

Wormleighton worked by 23 ploughteams, of which 7 belonged to the three demesnes and 16 to the ordinary folk. The intensive nature of arable land-use not only in Wormleighton but in the Feldon of Warwickshire as a whole in Domesday times has already been clearly demonstrated by Professor R. H. Kinvig in a fine series of distribution maps which merit careful study.¹ It is interesting to find that the number of recorded ploughteams was considerably in excess of the number of recorded ploughlands, and one wonders whether this indicates that the arable land was being very intensively worked at this time. If this were so, one would like to know whether the fertility of the soil was standing up to such intensive farming, but the Survey is unfortunately silent on such matters. Whereas plentiful woodland is recorded for villis in the Forest of Arden, north of the Avon, it is significant that none is recorded for Wormleighton and neighbouring villis, which again suggests that much clearing for arable and pasture had indeed taken place. The value of the vill had also increased considerably since just before the Conquest, when the three parts were worth 130 s., to 305 s. in 1086, though whether this considerable increase was entirely due to more intensive land-use or to harsh reassessment is unfortunately not known. In view of the apparent prosperity of Wormleighton in 1086 it is rather surprising to find that no mill is recorded there, whereas they were common in comparable villis in other parts of the Feldon.

Some measure of the importance of livestock in Wormleighton may be gained from the reference to 45 acres of meadow, providing the valuable hay crop on which cattle and sheep depended for supplementary feed in the harsh winter months following Martinmas. The principal meadows no doubt occupied the wetter clay land bordering the stream flowing just to the north of the village, with a second source around Crane Mere (Fig. 2). If one includes the three tenants of the separate estates, who may not necessarily have lived in Wormleighton, the total recorded population amounted to fifty, made up of 30 villeins, 8 bordars, 6 serfs, 1 priest, and 2 Frenchmen besides the three tenants. Assuming that the majority of these were heads of families, the total population of Wormleighton in 1086 must have been between 200 and 250, which is greater than that of today. The reference to two Frenchmen within Turchil's estate suggests that a small number of Norman folk had already entered the settlement, perhaps in the capacity of overseers. From the mention of a priest in both Wormleighton and Fenny Compton it would seem probable that a church had been established in each village, that at Wormleighton presumably occupying its present site on the hill overlooking the old village (*B* in Fig. 2). The sharp separation of church and village may appear unusual, but in Warwickshire there is nothing exceptional in this, for the churches at Warmington, Avon Dassett, and Burton Dassett, all close to Wormleighton, stand aloof on the hill above the old village. The present Church of St. Peter at Wormleighton contains remnants of an early twelfth-century structure in the surviving angles of the original nave, but no Anglo-Saxon material has come to light.² Presumably the early church, perhaps merely a wooden building, was rebuilt

¹ R. H. Kinvig, 'The Birmingham District in Domesday Times', *Birmingham and its Regional Setting* (1950), 113-134; see also his chapter on Warwickshire in H. C. Darby and I. B. Terrett (eds.), *The*

Domesday Geography of Midland England (1954), 270-308.

² *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, v (1949), 221-4.