

Migration und Integration
von der Urgeschichte bis zum Mittelalter
Migration and Integration
from Prehistory to the Middle Ages

9. Mitteldeutscher Archäologentag
vom 20. bis 22. Oktober 2016 in Halle (Saale)

Herausgeber Harald Meller, Falko Daim,
Johannes Krause und Roberto Risch



Tagungen des
Landesmuseums für Vorgeschichte Halle (Saale)
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herausgegeben von
Harald Meller,
Falko Daim,
Johannes Krause und
Roberto Risch

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The Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain: an archaeological perspective

Catherine Hills

Zusammenfassung

Die angelsächsische Migration nach Großbritannien aus archäologischer Sicht

Im vorliegenden Beitrag werden neuere archäologische Belege aus dem 5. Jh. n. Chr. in Großbritannien behandelt und erste Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung zum Ausmaß und den Auswirkungen der historisch belegten angelsächsischen Migration nach Großbritannien vorgestellt. Neuere Grabungen und Forschungen stellen einige der besser bekannten Berichte in Frage und es gilt auch genetische Untersuchungen in die neu erarbeiteten Zusammenhänge einzubeziehen. Es lassen sich für England klare regionale und chronologische Unterschiede festmachen, die, geleitet von germanischen Einflüssen aufgrund von Zuwanderungsbewegungen, ab dem frühen 5. Jh. n. Chr. in bestimmten östlichen Regionen, insbesondere in den Grafschaften Lincolnshire und Norfolk, auftauchen. In anderen Teilen Englands lässt sich ein eher lokaler und längerfristiger Prozess der Übernahme germanischer kultureller Aspekte und Begräbnissitten nachweisen, der wohl auf eine Migration sehr viel kleineren Ausmaßes zurückgeführt werden kann. Es kann sich dabei auch um Verschiebungen von schon bestehenden Gemeinschaften in Ostanglien und nicht direkt aus Germanien gehandelt haben. Sowohl Prozesse der Akkulturation, des erfolgreichen lokalen Widerstands als auch des gewaltsamen Aufzwingens neuer Eliten mögen beinahe von Dorf zu Dorf auf unterschiedliche Weise stattgefunden haben. Für die genetische Forschung bedeutet dies, dass man keinen schlagartigen Bevölkerungswechsel in ganz England erwarten darf. Während in gewissen Regionen Ost-Englands wohl ein wesentlicher Bevölkerungswechsel stattfand, erlebten andere Gebiete möglicherweise zahlenmäßig geringere und spätere Einwanderungswellen.

Introduction

In this paper some of the archaeological evidence relating to Britain during the 5th century AD will be presented, and some preliminary conclusions about the scale and impact of the historically recorded Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain will be drawn. Recent fieldwork and research calls into question some of the more familiar accounts, and interpretation of genetic research needs to be set in this revised context.

During the 5th century AD Britain ceased to be part of the Roman Empire and became a group of small warring territories, from which eventually developed the medieval kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Wales. This process involved population movements around the Irish and North

Summary

In this paper recent archaeological evidence relating to Britain during the 5th century AD is presented, with some preliminary conclusions about the scale and impact of the historically recorded Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain. Recent fieldwork and research call into question some of the more familiar accounts, and interpretation of genetic research needs to be set in this revised context. There was clear regional and chronological variation within England, with significant Germanic influence, reflecting migration, apparent from the early 5th century but only in specific eastern regions, especially the counties of Lincolnshire and Norfolk. In other parts of England there was a more locally varied and long-term process of adoption of Germanic culture and burial practices, probably reflecting a much smaller scale of immigration. The process might have involved movement from the established communities in East Anglia rather than directly from the continent. Acculturation, successful local resistance or the forcible imposition of new elites may all have operated, almost on a village by village basis. The implications of this conclusion for genetic research are that we should not expect to find a sudden change of population across the whole of England. Some regions in eastern England may have seen significant population change while elsewhere there may have been fewer and later immigrants.

Sea coastal regions, of which the largest was that from northern Germany and southern Scandinavia into eastern England, involving people who later became known as Anglo-Saxons. The debates surrounding the Anglo-Saxon migration have tended to polarise between minimal and maximal interpretations of the scale and impact of 5th-century population movements. These interpretations have to some extent been driven by changing perceptions of the relationships between the peoples inhabiting Britain, specifically whether or not the English are perceived as incomers, ancestrally different from their indigenous neighbours. Any such difference has been explained as the result of English descent from Germanic immigrants, who displaced in the east the native British: the latter are seen as

having survived in the west and north of Britain as the Scottish, Welsh, and Cornish peoples. Alternative versions see the Anglo-Saxons as a small incoming group, so that the population of what became England remained essentially British, and so not ancestrally different from the other peoples of Britain. Which version of the story has been favoured has varied over past centuries according to contemporary politics as much as, or more than, analysis of any kind of evidence (Hills 2003; Brugmann 2011). This is the reason why this topic has remained of interest both to scholars and a wider public in Britain, but it is also a source of confusion. A variety of disciplines has been deployed to try to resolve this confusion, including history, linguistics, genetics, and archaeology. All of us have been guilty of taking as our starting point over-simplified versions of the conclusions of the others, often drawing on outdated publications.

New archaeological information

The new archaeological information provides in some respects a much larger scale of data than has been previously available. It is not always easy to access this new data, so that textbooks and general literature tend to depend on older, out-dated summaries and reviews. Key sources of new evidence are excavation in advance of development, and landscape survey, which has added LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) and geophysics, as well as metal-detecting, to established methods of field walking and aerial survey. The density of settlement during some parts of the 1st millennium AD, as indicated by metal-detected finds and by commercial excavations, is far greater, especially in eastern England, than had previously been appreciated. The scale of some excavations is so large that it is possible to see the history of a whole piece of landscape, in some cases showing dense occupation, in others periods of abandonment. Environmental evidence complements this by showing the regional history of landuse, as does analysis of the landscape through all methods of survey. On a smaller scale, interpretation of the history of specific sites continues, where possible with increased precision of chronology. Much of this information is not synthesised or easily accessible, but some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. My intention in this paper is simply to outline some of this new archaeological evidence. This will not necessarily answer questions about historical trajectories or ethnicity but it will raise questions about some of the assumptions that underpin traditional accounts. In summary, the picture which emerges is one of regional variation: there was not one »Anglo-Saxon migration« but a variety of different interactions, over a century or more, between native and incomer in different parts of the former provinces of Roman Britain.

Chronology

Dating is a key issue: the 5th century AD is a period for which precise dating is problematic. Archaeologists have often accepted the constraints of the historical dates, derived mainly from the 8th-century historian, Bede, of 410 AD for

the »End of Roman Britain« and 449 AD for the »Adventus Saxonum« (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* Bk i.11, Bk i.15; 38–41; 48–51). Archaeological evidence does provide some support for these pivotal dates: in Britain the coin-dated sequences of the Roman period end soon after 400 AD while the majority of the well-equipped female inhumation burials of Early Anglo-Saxon England belong to the late 5th and first half of the 6th century AD. This has left a gap across much of the 5th century, accentuated by the fact that the period has been studied by different scholars from opposite ends, either focusing on the decline and collapse of Roman Britain, or on the origins of Anglo-Saxon and medieval England. This has left a kind of no-man's-land in between, producing anomalies like 4th-century »Germanic« metalwork or pottery, back-projecting and reversing the influence that Late Roman artefacts did indeed have on later Anglo-Saxon ornament. More rigorous analysis of assemblages and greater precision in radiocarbon dating is beginning to provide more defined chronologies, but many cemeteries in eastern England predominantly contain cremations, for which radiocarbon dating has not yet been widely used, and the 5th century has in any case a relatively flat calibration curve (Bayliss 2016). The problem of establishing dating for the 5th century means that debate as to continuity or discontinuity has often gone in circles. There are some contexts where discontinuity does seem clear – for example most towns show a hiatus between Roman activity and Mid or Late Saxon reoccupation. However, where they have late occupation sequences which begin in the late 4th century and extend at least into the early 5th century it is difficult to be precise as to when that hiatus began. In rural contexts, *Grubenhäuser* and post-hole buildings have been excavated next to some Roman villas, but it is not clear whether they were in contemporary use.

This picture is beginning to change. Both »Roman« and »Saxon« activity can be identified in the 5th century, overlapping chronologically in the first half of the century and possibly later, although not necessarily in the same geographical region. Continuation of coin use into the early decades of the century has been argued on the basis of the distribution of clipped silver *siliquae* as well as the occurrence of a few hoards, including the »Patching hoard«, deposited later than 461 AD (Bland et al. 2013; White et al. 1999). Continuing manufacture and use of pottery in a Roman tradition into the 5th century has also been identified (Gerrard 2016). Some of the forts on Hadrian's Wall continued in use, possibly with the garrison and its commander simply becoming the local chief and his retinue (Wilmott 1997). J. Gerrard has argued for a similar process elsewhere, with local elites in competition for territorial control, once the overarching authority of the empire had gone (Gerrard 2013). Such elites would have relied on the military strength provided by their retinues, fighting men of local or foreign origin, and would have displayed their power visually through weapons, armour, and imagery. In this version, a society like that imagined in *Beowulf*, with warlords and their retinues forming a competitive elite, would have come into existence across Britain, not necessarily as a result of conquest but as a response to the political and military situation. The British names in some Anglo-Saxon genealogies, such as Cerdic

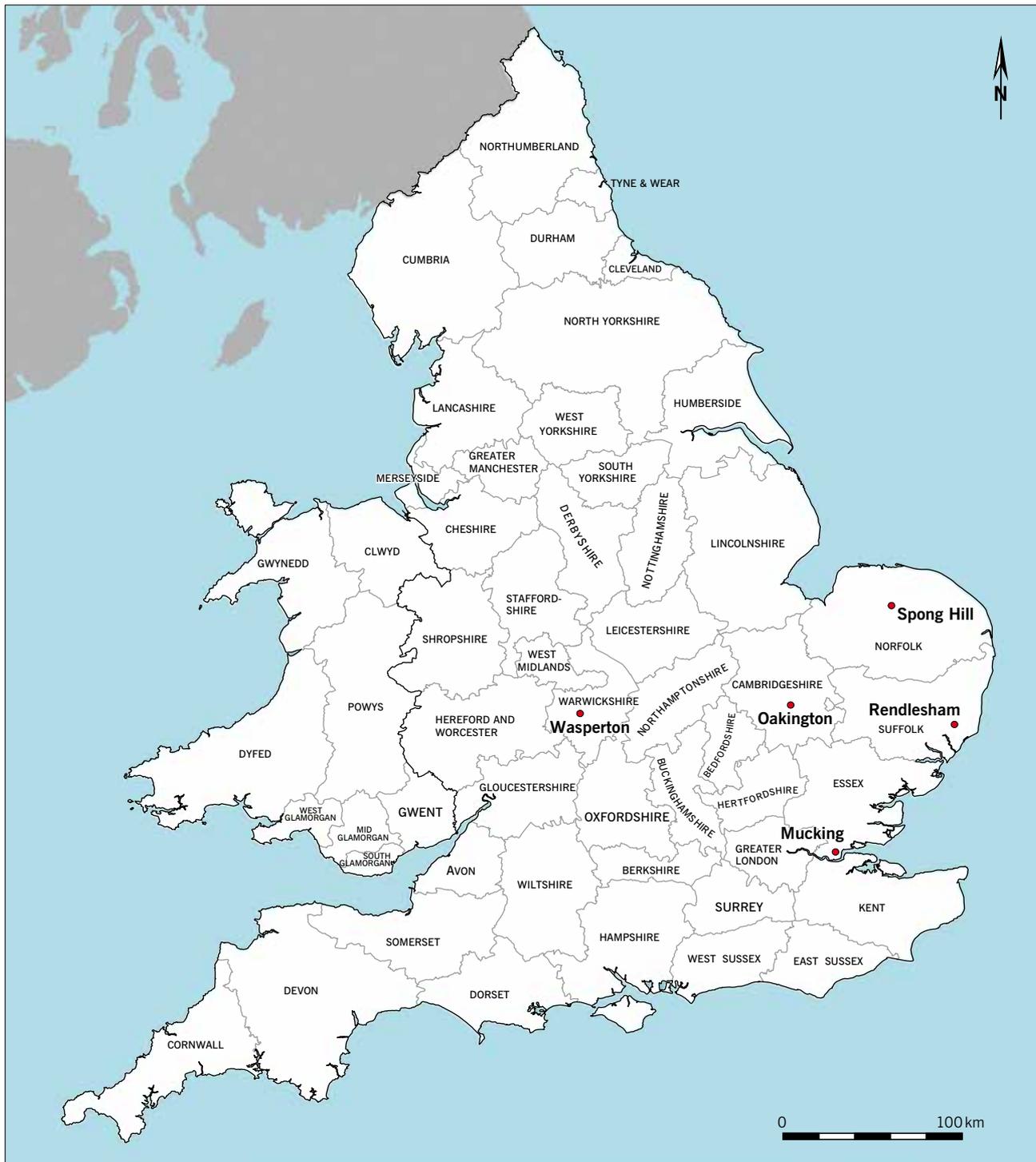


Fig. 1 Location map showing the counties of England and Wales and places mentioned in the text.

Abb. 1 Lageplan mit den Grafschaften Englands und Wales' sowie den Orten, die im Text erwähnt werden.

amongst the ancestors of King Alfred of Wessex, might reflect a later rationalisation of this process to produce a Germanic ancestry for early leaders who had in fact been British.

From the other direction, greater chronological precision shows that some of the early Anglo-Saxon evidence can be attributed to the first half of the 5th century, notably cremation cemeteries in Norfolk and Lincolnshire such as Spong Hill, a site discussed further later in this paper. However, the distribution of this evidence is very uneven, and some parts

of England have produced little, if any, Anglo-Saxon material earlier than the 6th century AD. A few sites occupied in both the Late Roman and Early Saxon periods do indicate some degree of continued significance. Of these, Mucking, Rendlesham, and Wasperton will be discussed further below (Fig. 1). This qualification of the account of a simple *Adventus Saxonum* in the middle of the 5th century needs to be set in the context of the recent increase in archaeological evidence.

Synthesis of recent archaeological fieldwork

A considerable amount of commercial archaeology has been carried out in Britain, as in other parts of Europe, over recent decades. The scale and location of fieldwork has been dictated by modern development, and not by research, and it often consists of very small excavations, or of linear transects along the line of modern roads. However, sometimes very large areas are investigated, for example in advance of the construction of airports, or around some cities. This has provided a consequently large quantity of information, much of which (though not all) is deposited in online archives: in Britain, the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)¹. Much of this consists of basic site reports, known as »the grey literature«, which does not provide synthetic analysis and discussion. Several recent projects have begun to address this problem, using databases drawn from ADS as the basis for research. A team at Reading University and Cotswold archaeology has collected and analysed evidence for the rural settlement of Roman Britain, which is now available as a database online with a projected series of publications, the first of which is now published (Smith et al. 2016). At Oxford, the »English Landscape and Identities« (EngLAID) project has taken a longer term and more geographically selective approach, also developing online resources and forthcoming publications². The EngLAID maps show the dense distribution of recent commercial excavation across England (EngLAID web page). At Exeter, the »Fields of Britannia« project drew especially on palaeoenvironmental and historic map evidence of the history of landuse during the 1st millennium AD (Rippon et al. 2015). Taken together, the »Rural Settlement of Roman Britain« and the »Fields of Britannia« projects show the considerable scale of settlement in lowland Britain in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. The number of excavated and recorded Roman rural settlements across England and Wales up to the end of 2014 was around 2500 (Rural Settlement of Roman Britain online resource)³. There is regional variation, with lower densities in upland regions of western England and Wales. Chronologically there was a peak of farming settlements in use during the 2nd century AD, with decline thereafter, especially in the 4th century (Smith et al. 2016, 405 Fig. 12.16). Fewer sites in most regions were occupied in the later period, and there were changes in architecture and the morphology of settlements and an increased focus on cattle exploitation. The apparent decline in settlement and population seen during the 5th century may have been partly the continuation of a trend begun while Britain was still part of the Roman empire. Causes for this decline may have included climatic and political instability as well as external threats or actual invasion.

Roman and Saxon landscape

This information has not yet been factored into most Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon settlement distribution

maps, which treat the two periods as undifferentiated blocks of time. These maps do show a dramatic decline in most areas between the two broad periods, whatever kind of information is being plotted. See for instance the contrasting maps of Roman and Saxon Northamptonshire (Williamson et al. 2013, Pl. 9; 15a) or Suffolk (Dymond/Martin 1989, 43; 45). However, a closer examination shows not only the overall decline within the Roman period indicated by the rural settlement research, but also a more variable picture.

Norfolk, and central eastern England more widely, is a region which shows clearly how archaeological evidence needs to be understood in the context of all of its past history. This was the most densely populated part of England at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 AD (Darby 1977, Fig. 34–36). It remained relatively densely populated throughout the Middle Ages, but thereafter the Atlantic trade caused a shift to the west of Britain, to Bristol and then Liverpool, and the cities of the industrial revolution grew up in the Midlands and northern England. Norfolk and Suffolk were left behind and became underpopulated, predominantly rural counties, which still see less development, and therefore less commercial archaeology, than the south east and the Midlands. As a result, the distribution of excavated sites is relatively less dense than in some other parts of central and southern England (Smith et al. 2016, 387 Fig. 12.1; 388 Fig. 12.2). However, the sand and gravel soils are conducive to cropmarks, which suggest a dense settlement pattern in the Roman period (Taylor 2007, 15 Fig. 3.3; 17 Fig. 3.5). There are also dense distributions of most categories of metal-detected finds, partly the result of long-term recording of such finds, but also the result of arable agriculture which produces metal-detected finds in quantity, albeit in the course of destroying archaeological evidence (Chester-Kadwell 2009, 88 Fig. 6.18). In Norfolk, detailed analysis of the evidence, especially metal-detected finds, showed an Early Anglo-Saxon settlement distribution in that county quite similar to the Roman (Chester-Kadwell 2009, 93 Fig. 7.1; 136 Fig. 7.80). The palaeoenvironmental evidence is consistent with this, because it suggests an increase, rather than a decline, in arable landuse from Roman to early medieval in Norfolk (Rippon 2015, 310 Fig. 12.2). The Norfolk evidence includes artefacts of 5th- and 6th-century date, including a number of burnt objects which have clearly come from disturbed cremations. This indicates that the county saw significant change in material culture from the early 5th century, which must have involved the arrival of new people but not necessarily the disappearance of the previous population. Defining »continuity« is problematic. For example, at Spong Hill Late Roman field systems were still visible and used to structure the layout of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, but there was a change of use, from farm to cemetery, with some evidence for clearance of the site and backfilling of ditches. In terms of population it could be argued that this represented the takeover by new people of land which had

¹ <archaeologydataservice.ac.uk> (12.06.2017).

² English Landscapes and Identities, Oxford.

³ Roman rural settlement project, Reading University and Cotswold Archaeology: M. Allen/

N. Blick/T. Brindle/T. Evans/M. Fulford/
N. Holbrook/J. D. Richards/A. Smith (eds.), The
Rural Settlement of Roman Britain: an online
resource [data-set]. York: Archaeology Data

Service [distributor] (York 2016),
doi:10.5284/1030449.

been deserted by its previous inhabitants. However, it had not been deserted so long that fields and their boundaries had disappeared, and the deliberate choice of the site might reflect local knowledge of topography and communication routes.

In Yorkshire, in the Vale of Pickering, geophysical survey on a very large scale has been directed by D. Powlesland. This shows clusters of *Grubenhäuser*, representing Early Anglo-Saxon settlements, spaced similarly to the later medieval villages but differing from the earlier Roman »ladder settlements« in precise location and layout (Powlesland et al. 2006). The excavated cemetery and settlement site of West Heslerton was in use mainly during the 6th to 8th centuries AD, and has not produced much 5th-century material, which might suggest that the change in material culture happened later in Yorkshire than further south in Norfolk (Haughton et al. 1999)⁴. In Norfolk and in the Vale of Pickering, therefore, it is possible to argue for a significant degree of continuing occupation and landuse throughout the 1st millennium AD, albeit by people using different kinds of material culture and not often at exactly the same sites as before. It remains difficult to interpret this in terms of numbers of incomers and their relationship with native Britons, but while complete annihilation of the latter is contradicted by the degree of continuing landuse, the arrival of new people is confirmed by the scale of adoption of new types of house, burial, and artefact. The population here is likely to have been a mixture of native and incomer.

On the other hand, some areas which have been very extensively excavated have shown little or no evidence for Early Anglo-Saxon settlement. In Essex, a large area was excavated in advance of the construction of Stansted airport. This produced much evidence for Roman activity, indicating that in the Late Roman period there was »an increased drive towards agricultural intensification« (Cooke et al. 2008, 170), as well as industrial activity. However, some sites showed little evidence for activity after the mid 4th century and there were no coins found which had been minted later than 378 AD. This is followed by what appears to be the abandonment of the area: »Extensive programmes of fieldwalking, evaluation, and excavation have failed to find any convincing evidence for post Roman settlement or agricultural activity prior to the Middle Saxon period« (Cooke et al. 2008, 180). Another excavation in Essex, along a 19 km linear transect in advance of a motorway, also found no Anglo-Saxon material or structures, apart from a single 8th-century building (Timby et al. 2007, 149). This suggests depopulation in parts of north-west Essex with no continuity of occupation and possibly some forest regeneration, which is consistent with the lack of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries or metal-detected finds across inland Essex and Hertfordshire. The environmental evidence for Stansted partially contradicts the suggestion of forest regeneration because it indicates the landscape was open and some mixed agriculture was practised, but this probably dates to the Middle rather than Early Anglo-Saxon period (Wiltshire/Murphy 2004, 354). By the

time the region was reoccupied in the Late Saxon and medieval periods, burials were no longer equipped with easily identifiable grave goods and *Grubenhäuser* had also gone out of use, so cultural identity is difficult to observe. The later population is not likely to have been descended from the people who lived there in the Roman period, but may have come from neighbouring areas, with whatever ancestry those neighbours had.

Regional case study: Cambridge

Other regions present more complicated histories, being neither completely deserted nor densely occupied. A good example is Cambridgeshire. Extensive areas have been excavated in recent decades around the city of Cambridge and its neighbourhood in advance of development. This has produced much evidence for later prehistoric and Roman activity, but very little for Early Anglo-Saxon. South of the city there were scattered structures and burials of Middle Saxon date but little, if anything, was recorded from the 5th to the 6th centuries, apart from a few poorly recorded old finds (Evans et al. 2008). The same picture is repeated to the north-west of the city, where a large area was investigated as a whole, producing prehistoric and Roman settlements and burials but no definitely Anglo-Saxon or medieval features, despite being adjacent to the known site of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Girton (Fig. 2). Further away, in the fens, the Roman port of Colne Fen, near Earith, came to an end and was not succeeded by any identifiable Anglo-Saxon activity (Evans et al. 2013). In Cambridgeshire, as in Essex, there were landscapes which were very much occupied and exploited from the last centuries BC to the 4th century AD but then remained almost empty until modern development began in the 20th century. There is, however, some evidence for Early Anglo-Saxon activity within the area of the medieval city of Cambridge. So far only one Early Anglo-Saxon settlement has been even partially excavated (Dodwell et al. 2004), but Anglo-Saxon burials have been found in and around the city, mostly poorly recorded but clearly representing several cemeteries. Recently, an inhumation cemetery has been excavated at Cherry Hinton to the west of the city. Some of the burials at Cherry Hinton contained classic 6th-century artefacts, such as a square-headed brooch and a buckle with Style II animal ornament, but there were only a few possibly 5th-century finds, including a small number of urned cremations (pers. comm. R. Mortimer, Oxford Archaeology East). In the south of the county a number of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are known, in an area where a series of linear earthworks appear to represent a defended early medieval territorial boundary (Malim/Hines 1998, 320 Fig. 9.1). Most of the burials from Cambridge city and county are associated with finds of 6th-century date, although a few are later, from the 7th century. There are, however, some cremations from Girton and also from a poorly recorded cemetery near St Johns College, as well as

4 Heslerton parish project, Vale of Pickering project, Director D. Powlesland: <<http://www.landscaperesearchcentre.org/AA>

<<http://www.landscaperesearchcentre.org/AA>>%20Tier%201%20Primary%20Headings/heslerton_parity_project.htm (29.05.2017).



Fig. 2 North-west Cambridge excavations, Cambridgeshire (England).

Abb. 2 Ausgrabungen im Nordwesten von Cambridge, Cambridgeshire (England).

Cherry Hinton, which do have 5th-century urns and artefacts. In this region, therefore, we see a dramatic contraction in occupation, beginning in the 4th century, with only a few burials dated to the later part of the 5th century, followed by more substantial cemeteries in the 6th century, including Oakington, the site which provided the samples for the genetic analysis presented by S. Schiffels (see Schiffels/Sayer in the present volume). As in Essex, the 6th-century Cambridge population may not all (or mostly) have been descended from their 4th-century predecessors. They might represent successful expansion from Norfolk, across the now obsolete frontier marked by the Devil's Dyke, by people who are likely to have been at least partially of incoming Anglo-Saxon descent. The genetic mixture suggested by Schiffels for Oakington would make sense in this context: he found individuals with indigenous British, incoming »Dutch«, and mixed ancestry (cf. Schiffels/Sayer in the present volume).

Regional variation

If we look more widely at landuse and settlement in England, they confirm a story of regional variation. The palaeoenvironmental evidence, especially pollen data, for the Roman to medieval transition is interpreted as indicating »relatively little overall change during the 1st millennium AD« (Rippon et al. 2015, 312). Within the regions defined in S. Rippon's study, only the south-east saw some increase in tree pollen, while Norfolk and parts of Suffolk saw an increase in arable pollen from the Roman to the early medieval period (Rippon et al. 2015, 310–311 Fig. 12.1–12.4). Widespread forest regeneration is not identifiable, although there are areas where this may have happened, such as the Weald of Sussex and

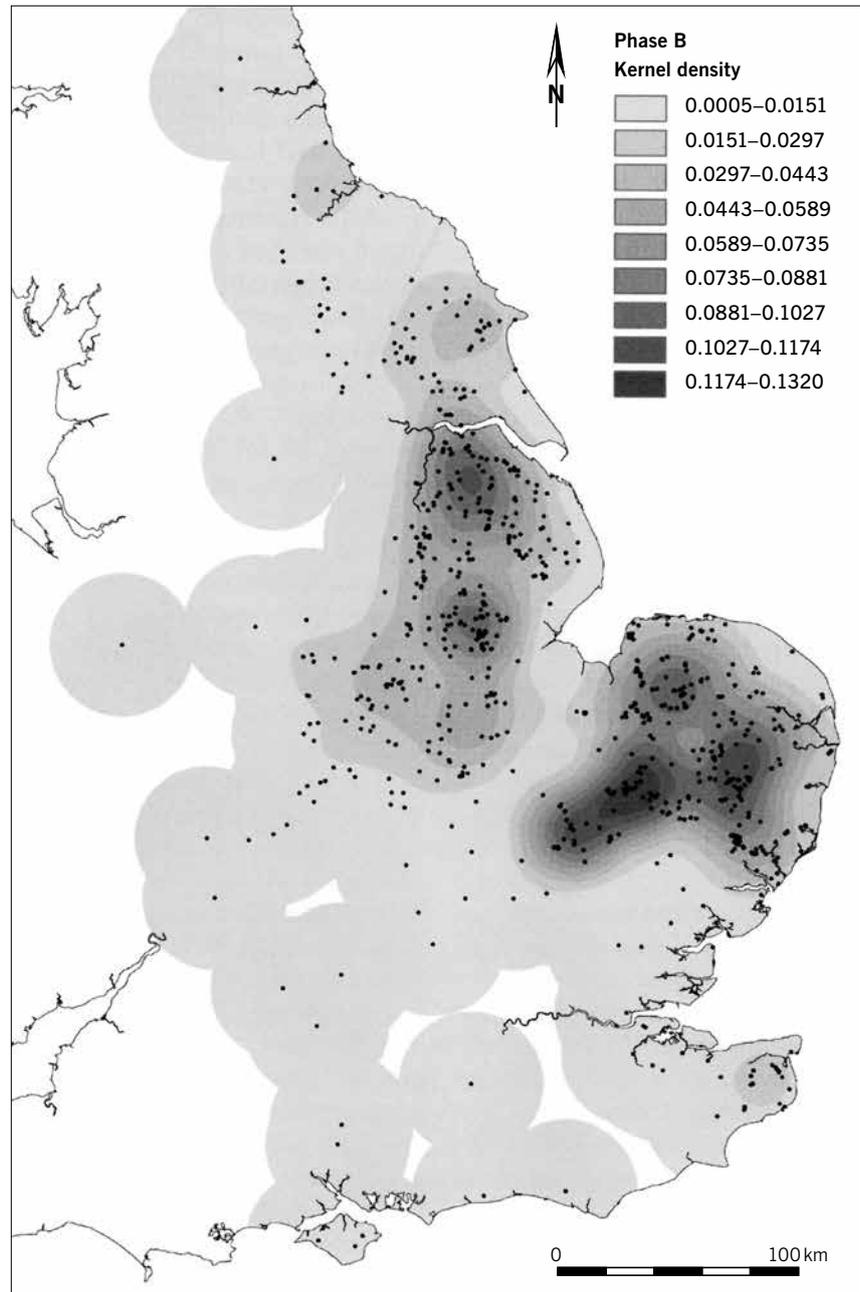
Kent, and possibly the part of Essex discussed above. This study also investigates the possible survival of Late Roman field systems, evidenced through excavation and survey, by comparing them with field boundaries recorded in early maps. In some places there is a convincing correspondence between the two, which suggests continuity of landuse. Taken together, the pollen and map evidence certainly demonstrate varied regional histories and a significant degree of continuity of landuse, with land staying open and farmed in many areas, mostly not abandoned and covered with regenerated woodland. This implies some continuity of population to maintain the land at least as pasture. The complexity of landscape history, and the problems encountered in generalising results across regions, are well shown by T. Williamson, for example in his detailed research on the area around Sutton Hoo in Suffolk (Williamson 2008) or Northamptonshire (Williamson et al. 2013). However, all the recent studies agree that there was regional variation, both during the Roman period and thereafter, and that there was not a simple cataclysmic story of the replacement of one population and its system of agriculture by another.

Metal detected finds

Landscape analysis is a relatively new approach to the topic of Anglo-Saxon migration, which has more often been approached by archaeologists through artefacts. This research area has also been reinvigorated in recent years, partly by new cemetery excavations and by reanalysis of older finds, but also through the discovery of many artefacts through metal detecting. Metal-detected finds can only contribute to research when they are recorded, as is currently the case in

Fig. 3 Distribution of cruciform brooches in England, phase B (AD 475–550). Kernel density estimation (KDE) analysis showing high (dark) and low (light) density areas.

Abb. 3 Verbreitung der kreuzförmigen Fibeln in England, Phase B (475–550 n. Chr.). Kerndichteschätzungsanalyse (KDE) mit hohen (dunklen) und niedrigen (hellen) Dichtebereichen.



England and Wales through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, hosted by the British Museum⁵. Not all metal-detected finds are reported but a very considerable number have been, causing distribution maps of many types of object to be redrawn and reinterpreted. One example of the resulting change in perception is the distribution of the copper alloy dress fasteners and ornaments worn by early medieval women, and often buried in their graves. Before 1990 the numbers of one type of brooch, the cruciform brooch, known to researchers, could be counted in hundreds: C. Mortimer listed 547 in the most comprehensive study to that date (Mortimer 1990). The numbers of these brooches have since then increased very considerably as a result of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The most recent

review by T. Martin was based on a sample of 2075 brooches (Martin 2015), and in the county of Norfolk alone M. Chester-Kadwell recorded more than 1000 (Chester-Kadwell 2009). Examples of this type of brooch, and others, continue to be found, and those recovered and reported are likely to represent a fraction of those originally made and used. The distribution of the cruciform brooches remains similar, but has become more striking in its concentration in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk (Fig. 3). Other artefacts, wrist-clasps and girdle-hangers, have similar distributions (Fig. 4; Hines 1993; Felder 2014). These finds are part of the evidence for strong regional variation within 5th–6th century Britain.

⁵ Portable Antiquities Scheme: <https://finds.org.uk/> (29.05.2017).



Fig. 4 Distribution of girdle-hangers in the 5th–6th century AD.

Abb. 4 Verbreitung der Gürtelgehänge im 5.–6. Jh. n. Chr.

Sites occupied in both Roman and Saxon periods

1. Rendlesham

Metal-detecting also contributes to knowledge of specific sites. Rendlesham, in Suffolk, has long been identified as the *villa regalis* mentioned by Bede in connection with the kings of East Anglia, a kingdom which can be approximately equated with the modern counties of Norfolk and Suffolk (*Historia Ecclesiastica* Bk iii.22; 285). The site was suffering increasingly from the illegal unreported use of metal-detectors, resulting in theft of unrecorded artefacts. The landowner responded by calling in the Suffolk Archaeological Service, which organised a comprehensive and fully recorded survey by local detectorists working with archaeologists (Fig. 5). They found thousands of artefacts, many dating to the 6th to 8th centuries AD, including evidence for manufacture and use of gold, silver, and copper alloy artefacts, and also Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Merovingian, and Byzantine

coins (Scull et al. 2016). This was followed by geophysical survey and small-scale excavation, which have demonstrated the existence of a major Late Roman and early medieval centre which might be comparable with southern Scandinavian central places such as Uppåkra, Skåne County (Sweden), or Gudme, Fyn, southern Denmark. This is the first such site to have been recognised in Britain. A key point is that it was already significant in the Late Roman period, so that C. Scull argues its »exceptional character in the 6th to 8th centuries was rooted in its earlier status under the Late Roman Empire« (Scull et al. 2016, 1601). This seems to have been a focus of elite activity in both periods, which could mean either that it was an early target for takeover or that the local leaders joined forces with incomers and adopted their material culture. Either way, this remains a place with long-distance contacts across Europe and a centre for production of high-status artefacts.

There are a few other places where there is evidence for both Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon occupation, without clear indication of a long gap in use. Their individual his-



Fig. 5 Rendlesham, Suffolk (England): metal detectorists and early medieval ornamental metalwork.

Abb. 5 Rendlesham, Suffolk (England): Sondengänger und frühmittelalterliche ornamentverzierte Metallobjekte.

tories tell different stories about the process of transition, two of which are summarised below.

2. Mucking

Mucking, on the Thames estuary, was a multi-period site, excavated in the 1960s and 70s, with occupation ranging from the Bronze Age to the Early Saxon period, including substantial prehistoric and Roman phases of occupation which have only recently been fully published (Lucy/Evans 2016). The presence of granaries and evidence for large-scale pottery production indicate this was a place with an economic function in the later prehistoric and Roman periods, probably not a high status residence, although possibly with some element of ritual importance. Evidence for Roman occupation declines after the mid 3rd century but there is late 4th-century pottery, much of it coming from Anglo-Saxon structures. S. Lucy argues that this suggests the initial Anglo-Saxon settlement took place within a continuing local

context of Romano-British activity. Even the later Anglo-Saxon settlement and cemeteries for which the site is best known are located to some extent in relation to the pre-existing Roman enclosures, most notably cemetery two, placed neatly between two Roman rectangular enclosures (Lucy/Evans 2016, 438 Fig. 5.20). As the excavator, M. Jones, argued, Mucking is a strategic location, controlling the Thames estuary (Jones 1974, 193). The initial settlement of Anglo-Saxons may have taken place within a framework of continuing local officialdom, but it certainly becomes a place dominated by the material culture, and presumably the actual presence, of incomers. The bones of those buried at Mucking have not survived well, so it is unlikely they will ever provide genetic information to confirm their ancestry.

3. Wasperton

In the West Midlands there are several cemeteries with Anglo-Saxon grave goods, in use mainly during the 6th cen-

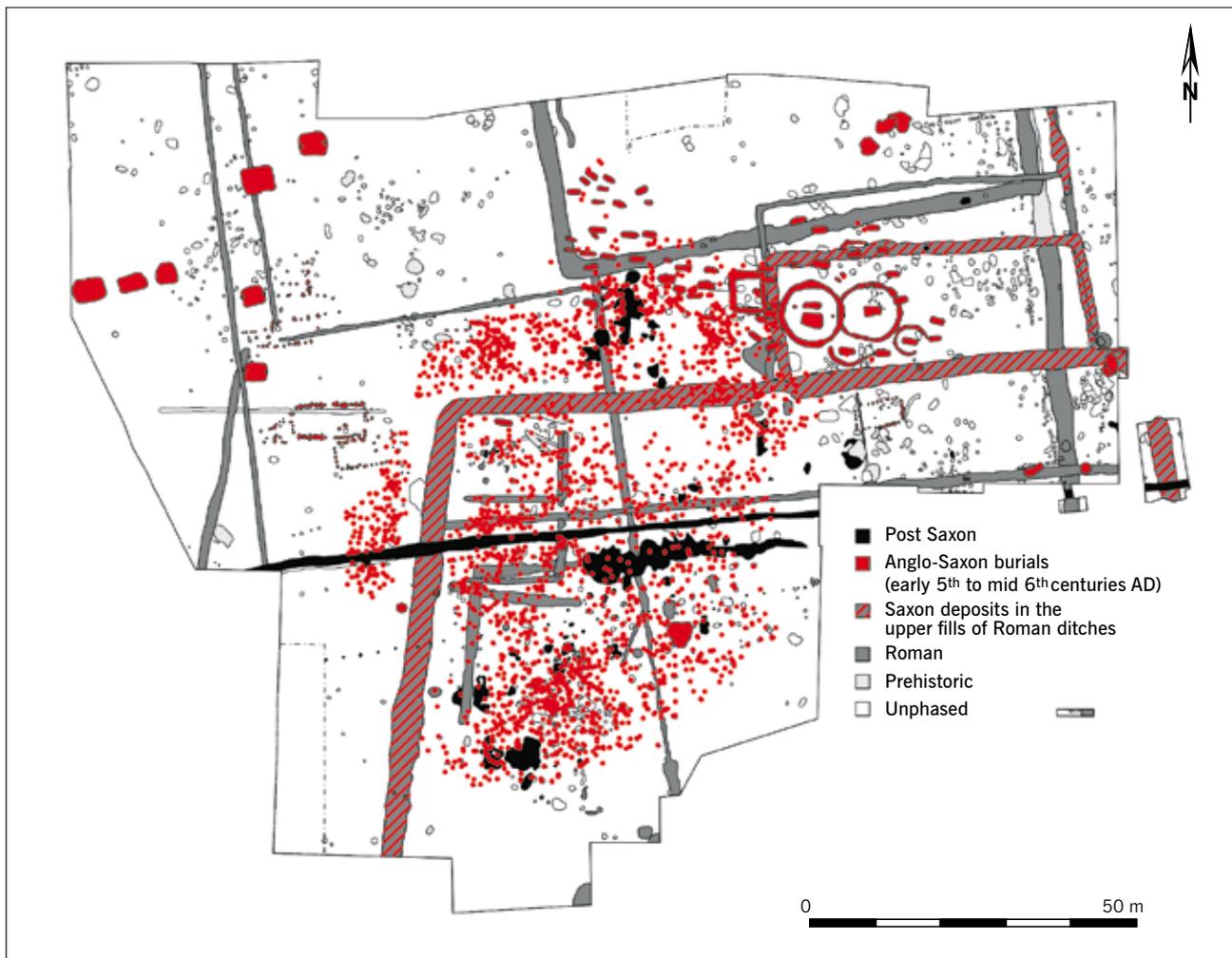


Fig. 6 Spong Hill, Norfolk (England): plan of excavation.

Abb. 6 Spong Hill, Norfolk (England): Grabungsplan.

tury. One of these sites is Wasperton, near Warwick (Carver et al. 2009). This is a rare example of a cemetery in use both in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, from the 4th to the 7th century. In the 4th century AD inhumations and cremations were buried in groups, interpreted as family plots, within a small rectangular enclosure, followed in the 5th century by inhumations in coffins constructed using iron nails, some with stone packing, oriented west-east. At the end of the 5th century a group of urned cremations of Anglo-Saxon character were buried in an open space within the enclosure, while during the 6th century, inhumations oriented north-south with Anglo-Saxon grave goods occupied part of the enclosed space. Later in the 6th century and into the 7th, burials under small mounds took place outside the enclosure. The regional connections of the Anglo-Saxon artefacts are with eastern England to start with, but then shift to Wessex. The changing burial practice at this site is consistent with continued use by local people with the addition of incomers, who chose or accepted the local British cemetery as the place to bury their own dead. If the latest burials under mounds are those of the elite, by that stage the people at Wasperton were under the control or leadership of people who presented themselves as having Anglo-Saxon ancestry. This site shows

the clearest demonstration of a process of population mixing which may have happened very widely.

4. Spong Hill

A different picture is presented at Spong Hill, in central Norfolk. Here a prehistoric and Roman settlement was succeeded by a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery, excavated in the 1970s and the subject of ongoing research by the author of this paper and many others (Hills/Lucy 2013). At Spong Hill the latest Roman ditches were partially filled in with cleared vegetation before the Anglo-Saxon cemetery came into use (Rickett 1995, 41). Here there does seem to have been separation between the two phases of activity and a significant cultural break in the nature of use, from settlement to cemetery, but not a long period of abandonment of the site.

The cemetery was excavated in its entirety, producing more than 2500 cremations but only 57 inhumations. Earlier disturbance appears to have removed some hundreds more cremations (Fig. 6). The Spong Hill pottery and artefacts show strong cultural connections with contemporary sites

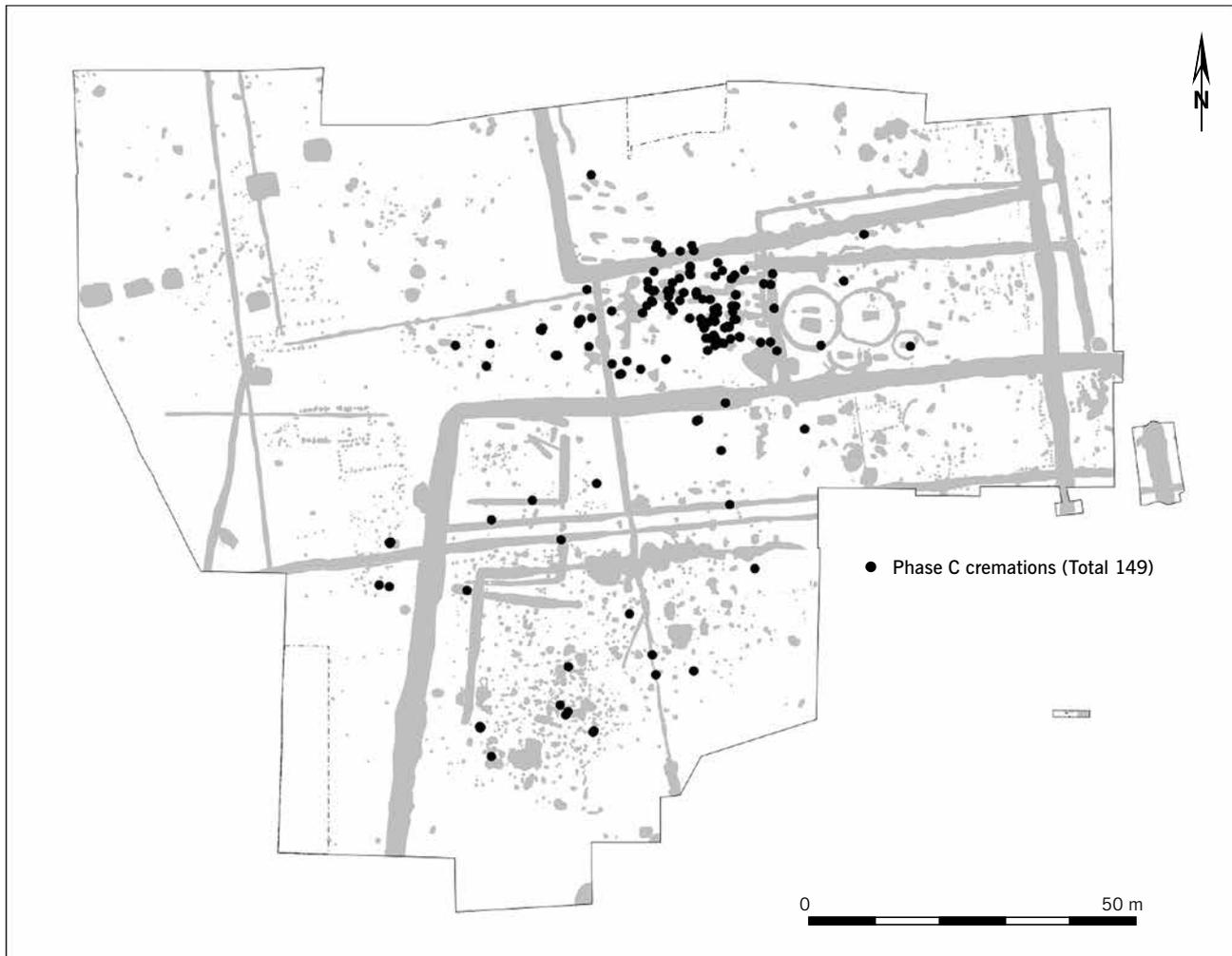


Fig. 7 Spong Hill, Norfolk (England): Phase C (late 5th to early 6th century AD).

Abb. 7 Spong Hill, Norfolk (England): Phase C (spätes 5. bis frühes 6. Jh. n. Chr.).

on the continent, visible through similarities in artefacts, pottery styles, and depositional practice, for both initial and central periods of the cemetery's use. Comparison of Spong Hill with major north German cemeteries shows there was continuing traffic and influence in both directions across the North Sea, as well as continuing local development. These links are, to varying extents, with different parts of the North Sea coastal region. Schleswig-Holstein, an »Anglian« region of north Germany, provides good parallels for the use of miniatures and cruciform brooches, and in the styles of pottery decoration seen in the earliest phases at Spong Hill. But even in the earlier phases at Spong Hill we also see influences from the »Saxon« Elbe-Weser area, particularly in the occasional presence of distinctive brooch types such as supporting arm, equal arm and applied brooches, and in stamped pottery decoration. The most distinctive artefact assemblages, the miniature toilet sets, are found in greatest quantity in Schleswig Holstein. Spong Hill therefore draws on a variety of continental regional traditions; it is not simply a transported package from any one specific place. Once established in Norfolk, local traditions developed, most notably in the use of stamped decoration on pottery. The role of the existing local British population is perhaps mani-

fested in a small number of Roman artefacts in burials and some aspects of burial practice. It remains probable that some of those buried in an »Anglo-Saxon« cremation urn were, in fact, of local British ancestry, though this cannot be quantified. A detailed chronology for this site has been established (Hills/Lucy 2013). This depends firstly on the relative sequence of material from Spong Hill, using stratigraphic relationships between burials and correspondence analysis of associated finds and pot decoration motifs. This internal sequence has been compared with later Roman and migration period chronologies within Britain and on the continent. Phase A and B consist of the majority of the cremations, with no inhumations, and occupy all of the cemetery area, with groupings of similarly decorated pots probably reflecting family plots. The latest phase, C, shows a contraction of burial to the north-eastern quarter of the cemetery, where both cremations and inhumations were buried (Fig. 7). The earliest phase, A, started before the middle of the 5th century. Key artefact types are antler combs and cruciform brooches. The combs include types that date from the late 4th century, most belong to the 5th century, with very few having a range extending beyond 500 AD (Riddler/Trzaska-Nartowski 2013, 141 Fig. 2.61). The main brooch

type is the cruciform of the typologically early, small, simple variety, with separate full round side-knobs. There is room for further discussion of the precise dating of some artefacts and possibly further precision and subdivision of phases but it is clear that the cemetery began at a time when artefacts were in use which belong to the years around 400 AD. The final phase of Spong Hill is contemporary with the initial phase of Anglo-Saxon inhumations elsewhere in England, which date between the late 5th and mid 6th centuries AD (Penn/Brugmann 2007).

The key point is that we have concluded that most of the cremations at Spong Hill were buried during the 5th century AD. This revision of dating carries with it the implication that the main use of Spong Hill was earlier than most furnished Anglo-Saxon inhumations in England, and partly contemporary with continental sites such as Issendorf, prov. Stade (Germany), and Schmalstede, prov. Rendsburg-Eckernförde (Germany), rather than later. This contradicts the traditional start date for substantial Anglo-Saxon presence in England, ultimately derived from Bede of the mid 5th century AD (*Historia Ecclesiastica* i.15, 48–51). Artefact types dated on the continent to the late 4th or early 5th century have previously been argued to have a later currency in England, simply because it was thought they could not have arrived before 449 AD. This resulted in a circular argument, seen as confirming a late 5th-century date for English material. The Spong Hill evidence shows we should abandon this line of reasoning.

Conclusion

The chronological overlap in use of sites in eastern England and in north Germany also means that we cannot interpret the process of migration as a simple one of abandonment of regions on one side of the North Sea and initiation of new settlements and cemeteries on the other. Contacts across and around the North Sea existed throughout the early medieval period (as at any other time), and there must have been continuing traffic and influence in both directions across the North Sea, as well as continuing local developments.

In a wider regional context it can be seen that the overall distribution within Britain of cremation burials and other 5th-century finds has a clear pattern. Early to mid 5th century pottery and artefacts are found in small numbers across southern and eastern England, especially in Kent and the Upper Thames, and some key coastal sites such as Rendlesham and Mucking. However, the main focus is in eastern England around the Wash. The modern counties of Norfolk and Lincolnshire, with parts of the East Midlands and southern Yorkshire, show a density of both excavated cremation burials and metal-detected finds which is of a different order of magnitude to that elsewhere in England (Fig. 8). The cemeteries of this area have a clearly defined character, with strong cultural connections to each other, visible through similarities in artefacts, pottery styles, and depositional practice. Cremation pottery, in particular, within this area has a consistent range of form and decoration, whereas elsewhere cremations are mostly later and contained in undecorated or sparsely decorated pots. The ideas embodied in the

earlier eastern cremations were not transmitted strongly further afield, where cremation was a minority rite and local practice was dominated by inhumation. The 5th-century eastern cremation region is the same as that defined later in 6th-century inhumations through dress accessories, such as annular and cruciform brooches, wrist-clasps, and girdle-hangers. The distribution of these artefact types is concentrated in Norfolk, Suffolk, the East Midlands, Lincolnshire, and south Yorkshire, with outliers further north and west, but not south of the Thames (see Fig. 4; Felder 2014; Hines 1993). The antecedents of these objects are differently distributed around the North Sea coast and further south; they are not a package transported to England as a whole from one continental region, but are selected components of an identity-bearing assemblage that developed within England. Regional identity appears stronger in the eastern region than in southern England, where much more regional variation is apparent. This gives a new slant on the account by Bede of the different peoples who settled different parts of Britain; the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. Bede was describing political and geographical divisions of his own day, explaining them in terms of earlier migration from specific parts of north Germany and southern Scandinavia. According to Bede, Jutes settled in Kent and the Isle of Wight, Angles in East Anglia, Northumbria, and Mercia, while the Saxons were the ancestors of the East, West, and South Saxons (*Historia Ecclesiastica* i.15, 50–51). Female inhumation graves do show regional variations in their style of dress and ornament which correspond to some degree with the divisions suggested by Bede. But these variations emerge most strongly in the 6th century, after the initial migration period, and they are not the result of a simple transfer of material culture from specific continental regions to specific regions in England. The finds from Spong Hill, in the »Anglian« region, are not of types originating in Angeln or even all from the same part of northern Germany, but from different regions of the North Sea coastal regions, from the Netherlands to southern Scandinavia (Hills/Lucy 2013, 329 Fig. 5.8). More of the finds found in Kentish burials have their origin in Frankia than Jutland. The »Saxon« regions seem to draw on a variety of sources and although there are some clear contrasts with the »Anglian« zone, they do not appear as a clearly defined single zone. This regional variation reflects the creation of identities within England, drawing on selective aspects of material culture from wide geographical zones and probably partly constructed on much earlier prehistoric and Roman territorial divisions. The greater coherence of the »Anglian« zone and its early definition can be explained as the result of the arrival in the first half of the 5th century of people from north Germany in Norfolk and neighbouring parts of Britain in sufficient numbers and force to cause a dramatic change in burial practice. This resulted in cemeteries very like those to be found on the other side of the North Sea, although drawing on traditions from more than one region and including elements which could be interpreted as showing native input. In other parts of England there was a more locally varied and long-term process of adoption of Germanic culture and burial practices, probably reflecting a much smaller scale of immigration. The process might have involved movement from the established communities in

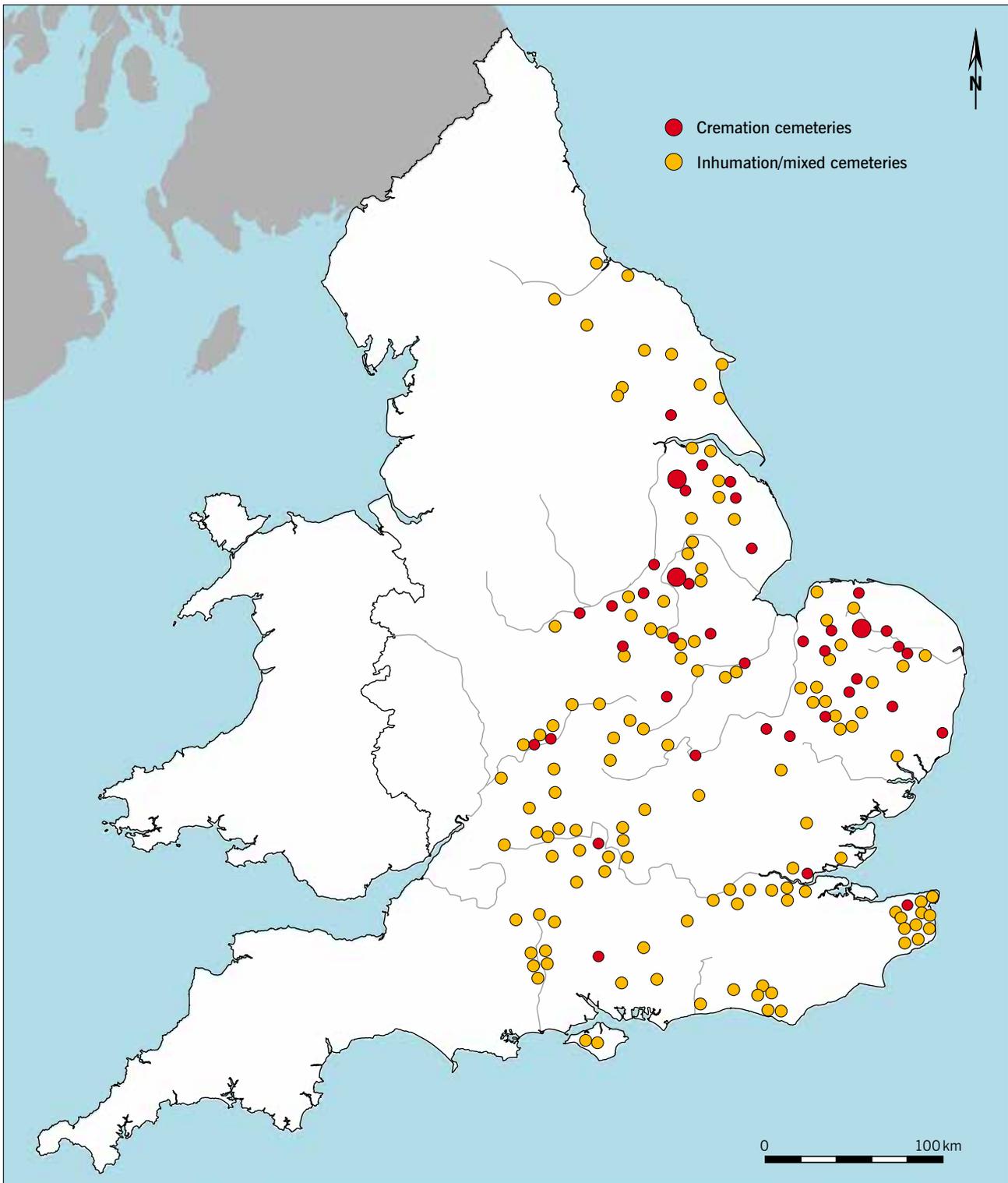


Fig. 8 Distribution of selected cremation, inhumation, and mixed cemeteries in England, 5th–6th centuries AD.

Abb. 8 Verbreitung ausgewählter Brand- und Körpergräberfelder sowie der Gräberfelder mit Brand- und Körperbestattungen in England, 5.–6. Jh. n. Chr.

eastern England rather than directly from the continent. Acculturation, successful local resistance or the forcible imposition of new elites may all have operated, almost on a village by village basis.

The implications of this conclusion for genetic research are that we should not expect to find a sudden change of

population across the whole of England. Some regions in eastern England may have seen significant population change, while elsewhere there may have been fewer and later immigrants. It is, of course, clear that eventually language and culture produced a dominant English identity, but that need not have been rooted in genetic homogeneity.

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Bislang erschienene Bände in der Reihe »Tagungsbände des Landesmuseums für Vorgeschichte Halle«

Die Reihe der Tagungsbände des Landesmuseums wurde 2008 ins Leben gerufen. Anlass dazu war die Konferenz »Luthers Lebenswelten«, die im Jahr 2007 in Halle ausgerichtet wurde. Bereits der zweite Tagungsband widmete sich mit dem Thema »Schlachtfeldarchäologie« dem Mitteldeutschen Archäologentag, der seit 2008 jährlich vom Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt veranstaltet und zeitnah publiziert wird. Dem großen Anteil internationaler Autorinnen und Autoren entsprechend,

erscheinen viele Beiträge dieser Reihe in englischer Sprache mit deutscher Zusammenfassung.

Mit dem bislang zuletzt erschienenen Tagungsband konnten die Vorträge der Internationalen Tagung »Alchemie und Wissenschaft des 16. Jahrhunderts. Fallstudien aus Wittenberg und vergleichbare Befunde« in zahlreichen Artikeln renommierter Forscher verschiedenster Fachdisziplinen vorgelegt werden.

Lieferbar sind folgende Bände:

Band 1/2008 Harald Meller/Stefan Rhein/Hans-Georg Stephan (Hrsg.),

Luthers Lebenswelten.

Tagung vom 25. bis 27. September 2007 in Halle (Saale).

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Band 2/2009 Harald Meller (Hrsg.),

Schlachtfeldarchäologie. Battlefield Archaeology.

1. Mitteldeutscher Archäologentag vom 09. bis 11. Oktober 2008 in Halle (Saale).

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Internationales Symposium in Halle (Saale) 16.–21. Februar 2005.

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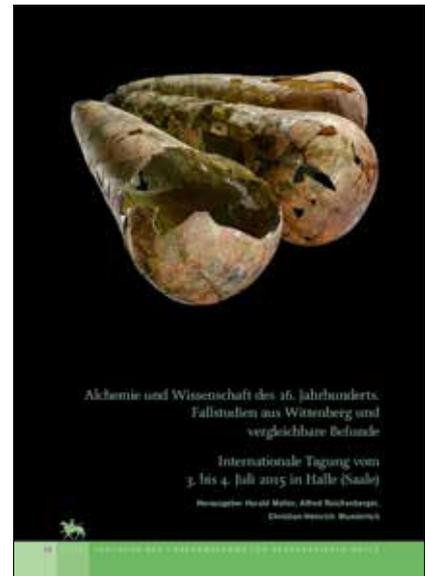
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Neolithic Circular Enclosures in Europe.
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