Reconstructing the Development of Somerset's Early Medieval Church

New Approaches to Understanding the Relationships between Post-Roman Church Sites, Early Medieval Minsters and Royal Villae in the South-West of England

by Carole Lomas

DESCRIPTION:
Reconstructing the Development of Somerset's Early Medieval Church uses Somerset as a case study in order to contribute to a broader understanding of how the Church developed across the British Isles during the transition from the post-Roman Church to that in existence in the 11th century. To facilitate this a large retrogressive data set was constructed which enabled new patterns of development to be identified; this has pushed forward understanding of how Somerset and the South-West evolved, including the reconstruction of Somerset's early great estates and early medieval parochiae. Crucially, it demonstrates how the medieval archdeaconries and deaneries correlate with Somerset's early great estates.

This book identifies the pastorally pre-eminent early medieval churches across Somerset by using a weighting system which enables comparative assessments of different types of evidence, including both historical and topographical, to enable the changing significance of individual churches to be assessed. The two most important conclusions are that the development of the Church in Somerset varied from parochia to parochia; there is no one trajectory of Church development and that there is only a weak link between early medieval minster settlements and later urbanisation.

The book collates and cross-references all the earlier research into Somerset's early medieval Church and in so doing becomes the most up-to-date study of Somerset's post-Roman churches. The retrogressive systematic approach to the collection and collating of data provides a methodology for understanding the development of the early medieval Church in other regions.

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