

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# CASTLES AND CASTLE BUILDING IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

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*Medieval castles formed parts of urban and rural settlement patterns. In the countryside most castles were simultaneously manorial centres, and their settlement contexts exhibit a high level of regional variation. Castles found in conjunction with medieval towns were either secondary impositions, usually within the perimeters of earlier defences, or primary nuclei around which urban communities formed. In contrast to other parts of Britain and Europe, private urban fortifications were virtually unknown in England. Castles and accompanying castle-towns formed focal points within wider rural territories, with fortified sites often lying at the junction of different types of rural resource.*

In a volume dedicated to the re-integration of medieval town and country, a review of evolving approaches to the study of castles is essential. Indeed, in this field a recent upsurge in research has begun to re-integrate castles properly within the context of their contemporary landscapes and townscape. Over the last decade in particular, archaeologists and historians have paid increasing attention to the roles of castles as settlements, economic units and status symbols that were both embedded within, and invariably exerted a profound impact upon, their surroundings. Reports on castle excavations and surveys, alongside regional studies and works of synthesis, have all progressively broadened their horizons to look beyond the defensive perimeters of individual sites and to examine private fortifications and their settings in a more holistic manner.<sup>1</sup> An important outcome of such work has been a growing realization of the extent to which the lords of both urban and rural castles re-shaped surrounding landscapes and townscape as an expression of their social status and ambitions. Through the planning or re-ordering of settlements and the creation and manipulation of features including deer parks, dovecotes, fishponds and gardens, such actions might alter the physical composition of landscapes and exert a profound psychological impact on the ways in which they were experienced.

Evidence from excavation, documents and the landscape will be used here to highlight some of the similarities and differences between patterns of castle building in medieval town and country. Yet it will also be questioned whether it is, indeed,

meaningful to draw a rigid division between urban and rural castles, since even sites closely associated with 'urban' settlements could have 'rural' qualities. The focus will be on England, although occasional reference will be made to other parts of Britain and Europe for comparative purposes.

Following a preliminary consideration of the complex regional variations in castle-settlement relationships, the first part of the paper examines various definitions of urban and rural castles, drawing particular attention to contrasts between sites inserted into earlier settlements and others that spawned dependent communities. The second part of the paper explores different lines of contact between castles and their wider hinterlands. Throughout, it is stressed that studies of castles can open important windows for urban and rural archaeology more generally and, in particular, can contribute to our understanding of medieval power relations, mentalities and ideologies. Arguably, the value of castle studies in illuminating such matters has been underestimated in the past.

#### MEDIEVAL CASTLES AND SETTLEMENTS

From the beginning it is fundamentally important to underline that medieval castles, whether located in urban or rural situations, were components of wider settlement patterns. While castles were, to greater or lesser extents, elite military sites and usually centres of administration and consumption, they were also points of human settlement. The prominent exceptions to this general rule lie among the relatively small number of 'siege' or 'campaign' castles built to fulfil short-term needs and rapidly abandoned or slighted thereafter. Representative examples of 11th- and 12th-century date include temporary siege-works built at Corfe (Dorset), Bamburgh (Northumberland), Bridgnorth (Shropshire), Dunster (Somerset), Pickering (Yorkshire), and the remarkable ringwork known as Danes Castle lying outside the walls of Exeter, excavated in 1993 after a period when its site was not known.<sup>2</sup>

An enormous level of variation is, of course, apparent in the landscape contexts of castles. As a site of lordship, the medieval castle was a remarkably flexible institution, readily adaptable to an enormous variety of geographical circumstances. Great temporal and spatial variations can also be identified in the composition of the castle building classes. These comprised, of course, kings and magnate families but also extended, at various times and in different contexts, to include sub-tenants, lawyers, officials and churchmen. But whether functioning as isolated manorial sites, secluded features related to hunting resources or the management of forests, components within village plans or parts of the fabric of townscapes, castles are elements within the settlement hierarchy. Yet while other high-status sites, such as moated manors, have traditionally been viewed as part and parcel of the medieval settlement pattern, castles have tended to lie beyond the horizons of settlement historians. What is highly significant is that, at a very broad scale, the medieval settlement contexts of castles tended to mirror wider regional variations in settlement patterning. For example, in areas of predominantly dispersed rural settlement, as in Devon and Cornwall, rural castles of all periods were invariably isolated landscape features. The site of Holwell Castle, Parracombe (Devon) is an illustrative example:



FIGURE 14.1 Castle Bolton (Yorkshire), showing the position of the castle at the head of a regular green-based village of apparently planned origins.

built on a spur-end position on the northern fringes of Exmoor that combined advantages of visibility and defensibility with accessibility, this small late 11th- or 12th-century centre of lordship formed one of several discrete settlement foci within the parish.<sup>3</sup> Other examples of rural castles constituting isolated forms of settlement within the generally dispersed landscape of south-west England abound; in Devon alone the sites of Durpley, Shebbear, Heywood, (Wembworthy) and Castle Roborough (Loxhore) all fit this pattern. The far smaller number of castles in Devon and Cornwall associated with nucleated settlements lay not within villages, but in association with some of the numerous small boroughs so characteristic of the region, as with sites such as Trematon and Week St Mary (Cornwall), and Tiverton and Winkleigh (Devon).

By contrast, in regions characterized primarily by regulated nucleated settlements, castles were far more often components of village morphology, and we might sometimes speculate that their lords were agents of settlement change, for instance promoting markets and/or re-casting villages in regular form, as at Barwick-in-Elmet, Bowes, Castle Bolton (Figure 14.1), Kirkby Malzeard and Sheriff Hutton (all in Yorkshire).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, regular villages containing Norman castles may provide us with some of the clearest examples of seigneurially planned rural settlements in England. Sites familiar to medieval archaeologists such as Goltho (Lincolnshire), Laxton (Nottinghamshire) and Middleton Stoney (Oxfordshire) all bear the characteristic hallmarks of village planning by castle lords.<sup>5</sup> Nor should we overlook the possible role of seigneurial initiative in the re-orientation of non-nucleated landscapes, as in the Vale of Montgomery, where a remarkable concentration of nine isolated mottes reflects a late 11th-century programme of resettlement, apparently under the authority of the earl of Shrewsbury.<sup>6</sup> In the East Anglian landscape, meanwhile, detailed study

has shown that a great many castles, including examples at Horsford, Hunworth and Weeting (all in Norfolk) lay on common edges, and were elements within a highly fluid pattern including the drift of settlement that often left parish churches as isolated features.<sup>7</sup> Although such observations are inevitably crude and thereby obscure the truly kaleidoscopic variations in castle-settlement relationships at the local scale, they nonetheless allow us to make a simple yet crucial observation: as landscape features, castles were not elevated above the medieval settlement pattern, but were rooted within it and were active contributors to its evolution.

In considering castles that lay within or on the fringes of medieval towns, a convenient distinction can be made between 'urban castles', which were secondary features imposed within pre-existing towns, and cases where the castle was a primary feature around which a secondary urban community grew up.<sup>8</sup> Representative examples of urban castles include Exeter, Leicester, Lincoln and Winchester (Hampshire), which were set within the corners of town walls of Roman origin, and Bedford, Totnes (Devon), Wallingford (Oxfordshire) and Wareham (Dorset), which were imposed within defences of late Saxon date. The vast majority of urban castles were imposed within one angle of an extant defensive circuit, making them seemingly peripheral features of the medieval townscape. This does not hold true at Norwich, however, where Norman re-planning of the city and the expansion of its defences made the great royal castle, set within the 9 hectare Castle Fee and adjacent to a market place, its focal point.<sup>9</sup> Other exceptions can be identified. The urban castles of Nottingham and Stamford (Lincolnshire) were unusually set beyond the lines of earlier defensive circuits, the former apparently to take advantage of an imposing natural site overlooking a ford over the river Leen, and the latter to occupy the site of what excavation has shown to have been a probable high-status Saxon residence.<sup>10</sup>

The unique topographical setting of Colchester Castle (Essex) near the centre of the town is explained by Norman re-use of the base of the former Roman temple of Claudius, which may in the immediate pre-Conquest period have formed the core of a *villa regalis*.<sup>11</sup> As at Stamford, the imposition of a Norman castle on an extant seat of authority must have had certain propaganda value, although in general the peripheral sites chosen for urban castles tend to argue against high-status antecedent occupation. However, what all these sites have in common is that they were either royal castles, or at least built with explicit royal approval, in the immediate wake of the Norman Conquest.

Far more numerous are those castles associated with urban communities that were planted in conjunction with, or grew up around, the high-status core. While these settlements exhibit a greater level of variation in the topographical relationship between castle and town plan, most have in common the fact that the street plan and, if present, the town defences, tended to focus on or gravitate around the castle nucleus. Some of the more common medieval plan forms include the chequer-plan town with the castle set immediately beyond the grid (for example, New Buckenham, Norfolk), the linear town with the castle at its head (for example, Warkworth, Northumberland) and, perhaps most commonly, the multi-phase amalgamation of different plan-units but invariably featuring a market place adjacent to the castle (for example, Bolsover in Derbyshire and Ludlow in Shropshire). While the basic

characteristics of these plan forms were obviously not restricted to castle-towns, a comparatively rare type of plan associated with urban communities appended to castles is the D-shaped town plan. In these cases a curving street pattern focuses on the castle nucleus, giving the impression that the town grew up in an enormous outer bailey. The best-preserved plan of this type is Devizes (Wiltshire); other examples include Launceston (Cornwall), Richmond (Yorkshire), Tonbridge (Kent), Trowbridge (Wiltshire) and — a settlement with probable urban potential that was never recorded formally as a borough — Pleshey (Essex).

Widely recognized is this role of the castle as 'midwife', bringing into existence towns planted as appendages to fortified centres as part of a wider upsurge in the growth of urban settlements under the patronage of lay and ecclesiastical lords and kings.<sup>12</sup> Although this tradition was generally a little later than the building of urban castles, the foundation of castle-towns was still relatively rapid: it has been estimated that three-quarters of all towns in England founded between the Norman Conquest and 1150 adjoined castles, although the pattern tails off very sharply thereafter.<sup>13</sup>

Urban castles exerted an initially disruptive impact on settlement topography. For no fewer than eleven towns, Domesday Book records that property had been cleared explicitly for the reason of castle building. The suspicion that this is not the entire picture is confirmed by archaeological evidence of occupation levels sealed beneath the earliest phases of other early Norman urban castles including Oxford and Winchester (Hampshire).<sup>14</sup> Nor was ecclesiastical property free of the disturbances of castle building: at Barnstaple (Devon), Cambridge and Malmesbury (Wiltshire) among other places, ecclesiastical precincts were encroached and permanently disrupted, while at Worcester the part of the cathedral priory cemetery cut off by the bailey ditch of the sheriff's castle (built 1069) was not returned until 1216.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, the emergence of secondary castle-gate boroughs implies a certain level of economic ambition, singling the castle out as a nucleus for settlement growth. Only exceptionally rarely does the construction of a rural castle appear to have disrupted or displaced extant settlements. Burwell and Eaton Socon (Cambridgeshire) are among the tiny number of places where rural castles were imposed upon villages, in the case of the latter leading to the re-planning of the settlement.<sup>16</sup> These instances seem to have been a product of the peculiar political and military circumstances of the Anarchy. We should not overlook, however, the likelihood that a great many Norman rural castles perpetuated late Saxon high-status residences, some of which may have possessed defences, as revealed on excavated sites including Sulgrave (Northamptonshire) and Goltho (Lincolnshire).<sup>17</sup>

Comparing the chronology of castle building within urban centres with the growth or plantation of secondary boroughs outside castles, it is particularly notable that urban castle building was not only a comparatively early process, but also an especially rapid one. The vast majority of urban castles were built during, or in the aftermath of, military campaigns in the immediate post-Conquest years (c.1066–80), as confirmed by the evidence of chronicles, Domesday Book or, more rarely, archaeology. Newark Castle (Nottinghamshire) is an interesting case in point. While documentary and architectural evidence pointed towards the first castle being built for Bishop Alexander in the 1130s, excavations in the mid 1990s revealed new evidence

of an earlier motte and bailey on the same site, built shortly after the Conquest over part of a Saxon cemetery and possible monastic enclosure.<sup>18</sup> Imposed disruptively into the corner of a defended town located at a river crossing and junction of routes, this fortification had many of the hallmarks of a Norman urban castle.

Raised to suppress or oversee major centres of population and, perhaps more importantly, to seize control of regional power bases and key nodes on the national communications grid, these castles were both instruments and symbols of Norman royal control, and many continued to function as administrative and judicial centres into the later medieval period. But while sites such as Exeter, Oxford and Thetford (Norfolk) featured among the largest mottes and ringworks built anywhere in Britain, and the *donjons* at Colchester, Norwich, Rochester (Kent) and the Tower of London the most impressive secular buildings of their age, not all urban castles were dominant and long-lived features of urban topography. The first Norman castle at Gloucester, for instance, was replaced by another on a larger site early in the 12th century; 11th-century urban castles at Canterbury (Kent), Derby and Stafford also had short lifetimes.<sup>19</sup> After this initial short sharp burst of urban castle building there is strikingly little evidence for the construction of either royal or private castles within English towns after c.1100. The major exceptions to this rule are the small number of new Anarchy-period urban sites (1139–53) built mainly in a restricted part of southern Britain, including documented examples at Cirencester (Gloucestershire) and Cricklade, Malmesbury and Wilton (all in Wiltshire).<sup>20</sup> Most of these castles were transient features of their townscapes, and their sites are often lost.

We must also recognize that in certain cases the distinction between urban castles and those with dependent boroughs can be blurred. At Hereford, Norwich and Nottingham, for instance, the imposition of Norman royal castles within or near pre-Conquest settlements led to the rapid re-orientation of urban topography through the creation of distinct 'French' boroughs for new colonists, indicating an interesting association between urban castles and the ethnic division of townscapes.<sup>21</sup> In other cases it may also be impossible to distinguish a successive chronological relationship between castle and borough from the possibility that the two units were planned more or less contemporaneously, as seems likely at Plympton (Devon).<sup>22</sup> In addition, topographical and documentary evidence often indicates that what may outwardly appear to be new Norman towns appended to castles were in reality urban settlements that grew from earlier village cores. Downton (Wiltshire) is a particularly clear example of this process; other town plans indicating essentially similar sequences include Clun (Shropshire), Thirsk (Yorkshire) and Marlborough (Wiltshire).<sup>23</sup>

It is also instructive to compare the pattern of 11th-century urban castle building with later private castles raised in the vicinity of pre-existing towns. These tended to lie not within the urban zone, but beyond its fringes. An illuminating example is Stafford Castle, built for Robert Stafford as the focal point of his extensive Staffordshire estates at the very end of the 11th century. While linked administratively to the county town, this fortification was not a feature of urban topography but rather built to overlook Stafford from a prominent position 1.6km to the south-west.<sup>24</sup> This castle effectively replaced a short-lived royal castle located within the town, thus representing a transfer of authority to a peripheral yet more dominant



FIGURE 14.2 Sandal (Yorkshire), showing the motte of the de Warrene's castle overlooking Wakefield.

position. A similar site to Stafford Castle in many respects is Sandal (Yorkshire) (Figure 14.2). Built shortly after c.1106 as the regional power base of the de Warenne family and the administrative focus of the manor of Wakefield, the castle occupied the skyline above Wakefield, looming over its surroundings with the town firmly within its viewshed.<sup>25</sup> If not urban castles in the physical sense, these sites doubtless exerted a powerful psychological influence over nearby earlier towns, even if they lay in what can be termed 'rural' settings, both being embraced by extensive deer parks.

With these various definitions and caveats in mind, it is possible to examine numerically the relative balance of urban and rural castle building in the medieval period. Taking as the basis for analysis King's magisterial gazetteer of castles in conjunction with surveys of documentary evidence for new towns by Beresford and for boroughs by Beresford and Finberg, of a total of 1125 castles in English counties, no fewer than 922 (82 per cent) are found in rural situations, 146 (13 per cent) were accompanied by later towns and boroughs, while 57 (5 per cent) can be defined as urban castles.<sup>26</sup> These statistics reveal the simple fact that, throughout the medieval period in England, rural as opposed to urban fortified seats were preferred by richer, wealthier and more powerful members of society.

This observation also underlines the glaring absence of fortified private dwellings in English towns, other than urban castles and episcopal palaces.<sup>27</sup> Neither detailed studies of medieval urban secular architecture nor analyses of late medieval licences



FIGURE 14.3 Stokesay (Shropshire), depicting the manorial residence upgraded to castle status by Laurence de Ludlow in the late 13th century.

to crenellate have revealed significant evidence for seriously defended dwellings constructed by members of the élite urban classes within English townscapes. Conversely, the English rural gentry tended not to build fortified houses in local towns. This absence marks an obvious contrast with parts of southern Europe, but also other areas of Britain, such as Ireland, where urban tower houses such as Taaffe's Castle, Carlingford (Co. Louth) were fairly common features within later medieval towns, to the point that many such settlements contain multiple examples, as at Carrickfergus (Co. Antrim), which featured ten or a dozen such sites.<sup>28</sup>

The ownership and building history of Stokesay Castle (Shropshire) (Figure 14.3) provides a valuable perspective on this issue. An extremely rare example of a private castle built not for a landed aristocrat but for a member of the urban classes, what is significant is that the site, set within a small designed landscape containing elaborate water features, was a quintessentially rural seat. Licensed to the wealthy wool merchant Lawrence de Ludlow in 1291, the castle was adapted from an existing building shortly after the manor was obtained by purchase.<sup>29</sup> The castle's juxtaposition with a Norman parish church may also be important, indicating perhaps an extant seigneurial complex acquired and then upgraded through the act of castle building. Lawrence's social aspirations thus found expression in a programme of rural aggrandisement rather than through the development of a principal urban

residence in Ludlow or Shrewsbury, from where the dynasty had emerged and where his business interests were focused.

In England, it seems that the concept of private defence within towns was restricted to the very highest echelons of medieval society. Meanwhile, the pattern of urban castle building through time was not steady, but rather comprised two distinct bursts of activity concentrated in the immediate post-Conquest decades and during the turbulence of the Anarchy. Indeed, the foundation of castles within English towns was an anathema relative to the wider pattern of royal and private castle building, being largely the product of extreme socio-political circumstances and military need rather than lordly ambition.

#### CASTLE-TOWNS AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

While the growth of nascent towns in association with castles, especially those at the heads of extensive lordships, was clearly an important motor behind the urbanization of medieval England, we should not overlook the fact that the establishment of such units would have had a profound impact on both their hinterlands and extant settlements. A particularly clear case is Tickhill (Yorkshire), where the castle-town of Robert de Busli, recorded in Domesday concealed within the entry for *Dadsley*, superseded and displaced the former vill which contained the original parish church.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, castle-town foundation could be the result of interventionist seigniorial initiatives that deliberately made the castle a focal point within its rural surroundings, generating commerce, providing income and enhancing territorial control. Nowhere is this clearer than Launceston (Cornwall) (Figure 14.4), where the Exon Domesday records that the Count of Mortain had removed the canons' earlier market in the manor of St Stephens-by-Launceston and placed it in his castle, around which developed a town. A similar policy was followed at Trematon, another one of the count's Cornish castles, where the bishop's market at St Germans was depleted by a rival castle-dependent market; likewise at Eye (Suffolk), where William Malet had a castle market.<sup>31</sup> In such cases, the establishment of a castle-market-borough unit was clearly geared towards economic domination of the wider district.

Another important theme related to castle-town units and their rural hinterlands is the question of whether planted urban settlements appended to fortifications were deliberately located with an eye for commercial potential. This is most apparent in northern England, where the relationship between honorial *capita* and surrounding estate networks can be especially clearly defined. Perhaps the clearest example is Richmond (Yorkshire), where town and borough were located at the junction of a pastoral zone to the west and an arable area to the east, thus forming a natural marketing point (Figure 14.5). A selection of comparable sites in this respect might include Barnard Castle (Co. Durham), Cockermouth (Cumbria) and Pickering (Yorkshire), all of which spawned towns located at the point of interface between arable and pastoral *pays*. In the late 11th and 12th centuries, the linkages between and urban *capita* and outlying districts might also be manifested in castle-guard arrangements, through which tenants on outlying rural estates periodically

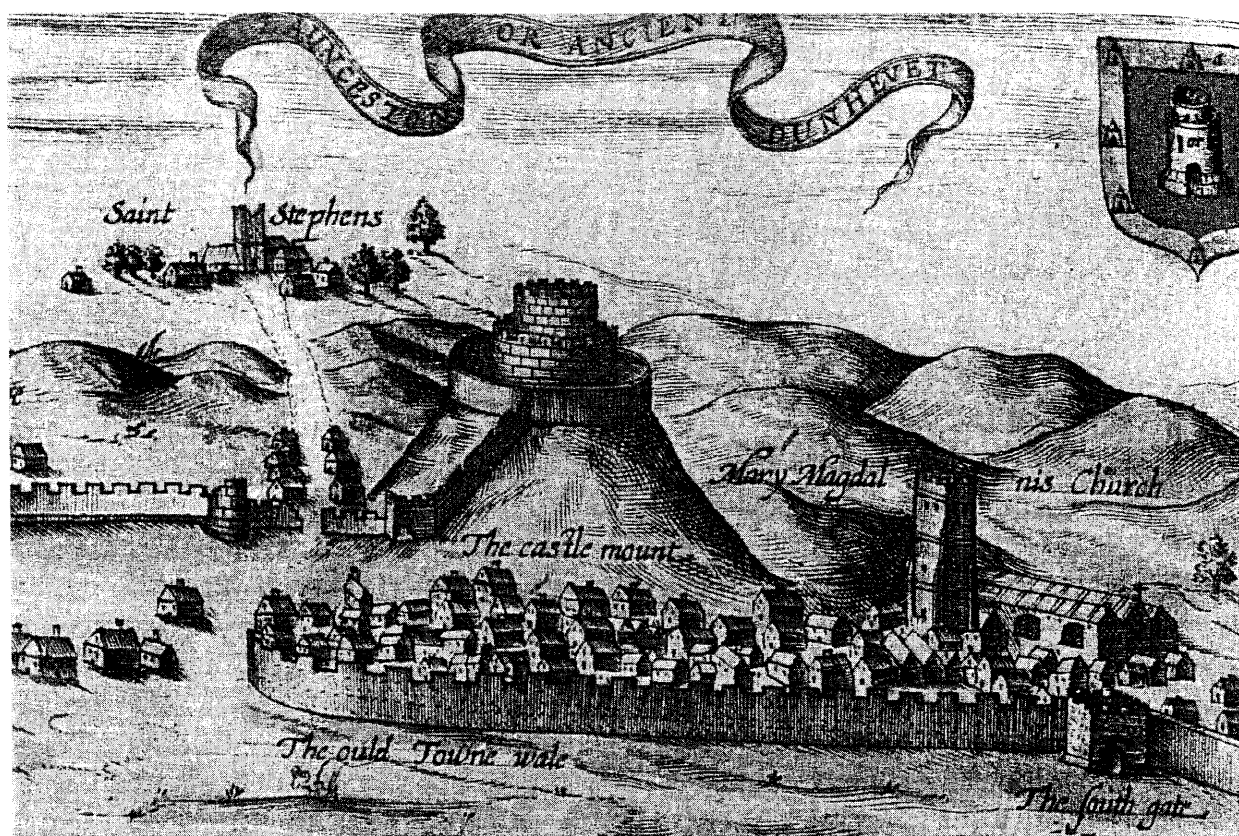


FIGURE 14.4 Launceston Castle and town (Cornwall) as depicted by John Speed.

contributed to the castle's defence and maintenance. Such arrangements can be traced in 104 cases in England and Wales, as exemplified by those land-units styled as 'castleries', comprising fortified sites and adjoining towns at the heart of especially compact blocks of estates; representative examples include Berkhamsted (Hertfordshire), Dudley (Worcestershire), and Pontefract (Yorkshire).<sup>32</sup> In other regions, particular geographical circumstances made it more likely that castle lords founded seigneurial boroughs at a distance from baronial castles that remained isolated features of the countryside. Hence at Okehampton (Devon) (Figure 14.6), the administrative centre and borough founded shortly before 1086 were physically separate; comparable is the relationship between Carisbrooke Castle (Isle of Wight) and the de Redvers' borough of Newport.<sup>33</sup>

Scrutiny of the morphological relationships between the fortified sites and their townscapes indicates that castles generally lay on what physically may appear to be the fringes of their associated settlements. In a great many cases, this peripheral status was further articulated through the creation of a deer park that formed a kind of suburban 'green belt' with aesthetic and symbolic as well as economic and recreational qualities. Devizes (Wiltshire) is a particularly striking example, where the castle is bracketed by a dependent town on one side and a deer park on the other. This arrangement is strikingly common elsewhere; other representative examples include Castle Rising (Norfolk), Hinckley (Leicestershire) and Pontefract (Yorkshire). Such arrangements give the distinct impression that the triumvirate of castle, borough and

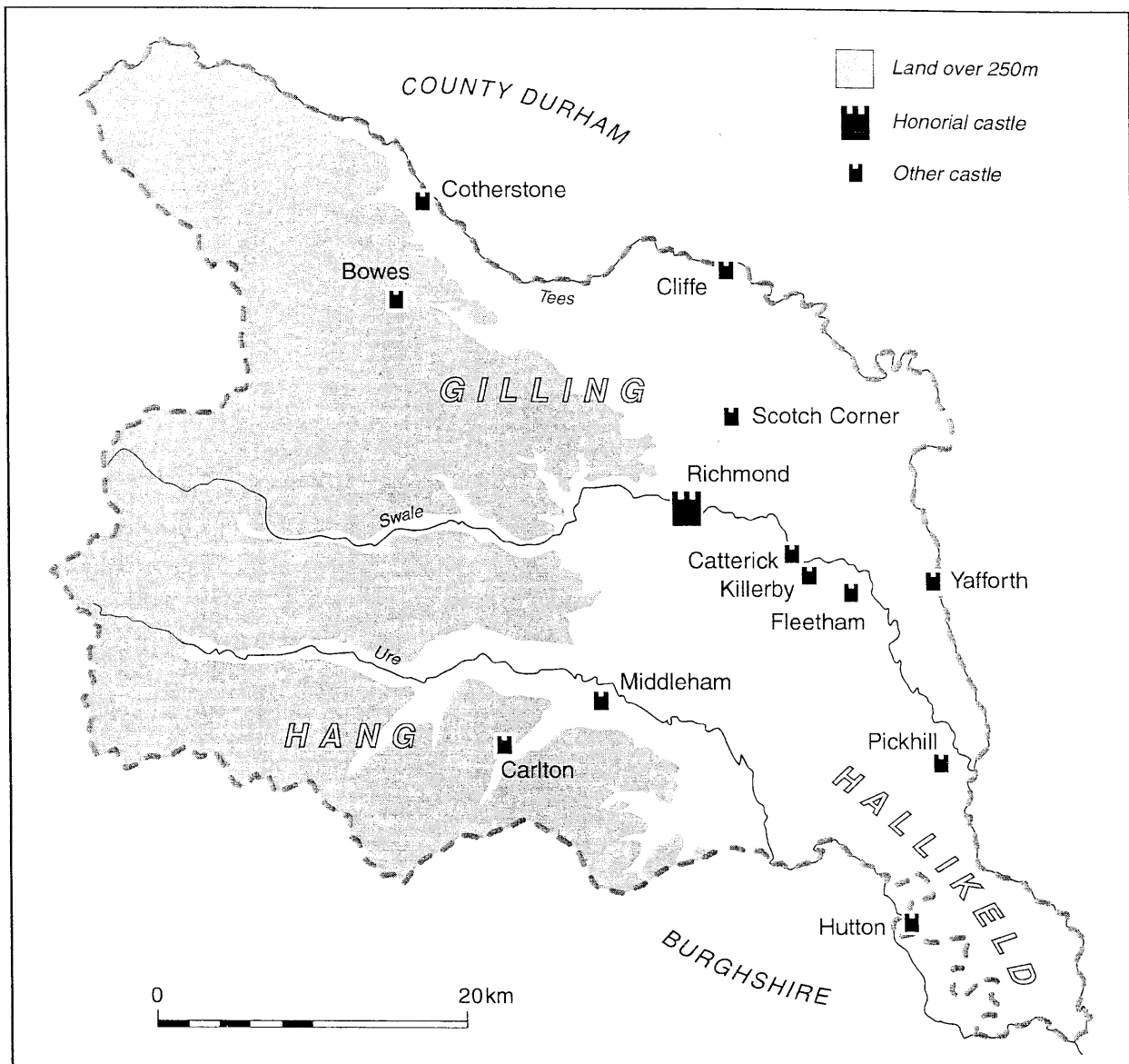


FIGURE 14.5 The Honour of Richmond (Yorkshire), showing the location of the honorial caput and subsidiary castles. The location of the honorial castle and its associated borough at the junction of upland and lowland zones is a characteristic feature of large Norman lordships in Yorkshire and the north of England.

park represented a form of ideal Norman town and country planning, with a newly established monastic house frequently being a further complementary element of the Norman colonization.<sup>34</sup> Detailed earthwork survey coupled with the study of settlement morphology at Ludgershall (Wiltshire) has afforded an especially detailed view of how the setting of this royal castle and hunting lodge was designed so that a unit of parkland north of the castle embraced the royal castle and hunting lodge to form a scenic backdrop, with the attached planned borough unit lying on the opposite side.<sup>35</sup>



FIGURE 14.6 Okehampton Castle (Devon), looking towards the medieval borough.

Despite settings that were sometimes constricted by settlement expansion, urban castles too could feature gardens and adjoin areas of parkland, forming recognizably élite landscapes designed for pleasure as well as more practical functions. Hereford Castle, for instance, was accompanied by pleasure grounds set in full view on the opposite bank of the Wye and enjoyed easy access to hunting resources; a similar pattern can be observed at Gloucester, while expenditure by the Crown on gardens at urban castles including Nottingham, Winchester (Hampshire) and the Tower of London is recorded.<sup>36</sup> Both urban castles and those to which boroughs were appended, it seems, could have ‘rural’ qualities, manifested through the manipulation of their immediate settings and the availability of access to resources such as deer parks and forests. In archaeological terms, the importance of urban castles as centres for the consumption of widely flung rural resources is reflected well in reports on environmental evidence within excavation reports.<sup>37</sup>

Many castle-dependent settlements existed in the notoriously grey area between urban and rural. Of particular significance here is the small yet significant number of castles accompanied by enclosed and often shrunk or entirely deserted settlement units often confusingly labelled as ‘burgus’ enclosures. These small castle-dependent plantations can be found in the most adverse of circumstances, an excellent example being the de Lacys’ failed borough of Almondbury (Yorkshire), which, squeezed into a hillfort, seems to have been a specialized castle-dependent nucleation.<sup>38</sup> Essentially similar are a group of sites along the Welsh Marches, prominent among them Kilpeck,

and Richard's Castle (Herefordshire) and Caus (Shropshire).<sup>39</sup> In all of these cases, we must question whether such settlements represented stillborn towns or communities specially dependent on the castle. In other instances such sites did not grow into fully-fledged boroughs but survive in essentially rural forms, as at Castle Acre (Norfolk). Within certain developed medieval town plans we may trace the alignment of these initial castle-dependent units planned as appendages to the high-status nucleus. Alnwick (Northumberland), the subject of Conzen's pioneering town plan analysis, is one such example; morphological and documentary evidence suggests that the distinct unit of the town plan known as *Bailiffgate* was administratively separate from the rest of the settlement and functioned as a specialized unit related to the workings of the baronial castle.<sup>40</sup> Essentially similar castle-dependent units appear to have formed primary nucleation points within the town plans of Bridgnorth (Shropshire) and Tickhill (Yorkshire); many others doubtless remain to be recognized.<sup>41</sup>

A site with an important role in these arguments is Boteler's Castle, Oversley (Warwickshire) (Figure 14.7). In 1992 and 1993, excavation and survey by Warwickshire Museums took place in advance of road construction works.<sup>42</sup> Particularly striking was the evidence of a vast defended outer enclosure (4.93 hectares, defined by a ditch up to 7.8m wide and 3.4m deep in places) appended to the motte and bailey. Excavation of a transect through this feature revealed it to contain a dependent settlement, dated broadly from the early 12th to the early 13th century and clearly contemporary with the castle. While there is no documentary evidence of a planted castle-dependent settlement, there is much in the excavated evidence — including the loosely gridded network of tracks, the finds and environmental assemblage — to recommend that this was a primarily non-agricultural service-providing unit. While it would stretch the evidence too far to suggest that the castle was accompanied by an abortive borough, it seems highly likely that this was the nucleus of a settlement that could have feasibly grown into one — a Bridgnorth or Richmond arrested at an early stage. It may not be coincidental that Boteler's Castle lay at the junction of two terrain types: the wooded area of Arden to the north and a lowland arable vale to the south. In any event, the settlement's short lifetime and early date of desertion marks it out as an atypical community whose existence was inextricably linked to that of the castle. Given the somewhat blurred division between medieval town and country, making definitions of what exactly constituted urban status a problem area,<sup>43</sup> it is highly significant that there appears to have been a form of settlement associated with castles that was not typically urban or rural but related explicitly to the functions of the high-status core.

## CONCLUSIONS

What overall conclusions can we draw from this brief overview of the comparative patterns of urban and rural castle building, and how can studies of castles illuminate lines of contact between town and country?

First, it is important to underline the enormous variations in the ways in which castles were embedded within medieval settlement patterns. While the building styles

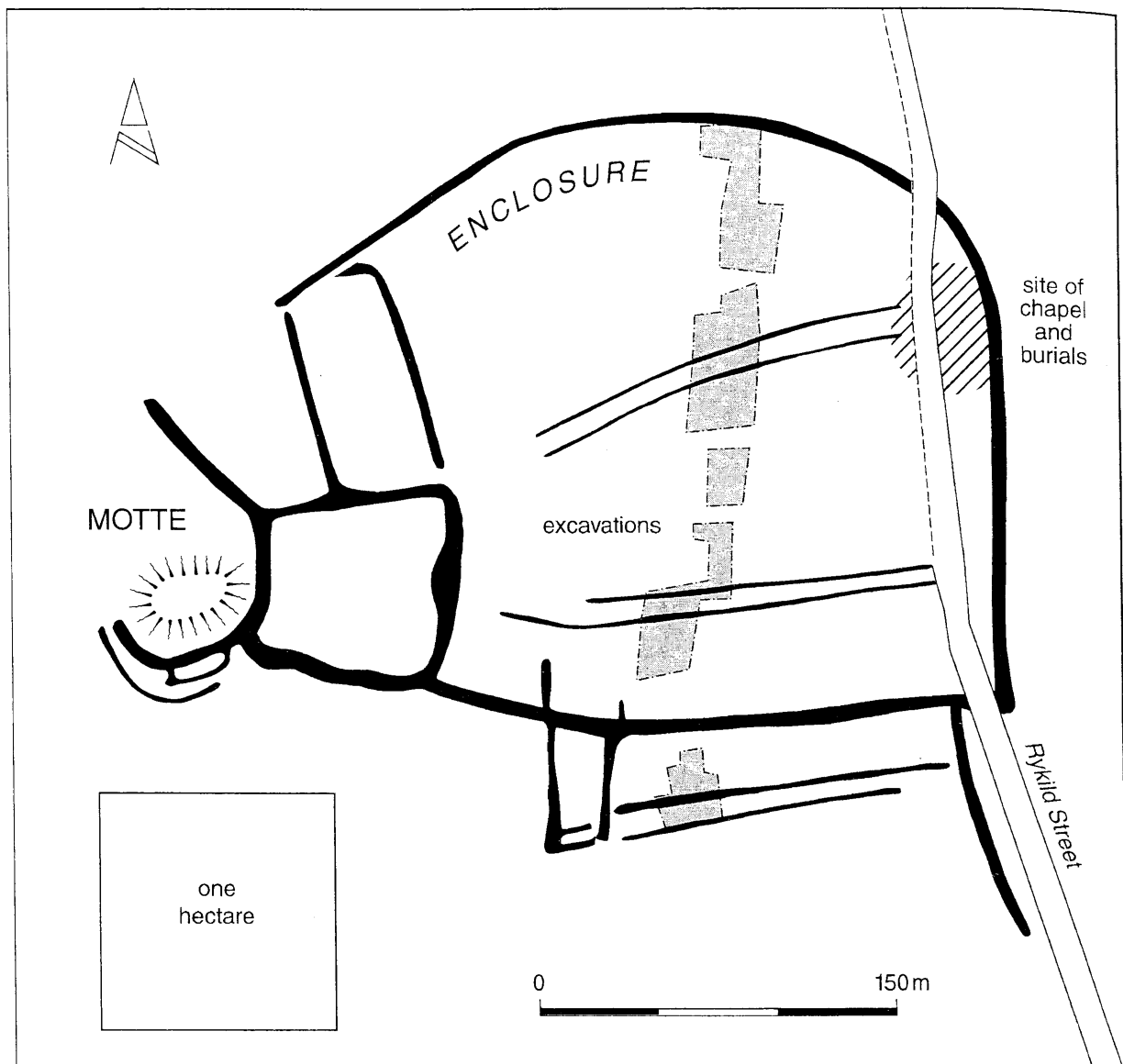


FIGURE 14.7 Boteler's Castle (Warwickshire), showing the large defended precinct attached to the motte and bailey and the location of excavations within it (after Jones *et al.* 1997).

of castles, as elite features of the landscape, seem not to have exhibited a high level of regional variation, fascinating regional differences are apparent in their locations and contexts within settlements and manorial economies. The inter-relationships between castles and urban and rural settlement patterns certainly hold immense potential for further detailed study. From one perspective, castellologists must continue to develop more holistic approaches to the study of castles — looking beyond the ramparts to appreciate more fully the contribution of fortifications and related sites to their contemporary surroundings. But, conversely, urban and rural settlement historians must not neglect the roles of castles as settlements and manors, and their often crucial roles in settlement change. Certainly, while the linkages between castles and the nucleation of villages have been the subject of much study in the southern European context (as exemplified by the *incastellamento* process in Italy),<sup>44</sup> the interrelationships

between castle building and rural settlement change in Britain have frequently been under-valued. A particularly pertinent question in this context is the extent to which urban planning associated with castles inspired the seigneurial re-organization of rural settlements within associated lordships. As archaeological sites, castles in urban contexts, meanwhile, hold immense potential for illuminating lines of contact between town and country. Baileys in particular may contain some of the best-preserved islands of stratigraphy in modern British towns, potentially containing information about the everyday economic lives of élite sites as well as the management and consumption of resources from surrounding hinterlands.

Secondly, we must always bear in mind that castles were only one facet — although in many cases a particularly expressive facet — of medieval lordship. A sophisticated understanding of the impact of castles on rural landscapes and urban townscapes and, in particular, attempts to reconstruct their hinterlands, are almost meaningless unless they are related to wider frameworks of lordship and territorial control.

Thirdly, and finally, from one perspective many of the sites and settlements referred to seem outwardly to constitute landscapes of power and coercion. But we must also appreciate evidence for the limitations of power, and accept that landscapes that outwardly may seem to represent authority and manipulation, may inwardly represent negotiation, and even resistance, although we are unable at present to recognize these clearly. Recognizing the signatures of such processes, through archaeological evidence or otherwise, is certainly an important challenge for the future.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For some recent examples of excavation and survey reports see Ellis 2000; Higham and Barker 2000; Darlington 2001. For re-evaluations of individual sites see Everson 1990; 1996; Liddiard 2000a. For county-based studies see Creighton 1999b; 2000; Liddiard 2000b. For synthesis see Creighton 2002; Creighton and Higham 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> Renn 1959, 110–111; Creighton 2002, 56–58.
- <sup>3</sup> Higham 2000, 445.
- <sup>4</sup> Creighton 1999a, 31–32.
- <sup>5</sup> Creighton 2002, 24–25, 198, 202–214.
- <sup>6</sup> King and Spurgeon 1965.
- <sup>7</sup> Liddiard 2000b, 105.
- <sup>8</sup> Drage 1987, 117.
- <sup>9</sup> Pounds 1990, 211–212.
- <sup>10</sup> Mahany *et al.* 1982, 6–9; Drage 1989, 15–19.
- <sup>11</sup> Drury 1982, 389–391.
- <sup>12</sup> Thompson 1991, 145–146.
- <sup>13</sup> Blair 2000, 262.
- <sup>14</sup> Hassall 1976, 253–254; Keene 1985, 50.
- <sup>15</sup> Colvin *et al.* 1963, 888; Renn 1968, 128; Haslam 1976, 35; Miles 1986, 68.
- <sup>16</sup> Lethbridge and Tebbutt 1952, 49–50; Addyman 1965, 40, 49–52; RCHME 1972, 41–42.
- <sup>17</sup> Williams 1992, 230–231.

- <sup>18</sup> Marshall and Samuels 1994, 54–55.
- <sup>19</sup> Darvill 1988, 1.
- <sup>20</sup> King 1983, 184, 501–502.
- <sup>21</sup> Owen 1945; Hillaby 1983; Hutcheson 2000.
- <sup>22</sup> Higham *et al.* 1985.
- <sup>23</sup> Beresford 1959, 194.
- <sup>24</sup> Darlington 2001, 149.
- <sup>25</sup> Mayes and Butler 1983, 3.
- <sup>26</sup> King 1983; Beresford 1967; Beresford and Finberg 1973.
- <sup>27</sup> Higham and Saunders 1994–95.
- <sup>28</sup> Mallory and McNeill 1991, 286–287; McNeill 1997, 209.
- <sup>29</sup> Cordingley 1963; VCH 1989, 60.
- <sup>30</sup> Magilton 1971–77, 345–346.
- <sup>31</sup> Harfield 1991, 375–376, 381.
- <sup>32</sup> King 1988, 15–19.
- <sup>33</sup> Beresford 1967, 137–138; Higham 1982, 110–111.
- <sup>34</sup> Le Patourel 1976, 317–318.
- <sup>35</sup> Everson *et al.* 2000, 115.
- <sup>36</sup> Colvin *et al.* 1963, 717, 757, 857; Whitehead 1995, 198.
- <sup>37</sup> For a good example see Albarella and Davis 1996.

<sup>38</sup> Manby 1968; RCHME 1996.<sup>39</sup> RCHME 1934, 172–173; Barker 1981; Shoesmith 1992, 167–168.<sup>40</sup> Conzen 1960, 21–22.<sup>41</sup> Lilley 1999, 12–13; Creighton 2002, 162.<sup>42</sup> Jones *et al.* 1997, 86–95.<sup>43</sup> Dyer 2002, 7.<sup>44</sup> Chapelot and Fossier 1985, 129–133; Christie 1999, 45.

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