

11 ANGLO-SAXON PRESENCE AND CULTURE IN WILTSHIRE *c.* AD 450 – *c.* 675

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Summary

It is suggested that the initial Germanic immigration may have taken place within the framework of the former Romano-British *civitates*. The north-west and west, and possibly the north-east corner, and the extreme south-west of the county appear to have remained in British hands until the 7th century when Saxon conquest was finally completed. The major theme of the paper is the emergence and growth of a Saxon identity in the county. Archaeological information is derived almost entirely from burials and stray artifacts. Excavated settlements are few and knowledge of the location of habitations is enhanced only by the occasional scatter of potsherds, supplemented, in a more general way, by place-names. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, personal names in literary sources, the laws of Ine, and place-names afford other and important evidence of contact and intermingling between the indigenous population and immigrants in Wiltshire.

The wider background

British warlords and Saxon mercenaries

After the Roman withdrawal Gildas tells us that the British were soon divided, their leaders warlords (*tyranni*) involved in civil wars (Winterbottom 1978, cc. 19, 21; Dumville 1995, 179-81). It is at least possible that some of these warlords ruled territories based on the *civitates*, for among those denounced by Gildas himself (c. 28), in a later context, is Constantine, king of Dumnonia; and it had been to the leaders of the *civitates* that Honorius had addressed his famous rescript of AD 410 that the Britons must henceforth look to their own defence (Paschoud 1989, n. 133, 57-60). However, it should be noted that the extent to which the *civitas* may have provided an identity for any individual or group at this time is unknown. The fate of the towns is discussed by Wachter (1995, 408).

It is also possible that such British warlords soon employed some Saxon mercenaries (who came with their families), although Gildas (c. 23) refers to the Saxons only in the context of *foederati* defending the east coast against the Picts. Their employment elsewhere,

however, may be suggested by the occurrence of inhumation burials and Germanic brooches, of the middle third of the 5th century, from a number of inland sites, including Dorchester-on-Thames (Hawkes 1986, 68; Welch 1999, 34) and Hod Hill hillfort in central Dorset (Eagles and Mortimer 1993). *'Multo tempore'*, Gildas says (c. 23), the Saxons rose in revolt and a contemporary Gallic Chronicle tells us that 'Britain' – whatever the chronicler meant by that – passed under the control of the Saxons (*in dicionem Saxonum*) in c. AD 441/2 (Muhlberger 1983; Wood 1998, 519).

The introduction into Britain of a new material culture and its impact

BACKGROUND

Novel styles of burial and types of buildings and artifacts, derived from the eastern, continental, littoral of the North Sea and from northern Gaul, become increasingly common in much of eastern and southern England from c. AD 475, that is, one or two generations after the arrival of the first immigrants. However, the degree to which this archaeological evidence is directly related to immigration from the continent or how far it marks the adoption of Germanic culture by the Britons, is the subject of considerable ongoing debate (Higham 1992, 8; Gelling 1993, 51; Scull 1993, 70); and there are problems in interpreting ethnicity from material culture (Jones 1997). The continuing arrival of newcomers from overseas is often difficult to demonstrate; an example is the prolonged contact between Issendorf in Lower Saxony and Spong Hill in Norfolk (Hills 1998, 148). In the 6th century a wide range of artifacts show strong insular development (Hawkes 1986, 81). Better farming conditions in England compared with those prevailing in north-west Europe, may also have been an incentive for migration (Zimmermann 1999).

SETTLEMENTS

The traditional north-west European aisled longhouse was not imported into England. However, by the mid 5th century this type of building was already obsolescent on the continent, being replaced by more modest 'farmhouses' (though little is known of their function) which do share many similarities with the structures found in this country. It has also been pointed out that the longhouse may well have been unsuited to the more restricted social groups which settlements in England appear to represent. Romano-British influence remains unclear, not least because of the very limited information available about late Roman wooden buildings. *Grubenhäuser*, small sunken-featured buildings, with a long history on the continent, now first appear, alongside the farmhouses, widely and immediately, throughout southern and eastern England. Some of these small buildings were craft workshops, others may have been used for storage (Hamerow 1997; 1999; Zimmermann 1999). Their apparent absence in areas to the west of Wiltshire, which did not come under Anglo-Saxon control until the 7th century and which display only very limited signs of 'Anglo-Saxon' cultural influence before that date, suggests that the new buildings went hand-in-hand with the novel burial rites. Posthole patterns found at, for instance, Poundbury,

Dorset (Spary-Green 1996) and at Cadbury-Congresbury hillfort, Somerset (Rahtz *et al.* 1992, 1993), point to sizeable, but apparently rather irregular, timber buildings. Furthermore, some small structures at Poundbury described as sunken-featured are in fact terraced into the slope and do not seem directly comparable to those in 'Anglo-Saxon' areas, although, it may be noted, the partially excavated building at Coombe Down (see below) seems similar as does evidence from Crickley Hill hillfort, Gloucestershire (Dixon 1988). The frequent new siting of settlements, many of which were probably small and may have accommodated family groups, is not necessarily significant, as relatively frequent shifts of site, within a generally dispersed pattern of settlement, is well known in the early Anglo-Saxon period.

Assemblages of artifacts from most settlements of this period are generally very limited, but often include handmade organic-tempered pottery, whether or not the sites lie within or without areas of 'Anglo-Saxon' influence. Where such pottery is the only evidence for post-Roman occupation in regions which otherwise exhibit clear signs of 'Anglo-Saxon' culture, it presumably either pre-dates the beginning of Saxon influence or, for some reason, 'Anglo-Saxon' products were not locally available (Eagles 1994, 18; Evans 1990).

BURIAL RITES

The suggestion has been put forward that the distinctive 'Anglo-Saxon' burial rites and dress, evidence for which derives chiefly from the disposition of artifacts within the grave, were being increasingly adopted by the British population (Dickinson 1982, 52; Scull 1992, 14). Ucko (1969) has demonstrated that burial rites are not necessarily conservative, and may even change very rapidly. The native inhabitants outside Kent, it is reasonably argued, were absorbed into, or indeed transformed by, a new, promoted, 'Saxon' or 'Anglian' identity in, respectively, southern and northern England (Dickinson 1991; 1993; Hines 1994, 52-4; Hamerow 1997). It may also be noted that imitation of the fearsome Saxons had occurred on the continent before their arrival in England; thus the early 5th-century equal-armed brooch from Hod Hill, Dorset, is a copy of a Saxon type, paralleled in Holland (Eagles and Mortimer 1993; Böhme 1999, 67). The homogeneity of cemeteries both in England and on the nearer parts of the continent, in terms of their general layout, the presence of both accompanied and unaccompanied burials (caution should be exercised in respect of the latter, in so far as artifacts of organic origin may have decayed without trace), the range of grave-goods, grave orientation, body posture and position, is striking. The emphasis in all of these burial grounds appears to be on the family or household, which in England could have included Britons (Crawford 1997; Härke 1995, 70). 'Created kinship', especially through the marriage of Anglo-Saxon men to British women is also a possibility (Charles-Edwards 1997). Burial practice therefore appears to mirror the small farmsteads noted above. If the wishes and custom of the kin were paramount, variation of rite is likely to have been both local and subtle, differing within as well as between cemeteries (Lucy 1998; Stoodley 1999, with particular reference to Wiltshire). Burial display may be especially evident at times of social stress, being used as a means of underlining a new legitimacy (Hedeager 1993, 128; Halsall 1995a, 43).

The long established and general practice in the countryside and the small towns of late Roman Britain was of unaccompanied inhumation burial on family plots. The unfurnished graves in the new cemeteries, and some others, for example those where the body is accompanied solely by a knife, cannot of themselves be differentiated from such burials (Philpott 1991, 126, 176). However, the 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries afford no evidence of particularly distinctive Romano-British burial rites, such as that with hob-nailed footwear, which is known to have been widespread in Wessex in the 4th century, although the date of its disuse is by no means clear (*ibid.*, 167). There may have been later burials in the cemetery at Wasperton, Warks, but the excavation there awaits full publication and the chronology of the site remains uncertain (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 201). This raises the possibility that native customs may have continued after the arrival of the Saxons and alongside the new-style largely furnished cemeteries.

Another, important, aspect of 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries, which are generally in new locations, is their frequent occurrence near prehistoric barrows. Indeed, such a position appears to have been deliberately selected in order to provide a focus for the new burials. The same phenomenon is known in north Germany (Thäte 1996). Furthermore, Anglo-Saxon style, accompanied inhumations are often found inserted into the barrows themselves. Although intrusive interments are also known in the Romano-British period, they are infrequent and may have been associated with cults of the dead (Williams 1998a, 76). It has been argued that the incoming Saxons deliberately chose to bury their deceased in this way as another means by which they could emphasise their newly acquired authority through links with a mythical past. The practice could then have been copied by some of the local population who had become identified with the new culture (Bradley 1987; Lucy 1992; Williams 1997; 1998b). In that way, the rite may have become another element in the development of a 'Saxon identity'. Barrows were also reused for high status burials in the 7th century (see below).

The adoption of Old English by the Britons

The paucity of Brittonic words which were borrowed into Old English demonstrates that the Britons consciously learned the language of the dominant Anglo-Saxons, who for their part clearly made little attempt to adopt the native tongue (Jackson 1953, 241). However, the process appears to have been long drawn out; in the early 8th century Bede considered it appropriate to give both English and British versions of some place-names. The thoroughness of the change in language mirrors the fundamental, in a sense almost aggressive, material cultural transformation which occurred from the later 5th century. Although the suggestion has been made that the scale of the adoption of the English language could have come about only as a result of the local presence of significant numbers of immigrant peasant farmers (Gelling 1993, 51), it has proved as difficult to explain the changes in language as those in the archaeology; either can be seen as an aspect of culture and thus equally subject to manipulation (Hines 1996a). The church may have played an important part in spreading the use of Old English (R. Coates, pers. comm.; Bazelmans 1999, 72). It has been pointed out that the language of

the Britons had been of lower status than Latin throughout the period of the Empire, and its inferiority, now as the language of the defeated enemy, was maintained, but in relation to English (Charles-Edwards 1995, 729; Hines 1998, 286). Indeed, there is doubt about the extent to which, if at all, Latin borrowings into Old English occurred after the Anglo-Saxons had arrived in Britain (Wollman 1993). It seems that it is the role played by different languages, in an essentially oral world in which bilingualism was commonplace (Geary 1983, 20), especially amongst the elite, which should be the emphasis of further research.

Ethnicity

A number of recent studies have emphasised the shifting and subjective definition of so-called ethnic groupings in the ancient world, with particular reference to the barbarians who entered the late Roman empire. It can no longer be argued that the groups of people (*gentes*) who went by, for example, the name of Goths, Franks, Burgundians or Saxons were genetically related. The group names reflected the reality of new power and represent, essentially, a political ethnicity, manipulated by the elite, and were to that extent artificial. Indeed it seems clear that these groups could include Roman citizens, and in large numbers. In Gothic Italy, for instance, the terminology appears to have been applied to the army of Theoderic, which was very mixed and included Romans; on the other hand, non-combatants, of whatever origin or social group were termed 'Romans' (Amory 1997 *contra* Heather 1996, 299). The Burgundians seem to have been similarly distinguished (Amory 1993; 1994), as do the Franks (Halsall 1995b, 28). There are hints of a similar differentiation in England. A number of clauses in the Laws of Ine of Wessex (Wormald 1995, 977), which date to AD 688-694, make reference to the Britons (*wealas*) (Faull 1975). The criteria used to distinguish and, within the kingdom, to define a 'Briton' are by no means certain. However, the lawcode deals with individuals according to their status; Britons could be of some means, though they were always of inferior rank to their English counterparts. A straightforward ethnic distinction seems unlikely and, in the light of continental usage, it may be significant that in Ine's laws a *wilisc* was a tribute payer but that a *ceorl* of comparable status owed military service to the king (Barnwell forthcoming).

The new leaders sought to establish and consolidate their authority by reference to, even the creation of, Germanic origin myths which were intertwined with others from classical sources; the latter marked their acceptance into the western Roman world. Their claimed descent from mythical figures of the distant past could only be maintained through success, as showing divine approval (Wolfram 1994, 21). The ancient texts, as always, tell us only of the upper echelons of society. Individuals could hold more than one ethnicity at any one time, and use it to their own advantage (Halsall 1999, 140). Loyalty to a personal lord was normally of greater importance for the individual. This was particularly true of the personal following (*comitatus*) of a warlord, which cut across the demands of kin (Abels 1988, 16). Territorial dimensions of ethnicity, whereby not just people but their land too were subject to rule, were developing on the continent from the 6th century (Geary 1983, 23) but, it has been suggested, only from the 7th century in England (Kleinschmidt 1998, 84).

It is clear that the barbarian leaders and folk coming into Britain in the 5th century were of very diverse origin. Bede (*HE*: Colgrave and Mynors 1969, i.15 and v.9) says that there were Jutes, Saxons and Angles, the latter two tracing their ancestry amongst the continental Frisians, Rugians, Danes, Huns and Bructeri, peoples who lived in Germany and were therefore known collectively to the Britons as 'Garmani'. Bede's list is discussed by Wallace-Hadrill (1988, 22, 181). Archaeology shows that others, not necessarily Germans at all, arrived from the frontier region of northern Gaul (Evison 1965; Böhme 1986). In addition, any such groups are likely to have become mixed both during the crossings and after reaching Britain.

The literary traditions of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Wiltshire in the 5th and 6th centuries

Introduction

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Whitelock *et al.* 1961), which was compiled *c.* AD 890, purports to record the conquest of Wessex by the Woden-born Cerdicings, although descent from Woden may have been introduced only by Ine, AD 688-726 (Kleinschmidt 1998, 94). It therefore offers an origin myth for the foundation of the kingdom and claims to provide some very limited historical information for the 6th century. However, it has been shown that the material it contains was manipulated to suit the needs of Alfred's propaganda and the value of the entries before the 7th century is very uncertain, not least because only minimal independent checks can be made against them. Some entries may well have been influenced by the particular interests of some religious houses (Dumville 1985; Nelson 1991; Yorke 1993; 1995, 53).

The genealogies of the West Saxon kings which the Chronicle cites include several names - Cerdic, Ceawlin and Caedwalla - which are of British origin, and another, Cenwalh, the *-wahl* element of whose English name refers to a Briton (Hawkes 1986, 76; Coates 1989-90; Yorke 1990, 138; Parsons 1997). These names may represent English name borrowing from the Britons, or they may reflect either intermarriage with the Britons at the highest social level or the incorporation of some notable British leaders into the 'English' tradition. British names also occur in the genealogies of other kingdoms; they were not always those of members of local families but their recurrence in Wessex perhaps makes this more likely. Such dynastic marriages would have been one means by which new territories were brought under English control. However, Cerdic is said to have arrived from overseas, and was perhaps a returning emigré who had prospered in Gaul (Campbell 1982, 37).

The Wiltshire Avon near Salisbury

Annals in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle recount the conquest by Cerdic and his son Cynric of the Avon valley and the Salisbury area, which was said to have been ultimately achieved following a victory at Charford in AD 519. The 6th-century dates given in the Chronicle are unreliable; as an example, Cerdic's reign has been recalculated as AD 538-554 (Dumville

1985, 51). Under the entry for AD 527, the Chronicle records that Cerdic and Cynric fought the British at *Cerdicesleag*, which is unknown; it also says Cerdic died in AD 534; and that Cynric defeated the Britons at Old Sarum in AD 552. Charford, 'Cerdic's ford', on the River Avon some 12km to the south of Old Sarum and on the Hampshire side of the present county boundary with Wiltshire, may once have lain at the northern limit of the territory of the Jutes in south Hampshire where, perhaps, it met the lands of the *Wilsaete*, the 'dwellers by the Wylve', recorded in the Chronicle s.a. 800 and 878. *Cerdices beorg*, the only other seemingly identifiable name - of a barrow - associated with Cerdic, is sited at the junction of the boundaries of the parishes of Andover, St Mary Bourne and Hurstbourne Priors in Hampshire (Yorke 1989, 91).

Central and northern Wiltshire

Under the annal for AD 556, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle introduces Ceawlin and records that in that year he and Cynric fought alongside each other against the British at *Beranbyrg*, identified as Barbury, a hillfort on the Ridgeway 11km to the north of the Wansdyke. None of the events of Ceawlin's remarkable career - he is the only king of the Gewisse to appear in Bede's list of great overlords (HE, ii.5) - takes place south of Wansdyke. Bede (HE, iii.7) says that the West Saxons were formerly known as the Gewisse; Walker (1956, 183) and Yorke (1989, 92) suggest the change occurred under Caedwalla, AD 685/6-688, but Kleinschmidt (1998, 97) argues that the name Gewisse may not have been of long standing and furthermore may have been pertinent to only one branch of the West Saxon royal house, that of Ine. However, for the sake of convenience, the name is retained here in a general sense for the period from Cerdic to Caedwalla. Ceawlin's fighting alongside Cynric has been taken to indicate joint action for the first time by Anglo-Saxon kingdoms based on the Thames and in southern Wessex (Hawkes 1986, 86). Sims-Williams (1983, 28), however, points out that the sources do not present Ceawlin other than as a Cerdicing. The boundary between these kingdoms was marked, it may be suggested, militarily by Wansdyke (see below). The events reported for AD 556 may also define a decisive point towards the ultimate achievement of a single Wessex kingdom. There is no further mention of Cynric. In AD 560 the Chronicle states that Ceawlin succeeded to the 'kingdom of Wessex'; he fights alongside members of his own family, which may indicate that one or more of them was put in charge of areas to the south on his behalf. The result of the great battle at *Wodnesbeorg* in AD 592 was that Ceawlin 'was driven out'. *Wodnesbeorg* is the long barrow called 'Adam's Grave', which lies only 1.5km south of the point, at Red Shore, Alton Priors, where the Ridgeway passes through an original gap identified in the East Wansdyke (Green 1971). The Chronicle entry, which does not specify the combatants, has always been difficult to understand but the battle may have been fought between Ceawlin and 'Saxons' south of Wansdyke who now regained their independence (Eagles 1994, 27). If this interpretation is correct, the absorption of southern Wiltshire by the Gewisse occurred at some time after this event. However, as has been noticed, it is unclear how far rulership was yet seen in territorial terms and Cerdic and his early successors may have been leaders of a group or groups of 'Gewisse' and no more (but see also above). The distinct geographical locations evident in different sections of the Chronicle

are notable and could relate to the traditions of once independent petty dynasts (Kirby 1991, 55). Whenever the absorption of southern Wiltshire did take place, the process of integration had presumably been accomplished by the time of the attack by Caedwalla (AD 685/6-688) on the Isle of Wight, when the mainland territory of the Jutes seems to have been in Gewissan hands (Yorke 1989, 92, with reference to Bede, HE, iv.16).

The appearance and spread of a new material culture in Wiltshire in the late 5th and 6th centuries (Fig 11.1)

The area around Old Sarum

To the east of Old Sarum, the burial ground at Winterbourne Gunner was in use in the 5th century (see below). The location of the associated settlement may be indicated by a few handmade organic-tempered sherds, which were found in limited excavation of the later settlement earthworks by the church of St Mary, only some 400m to the north of the burials (*WANHM*, 61, 108; finds in the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum). South of Old Sarum, a new cemetery, with furnished and some unfurnished burials (possibly two adjacent cemeteries, one with west-east, the other with south-north inhumations of the 5th century), was established at Petersfinger, east of the confluence of the Avon and the Bourne (Evison 1965, 38; Eagles 1994, 15). In 1860, in a gravel pit some 0.8km to the west, Dr Blackmore recovered Mesolithic flints, animal bones, charcoal and, again, organic-tempered pottery (Moore and Algar 1968). The latter included a distinctive, and well-known, type of plain 'Anglo-Saxon' pot with three small, pierced, lugs (Eagles 1979 (i), 85). No Roman wares were found, and this suggests a new settlement location. A third cemetery is known at Harnham (Evison 1965, 38; Eagles 1994, 15). A further such burial ground is known to the south, at Charlton, by the Avon (Davies 1984). Burial continued in all of these cemeteries in the 6th century. No 5th-century graves are known at Kelsey Road, St Edmunds Church and at East Harnham, all now within the limits of Salisbury (references to 'Anglo-Saxon' burial sites, unless specifically stated otherwise, will be found in Meaney 1964). Recent finds from metal-detecting suggest another 5th-century site in the Avon valley at Breamore in Hampshire just to the south of the county boundary (C. Gifford *et al.*, pers. comm.).

The Wiltshire Avon and its tributaries

In the chalklands of south Wiltshire, many burial sites occur in, or immediately overlook, the river valleys. Two of the major rivers, the Avon and the Wylye, retained their British names, as did the Nadder (references to British and English place-names are to Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1939 unless specifically stated otherwise). By the Avon, Walton (in Downton parish) may refer to the Britons (Fig. 11.2; Gelling 1997, 94). There are a host of new 6th-century sites and findspots. Recent finds here and elsewhere or records of them in the county are, unless noted otherwise, either in the collections of the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum (hereafter SM) or the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes

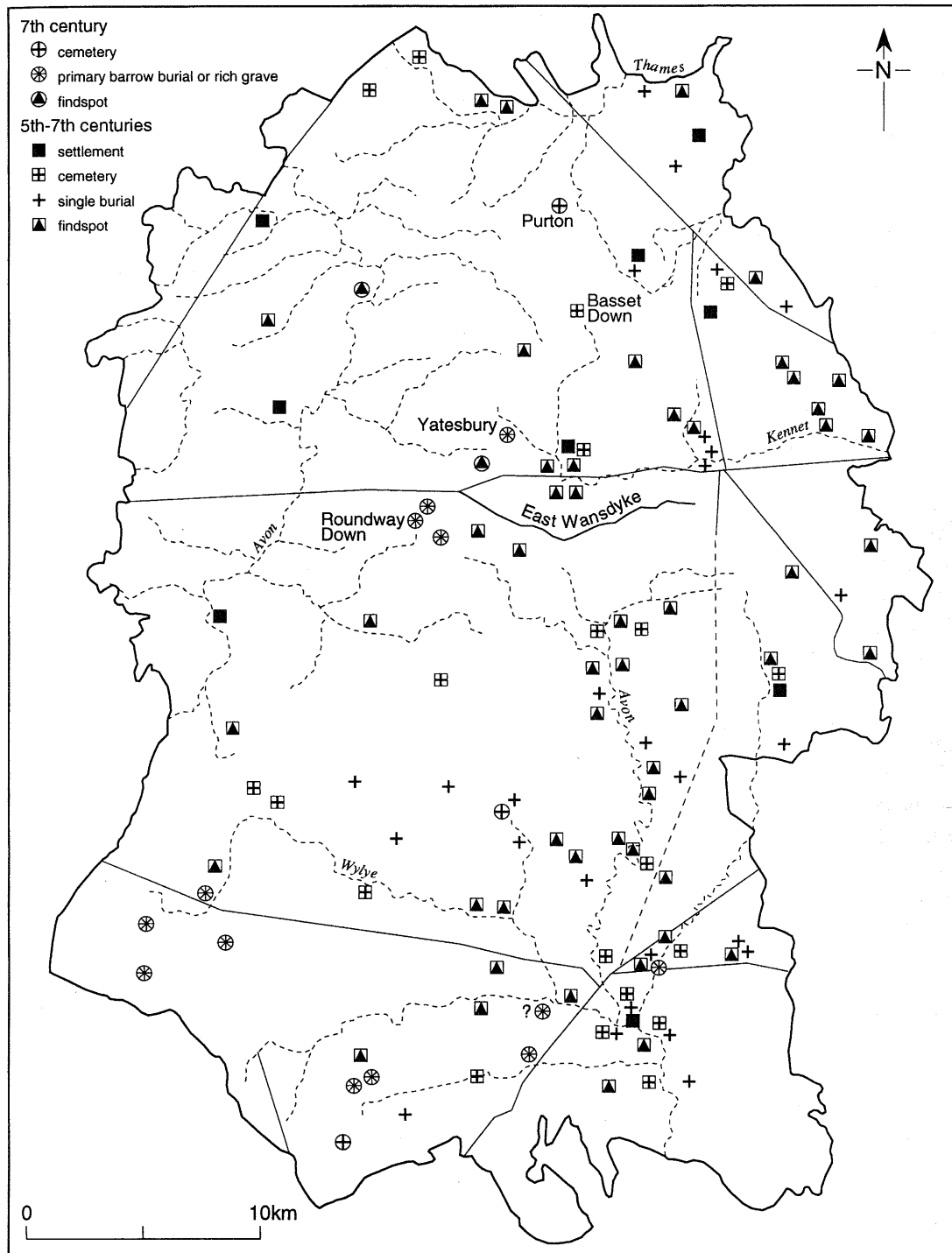


Fig. 11.1 'Anglo-Saxon' and other sites of the 5th to 7th centuries

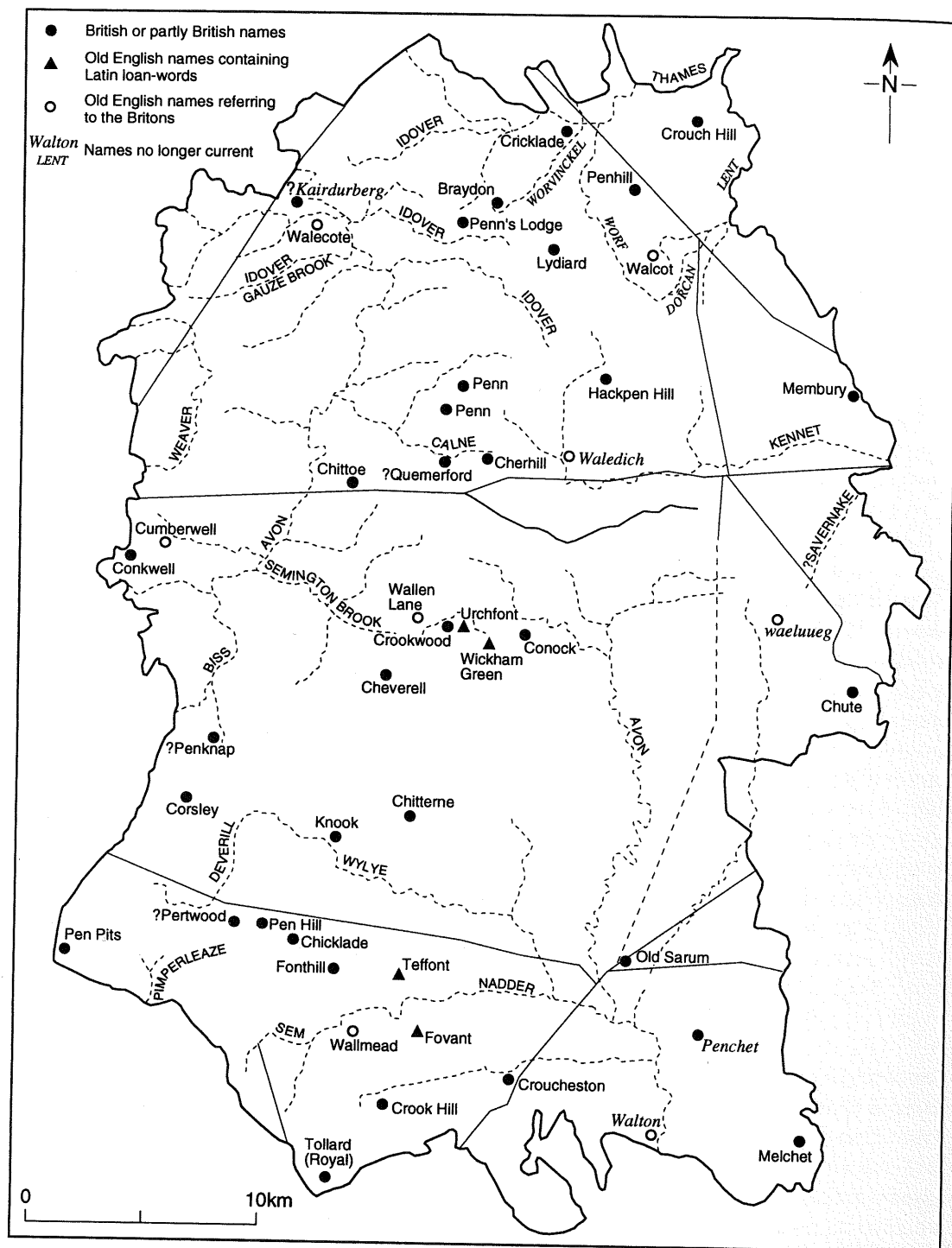


Fig. 11.2 British and related place names

(hereafter WHM). Particular attention may be drawn to a burial of high status, with sword, shield and spear, from below Witherington Ring, Alderbury. Several sites are recorded in Amesbury parish. Button brooches have been found in Upavon village and nearby at Widdington. The cemetery at Blacknall Field (known locally as Black Patch), Pewsey, lies on the Lower Chalk, on the south side of the upper Avon and on the southern slopes of Pewsey Vale. Excavations by Ken Annable between 1969 and 1976 uncovered 102 inhumations and three cremations (interim reports in *WANHM*; K. Annable, pers. comm.); the cemetery at Winterbourne Gunner is the only other early 'Anglo-Saxon' cemetery of comparable size in the county. The earliest graves at Blacknall Field include: (66) with applied saucer brooches decorated with a star; (104) with saucer brooches with five scrolls; (38, 44, 67) with button brooches; and (16) with a spearhead of Swanton's group E1, thought to date before rather than after the end of the 5th century (Swanton 1973, 79). The cemetery continued in use throughout the 6th century.

The Bourne, the Nadder and the Ebbles are all tributary to the Avon, the Bourne on its left, the two others on its right bank. Crouchston by the Ebbles has a name of British origin; along the Nadder such names occur only west of Teffont (see below). In the Bourne valley the cemetery at Winterbourne Gunner has already been noticed. A richly furnished late 7th or early 8th-century barrow on Ford Down is discussed below, in another context. A remarkable grave of the mid 6th century above the Bourne at Tidworth contained four adult male skeletons, each with weapons (Härke 1993). Excavations at Collingbourne Ducis in 1998 revealed a settlement with at least ten sunken-featured buildings and a possible post-built structure, beside the upper Bourne. One of the former dates between the 5th and late 7th century, the others being later (Pine 2001). The site lies only some 150m below a cemetery with 5th-century graves (Gingell 1975/76; Eagles 1994, 15). Along the Nadder, there is only one find from east of Teffont, a spearhead from Barford St Martin. Above and along the Ebbles there are spearheads from Odstock Down and Bishopstone and a cemetery at Broadchalke.

The Wylde is another, but major, tributary of the Avon. In the valley the name Knook is probably Brittonic and Corton may be of Latin derivation (Gelling 1997, 79). Intrusive burials in long barrows at Sherrington and Warminster (King Barrow, Boreham), are notable; they included, respectively, one accompanied by a two-edged sword and one with a seax. The hanging-bowl from Wilton is noted below. The Wylde has two tributaries, the Winterbourne (its later and present name is the Till) and another in the Ashton valley, both of which rise on the southern flanks of Salisbury Plain. Chitterne, at the head of the Ashton valley, has a woodland name of British origin, though the landscape is now an open one. 'Anglo-Saxon' burials are known from both valleys. Grave-goods from a 7th-century cemetery at Shrewton on the upper Winterbourne are particularly distinctive and include openwork satchel fittings, paralleled at Winkelbury (see below), and a gold bracteate. The upper Wylde, or Deverill, is considered below.

Salisbury Plain

These generally dry chalk uplands are bisected, unequally, by the River Avon. It is possible that water conservation on the Plain continued after the Roman period (Field 1999).

Other sites lie by lesser streams on the fringes of the Chalk, as has been mentioned above. The Greensand fringing the northern escarpment of the Plain, where it overlooks the Vale of Pewsey, was equally favoured for settlement. At Urchfont – the name is comparable with Teffont (see below) – quantities of Late Iron Age metalwork and Roman coins may point to another shrine (WHM records); Wickham (Green) nearby also has a name of Latin derivation (Gelling 1997, 73, 74, 84). Crookwood (Farm), at Urchfont, and Conock and Cheverell, respectively to the east and west have Brittonic names. These ‘groups’ of British names recur throughout the county and require further study, here as elsewhere (Gelling 1997, 90). Excavations at Wellhead Lane, Westbury, produced quantities of unstratified Romano-British and handmade organic-tempered potsherds, the latter including a pierced lug of the type noticed above (Fowler 1966). The excavations in 1990 at Grove Farm, Market Lavington, uncovered a contiguous and apparently contemporary settlement and cemetery, the latter in use from the later 5th into the 7th century (Williams and Newman forthcoming). Although late Roman material was found in the vicinity, the settlement occupied a new site, near the top of a local ridge in the Upper Greensand, well served by streams, and overlooking the clay lowlands. The burials were on the slope below. Three probable sunken-featured buildings but no larger structures were identified. The surrounding landscape was predominantly open. Wheat, rye and barley were grown. The livestock included cattle (over 50%), sheep/goat (around 37%) and pig but the latter accounted for less than 10% of the total. The large size of some of the cattle, and the sheep, which were kept probably for their wool, points to a background of Roman husbandry, a feature noted at early ‘Anglo-Saxon’ sites elsewhere, such as Abbots Worthy, Hampshire (Coy 1991, 67).

The excavated cemetery comprised 42 inhumations, an unknown part of the whole; the burials were of men, women and children. The earliest of the women’s graves appears to be (4), with a pair of ring-and-dot disc brooches. Grave (33) has just one of them, and is discussed below. Saucer brooches, reported upon by Dr T. Dickinson, in grave (26) date between the later 5th and the mid 6th century. The earliest weapon burials (17, 27, 31, 34) have spearheads of types HI-H3 and K2, of the late 5th century onwards. Burial (32) has a spearhead of hybrid C4/E4 type, of the mid 6th to mid 7th century. None of the graves intersected each other but some were cut into and others cut by settlement ditches. Thus one ditch cut a burial (11) with amber beads, usually regarded as indicative of the 6th century, but a ditch of a later phase was itself cut by grave (35) with, among other goods, a spearhead of group KI/K2.

On the high Chalk, a ‘sunken-featured building’, with which handmade organic-tempered and stamped pottery was associated, was cut into a hollow made by a negative lynchet and tracks at the Romano-British settlement at Coombe Down, Enford. The site lies on top of a local spur (Entwistle *et al.* 1993, 12). Its discovery was unexpected and it raises the possibility that other such places on the Plain may have continued in occupation or, less probably, were reoccupied. Scattered burials point to the likely existence of other settlements. Attention may be drawn to a group of seven small barrows, which may be of this period, on Netheravon Down (G. Brown, pers. comm.). Bronze Age barrows with unaccompanied intrusive interments, which, as elsewhere, may be of early Anglo-Saxon

date, and stray finds of spearheads from Bulford are recorded along the Nine Mile River, a tributary of the Avon. Burials or casual finds are also known from Heytesbury (intrusive in Bowl's Barrow), Wilsford Down and Rushall Down.

Bedwyn and the Hundred of Kinwardstone

This large Hundred (see below) encompasses very varied terrain. At the south the Chalk of Salisbury Plain stretches into the parishes of Collingbourne Kingston and Ducis, where there was a settlement and cemetery (see above), but at the south-east corner there was Chute Forest, its name of British origin. A small-long brooch is known from Wilton, in the parish of Grafton. A burial in a Bronze Age disc barrow at Great Botley Copse at East Grafton belongs to the late 6th or early 7th century. Immediately to the east of Bedwyn, from Shalbourne, there is an assemblage of finds of 6th-century and later date. 'Waeluneg' in a Bedwyn charter (Sawyer 1968, 756, hereafter S) and, in a slightly variant form (Grundy 1920, 78), in a charter for Burbage (S 688) may not refer to the Britons. At the north-west of the Hundred is the Forest of Savernake, in origin a British river-name, possibly of the Bedwyn stream (Gover *et al.* 1939, 15; Jackson 1953, 294). In this area, the southern slopes of the Kennet vale carry extensive spreads of clay-with-flints; on the south bank too are the Eocene Beds which offer poor soils of little use for agriculture. Another medieval forest, that of Barroc, which gave its name to the county of Berkshire (Gelling 1976, 801) may have been almost continuous with that of Savernake, stretching eastwards as far as Enborne (Hooke 1988, 150). The density and extent of the woodland within this large area at different periods is unknown and cannot be assumed (Eagles 1997).

The Kennet and its tributaries

North of Savernake Forest, the River Kennet, a major tributary of the Thames, affords easy access from and to the east. Furthermore, in terms of communications, major Roman roads from Old Sarum, Winchester, Silchester, Cirencester and Bath are focused upon a crossing of the river at the small town of *Cunetio* (Mildenhall). At some date after AD 354-8 the town was defended with a wall with external bastions; its function had clearly changed, and the place perhaps had a new role in the collection of the *annona* (Corney 1997; this volume). An inhumation grave located near Savernake Hospital (Marlborough) contained a spearhead of group K1. To the west, sites probably of the 6th century are known in Avebury parish, including a sunken-featured building by the winterbourne which feeds southwards into the Kennet which itself rises at Silbury Hill (Fowler and Blackwell 1998, 24). A burial is also recorded at Yatesbury in Cherhill parish (Meaney 1964, 279, Yatesbury I). A quantity of handmade pottery, including stamped sherds, came from excavations beside the Kennet itself (P. Robinson, pers. comm.). There are also finds from two locations at Ogbourne St Andrew beside the River Og, a tributary of the Kennet, which rises to the north on the Marlborough Downs and meets the Kennet at Marlborough. A Romano-British settlement site at Ogbourne St George has produced organic-tempered pottery (Fowler 1966). Lower down the Kennet, sites and stray finds are known from

the parishes of Mildenhall and Ramsbury. On Poulton Downs (Mildenhall), north of the river, the altogether exceptional discovery was made of a woman who had been thrown into a Roman well. Excavations at Ramsbury have demonstrated large tracts of forest thereabouts in the Middle Saxon period (Haslam 1980).

The Marlborough and Wiltshire Downs

On the north side of the Vale of Pewsey, casual finds of brooches are known from Bishops Cannings and Allcannings. Further north, on the Chalk, there are 7th-century burials at Roundway and Heddington (see below). Beyond Wansdyke and the upper Kennet, inhumations, apparently intrusive in a barrow, are recorded from immediately above the outer escarpment of the Chalk at Clyffe Pypard. At Clyffe Pypard, too, organic-tempered pottery has been found on the site of a Roman building (*WANHM*, 70/71, 136). The cemetery at Basset Down, Lydiard Tregoze, is in a similar location, as is another, newly discovered, at Wroughton (R. Canham, pers. comm.; not mapped on Fig. 11.1). A brooch of gilded bronze and decorated with a row of punched circles down both the bow and the faceted foot, of probable 5th-century date, is among finds recorded from graves found there in 1822 (Evison 1965, 39-40; the brooch is in *WHM*). Grave-groups do not survive. Large saucer brooches point to the continued use of the cemetery until the later 6th century. Further north-east, a probable sunken-featured building has been partially excavated on the Greensand which edges the Chalk below Liddington Castle (*WANHM*, 74/75, 113).

At Avebury the Kennet cuts through the inner escarpment of the Chalk whose upper edge, north of the river, is followed closely by the Ridgeway, which then continues north-eastwards to the county boundary at Bishopstone, and beyond (see below for the burial at Lowbury Hill). Bronze Age barrows on Overton Hill, West Overton, were found to contain 'Saxon' intrusive burials; one may belong to the 5th century, but others are certainly of 6th-century date (Eagles 1986; White 1988, 17). They are sited immediately above the River Kennet and the point where the Ridgeway crosses the Roman road from Silchester to Bath. By the Ridgeway, to the north, there are finds from Barbury Castle. Burials at Foxhill and at Callas Hill, Wanborough, lie by the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester, respectively 1km and 2.3km north of its intersection with the Ridgeway. To the south of the Ridgeway, in Bishopstone parish, a burial, intrusive in a Bronze Age barrow, is recorded from Hinton Downs; there are other findspots nearby (*WANHM*, 46, 173; *WANHM*, 72/73, 207). Further to the east and south on the Downs, artifacts, including the upper part of a cruciform brooch from a Romano-British site, have been recovered from locations at Aldbourne (Eagles 1997, 380). There is a wrist-clasp, the only one known in the county, from Baydon (Hines 1996b).

The *civitates* of the Roman administration and after (Fig. 11.3)

For the purposes of late Roman civil administration, the area that was later to become Wiltshire appears to have lain within the bounds of several self-governing *civitates*, which

were centred upon Cirencester, in Gloucestershire (*Corinium Dobunorum*), Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) and Winchester (*Venta Belgarum*), both in Hampshire, and Dorchester, in Dorset (*Durnovaria Durotrigum*). Ilchester, in Somerset (*Lindinis Durotrigum*) may have been the capital of a subdivision of the Durotriges. These units, which were for the most part of pre-Roman tribal origin (Hanson 1988, 55), were themselves subdivided into *pagi*, about which little is known. The Roman name *Durocornovium*, which was given to a settlement on Ermine Street and beside the Dorcan stream (a Brittonic name: *VCH Wilts* 1973, I, ii, 482) near Wanborough in north-east Wiltshire, however, appears to mean the 'fort of the Cornovii', who perhaps occupied one of these lesser territories, probably within the *civitas Dobunorum* (Rivet and Smith 1981, 350; Gelling 1988, 46; Burnham and Wachter 1990, 160; see also below).

There are hints of the boundaries of the *civitates* at certain places. Thus in the Roman period part of the eastern boundary of the Durotriges, dividing them from the Belgae, is likely to have followed the line of the east-facing Bokerley Dyke, on the present county division between Dorset and Hampshire (Bowen 1990). To the east, in the post-Roman period, the area which was later known as the New Forest appears to have been part of a Jutish kingdom in south Hampshire, the western limit of which is unknown, until the late 7th century (Yorke 1989, 92). Another point on the eastern boundary of the Durotriges is suggested by the Old English place-name Teffont, in the Nadder valley (south-west Wiltshire), whose name incorporates Latin **funta*, a spring or fountain, and means 'the spring on the boundary'. Gelling (1997, 83) has suggested that the terminology was precise, that the word may have been a direct loan from Latin speakers and that it may have referred specifically to a place where Roman constructions were evident. This may well be the case at Teffont where, on a knife-edge of Greensand, very limited excavation uncovered walling, and copious finds from the Late Iron Age onwards, including more than 200 coins, the latest of them of Honorius (AD 395-423), suggestive of a shrine; the site lies by the junction of the parishes of Teffont Magna, Teffont Evias and Chilmark (NMR records). Further support for an important boundary there is to be found in the contrasting dates and nature of the 'Anglo-Saxon' burial sites to the east and west of Teffont. For whereas furnished 6th-century cemeteries are well known eastwards, in the valleys of the Wylde, Nadder and Ebble, all the burials to the west, which are again of 'Anglo-Saxon' type, are of 7th-century date and furthermore include a remarkable number which display particularly distinctive rites and rich grave goods. This may suggest that the western area was part of a different territory from that to the east, and one which had remained in British hands until the 7th century, when it became subject to Saxon conquest.

Other bounds are more difficult to determine. Ptolemy says that Bath lay in the *civitas* of the Belgae. This attribution has always presented problems, for the distribution of Dobunnic coins would indicate that the place was situated firmly within their territory (Van Arsdell 1994). However, it has been noted that Ptolemy's statement may have been an error, in that he could have taken it from a partially misplaced entry on a map (Rivet and Smith 1981, 121). Indeed, the Bristol Avon at Bath may have divided the Dobunni from the northern group of the Durotriges, for the Late Iron Age archaeology south of that river looks to the south-west, rather than to south Gloucestershire, even though there

is no break in the distribution of Dobunnic coins (Cunliffe 1991, 171). Attention may also be drawn to the route taken by West Wansdyke, which follows the high ground on the south bank of the Avon. The interpretation of Iron Age coin maps, as has long been known, must be undertaken only with the utmost caution, not least because so little is known of the coin issuers themselves, the probable acceptability of coinage (and therefore its loss or hoarding) outside the issuers' own territories and, most importantly, the continued and significant circulation of the coins in the early Roman period. However, in spite of these difficulties, the limit of Dobunnic coinage in south-western Wiltshire appears reasonably secure. It has also been suggested elsewhere that the north-facing East Wansdyke may have been built close to the boundary between the Belgae and the Dobunni (Eagles 1994, 24). The Dyke is designed to block access from the Ridgeway but it also cuts the Roman road from Silchester to Bath where the road meets the northern escarpment of the chalk downs at Morgan's Hill, Bishop's Cannings.

The important Romano-British temple site on the Chalk and above the source of the River Wylye at Cold Kitchen Hill (Brixton Deverill) may have lain near the limit between the Belgae, the Durotriges and the Dobunni. The road from Old Sarum (*Sorviodunum*) to the Mendips passes beside it and the shrine is also located at the southern end of the block of three parishes (the others are Longbridge and Hill Deverill) named from the River Deverill. The Deverill is the former, British, name of the upper Wylye. It is known that some temples were sited on pre-Roman bounds in Gaul, where they served a variety of inter-tribal needs (Rivet 1958, 134). To the west the Roman road crossed the Upper Greensand and Oxford Clay which supported the southern part of Selwood. The wood marked the eastern limit of the new bishopric of Sherborne in AD 705 (ASC s.a.709). Asser recorded its Welsh name, *Coit Maur* - 'the great wood' (Stenton 1971, 65). This wood most probably also defined, however vaguely, the earlier Roman cantons in this area. The precise extent of the woodland at an early date is far from clear but the county boundary with Somerset between Maiden Bradley and Dilton Marsh looks suspiciously straight and may be of relatively late origin (for Domesday woodland see *VCH Wilts* 1959, IV, 391, 414).

In eastern Wiltshire, coins of the Atrebates hint that the *civitas Atrebatum* may have intruded into the county. In this connection attention may be drawn to the Domesday Hundred of Kinwardstone. It is of exceptional size and incorporates the early 100-hide royal estate of Bedwyn and the hillfort of Chisbury. The tradition that Chisbury was the stronghold of the sub-king Cissa, who was said to have been a predecessor of Caedwalla (AD 685/6-688) and to have ruled Wiltshire and the greater part of Berkshire from this centre, may reflect the earlier separateness of the area and its connections eastwards (Stenton 1913, 8; Eagles 1997). The eastern termination of East Wansdyke just within the Hundred bounds in the modern parish of Savernake, a former extra-parochial area and detached portion of Savernake Forest, may be significant (A. Reynolds, pers. comm.). The Domesday Hundred was an amalgamation of royal estates, at least of Bedwyn and Pewsey (J. Pitt, pers. comm.). The British name of Membury, which means the hillfort on the boundary, in Ramsbury parish, may not relate to its present position on the county boundary with Berkshire but to an earlier location between the Atrebates and the Dobunni (P. Robinson, pers. comm.).

Civil wars?

The apparently widespread outbreak of violence following the Roman withdrawal (see above) may provide the context for the final, built-up phases of Bokerley Dyke and for East and West Wansdyke, all three of which, as noticed above, may have lain on or close to the boundaries of *civitates*. The careful reinstatement of Ackling Dyke soon after Bokerley Dyke had been cut through the Roman road may point to a date when Roman techniques of road building were still current or remembered (Bowen 1990, 39; Eagles 1994, 23). Reynolds (1999, 85) suggests a late 8th or early 9th-century context for East and West Wansdyke, while Fowler (this volume) also argues for a 5th-century date. These particular stretches of boundary were, presumably, re-asserted because they were disputed, whereas elsewhere there was no need to mark the limits in a particular way (T. Darvill, pers. comm.).

There is no evidence to hint that any part of either Wiltshire or Dorset was in Saxon hands by the middle of the 5th century. Indeed, a grave (VI), probably of the third quarter of the 5th century, in the cemetery at Winterbourne Gunner may also belong with an initial group of *foederati*. This burial ground is in a strategic location, where the Portway, the Roman road from Silchester to the major road junction at Old Sarum, which lies close by to the west, crosses the Bourne. The grave's contents include a francisca, brought in most probably from 'Frankish' Belgium or northern France, and a strapend decorated with a fantastic beast in late Roman style, which is likely to have been made in southern Britain (Evison 1965, 39, 60, 67; Eagles 1994, 13). The strapend, whose fine decoration shows no sign of wear, is paralleled locally at Gussage Cow Down, east Dorset (M. Corney, pers. comm.). Accelerator radiocarbon-dating of the skeleton in one of the unfurnished graves excavated subsequently in the same cemetery indicated that that burial occurred between cal AD 400-460 (1610+/-35 BP: OXA-8036; J. Richards, pers. comm.). The Romano-British name (*Sorviadunum*) for the roadside settlement beside Old Sarum was adopted by the Anglo-Saxons, who called the place *Searobyrg*. The transfer points to the continuing presence there of Brittonic speakers and could, perhaps, have come about in the context of the employment of Germanic mercenaries (Gelling 1997, 54). It has been suggested (R. Coates, pers. comm.) that *Sorviadunum* may mean 'the fortress of Sorwjos'.

The location of the earliest, 5th-century, 'Anglo-Saxon' sites in relation to the *civitates* (Fig. 11.3)

Suggestions have been made above as to some possible limits to those parts of the four or five late Roman *civitates* which lay within Wiltshire. Within such boundaries the earliest 'Anglo-Saxon' sites around Old Sarum would have been located in the former *civitas Belgarum*. The cemetery at Pewsey was perhaps close to the boundary between that *civitas* and that of the canton of the Atrebates. Collingbourne Ducis, in Kinwardstone Hundred, may have been within the former *civitas Atrebatum*. There is a saucer brooch with a star design,

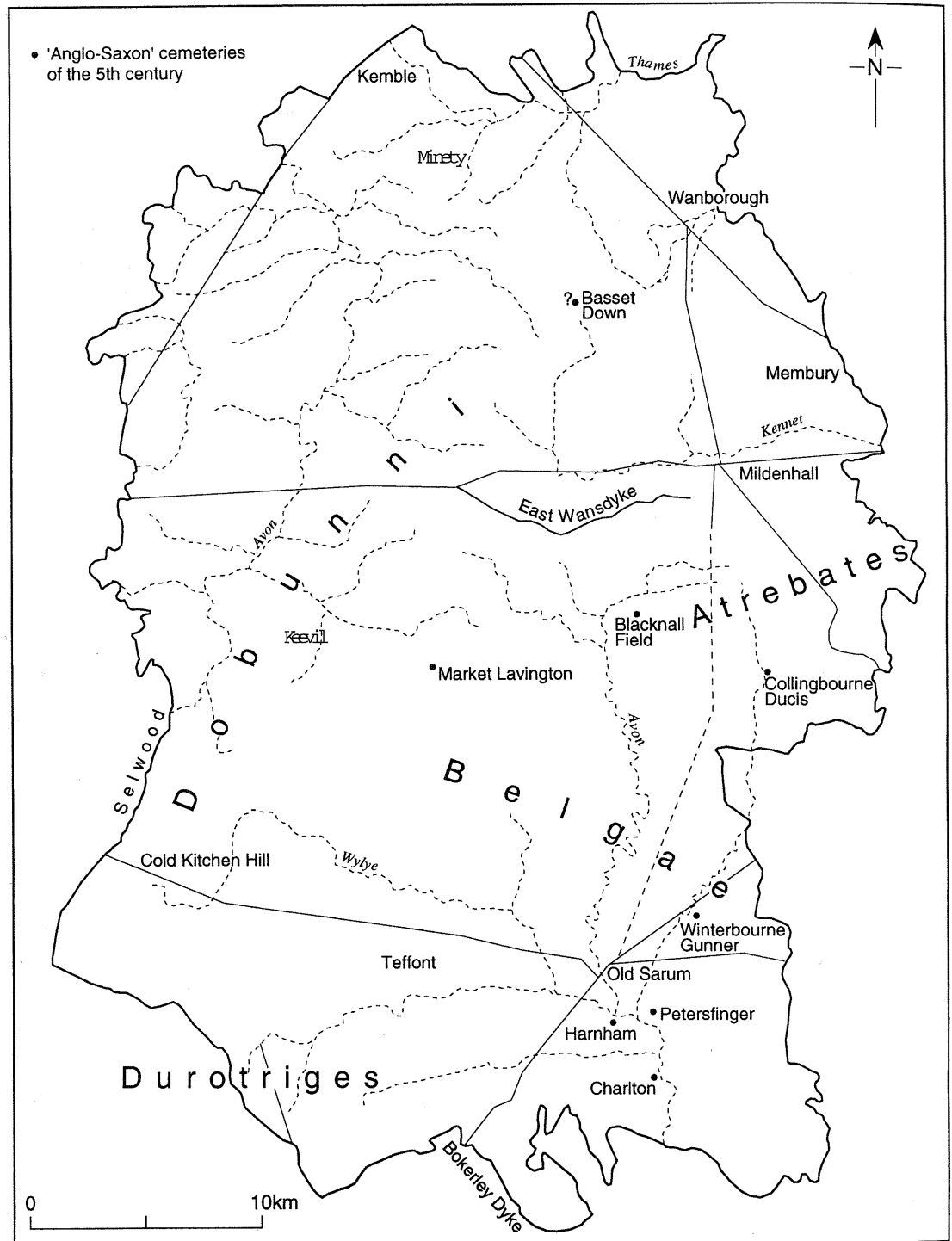


Fig. 11.3 The Romano-British civitates and 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries of the 5th century

of the second half of the 5th or the first half of the 6th century (Welch 1976), from the hillfort at Membury which was possibly on the border between the *civitates* of the Atrebates and the Dobunni (see above).

The situation of the settlement at Market Lavington, near the boundary shared by the *civitas Belgarum* and the *civitas Dubonorum* and far to the west of the other 'Anglo-Saxon' sites, and on the west side of Salisbury Plain, requires comment. It raises the possibility that an immigrant community was planted there, at the limit of territory newly acquired in the late 5th century, perhaps to mark its new 'ownership'. Alternatively, it could be suggested that the settlement at Market Lavington was unplanned, and only one of perhaps a number which were thinly scattered in areas under British, even 'Saxonised' British, control in the latter part of the 5th century; if so, it may represent a small, intrusive but, initially at least, perhaps unimportant element amongst the native population. There are parallels for this in the 6th-century 'Anglo-Saxon' sites and artifacts scattered in Dorset and Somerset (Evison 1968). The location and early date of the cemeteries at Beckford, Hereford and Worcester, are also comparable (Evison and Hill 1996; Bassett 1997). Furthermore, the Market Lavington cemetery does not appear to have the strongly military character seen in the high proportion of weapon burials at Stretton-on-Fosse, Warks, regarded as belonging to a frontier community (Härke forthcoming). Whatever interpretation is put upon the site, the initial date of the Market Lavington burials coincides with the appearance of a number of 'Anglo-Saxon' burial grounds and settlements elsewhere in the county and is a part of that new phenomenon.

Gildas, who may have been writing *c.* AD 540 (Charles-Edwards 1986), describes (cc. 10, 26) a generation of peace following a British victory at *Mons Badonicus* and the partition of the country by treaty. Härke (1990, 28) has argued that the archaeological evidence also points to the late 5th and early 6th centuries as a time of relative peace. It is possible that there is some relationship between the extent of 'Anglo-Saxon' culture, as seen in its novel but unadulterated form in Wiltshire, at this time and this division with the barbarians. Any such conclusions should be treated with caution; there are many problems of relating distribution maps of material culture and ethnicity (Jones 1997, 123).

Styles of dress and personal display within the new material culture

The apparently conscious promotion of a 'Saxon' identity in the south of England in the 6th century has already been noticed. The great majority, by far, of the brooches of this date found in Wiltshire are circular, but of a range of types, even within cemeteries; their wearers seem to have identified with this widespread 'Saxon' culture. Notable forms represented are button brooches, plain and ring-and-dot decorated disc types, and a wide variety of cast and applied saucer brooches. The designs on many of the saucer brooches tend to be very individualistic and careful analysis of the cast type has resulted in the identification of a large number of small groups, whose members may be very widely scattered (Dickinson 1993). Thus Dr Dickinson's study of the examples from Market Lavington has shown that the closest parallels to the cast saucer brooch in grave (8) are

from Alveston (Warks) and Woodston (Cambs), although an origin in Hampshire is possible for the group as a whole (Evison 1988, 47). The central field of a pair of these brooches in grave (7) is most closely matched at Mildenhall (Passmore 1934), and the pellets in the design at Blacknall Field, Pewsey, grave (21), both within the county. Other connections appear to have been more distant. General parallels to the outer field of the brooch in (24) are particularly evident in the Upper Thames region, while features of the decoration on the brooches in (26) share similarities with others in the East Midlands. It is suggested that these individual differences, within a general framework of potent symbolism, were deliberate and, perhaps, a means through which the elite were distinguished, generally and from each other, or each other's kin (Dickinson 1993, 39). A single saucer brooch in (8), worn at the left shoulder, fastened the usual tubular gown but represents a distinctive regional style of dress, found with children and young women in Berkshire and Wiltshire (Owen-Crocker 1986, 35), though Stoodley (pers. comm.) has noted that it occurs only infrequently in Wiltshire. The contents of grave (21) at Blacknall Field included a great square-headed brooch, an Anglian type as well as the pair of gilt cast saucer brooches noted above. Anglian artifacts are very unusual in Wiltshire; they include a cruciform brooch from Aldbourne and a wrist-clasp from Baydon, already noted. However, taken together and with others known to the east in nearby Berkshire they are sufficiently prominent to indicate direct communication with areas of Anglian culture, seen at its closest in Northamptonshire (Hines 1996b). The single disc brooch, of Roman type, on the right shoulder of the male in Collingbourne Ducis, grave 11, however, accords with Roman costume (Janes 1996, 127); the same grave contained an iron buckle with silver inlay. Roman-style dress may also have been worn by the person buried in Market Lavington (33); the sex of the adult skeleton could not be determined, but there was a disc brooch with ring-and-dot decoration, fastening an outer garment, at the right shoulder, over an inner garment with a belt. At Harnham the number of females who wore finger-rings and bracelets in the Romano-British fashion is notable (N. Stoodley, pers. comm.).

The mechanisms by which brooches, and their designs, travelled are still little understood. Local production seems most likely, itinerant craftsmen providing the necessary skills (Dickinson 1993, 36). A lead model for a five-spiral saucer brooch is a casual find from Ramsbury (in WHM; Mortimer 1994).

The 'Frankish' links which have already been noted at Winterbourne Gunner in the 5th century are also evident in the Salisbury area at Harnham and Petersfinger (Evison 1965, *passim*) and at Charlton (Davies 1984), and there is also, as noted above, a silver-inlaid buckle from Collingbourne Ducis. Similar associations are apparent in the 6th century. At Winterbourne Gunner, a perforated spoon was found in grave (VII), along with an 'Anglian' small-long brooch. Other costumes too appear to send a 'mixed' cultural message. Rogers has noted that the 'Saxon' gilded saucer brooch in Market Lavington (24) was worn at the right shoulder and appears to have fastened a sophisticated pattern-woven woollen undergown, with a woollen tabby outer garment of Frankish style fastened by a buckle (Rogers forthcoming). Three button brooches were associated with a local variant of a 'Frankish' bow brooch in Petersfinger grave XXV (Leeds and Shortt 1953; Arnold 1982, 50). A copy of a 'Frankish' bird brooch (Arnold 1982, 57;

brooch in SM) has been found recently at Milston, in the Avon valley to the north of Amesbury. Some of these fashions may have spread from Kent, where there were insular versions of continental Frankish dress (Parfitt and Brugmann 1997, 113). It is possible that some of these variations in costume resulted from competing, perhaps short-lived, ethnicities amongst the elite.

The western limit of 'Saxon' culture by the end of the 6th century

South of Salisbury Plain, Anglo-Saxon style burials are evident as far west as Teffont in the Nadder valley and Warminster on the Wylye by this date. They are absent from the extreme south-west of the county, including the valley of the upper Wylye or Deverill. Further north, such burials, and some 'Anglo-Saxon' settlements occur, generally, as far as the western and northern limit of the Chalk and Greensand, across Salisbury Plain (the most westerly find is a late 6th-century saucer brooch from Worton) and the Marlborough Downs. Finds from West Overton and Lydiard Tregoze possibly hint that an 'English' culture may have already penetrated to the western edge of the Marlborough Downs, considered to have belonged to the Dobunni, by AD 500. Cultural assimilation here, if anywhere, by communities farming the same chalkland landscape, might be thought likely; such a common purpose may well have been stronger than their links with their fellow farmers in the 'cheese' country to the north-west, where an 'Anglo-Saxon' material culture is not yet evident. The only known sites, of burials, are at Kemble and Castle Eaton (*WANHM*, 72/73, 207), beside the Thames. It is possible that the extent of this cultural zone changed little during the 6th century.

New conquests in the 7th century (Fig. 11.1)

The south-west of the county

It has been noticed above that the south-west corner of Wiltshire had, most probably, been part of the *civitas Durotrigum*, and reference was made to the appearance there of a number of notable 7th-century 'Anglo-Saxon' burials. Among them is a group of primary barrows, whose graves contain sugar-loaf shield bosses, which date to the second quarter of the 7th century (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 21, fig. 16). They occur on the high Chalk at Alvediston, Maiden Bradley and West Knoyle. The burial at Alvediston lies close to the elaborately accompanied late 7th-century female grave, cut into a Bronze Age barrow and with its distinctive bed-burial rite, at Swallowcliffe (Speake 1989; see below). Two other 7th-century burial grounds are known in this area, on Winkelbury Hill, Berwick St John (where the bed-burial practice recurs) and at Monkton Deverill, where the cemetery included another primary barrow (Rawlings 1995, 26; see below); and a richly furnished female grave of the second half of the 7th century has recently been excavated at Mere (Wessex Archaeology 1995). A grave with a prototype sugar-loaf boss, probably of

much the same date as the others, has been recorded at Ebbesborne Wake, which lies south of Teffont, towards the north end of Bokerley Dyke.

The four parishes of the Deverills, which share the former, British, name of the upper Wylye, are likely to have lain within its bounds. There is a notable group of place-names of Latin origin, Fonthill, Fovant and Teffont, in the Vale of Wardour. British place- and river-names are relatively abundant. Romano-British and organic-tempered pottery have been found together at Swallowcliffe (NMR ST 92 NE 36). There was a minster (*'monasterium'*), with a *parochia*, of some standing at Tisbury in south-west Wiltshire by c. 700. A charter of AD 759 (S1256) refers to the acquisition by Tisbury of a 30 hide estate near the River Fontmell, some 14km to the south-west in Dorset, probably in the late 7th or early 8th century. A late 10th-century charter confirmed the gift of Tisbury to Shaftesbury, maintaining the strong association with Dorset (Edwards 1988, 229; J Pitt, pers. comm.).

The west and north of the county

By the end of the 5th century an 'Anglo-Saxon' culture is evident as far west as Market Lavington, which, it has been suggested, may have been close to the boundary between the former Roman *civitates* of the Belgae and the Dobunni, and also, perhaps, as far as Basset Down (Lydiard Tregoze) to the north of East Wansdyke and most probably well within former Dobunnic territory. The cultural limit was apparently similar a hundred years later.

Beyond this 'Anglo-Saxon' zone, there is little sign of 5th- and 6th-century occupation of any kind on the clays and limestone in the western and northern parts of the county. In the north-west, a site at Kington St Michael has produced unstratified organic-tempered pottery (WANHM, 83, 229) which also occurs, in the north-east, at the Romano-British settlement at Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes (Frere 1990, 353). There were notable stretches of woodland at Braydon, Chippenham and Melksham, all being considered parts of Selwood by Asser in the 9th century (VCH Wilts 1959, IV, 391). There are many British river and place-names (the river name Idober is marked selectively on Fig. 11.3; a full list is given in Gover *et al.* 1939, 2-4). These river names relate to the Avon and the Thames and to some of their many tributaries. A minor tributary of the Cole, which rises at Chiseldon, named in charters Dorcyn, Dorcan, or Dorternebrok, flows past *Durocornovium*. There is a similar absence of early 'Anglo-Saxon' sites in south Gloucestershire. Burials and finds are known only from Kemble and Chavenage (Avening). At Bath, the reservoir building around the sacred spring associated with the Roman temple was not finally destroyed until at least the 6th century; an enamelled penannular brooch from the votive deposit there may date between the mid 5th and mid 6th century AD (Youngs 1995). Occupation elsewhere in the town may possibly have lasted as long (Cunliffe and Davenport 1985, 45; Burnham and Wachter 1990, 175; Woodward 1992, 113). There were possible post-Roman deposits, perhaps of agricultural origin, at Bath Street, which leads westwards from the Roman baths. A 6th-century 'Anglo-Saxon' brooch and a knife of similar date were recovered from later contexts (Davenport 1999, 48, 59, 60).

An exceptional find in the north-west of the county is an unfinished Celtic hanging bowl mount of the mid to late 7th century from Seagry, in the upper Avon valley south of Malmesbury. This piece may point to a British workshop there – evidence for which is otherwise known only in Scotland (Youngs with Eagles 1998). Also significant are two large zoomorphic penannular brooches, an enamelled one from ‘near Calne’, and a plain one from Oldbury Castle, on the Calne/Cherhill boundary immediately above the chalk escarpment. Such brooches were worn by Celtic men and women, and could signal rank, though an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ context is also possible. The one from near Calne is of the same type as that from Bath referred to above, the other may perhaps date a little later (Youngs 1995). There are numerous British place-names in and around Calne.

It is possible that the area from Kemble southwards as far as Bath, and from the Bristol Channel in the west to Oldbury in the east, and just possibly the north-east of Wiltshire too (though the evidence from there is less clear), should perhaps be considered as a single territory in British hands until some date in the 7th century. The whole area may have lain within the former *civitas Dobunnorum* (see above). The names Kemble, Minety, and Keevil may refer to their position on a boundary, Kemble being a word of definite, and Minety and Keevil probable, British origin (Fig. 11.3; Coates and Breeze 2000, 112). Kemble is by the source of the Thames, a location likely of itself to have ensured ancient prominence. Its boundary position has endured, being transferred from Wiltshire to Gloucestershire only in 1897, and it lay within the Wiltshire Domesday Hundred of Chedglow. ‘Anglo-Saxon’ burials in the parish have been noted above. The entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle s.a. 577 possibly recalls a memory of the former independence of Bath (but note Sims-Williams 1983, 33).

The Gewisse, Mercia and the Britons at war

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in AD 628 Cynegils and Cwichelm of the Gewisse fought against Penda at Cirencester and ‘came to terms’ (imposed by Penda). Stenton (1971, 45) noted that Penda’s victory marked an important step in the emergence of the Hwicce; indeed, the archaeological evidence suggests that that part of Gloucestershire had long had close links with the Dorchester-on-Thames region, considered to lie in the Gewissan heartlands and where Cynegils was baptised in AD 635. The background to a battle at Bradford-on-Avon in AD 652 is particularly obscure, as it is variously recorded as fought against the British or as civil war in different sources (Whitelock *et al.* 1961, 20, n 2). It is therefore not at all clear that it relates to an onslaught against British territory and, indeed, the place may not be correctly identified. The first unambiguous reference to an advance south-westwards by the Gewisse is the battle of Peonnan, possibly at Penselwood, in AD 658 when the Britons were said to have been driven back to the Parrett, in west Somerset (Yorke 1995, 53). There is no mention of Dorset and the annal may relate only to the former northern part of Durotrigian territory, that based on Ilchester. The first charter for Glastonbury dates to AD 678, in the reign of Centwine (Yorke 1990, 137; Costen 1992, 102). In AD 682 Centwine (AD 676-685/6), whose successes may have been underestimated, put the Britons to flight as far as the sea (Yorke 1990, 136).

'Saxon' influence was particularly marked - there may have been conquest - in the south-east of Dorset by the late 6th century (Eagles 1994, 17). Elsewhere in the county, Cenwalh (AD 642-73) was said to have transferred a 100 hide estate from the British monastery at Lanprobus to new Sherborne in AD 671 (Finberg 1964, 98; O'Donovan 1988, 82); and a charter (S1164), datable between AD 669 and AD 675, of Cenred, presumably the father of Ine but at this date apparently only a minor king in Wessex, grants land in the county to Abbot Bectun (Edwards 1988, 229). There is reason, therefore, to believe that Dorset was in Gewissan hands early in the AD 670s. Although the Chronicle makes no explicit mention of the county at this time, military conquest (as opposed to some peaceful means of acquisition, such as a marriage settlement) of the area at around this date is possible, and the group of burials with sugar-loaf shield bosses might seem to support such a view. If the latest phases of Bokerley Dyke do not date to the immediate post-Roman period, as has been suggested above, these events in the 7th-century wars offer an alternative context (H. Williams, pers. comm.). In this connection, it is possible that the richly furnished bed-burial of a woman, intrusive in a long barrow which had been incorporated into a prehistoric linear earthwork, itself an element in the complex and multi-phase Bokerley boundary 'line', was deliberately so placed to 'mark' the appropriation of new territory (Bowen 1991, 5, Pentridge 23; Speake 1989, 107, 'Woodyates'). It may also be noted that some, at least, of the unaccompanied burials in Bokerley Dyke at Bokerley Junction are (later) deviant burials, probably relating to an execution site (Reynolds 1998, 149).

It appears to be only in the 7th century that sites of 'Anglo-Saxon' character first appear in the north-east corner of Wiltshire, although it may be noted that there is a 6th-century burial immediately across the boundary in Berkshire at Coleshill, and another, in Wiltshire, by the Thames at Castle Eaton (*WANHM*, 72/73, 207). A further record relates to a burial with a knife, quite possibly 7th century, at Stanton Fitzwarren; this site, and the 7th-century cemetery at Purton, are on the Coral Rag. A seax has been found at Ashton Keynes (*WANHM*, 69, 186). At Swindon, on the Portland Limestone which caps Old Swindon Hill, excavations in 1975-77 uncovered six sunken-featured buildings and one of timber. The wooden building was approximately 8.5m by 4.5m and had been destroyed by fire; more than 100 loomweights, many of them in line, together with lengths of timber, apparently from the loom itself, shears and large pots were found. The walls of this building were covered with a sophisticated plastering. It overlay a slightly larger building, of post-hole construction, with internal stake-holes; associated finds included bone pins, many of them decorated, yellow vessel glass, and a gold fragment with inset garnet (Canham and Phillips nd). A grave with a spearhead and knife has been recorded nearby, in Evelyn Street.

There are also signs of change at the western margin of the Chalk in the 7th century. As has been seen, Oldbury hillfort may have been in British hands at this time; if so, it overlooked 'Anglo-Saxon' territory to the north, east and south. The distribution and location of sites immediately to the south of Oldbury, beyond the point where the Roman road from Silchester to Bath (which is followed by the southern boundary of Calne Without) was blocked by East Wansdyke, affords some further suggestive evidence of the old

Belgic/Dobunnic boundary. For there is a notable group of 'Anglo-Saxon' burials, all certainly or probably of 7th-century date, on the Chalk in the parishes of Heddington and Roundway, to the east of Oliver's Camp, which is similarly sited to Oldbury hillfort. Two of them are primary barrow burials, one on the summit of King's Play Hill, Heddington, the other on the top of Roundway Hill. There is also a richly furnished grave of the later 7th century, possibly a bed-burial (Speake 1989, 107), intrusive in a round barrow on Roundway Down. The accompaniments of the latter included a pin-suit with a gold roundel with a blue glass setting in the form of a cross, which has been thought of probable Irish workmanship and to reflect the influence of the monastery at Malmesbury (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 48; see further below). It may be noted that a Roman villa is located immediately below Oliver's Camp, to the south of Mother Anthony's Well, which lies at the head of a stream below the escarpment and at the junction of the parishes of Bromham, Rowde and Roundway; an earlier position on the Belgic/Dobunnic boundary is possible (*VCH Wilts* 1957, I. i, 51).

The richness of the intrusive burial on Roundway Down, and the probable recurrence there of the bed-burial rite, together with the local grouping and siting of 7th-century graves in that area, is reminiscent of the situation, noted above, in the south-west of the county, where it has been interpreted as reflecting new Anglo-Saxon conquest at much the same time. It may, perhaps, be argued that these burials also mark 'Anglo-Saxon' intrusion into new territory, in this case that which had once belonged to the Dobunni.

In the same vein, attention may also be drawn to the series of 'Anglo-Saxon' graves, of similar date, in what had probably been north Durotrigian territory in north Somerset. These burials occur at Buckland Dinham, Camerton, Evercreech, Queen Camel, Huish Episcopi and Keynsham (Geake 1997, *passim*; 1999a, *passim*). The latter was accompanied by a gold pendant with filigree decoration and dates to the late 7th or early 8th century (Geake 1997, 38). Its location immediately south of the Avon, between the river and the West Wansdyke, is perhaps comparable with the burial, noticed above, intrusive in a 'strand' of Bokerley Dyke (Eagles 1994, 18; Youngs with Eagles 1998, 40). The first charter for Glastonbury dates to AD 678, in the reign of Centwine of the Gewisse (Yorke 1990, 137; Costen 1992, 102).

Further, important, evidence for Anglo-Saxon control of north-west Wiltshire and north Somerset is provided by a series of charters which had been preserved in the monastic archives at Bath and Malmesbury. The foundation charter (S51) for the monastery at Bath dates to AD 675 and records the grant of 100 hides by Osric king of the Hwicce to Abbess Berta (Sims-Williams 1975, 2). Mercian control of the area was presumably secure by AD 679-80, when the Hwicce diocese was established (Plummer 1896, II, 246). The monastery at Malmesbury was possibly founded in the mid 7th century by the Irish hermit Maildub - perhaps, on the arguments used in this paper, when the area was still in British hands. Bede (*HE*, v.18) says the place was named after Maildub: see also Campbell (1987, 338) and Sims-Williams (1990, 108). Aldhelm, its first abbot, was said by William of Malmesbury to have been of West Saxon royal lineage, and the monastery appears always to have been in West Saxon hands (Sims-Williams 1990, 384). Charters show Aldhelm to have secured patronage from both Mercia and Wessex. From Mercia came land at Tetbury,

'*iuxta Tetton monasterium*', in AD 681, the earliest genuine and datable grant to Malmesbury (S71/73; Edwards 1988, 90), and an estate at Somerford Keynes in AD 685 (S1169; Edwards 1988, 93). Yorke (1990, 107) has noted that it was Mercian policy to support religious houses in areas they wished to take over. From Wessex came an exchange of land east of Braydon Wood (Forest) for an estate near the monastery in *c.* AD 676-686 (S1170; Edwards 1988, 94), and land at Kemble and east of Braydon Wood in AD 688 (S231/234; Edwards 1988, 97). Edwards (*ibid.*) suggests Caedwalla perhaps disposed of border areas to the Church.

West Saxon and Hwiccan rivalry in north-west Wiltshire in the later 7th century is therefore clear. As has been noted, the history of the monasteries shows the critical nature of the West Saxon border in the area (Sims-Williams 1990, 384). Aldhelm's concern for his monastery at Malmesbury is underlined by the privileges granted by Pope Sergius I, with the agreement of both Ine and Aethelred that Malmesbury should not suffer in wars between their kingdoms (Edwards 1988, 104).

The acquisition of new territories in the west may have resulted in the redrawing of some ancient and major boundaries. Ryme (Dorset) and Rimpton (Somerset) may both refer to the establishment of a new boundary, which became the northern limit of Dorset (Costen 1992, 85). Mere's name may have come about in the same way. Finally, it is possible that Martin, which probably means 'the boundary settlement', derives its (English) name from its location adjacent both to Bokerley Dyke and to the former southern boundary of the territory of the Wilsaete (Cole 1991/2, 39). The parish is now in Hampshire but was formerly in Wiltshire.

At Foxley, on the Corallian limestone west of Malmesbury, aerial photography has revealed a substantial settlement near the Fosse Way. A hall with external buttresses is comparable with one at Cowdery's Down in Hampshire but there is also a probable church (Hincliffe 1986). The range of the only radiocarbon date available from this site (obtained from test excavation), of cal AD 555-665 (1430 +/- 80 BP: HAR-6216), poses many questions, for it covers a period from the time when the area was certainly still in British hands to well after the Anglo-Saxon conquest. Sunken-featured structures and timber-framed buildings have been excavated at Trowbridge (Graham and Davies 1993, 142), and there is another sunken-featured building at Chippenham (*WANHM*, 84, 143). It is quite possible that the sites at Foxley and Trowbridge, at least, date to a period after the area had been incorporated into the kingdoms of the Hwicce and the West Saxons.

Wiltshire and the emerging West Saxon kingdom

By the later 7th century, as has been seen, Wiltshire was no longer at the frontier of Wessex, which now stretched westwards into Devon. The military successes in the west were matched, under Caedwalla, in southern Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. His energetic successor, Ine (AD 688-726), was able to consolidate these gains. Ine's laws point to a king pro-active in law-making and profiting from his interference in the now greatly extended administration of justice (Wormald 1995). It is also possible that he developed

Hamwic and overseas trade (Morton 1992, 28); the self-confidence of Wessex at this time is discussed by Mayr-Harting (1991, 216). Christianity was now a force to be reckoned with, though since AD 635 when Cynegils had been baptised at Dorchester-on-Thames, the progress of Christianisation had been slow (Yorke 1990, 139) despite the advantages it brought to kings (Campbell 1986, 76). Pagan shrine place-names, it has been suggested, such as that of Thunresfeld (at Hardenhuish: 'open land, within woodland, of Thunor', the woodland here later known as Chippenham Forest) continued to be coined at the end of the 7th century (M. Gelling, pers. comm.; Gelling 1973, 121). Attention should also be drawn to the remarkable group of sites by the county boundary with Hampshire on the commanding top of Roche Court Down, Winterslow, whose name incorporates *hlaw*, the OE for tumulus (Gelling 1997, 134-6). There a pair of primary Anglo-Saxon barrows lie close to an inhumation cemetery with west-east burials; all are likely to belong to the 7th century. One barrow covered a male burial accompanied by a knife, whose grave-cut was aligned on a post-setting in the centre of the adjacent mound, which was of similar construction but lacked any interment. The arrangement may be of religious significance (Blair 1995; A. Reynolds, pers. comm.). Eighteen execution burials were in a nearby prehistoric linear ditch (Reynolds 1998, 151).

Archaeological evidence seems to reflect the growing coherence of the kingdom and increasing confidence and wide connections of its elite. A number of elaborately furnished burials of the second half of the 7th century have been noted above, in various contexts. Rites no longer appear to have essentially a local context but recur over wide areas. The distribution of the examples so far known of the bed-burial rite is remarkable; they occur only in Wiltshire (including Swallowcliffe), Cambridgeshire and the Peak District (Speake 1989, 109, fig. 90). Furthermore, the Swallowcliffe grave contains, clearly deliberately, items of both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon design as, for example, does the Lowbury Hill barrow in Oxfordshire (Härke 1994, 204). Parker Pearson (1982) has suggested that rich burials tend to be most noticeable at times when individuals needed to assert their position. In this connection, the insertion of rich burials through the primary grave in prehistoric barrows, as at Swallowcliffe and Roundway Down, suggests a deliberate attempt to replace the original burial and demonstrate the dominance of the new elite (N. Stoodley, pers. comm.).

The wish to be linked to the ancient Romans may also be seen in the location of three primary Anglo-Saxon barrows in the county close to Roman roads. One, of unusual form, with a penannular ditch with external bank, and beside a Bronze Age barrow, on Ford Down, was close to the road from Old Sarum to Winchester (Musty 1969). Another, on Salisbury Race Course and again by a Bronze Age barrow, was by the road from Old Sarum to Dorchester (Evison 1963). The third is at Monkton Deverill (Kingston Deverill parish) to the east of Cold Kitchen Hill and near the junction of the Roman road between Old Sarum and the Mendips with that from Hamworthy to Bath (Rawlings 1995, 37). The siting of these important burials presumably made a powerful statement; their position suggests that they were thought to provide protection for their people (Williams 1999, 80). Their location also indicates the continued significance of the Roman roads and the importance of controlling them - the same phenomenon is known elsewhere in England but requires further study. The association with through routes was clearly an important

one, for the primary barrow at Alvediston, the burial at Swallowcliffe, and a third, with a relict box, at Yatesbury (Reynolds 1994, 193) all lie, not by Roman roads, but by herepaths.

Helen Geake (1997, *passim*; 1999b) has also drawn attention to the notable emphasis, not only in the burial record, in a number of the emerging kingdoms on a cultivated association with a Roman past and with the contemporary Mediterranean world. Such an outlook is likely to have been actively encouraged by the Church, whose role was so crucial in the formation of Wessex and of other new kingdoms (Wormald 1983, 124-6).

Conclusion

The period covered by this paper was one of dramatic change. It began when Roman officialdom had departed from Britain, never to return. Roman material culture suffered a rapid collapse. In spite of irregular contact with the disintegrating Roman world of northern Gaul, the initiative now lay not with the British warlords who inherited the old provinces but with the incoming Germanic peoples, many of whom had had only limited contact with the Roman empire. They brought with them new ways, new cultures and a new language. To all of these the native inhabitants had to adapt as best they might. It has been a central purpose here to try to tease out from a variety of meagre and ill understood evidence hints of these processes at work. It is not until some 150 years later that it is possible to see again, in Wessex as elsewhere, the establishment, with the aid of an enterprising and energetic Church, of robust political institutions which mark a new and important phase in the history of England.

Note Radiocarbon dates have been calibrated using Stuiver and Pearson 1986; the date ranges cited are given using the 68% confidence limits.

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