argued that many of the minor roads around Rivenhall and many elements of the field system (Fig 50) are also of Roman or earlier origin. It is inescapable that the present road pattern was set in or by the 11th century; and when it is recalled that some roads and tracks bear meaningful relationships to certain Roman period features, or have evidently been diverted in the early medieval period to go round a church or mill, further substance is added to our early dating of the whole skeleton of the landscape.

The second class of evidence concerns woodland and arable. While these cannot be measured or mapped with precision, some general topographical conclusions can be exacted. First, we have shown that the notional acreage of arable, meadow, and pasture in Rivenhall i in 1066-86 corresponded with the combined estates of Rivenhall Hall and Hoo Hall, as revealed through medieval

records and post-medieval estate maps. Secondly, the same manor possessed a large piece of woodland which may be identified in part with Rivenhall Wood (later Thicks). This must have occupied almost the whole of the eastern and western margins of the central third of the parish, and probably some smaller areas of woodland towards the northern end too. It has also been suggested that the arable, meadow, and pasture of Rivenhall ii can be equated with the medieval lands of Archers, while the extents of Rivenhall iv and v were quite small and can be defined with reasonable clarity.

Reconstruction of the 11th century landscape

Over the past century the Domesday Survey and the problems of its interpretation have been exhaustively discussed, but rarely has an attempt been made to relate the survey, in detail, to the landscape. The Essex Survey is very rich in topographical information and the one serious attempt to convert this into cartographic history (other than of the most generalized type) has been scorned (Coles 1934; Darby 1971, 238). Furthermore, as Darby has pointed out, when Round discussed the Essex Domesday he seems to have had maps in mind but not in front of him (Darby 1971, 235); the result was an important but arid exposition (Round 1903).

While fully acknowledging the hazards of reconstruction, there is no alternative material available for the study of the later Saxon landscape in Essex. In the following discussion, it is important to bear in mind that measurements given in Domesday were generally in round figures, and thus only approximate, for arable and woodland;² hence whether the Domesday acre is taken as a statute acre or 1.2 statute acres is not critical. Measurements of woodland and of pasture (*rendming x shillings*) are more difficult to translate, but in general terms it is obvious enough that pasture worth 6d will only be a few acres (Rivenhall ii), while that worth 3s will be some tens of acres (Rivenhall i). General orders of magnitude can be estimated and weighed against the available resources, at least in the Rivenhall area.³

In addition to the roughly quantifiable units, allowance must be made for waste, common, and lesser church property, none of which is mentioned in the survey for this area. Various medieval sources allow us to identify at least some of these. Finally, the Domesday Survey appears to count only woodland for swine, ignoring managed woodland. As Rackham (1976, 60) and others have observed, the reduction of woodland between 1066 and 1086 was not usually accompanied by an increase in arable, and the explanation is probably to be found in the creation of new areas of managed woodland, or even parks. In Rivenhall i there was a reduction of woodland for pannage from 400 to 350 swine. Curiously, Rivenhall ii had ten pigs but was not accredited with any woodland. Rivenhall iv was the only other holding noted to have wood (for ten swine). A suggested reconstruction of the 11th century topography of Rivenhall is offered in Fig 125.

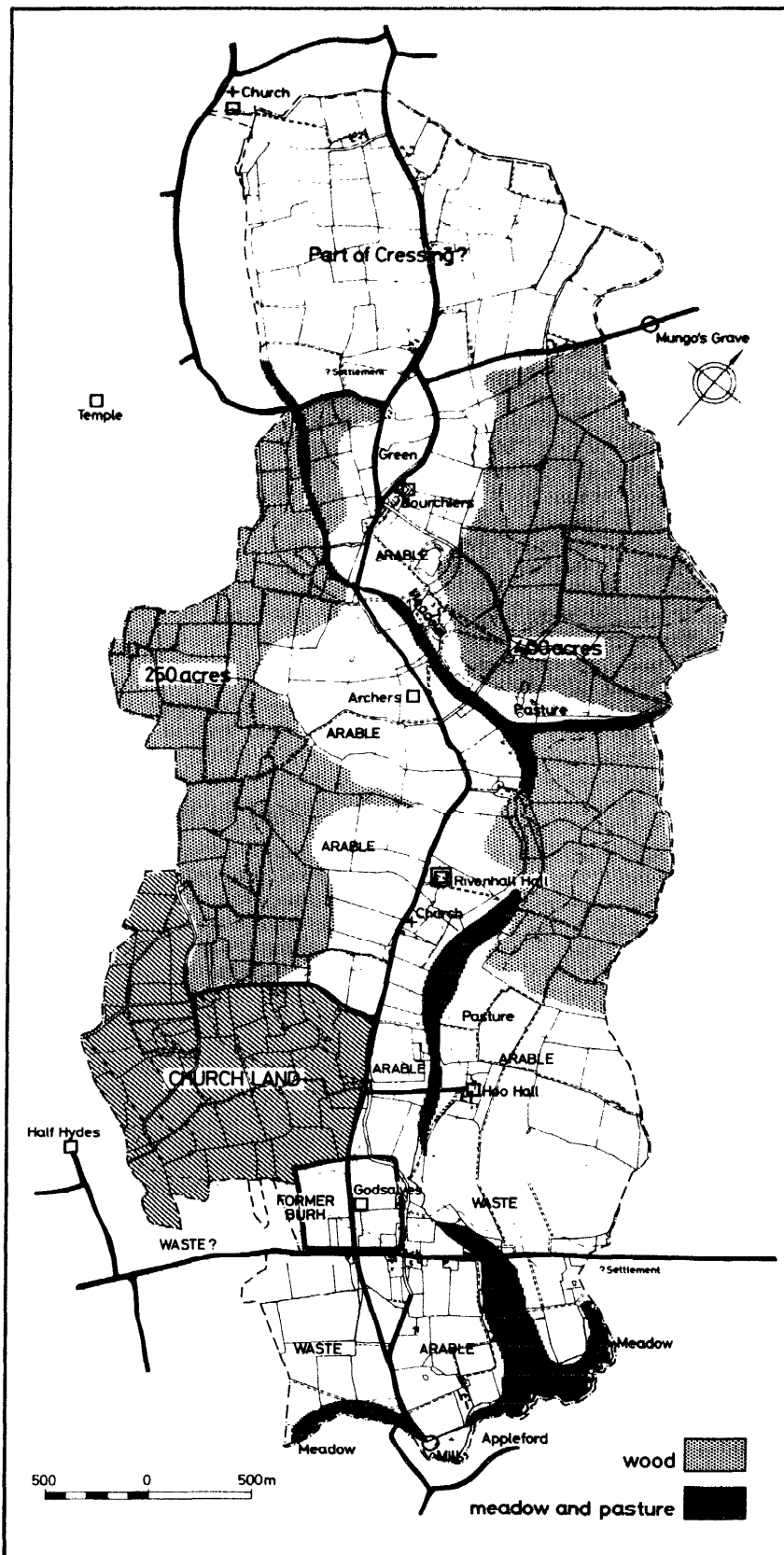


Fig 125 Reconstruction of the topography of Rivenhall in the 11th century. Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 plan 1924

Arable and pasture

About 600 acres are shown, comprising the lands of Rivenhall Hall, Hoo Hall, Archers, Bourchiers, Half Hydes, and Godsaves (Domesday nominal total, 575 acres). This includes much land which could have served as pasture along the Cressing Brook, and did so in the medieval period. Domesday pasture totalled 7s 6d in value and can hardly have been less than 50-100 acres, and thus we should perhaps include in the arable-pasture reckoning the land around Appleford Farm, the history of which is virtually unknown.

Meadow

The best meadow in medieval Rivenhall was on the Blackwater (Fig 128): Page's Meadow (by Appleford: LP422) and Baye's Meadow, just to the east (LP424). Down to the 19th century the manor of Rivenhall Hall controlled the greater part of these. Martin's Meadow (near the south end of the Cressing Brook, LP284) was the next best. There appears never to have been more than about 30 acres of good meadow here, and about as much again of second-rate meadow. Thus surely the 30 acres of meadow held by Rivenhall i in the 11th century lay on the Blackwater.

There was a second area of meadow in the northern part of the parish, in the upper reaches of the Cressing Brook. Before changes in the drainage pattern caused by the construction of the park and lake there were about 30 acres of meadow adjoining Archers and, proceeding upstream, up to another 20 acres adjoining Bourchiers and Boars Tye Farm. These would have been very conveniently situated to fulfil the requirements of the 21 acres and 10 acres of meadow of Rivenhall ii and iii respectively.

Presumably the 10 acres of meadow belonging to Half Hydes in 1086 lay on the Blackwater. The total area of true meadow in Rivenhall in the medieval and later periods cannot have exceeded 100 acres, of which a nominal 69 acres were accounted for in 1086.

Woodland

On the west side of the parish Rivenhall Wood probably occupied about 250 acres as its maximum known extent. To the south-east was Tarecroft Wood which was much smaller. On the eastern side of the parish lay Stories Wood, Lander Field Wood, Barrowfield Wood, and Kitchen Field Wood. Field names and the pattern of boundaries suggest that this area was cleared piecemeal, possibly only beginning early in the post-medieval period. In part this woodland formed the medieval park. At the time of the Domesday Survey there is likely to have been at least 400 acres of woodland here.

The total medieval woodland for which there is reasonable evidence is thus c 650 acres, which compares favourably with the estimated amount required to support the notional Domesday swine (p 174).

Waste and common

There were doubtless areas of unassigned land in the 11th century, as far as the survey was concerned. Here we may point to the spindle-shaped green at Boars Tye and the two blocks of land in the southern part of the parish named the Mores and also associated with other names

such as Bushey Piece, Marsh, etc, indicative of medieval waste.

Church land

There is reason to believe that a large block of land in the south-west of the parish was part of an unnamed ecclesiastical estate which was being broken up early in the medieval period. This land was apparently excluded from the Rivenhall Survey.

Other lands

At Boars Tye Green there is a natural line of division which runs across the parish at its narrowest point. North of this is an area about which we know virtually nothing; it contains no manor, but at the north-east corner it literally abuts Cressing church and the site of the probable lost manor of Cressing. There are grounds for suspecting that this area, like the Lanham's triangle, was not part of Rivenhall in the 11th century- If this is so it would have come under Witham in 1086.

Finally, at the north-east corner of the parish is an irregular holding containing Sheepcote Farm, now a detached part of Cressing parish. This is a medieval development, and the lower part of the farm must formerly have been in Rivenhall parish; it was largely wooded, adding another 100 or so acres to the early medieval total.

Rivenhall in the Anglo-Saxon period

Although one may quibble with some details, this analysis of the medieval landscape and land holdings correlates closely with the statistics of the Domesday Survey. All the land in the presumed area of the parish in the early medieval period has been accounted for, and a coherent picture has emerged. It may now be proposed that the basic form, layout, and land use of the medieval parish were a legacy of the late Anglo-Saxon period. The excavations at the church have shown that the development from a small timber structure-presumably a proprietary chapel-to a substantial stone-built parish church took place in the 10th century. This accords with the earlier phases of the general development of the parochial system in England. Thus the *Ruenhala* of Domesday-five times mentioned-was a fully developed parish containing several manors and other holdings which were welded into such a cohesive unit as to require no individual names. The implication must be either that five estates had coalesced to form the parish of Rivenhall, or else that the parish perpetuated the physical form of an Anglo-Saxon estate which by the 11th century had become subdivided.

Figure 125 shows that there are no major internal divisions in the parish which could be invoked as Saxon estate boundaries. Indeed the Domesday vills seem to form a continuous chain through its centre, and no convincing line can be drawn between the two largest ones. The fact that only Rivenhall i is accredited with woodland at Domesday suggests that this was the original estate, which retained control over the entire woodland in the parish. Rivenhall i was a royal vill before the con-

quest, being in the possession of Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, and it is not surprising that its principal asset, the woodland, had been retained when other parts had been granted away. Likewise it is not surprising that the estate managed to yield 20 pounds in 1086, when it was technically only worth 12 pounds.

There is thus a *prima facie* case for regarding Rivenhall as one large Anglo-Saxon estate, fragmented by 1066. Is there, then, any evidence for the bounds of the original estate? On the south-east the river apparently formed the boundary; on the north-east the sinuous parish boundary between Rivenhall and Kelvedon is evidently a feature of great antiquity, antedating the layout of the field systems on either side. Surviving parts contain some of the highest species counts in the parish (Vol 2, part 10.4). From the Blackwater to Sheepcote Farm, a distance of 5.7km, there are only three or four angular changes in the direction of the boundary. At Sheepcote a lane runs south-west from the parish boundary to Boars Tye-where it is interrupted by the spindle-shaped green-and then on towards Crossing Temple. This appears to be a Roman alignment and has no evident function in the medieval landscape.⁴ It is put forward as a possible north-western boundary to the estate.⁵

Finally, the south-western boundary is the most problematical: at the more northerly end it probably followed the parish boundary, but below this the boundary is very irregular and of relatively late origin. In the central section two basic alignments are possible; both are shown on Fig 125. The inner line is probably to be preferred, since this follows a sinuous track and parish boundaries for nearly 3km; but it excludes Half Hydes. The last section of the boundary, between the main Colchester road and the river, cannot even be guessed, since this area is a tangle of detached portions of various parishes. There have been several boundary changes on the south-west side of the parish, which cannot be explored in detail here. While Half Hydes was evidently within the parish of Rivenhall at the conquest, there is no reason why it should have been within the bounds of the pre-late Saxon estate which we are now attempting to trace. Indeed, its relative isolation from the other Rivenhall estate components tends to suggest that it was a late Saxon annexation.

The land block thus defined is of fairly regular layout and roughly rectangular in form, being c 5.2km by 2.2km, and having an area of some 11.5 sq km (1150 ha or 2850 ac).

The topography of the putative primary Anglo-Saxon estate is interesting. The capital manor and church lie geographically in the centre, as does the topographical feature which gave Rivenhall its name (Vol 2, part 10.1). We have already shown how this key site was occupied continuously from a very early date and, in particular, throughout the Roman period by one of the biggest and most sophisticated villas in Essex. Further, we have demonstrated how the villa was gradually replaced in the Anglo-Saxon period by domestic buildings in timber, and how in the mid to late Saxon period the hall probably occupied the earthwork platform on the north side of the churchyard, before moving to its present site in the early medieval period. There is no evidence for discontinuity of settlement at the villa-church site, and there is no compelling reason why the estate boundary which we have just delineated should not have been coterminous with that of the Roman villa. Whilst absolute proof will never be forthcoming, there is nothing inherently unlikely in

a late Roman estate remaining intact and functioning as an economic unit through the Early and Middle Saxon periods, ultimately to emerge in documented history as a royal vill. Although in Britain this is seldom demonstrated, on the Continent a comparable development is seen as commonplace (cf Percival 1976, 171-4).

While it is easy to take an Anglo-Saxon parish or estate which happens to contain a Roman villa and equate the two, it is necessary to demonstrate that this is not just a fortuitous coincidence. That can be done with conviction in the Rivenhall area, but the subject cannot be pursued in detail here. Suffice it to say that there are Roman buildings, probably all villas, in intimate association with the capital manors at Stisted, White Notley, Great Braxted, Coggeshall Hall, and Prested Ha11.⁶ The manor of Church Hall, Kelvedon, lies adjacent to the Roman settlement, and several other Domesday manors are on or adjacent to Roman sites of uncertain nature, eg Little Braxted, Howbridge Hall, Crossing Temple, and Crossing Church (probably manors in Witham in 1086). In short, there is an impressive correspondence between Roman sites and Domesday villas in the area surrounding Rivenhall (cf Figs 49 and 123).

In Rivenhall itself, not only is the principal manor on the site of the villa, but the subsidiary manors are also related to lesser Roman sites. Thus Roman pottery and tile have been found on the site of Archers, there is a scatter of pottery on the fields behind Hoo Hall, and there is a Roman burial from Rivenhall End, just opposite Godsalves. No finds of the Roman period have been reported at Half Hydes or at Boars Tye, but no fieldwork has been undertaken and they are largely submerged under housing estates. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the subsidiary settlements on the Roman villa estates in this area became the small Domesday villas, holdings of sokemen, and minor medieval manors. Obviously there will not be a total correspondence since some settlements will have disappeared altogether and others been created *de novo* in the later Saxon and early medieval periods; these, however, are clearly in the minority. Large-scale settlement continuity in this part of Essex is not in doubt, and moreover the survival of territorial, tenorial, and economic patterns now begins to look promising; there is great potential for future detailed studies.

There are two further pieces of topographical evidence which seem to relate to the Anglo-Saxon period, and these are the settlements which actually lie on the boundaries of the Rivenhall estate at its northern and southern ends. At the southern end is the oldest placename, *Atingefordia* (Appleford), discussed by Dr Gelling (Vol 2, part 10.1). We can take this to represent a settlement founded in the Middle Saxon period, at the point where the road from Braxted to Rivenhall crossed the Blackwater; ie it was a new settlement established on the boundary. At the opposite end of the parish is the spindle-shaped enclosure (Boars Tye) which straddles the proposed estate boundary. As Dr Gelling points out, there are two possible origins for the naming of the Tye. It is certainly not a late medieval topographical feature, since it antedates Bouchiers Hall and its moat, but appears to be a small outlying common and therefore presumably an early naming. A Middle Saxon date is, on balance, more probable. One might also ask whether Durward's Hall, which straddles the eastern estate boundary, is another similar case, although there is no evidence for Durward's before the mid 12th century.

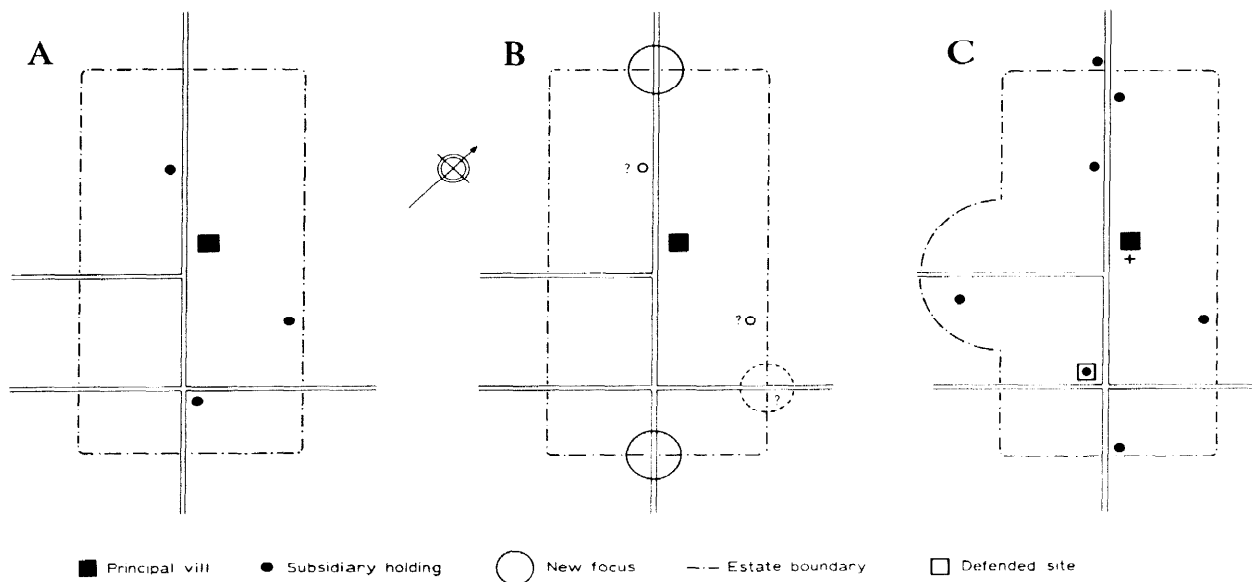


Fig 126 Model to explain the possible development of the Anglo-Saxon estate of Rivenhall: A. late Roman; B. Middle Saxon; C. Late Saxon

A possible model for the development of the Rivenhall estate from the Roman period to the late 11th century is given in Fig 126. Before leaving the Domesday geography of Rivenhall one other feature is worthy of comment.

Rivenhall 'Burgate'

In the south-west angle of the cross-roads at Rivenhall End is a 70 acre land parcel, bounded on two sides by roads and on a third by a brook. In one corner stood the medieval tenement of Godsalves, the small Domesday manor of Rivenhall iv. The manor disappeared in the medieval period and the plot had several tenements, including Pond Farm, built on part of its frontage. About 50 acres however remained intact and this plot is repeatedly named in documents down to the 19th century as the Burgate field; there was no accompanying tenement and it was annexed to Hoo Hall manor. It did not form a contiguous part of the Hoo Hall lands, and Burgate Field is often mentioned as a separate item in manorial records. The name, Dr Gelling points out, is best seen as referring to a pre-conquest *burh*, or defended manor house, and here in 1066 was a manor and lands owned by Ulsi, a freeman. The topography of the site allows a confident reconstruction of the curtilage of the hypothetical *burh*. The road from Rivenhall End to the church follows a curious course with a double bend just north-west of Pond Farm, taking it down to marshy ground close to the Cressing Brook; this is seen as a deviation from the Roman alignment but was previously unexplained. Burgate field lies right across the projected line of the Roman road, the existing road making a detour around the edge. The Western Estate map of 1716 records sufficient detail for the earlier topography of the site to be reconstructed as shown in Fig 127. The original line of the Roman road through Burgate field is shown as a footpath in 1716, presumably marking two gates into the

burh; indeed the position of the north-west gate is highlighted by a kink in the field boundary. The north-east side of the *burh*, around which the present road runs, is likely to be represented by the sections of boundary which run behind Pond Farm and other tenements. The south-west side of the enclosure is also marked by a field boundary, the west corner of which stands out clearly as a salient; the area thus defined was square, with sides of c 500 yards (457 m). The area enclosed was c 35-38 acres. Internal boundaries show that a building stood near the centre, although it had gone by 1716; this was the site of Godsalves manor house. By the early 18th century Godsalves had become an inn, renamed 'Foxes', standing on the main road frontage. Pond Farm itself is also a topographical indicator. This was probably built as a 15th century yeoman's house, later converted to tenements, and must have been erected on the earthworks of the *burh*, adjacent to a surviving length of waterlogged ditch which was 'the pond'. The earliest reference to this is in a rental of 1415 which mentions John *atte Pond*. The present road, where it turns around the north corner of the *burh* adjacent to the pond, runs in a hollow-way and presumably marks the ditch of the *burh*. Thus the topographical and place-name evidence demonstrates the presence of an earthwork of square plan, built against the north-west side of the main Roman road, and astride the subsidiary road to Rivenhall villa. The earthwork was evidently known as 'the burh', and perhaps the last surviving feature, which gave its name to the site, was the *burh-gear*. The freeman who occupied the manor here in 1066, with his 30 acres and one plough, would have fitted comfortably inside the *burh*. But it can hardly have been built for him, or his like. What, then, was the original nature of the enclosure? Surely if it had been built as a thegn's *burh* it would have survived, at least into the early medieval period, as a substantial manor, indeed the principal manor.