

Archaeology, History, and the Isle of Wight in the Middle Saxon Period

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CONTRARY to earlier beliefs, recent metal-detector finds from a number of sites in the Isle of Wight now attest to the continued wealth and economic importance of the island after its conquest by Cædwalla in 686. This is particularly revealed in the area around Carisbrooke, which, it is argued, survived as a major central place throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. The evidence from scattered excavations and finds is brought together, assessed, and set into the wider context of 7th- and 8th-century political and economic developments in the Solent area.

During the Anglo-Saxon period the Isle of Wight was a dangerous place to live. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* describes how, in 530, Cerdic and Cynric obtained possession of the island ‘slaying many men at *Wihthgarabyrig*’.¹ Barbara Yorke has convincingly argued, however, that the 5th- and 6th-century entries of the *Chronicle* are notoriously unreliable, although other attacks on the island are more securely attested from the mid-7th century onwards.² In 661 Wulfhere of Mercia is reported to have ‘ravaged the Isle of Wight’, afterwards placing it under the control of King Æthelwath of the South Saxons. Mercian control, however, did not last long. Only 25 years later, in 686, the island was again laid waste, this time by Cædwalla, king of the *Gewissae*.³ His savage treatment of the inhabitants was vividly described by Bede, who claimed that Cædwalla ‘strove to exterminate all the natives, and replace them by settlers from his own province’.⁴ If, as suspected, there had been a royal house of the Isle of Wight, it was now extinguished with the betrayal and subsequent killing of the two young princes, ‘brothers of Aruald, king of the island’. ‘On the approach of the invaders,’ Bede wrote, ‘these princes had escaped from the island and crossed to the adjoining territory of the Jutes,’ and were ‘guided to a place called *Ad Lapidem*, where they hoped to remain hidden’. Being ‘betrayed’,

¹ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. G. N. Garmonsway (London, 1972), MS A, The Parker Chronicle for 530.

² B. Yorke, ‘The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the origins of Wessex’, 84–96 in S. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (Leicester, 1989).

³ *Chronicle*, op. cit. in note 1, 661, 686.

⁴ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), iv.16.

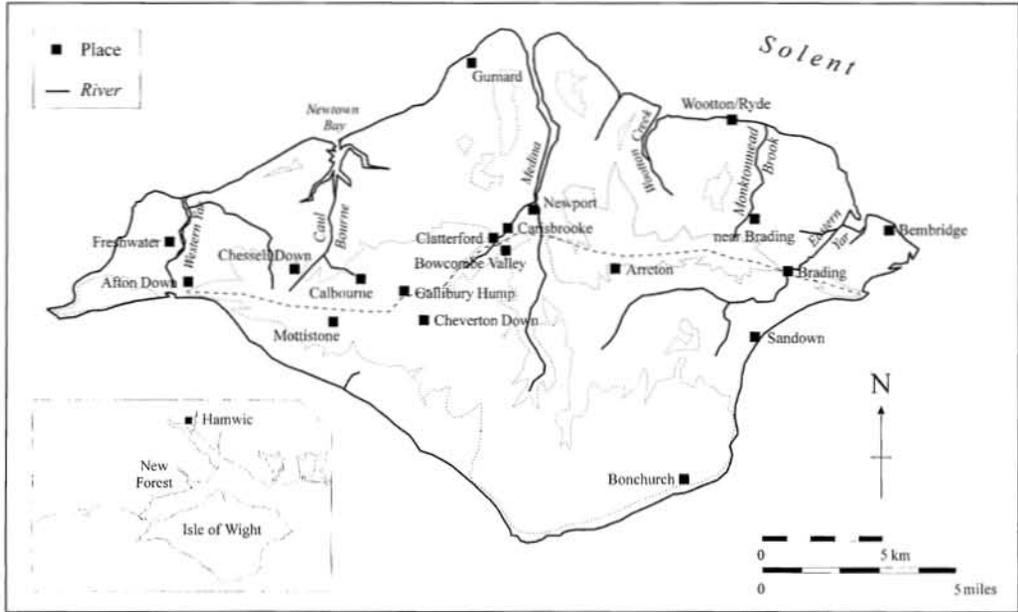


FIG. 1

Isle of Wight rivers and place-names mentioned in text.

however, they were 'ordered to be put to death', but not before being baptized by 'Cynibert, Abbot of a nearby monastery at *Hreutford*'.⁵ After Cædwalla's devastating conquest, the sources remain silent for over 200 years, until the close of the 9th century, when the island was ravaged once again, this time by the Danes in 896.⁶

Why was this island conquered and harried so much? One answer must certainly be found in its geographical position (Fig. 1). Located just to the south of Hampshire, the Isle of Wight from the earliest times provided excellent communications along the south and south-east coasts, as well as over the Channel towards France. It overlooks the Solent, the entry to Southampton Water, which is the greatest natural harbour on the south coast, and therefore ultimately the access and entry to the chalk lands around Winchester, and thence the Thames Valley.

Despite this important strategic position, the Isle of Wight appears to have been curiously neglected in archaeological research to date, particularly in the later Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. It is notably absent, or only mentioned in passing, in works like Aldsworth's study of pre-Domesday Hampshire (1974), and the Anglo-Saxon and medieval articles in Shennan and Schadla-Hall's *Archaeology of Hampshire* (1981) do not even feature the Isle of Wight on a map.⁷ More recently

⁵ Identified with Redbridge (Eling); P. H. Hase, 'The mother churches of Hampshire', p.45 in J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches* (Oxford, 1988).

⁶ *Chronicle*, op. cit. in note 1, 897 [896].

⁷ F. G. Aldsworth, *Towards a Pre-Domesday Geography of Hampshire — A Review of the Evidence* (B.A. Southampton Univ., 1973/4); S. J. Shennan and R. T. Schadla-Hall (eds.), *The Archaeology of Hampshire* (Winchester, 1981).

it is missing from the 1994 volume on *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex* edited by Aston and Lewis.⁸ Until recently only three researchers have worked more closely on Anglo-Saxon Wight since the appearance of a short survey of the island's archaeology in the *Vectis Report* of 1980.⁹ The first was C. J. Arnold, who, following an unpublished undergraduate dissertation on the *Anglo-Saxon Settlement of the Isle of Wight* from 1975, published studies on the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of the island.¹⁰ The second was John Margham, who in recent topographical studies drew attention to the area of Carisbrooke as a possible early central place for the island, a view echoed in Christopher Young's forthcoming excavation report on Carisbrooke Castle.¹¹ Finally, Barbara Yorke, who in her article on the Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the origins of Wessex combined evidence from both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for the first time. She set out a convincing historical framework for the early 'Jutish' provinces on mainland Hampshire and the 'Jutish' kingdom of Wight, which, she concludes, was a 'self-governing area of some significance before its conquest by Cædwalla'.¹²

Of these works, both Yorke and Arnold have mainly concentrated on the Early Saxon period, which, in contrast to the Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon periods, is well represented both in artefactual and written remains. Arnold acknowledged 'an apparent gap in the archaeological evidence' from the 7th century onwards.¹³ A similar gap between Early and Late Saxon evidence has been postulated by Margham in his study of Carisbrooke, which, he suggests, only 'by the later Anglo-Saxon period had re-emerged as a "central place" for the island'.¹⁴ Thus the lack of historical evidence, taken together with the so far almost complete absence of Middle Saxon material, may easily lead to the assumption that the Isle of Wight was of little or almost no importance after the disastrous events of 686.

This article demonstrates that such a view can no longer be sustained. New archaeological finds from the island now increasingly attest to the continued importance of the Isle of Wight throughout the Middle and into the later Anglo-Saxon period. The evidence for this will be discussed in three parts. The first provides a short survey of earlier activity on the island which had a lasting impact on the landscape and continued its influence throughout the Middle Saxon and into the later periods. The second examines the Middle Saxon evidence from the

⁸ M. Aston and C. Lewis (eds.), *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex* (Oxford, 1994).

⁹ H. V. Basford, *The Vectis Report: A Survey of Isle of Wight Archaeology* (Newport, 1980). More recent work includes a new assessment of the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries on the island by P. Sørensen (D.Phil. Oxford Univ., forthcoming); also M. Stedman, *A Case Study of the Apesdown and Bowcombe Valleys in Relation to the Early Anglo-Saxon Settlement Pattern of the Northern Environs of the Isle of Wight and the Southern Hampshire Basin* (B.A. King Alfred's College Winchester, 1996); id., 'Three Early Saxon metalwork finds from the Isle of Wight', *Proc. Hampshire Field Club Archaeol. Soc.* 53 (1998), 109-19 (*Hampshire Studies* 1998).

¹⁰ C. J. Arnold, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of the Isle of Wight* (London, 1982); id., 'The Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of the Isle of Wight: an appraisal of 19th-century excavation data', 163-75 in E. Southworth (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A Reappraisal* (Stroud, 1990); id., *The Anglo-Saxon Settlement of the Isle of Wight: An Examination of the Evidence* (B.A. Southampton Univ., 1974/5).

¹¹ J. Margham, 'Carisbrooke: a study in settlement morphology', *Southern Hist.* 14 (1992), 1-28; C. J. Young, *Excavations at Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight, 1921-1996*, forthcoming.

¹² Yorke, op. cit. in note 2, 89; id., *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester, 1995).

¹³ Arnold 1982, op. cit. in note 10, 109.

¹⁴ Margham, op. cit. in note 11, 24.

island, the island's resources, and its economic involvement both locally and inter-regionally. In the third and final part, the finds are set into a wider context of Early and Middle Saxon developments in the Hampshire Basin, and reasons are given for the successive conquests of the Isle.

THE PREHISTORIC AND EARLY SAXON LANDSCAPE

Geologically the Isle of Wight can be divided into three broad zones. Its main feature is a central chalk ridge, the Central Downs, which, although in many places less than 1 km wide, rises in places to over 200 m. It traverses the whole island from east to west, and separates the lower lying clay and sandy north from the Lower Greensand formations and chalk in the south.¹⁵ The underlying geology and resulting soils appear from the earliest periods to have profoundly influenced the location of settlement and burial sites on the island. Already in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages the chalklands and southern areas of the island were preferred. In particular the floodplain of the Eastern Yar River with its fertile alluvial soils appears to have been extensively utilized compared to the often ill-drained clays and more densely wooded north of the island.¹⁶ A broadly similar pattern may be glimpsed in the Roman period, with long fields identified on Brading Down probably associated with the estate of the nearby villa of Brading; and at a later date the same can be observed from the distribution of settlements and plough-teams in Domesday Book.¹⁷

Nevertheless, with cliffs along most of the southern coasts, the north would have provided the main access to the island along major coastal inlets, such as the tidal Medina directly opposite Southampton Water, the Western Yar, Newtown River, and the Eastern Yar, as well as smaller streams, such as Monktonmead Brook (Ryde), along which a concentration of Roman coins has been found.¹⁸ Some of these inlets would have provided sheltered harbour for single ships or whole fleets, such as Brading Haven, a major harbour formed by the Eastern Yar, which, in Roman times, probably extended southwards as far as modern Sandown.¹⁹ Other sites, such as a Roman beach trading place recently discovered along Wootton Creek, which also saw cattle slaughtering and salt production, may possibly have also supplied ships anchored in the Solent.²⁰

Within the island the easiest natural line of communication would have been provided by a prehistoric track on top of the chalk ridge, running the whole width

¹⁵ E. Bird, *The Shaping of the Isle of Wight* (Bradford on Avon, 1997).

¹⁶ Basford, op. cit. in note 9, map 4 on p. 14, map 11 on pp. 34–35.

¹⁷ D. Tomalin, *Roman Wight: A Guide Catalogue* (Newport, 1987), 24; *Domesday Book: Hampshire*, ed. J. Munby (Chichester, 1982), maps in Appendix; R. Welldon-Finn, 'Hampshire', 287–363, at 310–15 in H. C. Darby and E. M. J. Campbell (eds.), *The Domesday Geography of South-East England* (Cambridge, 1962); refined by J. Margham, 'The Domesday population of the Isle of Wight', *Proc. Isle Wight Nat. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 8, (1988), 56–60.

¹⁸ Tidal waters reached Newport in the 16th century: W. Page and H. A. Doubleday (eds.), *Victoria County History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight V* (London, 1912), 253; Basford, op. cit. in note 9, map 9 on p. 30.

¹⁹ Tomalin, op. cit. in note 17, fig. 1 on p. 12.

²⁰ Isle of Wight County Council, *Romans on the Wight* (Newport, 1992), 29; D. Motkin, pers. comm.; such practice was certainly common during medieval times and probably already much earlier: S. F. Hockey, *Quarr Abbey and its Lands 1132–1631* (Leicester, 1970), 131, 135.

of the island from east to west. Its exact course remains difficult to map, as woodland clearing has resulted in about 40–50 cm of chalk eroding from the downland crests since the Bronze Age, but it is likely to have run along the highest grounds, following watersheds.²¹ Partly represented by a small road along Mersley and Arreton Down to the east, its course around Newport is lost, but further west its line is taken up by the Tennyson Trail, followed by a large number of Bronze-age tumuli, confined to the chalk.²² The central part of this ancient route is intersected at three points by rivers and their valleys, introducing important north-south elements. In all three instances Roman villas can be found in the close vicinity of these nodal points: Brading villa (probably the most important villa on the island due to its easy access to Brading Haven and hence coastal and overseas transport routes) located close to the Eastern Yar, Shide (or Newport) Roman villa next to the Medina, and Carisbrooke villa next to the Lukely Brook, formerly the Carisbrooke.²³

Perhaps already in the Iron Age, but certainly by the Roman period, the central area around Carisbrooke and the head of the Medina appears to have been a focus of activity, with four of the eight known villas concentrated there: the Newport villa close to a crossing point over the Medina, and the Carisbrooke, Clatterford, and Bowcombe villas following Bowcombe valley, again most of them connected with important fording points.²⁴ In addition, these villas were all located in the direct vicinity of the divide between the chalk ridge and the fertile soils of the greensand, which appear to meet in the valley bottom. With their location on or close to the ridge, the villas would therefore have been able to exploit not only the downland, but also both the fertile arable soils to the south and the woodlands to the north. Such practice is certainly suggested by some of the finds from the villas, including oysters from the coast, red deer and antler bones probably from the north of the island, and remains of field systems (and, from the 4th century, corn-dryers) from the downs and perhaps southern greensand formations.²⁵ It may be in the context of this early exploitation of different ecological zones that one has to seek the origins of the later pattern of north-south divides, first recorded in a charter of 826, and later manifested by parish boundaries and the territories running from sea to sea of the early churches at Domesday.²⁶

To ship cereal or livestock surpluses from these estates, access to the sea would have been important, and concentrations of Roman coins have been found not only in the vicinity of the villas, but also in the Newport area along the lower Medina and around other inlets.²⁷ Probably because of the very early excavation

²¹ Basford, *op. cit.* in note 9, 18.

²² Ordnance Survey, *Landranger Map 196: Solent & the Isle of Wight, 1:40000* (Southampton, 1993).

²³ In addition both Newport and Brading are situated on or near to Iron-age settlements. Isle of Wight County Council, *op. cit.* in note 20, 6, 14–17.

²⁴ Tomalin, *op. cit.* in note 17, fig. 1 on p. 12.

²⁵ Isle of Wight County Council, *op. cit.* in note 20, 24.

²⁶ For the complicated provision of churches, their territories, and the development of medieval parishes, see S. F. Hockey, *Insula Vecta: The Isle of Wight in the Middle Ages* (London, 1982), 1–8; P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (London, 1968), no. 274.

²⁷ Basford, *op. cit.* in note 9, map 9 on p. 30.

of most of the villas, little is now known about possible continuity of use of these sites after the 4th century. However, the find of a quoit brooch, metal-detected from the site of the now scheduled Clatterford villa in the late 1980s, may provide just a glimpse of such use into the 5th century, perhaps similar to developments in another 'Jutish' area, Kent, where a stronger case for continuity has been made.²⁸

For the Early Saxon period, burial sites are archaeologically well attested, with over ten places known or suggested on the island. These sites seem to spread out over most of the length of the chalk ridge, with a concentration in the central and western parts, some re-using Bronze-age barrows for secondary burial.²⁹ Predominantly recorded or excavated in the earlier parts of the 19th century, often little is known about the location, layout, or date of these cemeteries. Arnold was nevertheless able to identify a group of very early sites dating from the late 5th or early 6th century, frequently, as at Bowcombe, located 'above steep-sided coombs' adjacent to large blocks of downland.³⁰ With maybe as many as seven such early burial sites, including amongst others places like Bowcombe Down, the large cemetery at Chessell Down, and the graves from Carisbrooke Castle, a form of *Siedlungskammer*, 'settlement cell', may have to be envisaged on the island.

As Yorke has shown, there can be little doubt now that during the Early Saxon period the Isle of Wight was settled by peoples perceived as 'Jutes' rather than West Saxons, as claimed by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.³¹ Both Bede and Asser, in his *Life of King Alfred*, refer to a 'Jutish' origin of the Isle of Wight, which appears to have had its own royal family until Cædwalla's conquest in 686.³² The political independence of the island is also attested by its inclusion in the apparently 7th-century *Tribal Hidage*. There the *Wihthgara* were assessed, probably for tribute purposes, at 600 hides,³³ a figure apparently harshly doubled after Cædwalla's conquest.³⁴

An important link between the island and Kent was attested by Bede, who recorded that the 'people of Kent and the Isle of Wight and those in the province of the West Saxons opposite the Isle of Wight' apparently all shared a common Jutish ancestry.³⁵ Such connections between the royal houses of Kent and the island are also found in Kentish records, and in administrative arrangements, such as the naming of groups with the second element *-ware* (dwellers of), as in the *Meonware* or *Wihthware*, rather than the Saxon counterpart *-ingas* (people of).³⁶

²⁸ *CBA Group 12 Newsl.* (April 1989), 25–26; id. (Oct. 1989), 21–22; *Britannia* 20 (1989), 319; A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization* (Leicester, 1986), 69–117, 260, 341–43.

²⁹ Arnold 1982, op. cit. in note 10.

³⁰ Now often dry valleys. Arnold 1990, op. cit. in note 10, 164.

³¹ Yorke, op. cit. in note 2.

³² Asser, *The Life of King Alfred*, trans. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (eds.), *Alfred the Great* (London, 1983), ch. 2, records that Alfred's mother Osburh descended from the royal house of the Jutes of Wight; Bede, op. cit. in note 4, I, 15, IV, 16.

³³ W. Davies and H. Vierck, 'The contexts of Tribal Hidage; social aggregates and settlement patterns', *Frühmittelalterliche Stud.* 8 (1974), 223–93; D. M. Dumville, 'The Tribal Hidage: an introduction to its texts and their history', 225–30 in Bassett, op. cit. in note 2; cf., however, S. Keynes, 'England, 700–900', 21–25 in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c.700–c.900* (Cambridge, 1995).

³⁴ Bede, op. cit. in note 4, IV, 16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 15.

³⁶ *Chronicle*, op. cit. in note 1, 449–88; Yorke, op. cit. in note 2, 88; Yorke, op. cit. in note 12, 36–37; Bassett, op. cit. in note 2, figs. 4.2, 6.1, 7.1; Bede, op. cit. in note 4, IV, 13.

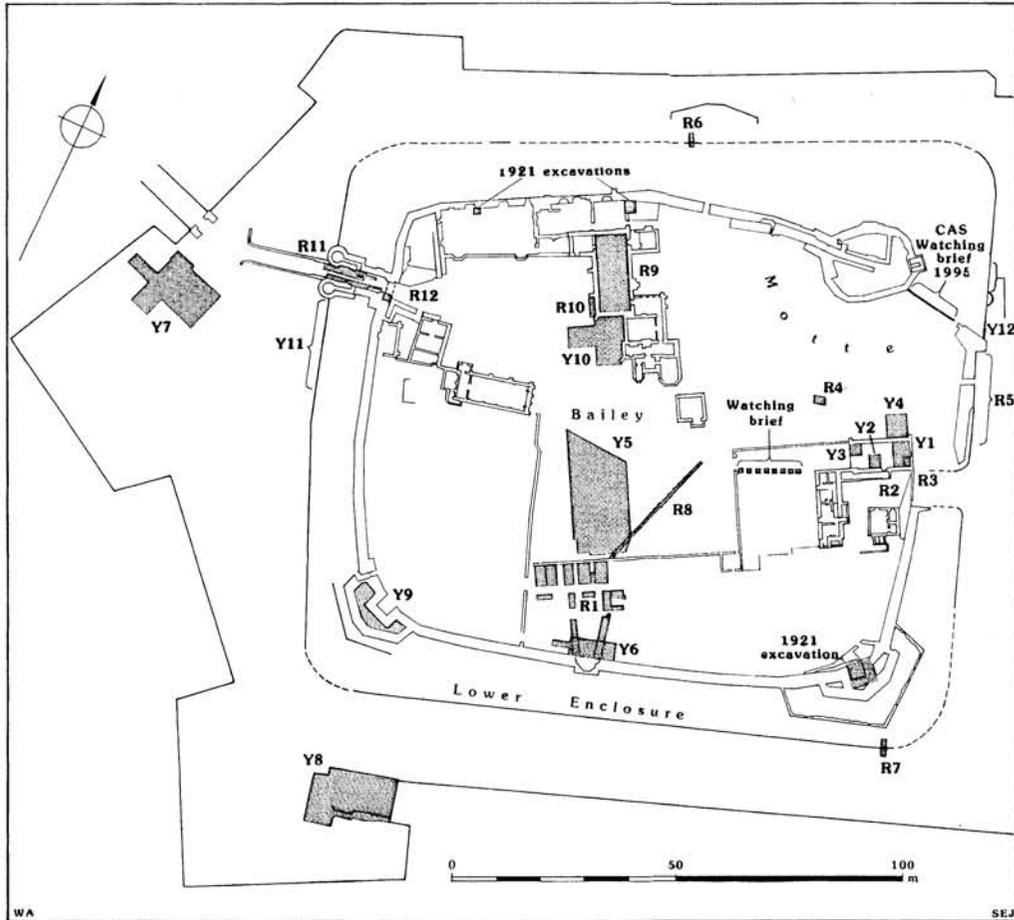


FIG. 2

Carisbrooke Castle: location plan showing the Lower Enclosure and all excavation trenches including the site of the Early Saxon cemetery (Y5). Drawing provided courtesy of English Heritage/Wessex Archaeology.

Archaeologically, grave goods, including certain types of brooch, pottery, high-status imports, and rare pre-650 runic inscriptions, have provided ample evidence for the close links of the Isle of Wight not only with Kent, but also with the Continent.³⁷ Perhaps the richest finds have come from the cemeteries of Chessell Down in the western part of the island, close to an outcrop of Bembridge Limestone with cropmarks of unknown date, and Carisbrooke Castle in the centre, the latter excavated by Young in 1976–81 (Fig. 2). At Chessell Down, male grave 26 contained a complete weapon set, hanging bowl and bucket, as well as a Mediterranean bronze pail. Another such pail was found in grave 45, the burial of

³⁷ For example D. Leigh, *The Square-Headed Brooches of Sixth-Century Kent* (Ph.D., University College Cardiff, 1980).

a female, together with two silver rimmed wooden cups, silver gilt and garnet Kentish and Merovingian jewellery, and other high-status finds, which together have led to the suggestion that a Kentish woman may have been buried here.³⁸

Strong contacts with Kent, and particularly with the Continent, are also attested at Carisbrooke Castle (Fig. 3). There, male grave 1612, apart from an outstanding gold-plated tremissis and 51 ivory counters from a playing set, contained an exceptional total of four prestige vessels including a bead-rimmed bronze bowl, a metal-bound bucket, a glass bowl, and a silver and bronze rim-mount from a drinking horn. Of these, the drinking horn had connections 'with the finest workshops of Kent, while the other three vessels were all imports from Merovingian Gaul or the Rhineland'.³⁹ There can therefore be no doubt about the importance of the early coastal and particularly cross-Channel connections of the island, the latter more recently underlined by the metal-detector find of another 5th- to 6th-century Merovingian/Frankish bronze bowl from the centre of the island, at Bowcombe Down, in 1994.⁴⁰

The corresponding early settlement sites are by comparison so far completely absent. While a study of early place-names in *-ham* and of the later *-ing* and *-ingham* names would seem to point to an early colonization of the Eastern Yar Valley, there is an even stronger likelihood that many other settlements would have followed spring-lines at the foot of the chalk ridge, with their cemeteries located on the higher ground, a pattern commonly recognized in other chalk areas.⁴¹ Finally, perhaps similar to a pattern suggested along the Middle Avon in mainland Hampshire, many early settlements may also underlie present villages.⁴² In absence of any program of systematic field-walking, however, and in view of a more general lack of excavations, this must, at present, remain an assumption.

THE MIDDLE SAXON LANDSCAPE (Figs. 4 and 6)

For the Middle Saxon period, archaeological finds from the island have until recently been almost non-existent. Lack of fieldwork is certainly to blame. The *Vectis Report*, for example, has drawn attention to considerable numbers of hollow-ways which still remain unrecorded, potentially providing important evidence for early lines of communication within the island.⁴³ A closer understanding of the period is also complicated by the almost total absence of written records. Of eleven Saxon charters referring to the island, only one, S. 274, can be dated to the Middle Saxon period.⁴⁴ It provides a boundary survey for land at Calbourne in 826,

³⁸ Arnold 1982, op. cit. in note 10, 23–24, 27–28.

³⁹ Morris and Dickinson in Young, op. cit. in note 11.

⁴⁰ Stedman 1998, op. cit. in note 9, 115–18.

⁴¹ Basford, op. cit. in note 9, 35; K. U. Ulmschneider, *The Archaeology of Middle Saxon England: The evidence of Lincolnshire and Hampshire Compared* (D.Phil., Oxford Univ., 1998), 56 and 125 for mainland Hampshire and Lincolnshire; Stedman 1998, op. cit. in note 9, 112; Arnold 1990, op. cit. in note 10, 164; cf., however, B. Cunliffe, 'Saxon and medieval settlement patterns in the region of Chalton, Hampshire', *Medieval Archaeol.* 16 (1972), 1–12.

⁴² A. Light et al., 'The middle Avon valley survey: a study in settlement history', *Proc. Hampshire Field Club Archaeol. Soc.* 50 (1994), 43–101, esp. 79–84.

⁴³ Basford, op. cit. in note 9, 35.

⁴⁴ Sawyer, op. cit. in note 26, nos. 274, 281, 543, 766, 821, 842, 1391, 1507, 1581, 1662, 1663.

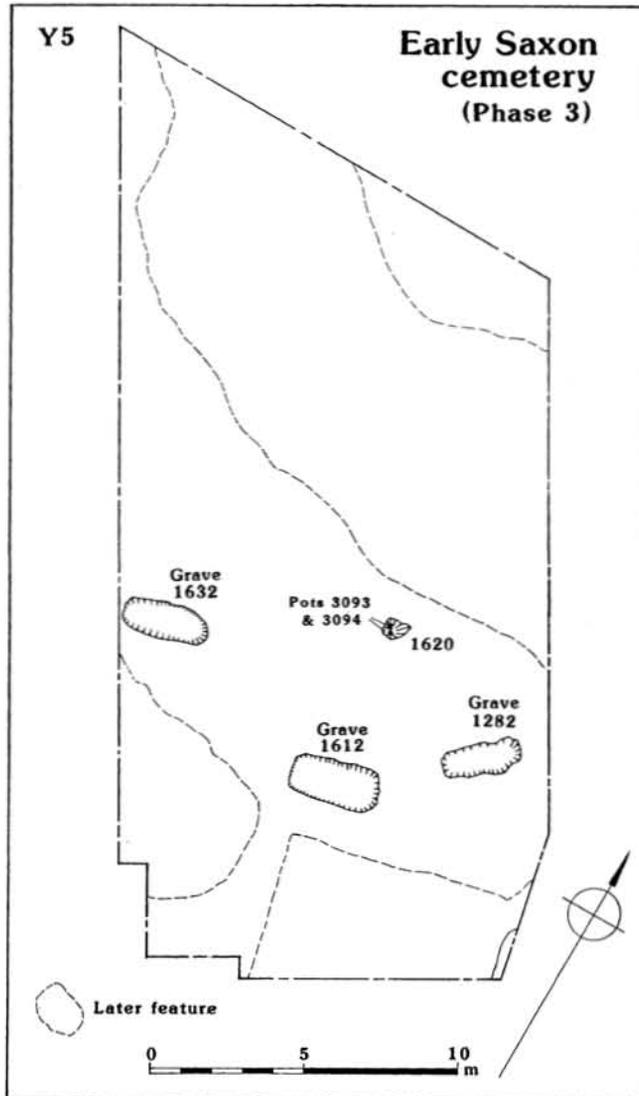


FIG. 3

Plan of the Early Saxon cemetery at Carisbrooke Castle (Y5). Drawing provided courtesy of English Heritage/Wessex Archaeology.

making reference to a *Gemot Beorh*, 'barrow of the moot', which Grundy identified with a tumulus on the chalk ridge at Newbarn Down, Gallibury Hump.⁴⁵

Middle Saxon activity is also suggested further along the ridge to the west, at the Long Stone, a neolithic long barrow preserved on Mottistone Down. Here the

⁴⁵ Basford, *op. cit.* in note 9, 130; Isle of Wight Sites and Monuments Record (IOW SMR) 425.

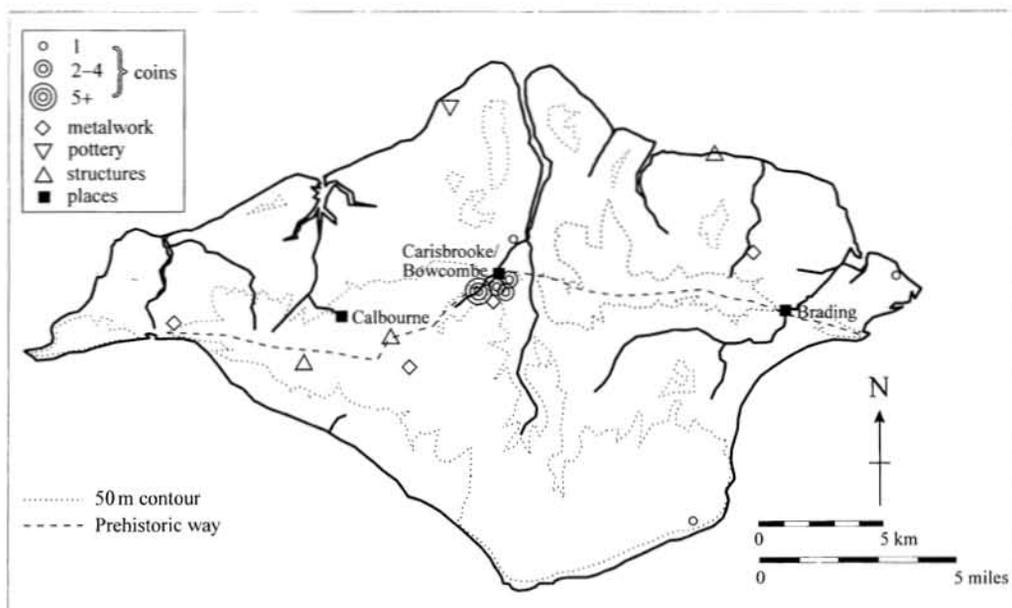


FIG. 4
Middle Saxon finds from the Isle of Wight.

Old English name of the village of Mottistone, *Modestan*, 'stone of the speakers', would indicate that the stone was probably used as another meeting place for moots, although the exact date of its use remains unknown.⁴⁶ Earlier activity in the area is attested by Early Saxon secondary burials from 'Harboro', on the highest point of Mottistone Down, with early settlement again possibly located further downhill, utilizing springs issuing from the chalk where it meets the greensand.⁴⁷

Single finds, mostly metal-detected, have also recently been made from other parts of the island. A hooked tag of 7th- to 11th-century date was recorded last year from the top of Cheverton Down, and in the same year a gilded copper-alloy stud of 8th- or 9th-century date was recovered from the sloping grounds of Afton Down, located in the south of Freshwater parish.⁴⁸ Freshwater is otherwise also known for the pre-Conquest fabric of its church, as is Arreton, and both sites may have been connected to the ridgeway.⁴⁹

Attention must again be focused on the central area of the island, which, as suggested above, appears already in Roman times to have been a centre of activity. Early Saxon importance is attested by the two cemeteries recorded at Bowcombe

⁴⁶ E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford, 1960), 332; Basford, op. cit. in note 9, 130; IOW SMR 254.

⁴⁷ Arnold 1982, op. cit. in note 10, 88.

⁴⁸ IOW SMR 2539 and 2580.

⁴⁹ H. M. Taylor and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture I* (Cambridge, 1965), 30-31 and 246; J. Margham, 'Freshwater man and the landscape', *Proc. Isle Wight Nat. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 12 (1992), 95-124. IOW SMR 2147, formerly believed to be a sceatt of Series V from Arreton, has now been identified as Roman: D. M. Metcalf, pers. comm.

Down and Carisbrooke Castle, the latter outstanding in its imported goods, and the former with the metal-detected Frankish bowl now producing similar evidence. At Domesday, Bowcombe was the site of an important royal manor, apparently the largest on the Isle of Wight. Bowcombe then possessed a mill, a salt-house, a toll worth 30s., and a church 'held by the monks of Lyre'. All the tithes of Bowcombe belonged to this church, to which were attached twenty smallholdings, inhabited by bordars. Bowcombe was also the centre of a hundred, which at that time appears to have comprised most of the island.⁵⁰

In his article on the settlement morphology of Carisbrooke, Margham was able to identify the recorded village and church with Carisbrooke. He suggested the presence of an important royal administrative and ecclesiastical centre here by at least the 11th century, and probably by the 'later Anglo-Saxon period', 're-emerging' as he argues, as a 'central place' for the island. Indeed, remains of substantial Late Saxon buildings were found by Young at Carisbrooke Castle, overlying the Early Saxon cemetery. Incorporated in the fabric of the later castle are also the remains of a pre-Norman mortared stone wall, the so called 'Lower Enclosure' (Fig. 2). First discovered in 1923, trial excavations by Rigold (1959) and Young (1976–81) have so far failed to establish a secure date for this sub-rectangular enclosure. While Rigold has argued for its construction as a Saxon Shore Fort, Young prefers a later origin, perhaps within the context of the evolving Late Saxon burhs.⁵¹ Unfortunately there is no secure written evidence to lend support to either theory. The Isle of Wight, like Kent appears to have been omitted from the 10th-century *Burghal Hidage*,⁵² and the place-name of *Wihthgarabyrig*, first recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* s.a. 530, if it can be identified with Carisbrooke at all, could have been given at any date before 893.⁵³ Whatever the exact date of the enclosure, the archaeological finds certainly attest to the Early and again Late Saxon importance of this central and strategically important area.

Apart from a few sherds of unstratified pottery, no Middle Saxon evidence was identified by Young, although this need not necessarily imply that the site was not in use during the period. Indeed, recent metal-detector finds from the wider area of Carisbrooke and from the Bowcombe valley now indicate that the general area would not only have retained its importance during the Middle Saxon period, but would probably also have continued to serve as a 'central place' for the island. Before discussing the Middle Saxon archaeological evidence for this in detail, attention should be drawn to Carisbrooke Church, in an elevated location on the opposite site of the Lukely Brook, for which a ford is still visible today. Patrick Hase

⁵⁰ *Domesday*, op. cit. in note 17, 52b and c (IoW1.7).

⁵¹ S. E. Rigold, 'Recent investigations into the earliest defences of Carisbrooke Castle', *Chateau Gaillard* 3 (1969), 128–38; C. J. Young, 'Carisbrooke Castle to 1100', *Chateau Gaillard* 11 (1983), 281–88, at 283–84; id., op. cit. in note 11.

⁵² D. Hill, 'The Burghal Hidage: the establishment of a text', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 13 (1969), 84–92; D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex* (Manchester, 1996).

⁵³ Carisbrooke has sometimes been identified with *Wihthgarabyrig*, the 'fortress of the men of Wight', *Chronicle*, op. cit. in note 1, 530, 534, 544, and is mentioned by Asser in 893: Asser, op. cit. in note 32, ch. 2; P. Hase, *The Development of the Parish in Hampshire* (Ph.D. Cambridge Univ., 1975), 333 for a possible refuge; Margham, op. cit. in note 11, 7, for a possible earlier name of the castle; cf., however, Yorke, op. cit. in note 2, 85–86.

has long argued for the existence of an early mother church at Carisbrooke, the parochia of which may have encompassed the great royal manor of Bowcombe, and the ancient rights of which are preserved in the Cartulary of Carisbrooke.⁵⁴ The early church provision for the island is still open to much debate. Apparently the 'last of all the provinces of Britain' to be converted, Bede describes the inhabitants as still 'entirely devoted to idolatry' at Cædwalla's conquest. Cædwalla, at this time not baptized himself, nevertheless 'bound himself by an oath to dedicate a quarter of the island', or 300 hides, 'to the Lord'. The land was given to Bishop Wilfrid, who entrusted it to his clerk Bernwini and 'a priest named Hiddila' to 'preach and administer baptism'.⁵⁵

While several churches have been linked by tradition to Wilfrid, none has so far provided any early evidence.⁵⁶ At present the best claim for an early mother church is probably held by Carisbrooke. The date of its foundation remains unknown, but the church's connection with a royal manor and hundred would make it similar to other mother churches identified by Hase in the area of Southampton Water.⁵⁷ These have all been shown to date to the late 7th or early 8th century, perhaps representing a deliberate attempt to enforce Christianity on the newly conquered Jutish territories.

Equally debatable is the original extent of the parochia of Carisbrooke, as the granting away of land to greater churches, like the 826 grant of Calbourne to the bishopric at Winchester, would have severed, if not removed, any early institutional links with the former mother church.⁵⁸ Before the 12th century, however, the parochia still appears to have comprised the whole area from sea to sea between Northwood and Shorwell/Chale. A similar north-south division of land is apparent from the boundary clauses of the Calbourne charter, a pattern, as argued above, perhaps originating from the Roman period. There may also have been a relationship between Carisbrooke Church and the remains of the Roman villa at Carisbrooke, which lies in the grounds of the Vicarage, only about 150 m from the church.⁵⁹

It is from this central area around Carisbrooke and the Bowcombe valley that a growing number of Middle Saxon coins and other finds have now started to appear. At present, 21 Middle Saxon coins are known from the island, comprising nineteen sceattas and two pennies. The earliest find was made in 1759, when an Anglo-Saxon sceatt, probably of Series E, was found 'at Newport, in association with a Roman coin of Tiberius', attesting to the continuing importance of the Medina as a major entry point into the island.⁶⁰ Apart from one other early

⁵⁴ Hase, *op. cit.* in note 53, 323–33.

⁵⁵ Bede, *op. cit.* in note 4, iv.16; Hase, *op. cit.* in note 53; Hockey, *op. cit.* in note 26, 1–13; Margham, *op. cit.* in note 11; recently, J. Margham, 'Saints in an island landscape: a study in church dedications', *Proc. Isle Wight Nat. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 13 (1997), 91–106.

⁵⁶ Taylor, *op. cit.* in note 49, 30–31, 246; Margham, *op. cit.* in note 55.

⁵⁷ Hase, *op. cit.* in note 5, 45–66, at 45–46 and fig. 9 on p. 47.

⁵⁸ Sawyer, *op. cit.* in note 26, no. 274; P. Hase, 'The church in the Wessex heartlands', 62–63, n. 59 on p. 62, in Aston and Lewis (eds.), *op. cit.* in note 8.

⁵⁹ Basford, *op. cit.* in note 9, 33; Margham, *op. cit.* in note 11, 5.

⁶⁰ D. M. Metcalf, 'Find-records of medieval coins from Gough's Camden's Britannia', *Numis. Chronicle* 17 (1957), 181–207, p. 205.

discovery, a penny of Æthelwulf (838–58) found close to the Undercliff at Bonchurch,⁶¹ the remaining coins are all metal-detected, recovered by five different finders between 1989 and 1997. As a result of the close co-operation between most of these finders and local archaeologists, the findspots of at least nine of the sceattas can now be securely located within the vicinity of Carisbrooke Castle and the Bowcombe valley to the south-west. They comprise three specimens of Series H, apparently two of Series O, and four of Series E, one of them an extremely scarce type 'outside the usual range of style'.⁶² A tenth find, a sceatt of Series C2, submitted by an already known finder who for years has been providing artefacts and sceattas from the same general area, could indicate that this coin may also stem from here.⁶³

Until recently much less was known about the findspots of the seven sceattas and one penny, recorded by the British Museum in 1992 and 1993, and apparently all recovered by the same finder. Being detected between 1991–93, finds from this important site comprise three sceattas of Series H, one of each Series W, X, D, and R derivative, a penny of Offa's Light coinage, and a post-Conquest coin.⁶⁴ The findspot was then described as the 'Isle of Wight', but the finder recently acknowledged that all these finds came from the Bowcombe/Carisbrooke area.⁶⁵ Therefore certainly nine, and probably as many as eighteen coins, can now be firmly located in the Bowcombe/Carisbrooke area, providing evidence for a major 'productive site' in this central part of the island.

Some important conclusions can be drawn from this material. First, almost all of these finds were metal-detected in recent years, attesting to the continuing, and still growing, importance of metal-detecting in archaeology.⁶⁶ Second, all of them are coins. This may represent a true picture, but in view of the importance placed by finders on coins rather than pins or strap-ends, other finds are perhaps to be expected. Indeed, metalwork finds have now started to appear from the Carisbrooke area, where, in addition to the above mentioned coins, two strap-ends of probably 9th-century date have also been discovered.⁶⁷ Other finds from the same area include Roman coins and pottery, 6th-century brooches, and Late Saxon, medieval, and many other, so far unidentified and undated, finds.⁶⁸

As for the origins of the Middle Saxon coins from the central area, a wide range of places may be suggested. Of the six sceattas of Series H, five of type 49 certainly originated from Hamwic, probably reaching the well-connected valley

⁶¹ Reported in 1934, but not seen: IOW SMR 708.

⁶² The findspots have been confidentially recorded and most of these coins have been retained by the finders: IOW SMR 2161 and 2156. Of these finds one sceatt of Series E has been published in *Brit. Numis. J.* 59 (1989), Coin Register 1989, no. 67, p. 228. Only two further finds, a sceatt of Series H and the unusual Series E variant, were available for publication: see below; D. M. Metcalf, pers. comm. Another sceatt of Series E has been recorded from Bembridge beach: IOW SMR 2164.

⁶³ *Brit. Numis. J.* 65 (1995), Coin Register 1995, no. 77, p. 236.

⁶⁴ *Brit. Numis. J.* 62 (1992), Coin Register 1992, nos. 231 and 232 on p. 219, nos. 246 and 247 on p. 220, no. 257 on p. 221; *Brit. Numis. J.* 63 (1993), Coin Register 1993, no. 148 on p. 145, nos. 170 and 177 on p. 147.

⁶⁵ D. Motkin, pers. comm.

⁶⁶ Recently assessed by C. Dobinson and S. Denison, *Metal Detecting and Archaeology in England* (London, 1995).

⁶⁷ IOW SMR 2161, see below.

⁶⁸ IOW SMR 2388 and 2161.

via the Solent and Medina, or along other inlets and the prehistoric track. Their large concentration on the island, compared to no more than two known from any of the other three Hampshire sites outside Hamwic, must be regarded as outstanding at present, and points strongly to a trading connection with the emporium.⁶⁹ Equally unusual is the occurrence of a sceatt of Series H type 48, from a different mint, probably in the South Wessex area, and suggested by Metcalf to have possibly been used by travellers to Italy.⁷⁰ Commercial activity is also indicated by possibly five sceattas of Series E, and one of Series D, minted in Frisia or the Lower Rhineland. They would seem to point to direct contacts with the Continent, although one might argue for a link that led via Hamwic. Similarly the sceatt of Series X originated in Jutland, tying in with similar finds from Hamwic.⁷¹

However, it appears that not all trading activity would have necessarily been connected with Hamwic.⁷² While many sceattas of Series E were found at the emporium, only two specimens of Series D were recorded. These, together with the Isle of Wight coin, represent the only finds of Series D so far in Hampshire. Sceattas of Series W, with a Wessex origin, perhaps minted somewhere around the Solent or wider Hampshire Basin, are slightly more common in Hampshire, but again only two come from Hamwic, compared to one specimen from the Isle of Wight.⁷³ Perhaps even more important in this respect are the (apparent) finds of two rare sceattas of Series O type 38 (minted south of the Thames) securely located in the Bowcombe valley area, the very scarce Series E type 12/5 'mule', and the almost equally rare sceatt of Series R derivative (minted in South Humberside or Lincoln?).⁷⁴ Although over 130 sceattas are known from 26 sites in Hamwic, not a single example of Series R was found amongst them.⁷⁵ Incidentally, only one other possible specimen of Series R is known from Hampshire, found at Winchester in about 1839, but its attribution is imprecise and it was subsequently identified as a rare K/R 'mule'.⁷⁶ Similarly, the other three sceattas of Series O from Hampshire were all of type 40 which, as Metcalf argues, was 'unconnected with the group of other types making up Series O', being different in appearance, distribution, and probably place of minting.⁷⁷ But perhaps the most outstanding find is the above mentioned Series E type 12/5 'mule'. Probably of Continental origin, only two other specimens of this type are known (one of them from the Continent), and all

⁶⁹ Ulmschneider, *op. cit.* in note 41, no. 44 on p. 397 ('South Hampshire'), nos. 29 on pp. 392–93 and 91 on p. 413 (Clausentum), and no. 24 on p. 392 (Cheriton).

⁷⁰ D. M. Metcalf, *Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford*, 3 Vols., (London, 1993–94), 339.

⁷¹ M. F. Garner, 'Middle Saxon evidence at Cook Street, Southampton', *Proc. Hampshire Field Club Archaeol. Soc.*, 49 (1993), 77–127, on p. 105; D. M. Metcalf, *pers. comm.*

⁷² In view of the still comparatively small sample of securely identified and published coins from this site, any closer statistical analysis and comparison with the Hamwic finds would as yet be premature; however, some trends may be suggested.

⁷³ Metcalf, *op. cit.* in note 70, 152–57, on pp. 155 and 157.

⁷⁴ Only two similar specimens are known of this variety (R derivative), one from Tilbury, Essex, the other from a productive site near Canterbury, Kent: Metcalf, *op. cit.* in note 70, 524–36, on pp. 531 and 536.

⁷⁵ S. E. Rigold and D. M. Metcalf, 'A revised check-list of English finds of sceattas', 263 in D. Hill and D. M. Metcalf (eds.), *Sceattas in England and on the Continent* (BAR British Series, 128, Oxford, 1984); D. M. Metcalf, 'The coins', 15–73 in P. Andrews (ed.), *Southampton Finds Vol. 1: The Coins and Pottery from Hamwic* (Southampton, 1988); Garner, *op. cit.* in note 71, 105.

⁷⁶ Metcalf, *op. cit.* in note 70, 449–50.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 477–81, on pp. 477 and 481.

three appear to be from the same dies.⁷⁸ The Isle of Wight sceattas of Series R derivative, O type 38, and the Series E 12/5 'mule' therefore appear to represent the only ones of their type in Hampshire at present, with at least the latter three securely located close to a later important royal estate centre with an early mother church.

It is interesting to speculate about the type of products which may have been traded with Hamwic and other areas. During the Roman period trade in Bembridge Limestone, a stone specific to the Isle of Wight and including both Binstead and Quarr types, is well attested, and the stone has been found as far afield as Southampton, Winchester, Chichester Harbour, Portchester and Dorchester.⁷⁹ For the Middle Saxon period the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* has now isolated some of the provenances of stone used for sculpture.⁸⁰ Pale grey-brown Bembridge Limestone from the Isle of Wight has been identified at South Hayling, where it was used for a probably 8th-century cross-base, and perhaps at Little Somborne for a cross-shaft dated by Tweddle to the late 8th or early 9th century but almost certainly of a later date.⁸¹ Finally, two pieces have been excavated at Winchester, one a fragment of an impost dated to the 7th or 10th century, the other a fragment with bands, dated to the late 9th century, but possibly earlier.⁸² Although there is a chance that some of these pieces, in particular those from Winchester, may have resulted from a re-use of stone quarried in the Roman period, there still remains a strong likelihood that stone would have been traded from at least the 9th century onwards, a situation underlined by its use in more than 25 mainland Hampshire and Sussex churches dating from the later Saxon period onwards.⁸³

Outcrops of limestone occur along the north and north-eastern coast of the Isle of Wight, from Gurnard to Bembridge, while further, perhaps less accessible beds, are found in the western parts of the island.⁸⁴ It appears that Bembridge Limestone is only found directly on the beach at two points: in the area between Wootton Creek and Ryde, where quarries have been identified and recently surveyed, and near Gurnard.⁸⁵ Although no Roman or Saxon quarries have been identified at the latter site so far, it has been suggested for the Roman period that the unusual coastal location of Gurnard villa, the only one not found on the central chalk ridge, may indicate that it controlled the quarrying of Bembridge Limestone from nearby sources.⁸⁶

It may just be by chance that Gurnard is one of the few places on the island to have produced any Middle Saxon occupational material so far. Pottery of possible

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 246–47; see also below.

⁷⁹ Isle of Wight County Council, *op. cit.* in note 20, 27.

⁸⁰ D. Tweddle et al., *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture IV: South-East England* (Oxford, 1995).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 260 and 265–66; M. Biddle, *pers. comm.*; Ulmschneider, *op. cit.* in note 41, 105.

⁸² Tweddle, *op. cit.* in note 80, 273–309.

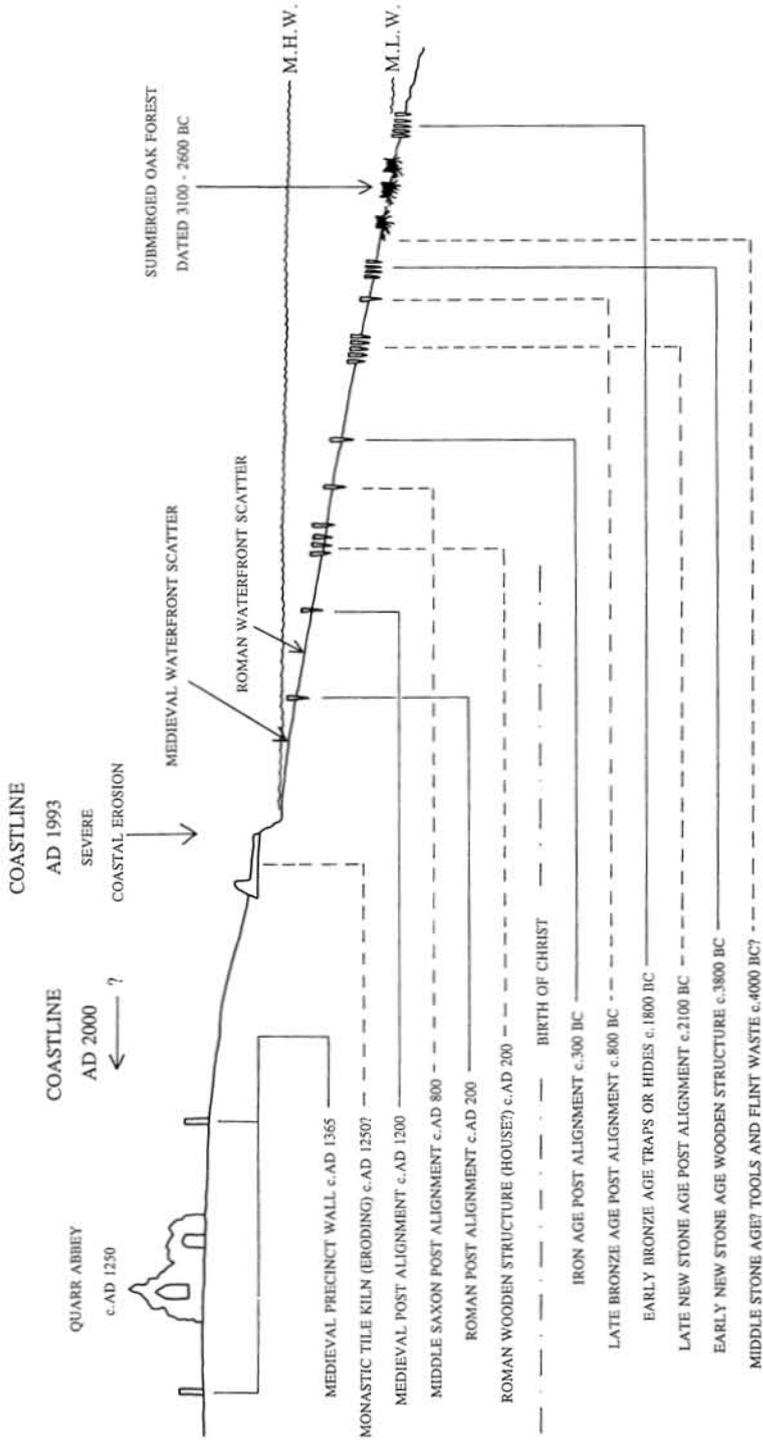
⁸³ *Ibid.*, 102–03; E. M. Jope, 'The Saxon building-stone industry in Southern and Midland England', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 8 (1964), 91–118, esp. fig. 26 on p. 94 and pp. 115–17.

⁸⁴ Tomalin, *op. cit.* in note 17, fig. 2 on p. 13.

⁸⁵ Jope, *op. cit.* in note 83, 116; D. Tomalin, *Wootton Haven: An Assessment and Updated Project Design for the Wootton-Quarr Intertidal Survey* (Newport, 1995), Appendix 2, 248–52.

⁸⁶ Isle of Wight County Council, *op. cit.* in note 20, 27.

ARCHAEOLOGY & COASTAL CHANGE AT WOOTTON-QUARR



A SUMMARY OF THE 1992 SURVEY BY THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NOT TO SCALE

FIG. 5 Wootton-Quarr: schematic section of early post alignments found in the inter-tidal zone, including those of Middle Saxon date.

9th-century date (Hodges class 2) was discovered there in 1930.⁸⁷ Whatever its exact function, Gurnard's location on the northern tip of the island must have been of importance, providing a landing place, as well as possibly overlooking trade along a postulated Roman route connecting the villa to the central area around Carisbrooke.⁸⁸ It may also be significant that a Roman road from the lower Test/New Forest area terminated on the Solent at Lepe, just opposite, with the shortest water connection to Gurnard.⁸⁹ Lepe has also been identified as Bede's *Ad Lapidem*, where the two princes fleeing from the Isle of Wight were brought.⁹⁰ Unfortunately their place of departure from the island remains unknown.

At the moment, however, any postulated Middle Saxon landing, trading or even quarrying place at Gurnard Bay cannot be verified archaeologically. This may not change in future. Coastal erosion led to the discovery and recording of the Roman villa between 1864 and 1880, which by then was 'fast tumbling into the sea'.⁹¹ More recent studies have suggested slippage and erosion varying between 30 cm and 1.50 m a year, with some places losing up to 3 m, amounting to a potential loss of possibly as much as 100–150 m during the last century alone.⁹²

Another potential place of importance is the area between Fishbourne Creek and Ryde on the north-eastern coast, referred to above as an important site for the quarrying of stone on the beach, and probably since the Roman, but certainly by the medieval period providing ferry routes to the mainland.⁹³ There the *Wootton-Quarr Project*, an ongoing intensive survey of the intertidal region, has revealed alignments of stout posts running for some 2 km along the extreme low water mark (Fig. 5). Radiocarbon samples taken at several points along its length appear to confirm a date in the 7th/8th century. While the area has also provided Iron-age posts and Roman evidence, at present the exact function of the posts remains unknown, although a possible use as fishtraps has been suggested.⁹⁴

Apart from stone, another possible product to be traded (or used for preserving tradable perishable goods) might have been salt. Extraction of salt is well attested for the Roman period on the island, for example at Wootton Creek and Yarverland.⁹⁵ Domesday Book lists three salt-houses on the Isle of Wight, at Whitefield to the north-east, Watchingwell in the north-west, which was held by Wilton Abbey and exempt from dues, and Bowcombe itself, also free of dues.⁹⁶

⁸⁷ R. Hodges, *The Hamwic Pottery* (CBA Res. Rep. 37, Southampton, 1981), 6–7 and 56–57.

⁸⁸ Hase, op. cit. in note 58, fig. 3.11 on p. 59; the road may have linked the Roman villa at Gurnard with the fort at Carisbrooke and with the other villas, but there is no evidence as to where exactly it ran, D. Motkin, pers. comm.; F. Williams-Freeman, *Field Archaeology as Illustrated by Hampshire* (London, 1915), 216–20.

⁸⁹ D. E. Johnston, 'Hampshire: the Roman period', fig. 15 on p. 49 in Shennan and Schadla-Hall (eds.), op. cit. in note 7.

⁹⁰ Yorke, op. cit. in note 2, 90.

⁹¹ E. Kell, 'An account of the discovery of a Roman building in Gurnard Bay, Isle of Wight, and its relation to the ancient British tin trade in the island', *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.* 22 (1866), 351–68; F. Haverfield, 'Romano-British remains', 317–18 and 325 in H. A. Doubleday (ed.), *A History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (London, 1900); Tomalin, op. cit. in note 17, 10.

⁹² Basford, op. cit. in note 9, 70, fig. 4 on p. 71; M. Fulford et al. (eds.), *England's Coastal Heritage* (London, 1997).

⁹³ Hockey, op. cit. in note 20, 1; id., op. cit. in note 26, 81–104, esp. 66; P. Hase, pers. comm.

⁹⁴ D. Motkin, pers. comm.; Fulford, op. cit. in note 92, 76–77.

⁹⁵ Isle of Wight County Council, op. cit. in note 20, 27; K. W. De Brisay and K. A. Evans (eds.), *Salt, the Study of an Ancient Industry* (Colchester, 1975).

⁹⁶ *Domesday*, op. cit. in note 17, 53a (IoW16.14), 52d (IoW5.1), 52b (IoW1.7).

Bowcombe is the only place on the island where a toll of 30s. is mentioned, perhaps indicating the presence of a market, while possible industrial, agricultural, and trading activity may also be suggested from the presence of 20 bordars attached to the church paying 14s.⁹⁷ Other Domesday commodities on the Isle comprised 143 slaves, pigs, and two somewhat enigmatic cows, held by a vavassor.⁹⁸

Finally, there is a distinct possibility that foodstuffs would have been traded from the Isle of Wight. With its diversity of soils, the island was ideal for cereal and livestock farming, both greatly intensified during the Roman period. While the sea, northern rivers, and inlets provided plentiful natural resources of fish and oysters, the clayey and wooded north of the island would have been used for pig-rearing, hunting (as, for example, at Domesday in the royal hunting ground at Watchingwell), as well as a source of timber.⁹⁹ The central and southern chalklands either supported sheep or were used for cultivation as, for example, is attested by the remains of field systems in the vicinity of the Roman villa on Brading Down.¹⁰⁰ But perhaps the most important parts of the island were the loamy greensands to the south, providing excellent soils for grain. Intensively exploited throughout the Roman period, it was from these southern areas that in the late 13th century corn was shipped to support Edward I's army in Scotland.¹⁰¹

THE ISLAND IN ITS WIDER CONTEXT

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from this preliminary survey. By the late 5th, but certainly during the 6th century, the 'Jutish' Isle of Wight exhibited considerable wealth and wide trading connections from its burials. Some of this wealth may have been generated by the exploitation of the rich natural resources of the island. The fertile greensand areas provided some of the best soils in and to the south of the Hampshire Basin, in what would have been the Jutish territories. Even more significant, however, are the historically and archaeologically well-attested links between the Jutish island, the Jutes of Kent, and the Continent, at a time when both Kent and the Isle of Wight appear to have held a monopoly of southern cross-Channel trade.¹⁰²

The island's natural resources, its important geographic and strategic location, and, probably most important of all, its access to long established coastal and overseas trade routes, therefore provide some context for the successive conquests in the 7th century by Wulfhere of Mercia in 661 and Cædwalla of Wessex in 686. The importance of the latter conquest in the evolution of Wessex has been hinted

⁹⁷ C. Dyer, 'Towns and cottages in eleventh-century England', 91–106, on pp. 100–01 in H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. H. C. Davies* (London, 1985).

⁹⁸ *Domesday*, op. cit. in note 17, 53b (IoW7.15); joint evidence for Roman cattle slaughtering and salt making has been found at the Wootton Creek site, perhaps supplying ships (or for export), Isle of Wight County Council, op. cit. in note 20, 25, 29.

⁹⁹ The King's Park, *Domesday*, op. cit. in note 17, 52d (IoW5.1).

¹⁰⁰ Isle of Wight County Council, op. cit. in note 20, 24.

¹⁰¹ Hockey, op. cit. in note 26, 105–08.

¹⁰² J. Huggett, 'Imported grave goods and the early Anglo-Saxon economy', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 32 (1988), 63–96; M. Welch, 'Contacts across the Channel between the fifth and seventh centuries: a review of the archaeological evidence', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 7 (1991), 261–69.

at by Barbara Yorke, and is perhaps underlined by Bede, who 'after the reign of Cædwalla ceases to use the term *Gewissae* as an alternative to West Saxon'.¹⁰³ It was through the annexation of the Isle of Wight (and neighbouring provinces) that the *Gewissae*, for some time under severe Mercian pressure from the north, acquired strategic control of ports and access to important cross-Channel trade networks, perhaps providing not only the background for their development into the West Saxons but also for the subsequent rise of the trading port at Hamwic. Located in the centre of the former Jutish territory, the evolution of Hamwic can only be satisfactorily explained in the context of the final submission and control of the Jutish lands, which would have created the safe political surroundings needed for the rise of this undefended emporium.

Yorke has also speculated about the possibility of a controlled settlement of Jutish people at Hamwic. Such a view cannot at present be supported archaeologically. However, the Middle Saxon evidence from the Isle of Wight certainly indicates strong trading links with both Hamwic and Continental sites by the 8th century. This utilization of potentially ancient coastal and cross-Channel trade routes from the Hampshire Basin is also reflected in early written records, which, at least from the 7th/8th centuries onwards, point to the growing importance of travel routes to northern France and the Seine area.¹⁰⁴ It was from Hamblemouth on the Hampshire coast that St Willibald set out in about 721 to a place near Rouen, where there was a mart, the ship perhaps bound for the important fair at Saint-Denis, in existence since Merovingian times.¹⁰⁵

While the archaeological evidence for the continued use of these trade routes is growing, the nature of the relationships between Hamwic and the Isle of Wight, particularly in the absence of a clear identification of many of the recorded coins, must remain shadowy at present. Those sceattas securely attributed by the British Museum and Metcalf, point to only a little evidence from the primary sceatt phase, mainly represented by the Series W and perhaps Series D sceattas, and a strong influence from the later Hamwic type 49 (but not the earlier type 39) and other secondary phase coins.¹⁰⁶ From the current assemblage of finds there seems, at present, no reason to suggest a separate mint-place, with the island almost certainly being under the monetary influence of Hamwic, with which it appears to have happily co-existed for much of the Middle Saxon period.

The other face of the successful West Saxon conquest is illuminated by Bede's description of the latter attack as devastating for the natives, who are said to have

¹⁰³ Yorke, *op. cit.* in note 2, 93; J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 1994), 42–45; both terms are used in Bede, *op. cit.* in note 4, iv.15.

¹⁰⁴ And perhaps already earlier: P. Johaneck, 'Der "Außenhandel" des Frankenreiches der Merowingerzeit nach Norden und Osten im Spiegel der Schriftquellen', 222–25 and 234–44 in K. Düwel et al. (eds.), *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der Vor- und Frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Teil III: Der Handel des frühen Mittelalters* (Göttingen, 1985).

¹⁰⁵ *Vita Willibaldi*, ed. and trans. A. Bauch, 'Das Leben des Hl. Willibald', *Quellen zur Geschichte der Diözese Eichstätt Band 1: Biographien der Gründungszeit* (Eichstätt, 1984), 40–41.

¹⁰⁶ Of these *British Numis. J.* 62 (1992), Coin Register 1992, no. 231 on p. 219, wrongly recorded as type 49, has been re-classified as type 48: D. M. Metcalf, *pers. comm.*

been exterminated.¹⁰⁷ For a long time the lack of settlements and Middle Saxon archaeological material from the Isle of Wight has been explained as a result of this conquest. This view can no longer be upheld. Although excavated settlements of both Early and Middle Saxon date are still missing, new finds, almost exclusively from metal-detectors, have started to provide important evidence for Middle Saxon occupation and commercial activity on the island. In particular the central area around Carisbrooke, a central place from earliest times, can now be shown to have continued its importance during the Middle and into the Late Saxon and medieval periods, rather than to have 're-emerged' after a gap in settlement. The wealth of the Isle of Wight, glimpsed in the 5th- and 6th-century grave-goods and in the 7th century through Cædwalla's imposition of heavy taxation (double of what had been rendered before), appears not to have faltered, but, as attested by the growing influx of silver coinage, to have continued well into the 8th and probably later centuries.

Finally, attention has been drawn to other possible places of importance on the island, for example at Gurnard, in the Wootton-Quarr area, and, as single finds may suggest, from other areas along the slopes of the chalk ridge. The site of the early monastery founded by Wilfrid, associated with Cædwalla's grant of 300 hides, remains, for the present, undiscovered. Hase has drawn attention to the overriding importance of Carisbrooke as a mother church, but other possibilities also need to be considered, not least the formerly important area around Brading, which, according to one tradition, was supposedly the site associated with a grant of 50 hides by King Ine to the church of Winchester.¹⁰⁸ No early finds are at present known from the village itself, but metal-detecting in the wider area has produced an outstanding 8th-century ecclesiastical staff or crozier, about 1.5 km away from Brading church.¹⁰⁹ Finally, more sites are likely to be located along the northern coasts or at the entries of rivers, acting as vital landing and shipping places for goods. From the earliest date, these places had provided excellent shelters for ships and fleets. These would soon be used again: by the Vikings for their attacks on southern England.¹¹⁰

A SELECTION OF THE FINDS

1. (Fig. 6, a) Copper-alloy quoit brooch of almost completely flat section with pin, V-slit, and two circular perforations for the missing pin stops. Decoration on the upper surface is restricted to its inner and outer borders with pairs of stamped dots and triangles framing two concentric circles. Very similar in execution and design to the 5th-century quoit brooch from Alfriston, Sussex, grave 57.¹¹¹ Unstratified. 32 mm in diameter. This is the only known example of a quoit brooch from the island, although quoit brooch-style

¹⁰⁷ Bede, *op. cit.* in note 4, iv.16; cf., however, Asser, *op. cit.* in note 32, for Alfred's mother claiming to be descended from the royal house of Wight.

¹⁰⁸ *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, II, London, 1865), 6; however, the authenticity of this grant is doubted: Page and Doubleday (eds.), *op. cit.* in note 18, 158.

¹⁰⁹ I am indebted to John Blair for drawing my attention to this piece which is discussed in detail by Susan Youngs, below.

¹¹⁰ *Chronicle*, *op. cit.* in note 1, 897 [896], 998, 1001.

¹¹¹ M. G. Welch, *Early Anglo-Saxon Sussex* (BAR British Series, 112, Oxford, 1983), 59–64 and fig. 27c on p. 543.

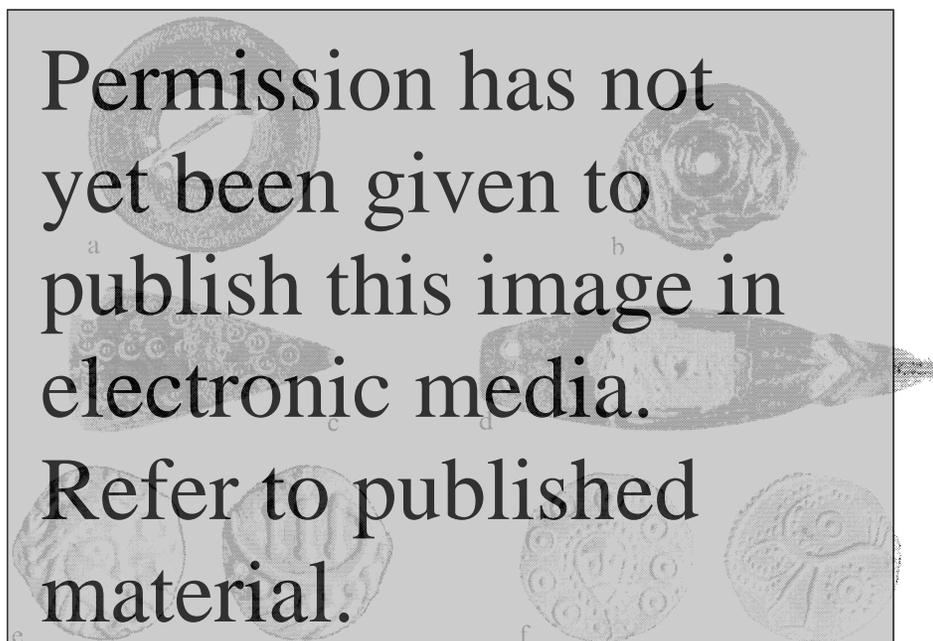


FIG. 6

A selection of Middle Saxon finds from the Isle of Wight: a. quoit brooch; b. stud; c. hooked tag; d. strap-end; e. sceatt series E variant (scale 2:1); f. sceatt series H (scale 2:1). *Photographs kindly provided by the Isle of Wight Council Museum Service.*

ornament has been found on a roundel from Bowcombe Down, grave 13, and a strap-end from Chessell Down.¹¹²

2. (Fig. 6, b) Copper-alloy gilded stud, cone-shaped with central piercing. The circular stud is corroded around the edge and decorated with a continuous band of two-strand interlace against a plain background between plain raised borders. The centre appears to have an empty circular setting through which a rectangular hole has been made. The back has not been studied and the original means of attachment are unknown. Photographs of the find were sent to the British Museum for identification which, on the grounds of its simple decoration, confirmed a probable Middle Saxon date, i.e. 8th- or 9th-century. Unstratified. About 19 mm in diameter, 5 mm in height. There appear to be no precise parallels to this find. A related stud but of typically Irish form was excavated at St Peter's Street, Northampton, Northants. The latter was identified as a shrine mount but a more prosaic use is likely. The Isle of Wight stud appears to have come off something fairly robust, possibly a box.¹¹³

3. (Fig. 6, c) Copper-alloy hooked tag, triangular with rounded corners, a shallow hook formed by recurving the apex, and two attachment holes at the base, one broken. Slightly corroded on its surface, the tag is decorated with an incised line along its long sides and crudely punched ring and dot ornament broadly following its borders and a central

¹¹² V. I. Evison, *The Fifth-Century Invasions South of the Thames* (London, 1965), 37, 62–65, 93–94, 126, fig. 28a and pl. 14a.

¹¹³ S. Youngs, pers. comm.; id., letter to Isle of Wight County Archaeological Centre, 6 May 1997; J. H. Williams, *St Peter's Street, Northampton. Excavations 1973–6* (Northampton, 1979), fig. 109 no. 44 on pp. 252 and 254.

line from tip to base. Comparable triangular hooked tags have been recovered in considerable numbers at sites such as Shakenoak, Oxon., and Winchester, Hants., and appear to have had a long period of use, beginning in the 7th and extending into the 11th century.¹¹⁴ Unstratified. 38 mm in length.

4. (Fig. 6, d) Copper-alloy strap-end with heavily decayed ?metal inlay, convex sides, two rivet holes, and a zoomorphic terminal in form of an animal head. Main decorative panel lost. Its form would appear to link it to a series of zoomorphic strap-ends broadly dated to the 9th century.¹¹⁵ Unstratified. 64 mm in length.

5. (Fig. 6, e) Silver sceatt, variant of Series E, Type 12/5 'mule'. Obverse: diademed "LVNDONIA" bust; reverse: 'porcupine'. Early 8th century. Unstratified. This is an extremely rare coin, with only two other specimens known. From the same dies as *Ashmolean* 264.¹¹⁶

6. (Fig. 6, f) Silver sceatt, Series H, Type 49, variant 2b. Obverse: facing moustached head, kite-shaped, with complete dotted outline, eight roundels interspersed with dots, cross pommee at 6 o'clock; reverse: bird walking right crested with pelleted spikes, head lowered, dotted outline around wing and in and outside tail, large pellet above and rosette below neck. First half of 8th century. Unstratified. From the same obverse and a very similar reverse die as *Hamwic* 70.¹¹⁷

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX: AN ANGLO-SAXON STAFF FITTING FROM NEAR BRADING

By SUSAN YOUNGS

An isolated find of an elaborately shaped and decorated mount represents a hitherto unrecorded type of object from the Middle Saxon Period. It is a heavy casting of bronze, once thickly gilt but now corroded on many outer surfaces, broken at one end and corroded at the other, with an overall length of 82 mm

¹¹⁴ M. Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester* (Winchester Studies 7.ii, Oxford, 1990), 548–51; A. C. C. Broadribb, et al., *Excavations at Shakenoak Farm, near Wilcote, Oxfordshire, Pt III* (Oxford, 1972), fig. 31 no. 145 on p. 73.

¹¹⁵ L. Webster and J. Backhouse, *The Making of England* (London, 1991), 233–34; G. Thomas, 'Silver wire strap-ends from East-Anglia', *Anglo-Saxon Studies Archaeol Hist.*, 9 (1996), 81–100.

¹¹⁶ Metcalf, op. cit. in note 70, 246–47, pl. 15 no. 264; id., pers. comm.

¹¹⁷ D. M. Metcalf, pers. comm.; id., op. cit. in note 70, 325–26; id. in Andrews, op. cit. in note 75, no. 70 on p. 44.

(Figs. 7–8).¹¹⁸ The tapering tubular socket is incomplete at the lower edge, with a maximum diameter of 21 mm, and it carries three cast panels of interlace inside plain raised borders. At the narrow end the socket extends into a hollow globular terminal with a biconical profile decorated externally with four panels of interlace inside raised plain borders. There is a large hole caused by corrosion. The border at the top has a rectangular recess at one point between two panels. From the globular terminal projects a solid tapering rod with a sub-oval cross-section and a narrow vertical face with further cast decoration. The gilding remains in good condition on this smooth surface. The rod measures 44.6 mm and is broken off where it was pierced by a narrow hole, the groove can be seen running across the broken surface (Fig. 7i). Another such hole runs right through the rod in the decorative panel just above the notch. Manmade holes in the socket, one still with a rivet head, show that this was how the whole mount had been attached at that end (Fig. 7 section B).

Interlace on the piece is of two kinds, either four-strand, based on two opposing loops plaited through each other, with trefoil terminals on loose ends, or, in five of the panels, it is formed from loosely looped strands in varying patterns, some apparently splitting and all with vegetable details. The fine detail, however, is fugitive because of the extensive corrosion of the outer surfaces. The ornament running up the rod is unusual and difficult to interpret but is probably also based on an etiolated plant motif with a tendril above the knob.

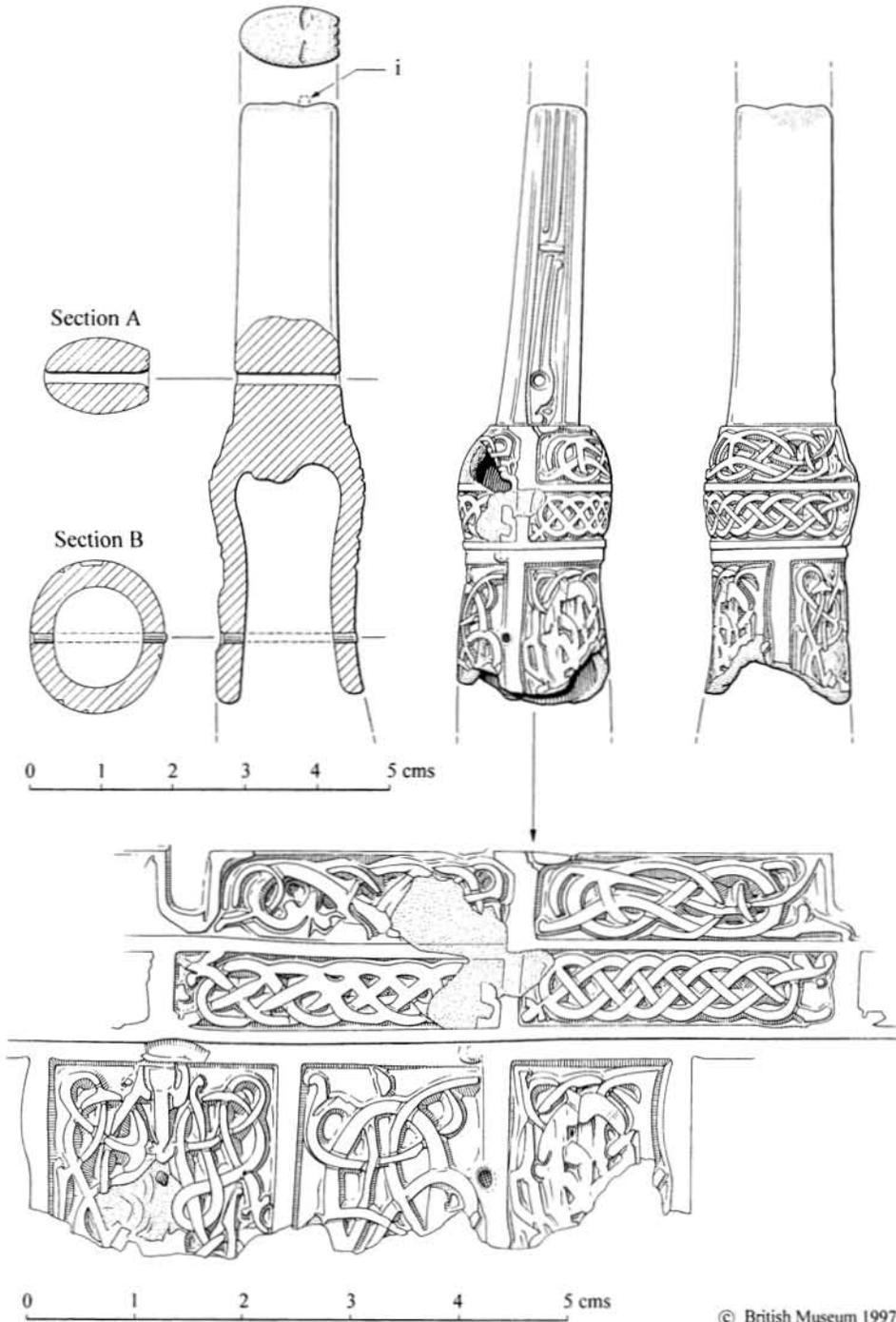
The style of the different interlace panels, in particular their leafy terminals indicates that this an Anglo-Saxon piece dating to the late 8th century when the faceted chip-carved effect, seen so commonly on pinhead panels and elsewhere, was being abandoned for more rounded low relief ornament which in style is closer to the tradition of stone sculpture. The loosely looped ornament of the majority of the panels is also seen in manuscript illumination of this period; the best parallels are found on panels of the Leningrad/St Petersburg Gospels, but there the free loops are almost invariably associated with animals, while the non-zoomorphic interlace is more tight and orderly without loose ends.¹¹⁹ In sculpture loose ends with leafy terminals are seen early on cross shaft fragments at Jarrow, County Durham and Norham in Northumberland where they are derived from vine scroll ornament.¹²⁰ The 'disorganized' animal interlace on a cross shaft from Steventon, Hampshire, is in this loosely looped style and is dated to the late 8th or early 9th century.¹²¹ On the fitting under consideration here even the disciplined plait of the knob has decorated ends and is not formed from continuous lines. I suggest

¹¹⁸ My thanks to Mr Frank Basford, Archaeological Officer, for bringing this piece to my attention and for allowing me to study it, and in particular to Dr Ulmschneider for providing a context by including it in her paper and to Mr James Farrant who recorded so much of the ornament with skill and persistence.

¹¹⁹ J. J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th Century*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, vol. 1 (London, 1978), no. 39; illustrations of other illuminated pages from the Leningrad Gospels showing this style in E. H. Zimmermann, *Vorkarolingische Miniaturen* (Berlin, 1916), vol. iv.

¹²⁰ Jarrow 2A and Norham 1D in R. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, vol. 1, *County Durham and Northumberland* (Oxford, 1984).

¹²¹ Dominic Tweddle in D. Tweddle, M. Biddle and B. Kjolbye Biddle, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, vol. iv (Oxford, 1995), pl. 472, top panel; he dates the cross shaft to the late 8th or early 9th century.



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FIG. 7

The Brading staff mount, sections and ornamental details. *Drawn by James Farrant.*

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FIG. 8

The Brading staff mount. Gilt bronze staff mount, general views. Scale 1:1. *Photographs: British Museum.*

tentatively that this indicates affiliation with decoration from southern England, but this is not easy to demonstrate.

The precise function of this solid casting is another matter and for this reason I have been careful not to talk of the top or the bottom of the piece. The socket was designed to fit on to a circular rod but it is not possible to calculate its original length by reconstructing the full design of the interlace panels. The purpose of the holes through the rod is less clear — why are they at right-angles to each other? While one could argue that because the complete one interrupts the ornament it must therefore be secondary, this is not necessarily true and still does not explain their use. The socket fitted either on to the lower end of a staff as an elaborate spiked ferrule, or on the top, when the rod could have ended with an integral finial, or a further holder for a cross or flabellum. The few early surviving crozier ferrules are Irish and have relatively short and symmetrical end sections designed to sit flat on the ground. While the socket and knob found on the Isle of Wight correspond to the upper and middle section of an 8th-century Irish ferrule from the Petrie collection, of which the tapering middle section is octagonal in section with a biconical socket above, the latter ends in a flat foot.¹²²

It is more likely that the rod curved round to form the crook of a crozier. This would explain the narrow panel on one side only, which would then have run up

¹²² S. Youngs (ed.), *The Work of Angels: Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 600–900 A.D.* (London, 1989), no. 149.

the outer side of the curve forming the crest. James Farrant observed while making the drawings that the ornament reads better as presented in the figure with the bar uppermost. The rectangular notch let into the knob is purely ornamental which suggests that this is a skeuomorph of a fitting on a wooden rod. The bi-conical knob certainly recalls broadly contemporary crozier knops from Ireland.¹²³ These are usually on a larger scale, although one parallel in the Irish material to the knop and tapering upper shaft is the unique enamelled terminal from Helgö, Sweden, which is only 93 mm high.¹²⁴

There is a problem in that no fitted staffs or staff fittings of this type survive from the Middle Saxon period so that no direct comparisons can be made. It is possible, however, that the single knop from Hedeby in Germany could be an Anglo-Saxon piece in Insular style: the details are common to both cultures at this period, as Cormac Bourke has observed.¹²⁵ The fitting from Hedeby has a median panel of two-strand interlace, with animal ornament above and below and is 40 mm in diameter, while another knop from Lund, Sweden, is of similar type but with broad frames to the panels as on the Isle of Wight find.¹²⁶ Such a knop could be found at either end of a crozier, but both of these could also be of Irish manufacture. If this richly gilded mount from near Brading is a crozier fitting, it was small. The character of the piece nevertheless indicates that it had an ecclesiastical or at least a ceremonial function.

¹²³ C. Bourke, 'Irish Croziers of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', 166–73 in M. Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular Art A.D. 500–1200* (Dublin, 1978).

¹²⁴ Youngs, op. cit. in note 122, no. 147.

¹²⁵ Bourke, op. cit. in note 123, 166.

¹²⁶ T. Capelle, 'Metallschmuck und Gussformen aus Haithabu', 16, in K. Scheitzel (ed.), *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu, 4. Das archäologische Fundmaterial 1 (1963–1964)* (Neumünster, 1970); for both Hedeby finds and Lund, E. Wamers, *Insularer Metallschmuck in wikingerzeitlichen Gräbern Nordeuropas* (Neumünster, 1985), Kat. 143a, 168 and 155, Taf. 8.