evidence is particularly rare. The current debate is polarised between suggestions of a twelfth-century introduction, put forward in a seminal paper by Joan Thirsk (1966), and ninth-century origins, on the basis of field walking in Northamptonshire and Yorkshire in the 1970s and 1980s. The choice of one position rather than another has important implications for explanations of historical process between about AD 850 and 1300. The Longstanton excavations decisively show that the majority of medieval arable strips were laid out between AD 1200 and 1400, replacing late Anglo-Saxon paddocks and droves that had been used for pastoral husbandry. Documentary evidence indicates that a three-course rotation was practised in the parish during the same period, and it seems probable that both reflect a Midland open-field system. This is not far from being revolutionary research, and more work is now needed to extrapolate these results on a broader level.

Yet these are not the conclusions drawn in Chapters 8 and 12, or in the 'Conclusions', which concentrate largely on debates around the origins of medieval settlement. Claims are made that "the project demonstrated, archaeologically, the presence of late Anglo-Saxon settlement, which in most cases continued in use into the medieval period" (p. 169). It is possible that such evidence was discovered and published elsewhere, but it is not in the volume under review, where the excavations found no reliable evidence of settlement in any period except the medieval—an outlying hamlet. Although late Anglo-Saxon features were found that may *possibly* have been drip gullies or beam slots, the excavation reports do not go so far as to identify these features as structures of any kind, let alone dwellings. In other words, the concluding chapter makes broad assertions about the origins of the medieval landscape in Longstanton that are not substantiated by the preceding text. Such flaws are not helped by inconsistent referencing of earlier excavation reports, a lack of integration of the archaeological and historical evidence, and the absence of an index.

It is rare to find a volume both so interesting and, in places, so frustrating. The chronology of agricultural activity it outlines will be of lasting importance for those interested in the evolution of the productive landscape; yet the summative Chapters 8 and 12, and the 'Conclusions', concentrate almost exclusively on theoretical issues relating to the origins of medieval settlement to which the excavated evidence has remarkably little to contribute. This is an important book whose archaeological results deserve wide recognition, albeit for reasons that the volume itself does not appear to recognise.

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ANDREW TESTER, SUE ANDERSON, IAN RIDDLER & ROBERT CARR. *Staunch Meadow, Brandon, Suffolk. A high-status Middle Saxon settlement on the fen edge* (East Anglian Archaeology 151). 2014. xiv+439 pages, 251 colour and b&w illustrations, and 90 tables. Bury St Edmunds: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service; 978-0-9568747-4-0 paperback £45.

This lavish volume presents the research undertaken between 1980 and 1988 on the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Staunch Meadow, Brandon, Suffolk. The settlement, dating from the mid seventh to later ninth century AD, was situated on a raised 'island' of windblown sand, beside a 1km-wide branch of the fens that follows the valley of the Little Ouse. The excavations covered an area of 11 750m^2, providing one of the few large 'windows' through which to examine a complex nucleated settlement of this date in England.

Elements in the site's complex layout included 35 buildings of mostly earth-fast timber construction, a raised causeway and bridge to access the island, two cemeteries and two buildings identified as churches, and zones linked to specific manufacturing activities. Artefacts recovered included 20 Anglo-Saxon coins, copper alloy pins, personal dress items (including some of silver and gold), fragments of window glass and vessel glass, over 100 bone objects, 24 000 sherds of pottery, 157 000 fragments of animal, bird and fish bones, and 416kg of ironworking slag. There was

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also significant evidence for a literate element among the settlement's population, reflected by three objects bearing runic inscriptions (one of which was an antler tine inkwell), three styli, fragments from eight glass inkwells and a gold plaque, with the eagle-image of St John, and a surrounding inscription in Latin of SCS EVANGELISTA IOHANNIS (pp. 256–63). Bringing these excavations to full, high-quality publication is a major achievement, and the excavators and leaders of the post-excavation research and their large team of specialists deserve huge credit. English Heritage (now Historic England) also deserves much praise for its long-term commitment to funding these research projects and their publication.

Particularly praiseworthy is the exemplary stratigraphic analysis and phasing (Chapter 2), achieved by combining data from key stratigraphic relationships, dendro-chronological and artefact-based dates with 27 radiocarbon dates and Bayesian modelling. The presentation of the remains by phase and spatial analysis of the discard of artefacts and manufacturing debris is also impressive. It provides a particularly interesting contrast to the contemporary remains from Flixborough, Lincolnshire, where larger quantities of artefacts, bones and industrial debris were deposited as refuse, within a smaller zone of a larger settlement (Loveluck & Atkinson 2007). The reports on the human, faunal and botanical remains, and on the different types of finds, are also of a very high standard, provided by leading specialists.

Within the wider context of the social dynamics of seventh- to ninth-century England, the greatest contribution of the settlement and cemetery sequences from Brandon lies in the insights that they provide on the complexity of rural centres and their social make-up. Most notable are the hypotheses suggesting that the nucleated settlement housed both secular aristocrats and a small monastic community, accounting for both trappings of lay social practices—hunting, feasting and perhaps warfare—and the presence of a Christian element that was involved in a literate culture of a more sophisticated nature than comparable sites, such as Flixborough, where inkwells were absent. The suggestion of aristocrats holding small monastic centres and estates as lay abbots, or as imposed owners, following textually attested Mercian practices in Kent, is highly plausible (p. 392).

In some important instances, however, the interpretative discussion in Chapter 12 would have benefited from more appropriate or fuller comparative references to achieve a more balanced argument. For example, in support of the nucleated settlement as a monastery, reference is made to settlement location on headlands or sand islands as particularly favoured for monasteries in East Anglia, and that enclosures were a particular feature of monasteries (p. 389). Yet in fenland 'marsh-scapes', raised sand islands (roddons) and headlands were favoured locations for settlements in general, as the seventh-century pre-monastic settlement at Brandon demonstrates, as do other sites, such as Fishtoft, near Boston, Lincolnshire (Cope-Faulkner 2012), among others; and all of these sites used enclosures to structure settlement space.

In another case, the authors cite the emerging trend of the consumption of cod on 'high-status' sites, "including the monasteries at Brandon, Flixborough and Lyminge, in the Middle Saxon period" (p. 375). Here, it would have been more balanced to have added reference to the significant number of cod caught and consumed in the ninth-century phases of the estate centre at Bishopstone, Sussex (Reynolds in Thomas 2010). Similarly, in interpreting the significance of small whale or dolphin bones at Brandon, it would have been useful to cite examples recovered from non-monastic estate centres at seventh- to early eighth-century Carlton Colville, Suffolk, and ninth-century Bishopstone, in addition to Flixborough, which is here assumed to have been a monastery for its entire seventh- to mid-ninth-century occupational history (following Blair 2011), despite the close similarities between Flixborough's later seventh- to eighth-century lifestyles to secular estate centres such as Carlton Colville and Portchester Castle, Hampshire (Lucy *et al.* 2009; Loveluck 2013).

The authors also quite rightly cite Continental analogies from monastic traditions in northern France (pp. 388–89, following Blair 2005), a region with influential links with Anglo-Saxon England and its Christian networks. Yet again, the Continental analogy is not balanced by even brief discussion of northern French sites, whether estate centres such as Serris, Seine-et-Marne or small monasteries, such as Hamage, Nord, which was published in interim form in French over the last two decades and referred to in publications in English over the last ten years (see Loveluck 2013).

There are other examples of unbalanced analogy in Chapter 12, but despite these minor points, they do not take anything away from the achievement of producing this landmark publication, which will provide a key dataset and series of hypotheses for

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interpretation over the next decade. They will, no doubt, be further informed and amended by current research bringing the Kentish royal estate centre and monastery at Lyminge to publication (Thomas 2011), and by wider debates on the relationship between elites and the spectrum of farming, artisan and merchant populations (Loveluck 2013; Oosthuizen 2013).

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TOBY F. MARTIN. *The cruciform brooch and Anglo-Saxon England* (Anglo-Saxon Studies 25). 2015. xiii+338 pages, numerous b&w illustrations, and 17 tables. Woodbridge: Boydell; 978-1-84383-993-4 hardback $120.

In his study of the cruciform brooches of fifth- and sixth-century England, Toby Martin has produced a magisterial analysis that can be commended to anyone with an interest in the relationships between material culture, society and our understanding of the past, as well as all readers interested in the emergence of Anglo-Saxon identities. Much of the book is devoted to constructing a typology of the material from its humble origins in the early fifth century to its last ostentatious gasp in the later sixth century. Martin is rightly unapologetic about his emphasis on typology, stressing its particular value as an interpretative framework in this context, given the number of such brooches (over 2000), their coherent evolution over time and the number of other artefacts with which they can be cross-correlated, as well as osteology and changing burial practices. His analysis is embedded in debates about ethnogenesis, and a plausible case is made for these brooches being selected and developed as an active marker of a nascent 'Anglian' identity for audiences within eastern England, Britain more widely and perhaps also the Continent. One of the many strengths of the book is its continuous awareness of the wider context of brooch-wearing among Migration Period women throughout Europe (including Scandinavia).

Martin sees the cruciform brooch in its earliest manifestations (*c*. AD 420) as a marker for migration, entering England largely as a paired, *peplos*-dress fastener on the bodies of women from Northern Europe, but not yet an important marker of age, status, gender or ethnicity. Once in England, it develops a trajectory of its own and shifts dramatically in function as well as form, becoming primarily a centrally placed cloak fastener (or pair of cloak fasteners) and much more complex in design. Martin convincingly connects this to the assertion of elite status within households. This is combined with an astute analysis of the way in which this middle phase of development is underpinned by a fundamentally

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