John Hines

Seats of the Powerful in Britain after the Short 5th Century

A Chronological and Geo-Political Pattern. With a Postscript on Sites of the 9th to 12th Centuries

ABSTRACT

Following the collapse of Roman rule in the southern half of Britain, geographical and long-standing regional differences underlay variance as new early Medieval polities were constructed. The Romanised southwest has the earliest settlement evidence of a hierarchy of rule. In Scotland a system of hilltop fortifications appears earliest in Brythonic-speaking territories south of the Forth-Clyde isthmus and subsequently spread north into the Gaelic and Pictish areas. In Anglo-Saxon England, a »great hall« phenomenon marks the progressive consolidation of deeply stratified societies from the late 6th century. A »Postscript« traces changing patterns from the end of the 8th century to the start of the High Middle Ages and the culmination of a process of encastellation. England had advanced to a leading position politically, and was most open to the »feudal« practices developing on the Continent. Political history and the archaeology of power are now manifestly inseparable.

KEYWORDS

Anglo-Saxon / fortification / hierarchy / kingship / manor / palace / settlement / Picts / Scots / Wales

Britain underwent a profound convulsion at the start of the Early Middle Ages. With tantalizing parallels to our own times, this involved a painful rupture from a political and economic empire that at the start of the 5th century still controlled a large part of the Continent of Europe. In AD 400, the greater and more populous part of the island of Britain was part of the Roman Empire; by the end of that century, however, Roman rule had passed beyond living memory, and the outlines of the political, cultural and linguistic map of a new, Early-medieval Britain were relatively firmly established. Circling the island from the southwest in an anticlockwise direction, the four principal, different populations were the British in the south and west, the Anglo-Saxon in the southeast and east, the Pictish in the north and east, and the Scots in the northwest. The changes seen from the beginning of the 5th century to its end in the economic sphere, and in social structures and politics, were intense and thorough. An interesting question, which is relevant to the following discussion, is whether ideological aspects of communal self-perception, identity and ideals were subject to quite the same pattern of collapse and a consequent need for re-invention. Apparently born before the end of the 5th century, the British writer Gildas wrote precise if rhetorical Latin, and referred to himself and those he saw as his fellow-countrymen as *cives* (Gildas, De excidio; Lapidge/Dumville 1984; Flierman/Welton 2021). The Christianity that had become the state-promoted religion of the Late Roman Empire actually continued to spread and consolidate in the Insular zone following the abandonment of the British provinces by the Roman Empire in

In: M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska · L. Grunwald · O. Grimm (eds), Frankish Seats of Power and the North – Centres between Diplomacy and Confrontation, Transfer of Knowledge and Economy.
LEIZA Publications 7 (Mainz 2025). DOI: 10.11588/propylaeum.1681.c24450

AD 411 (C. Thomas 1981, 240–355; Charles-Edwards 2013, 181–185): it was introduced to the north of the island beyond the Wall and into Ireland, and consolidated in the early »Age of the Saints« in Wales and Cornwall.

The historical concept of a »long century« originated with F. Braudel's »long XVI^{e} siècle«, so-described in 1949; it was popularised by Eric Hobsbawm, who contrasted a »long 19th century« with a »short 20th century« – in fact spawning German scholarly references to a »langes 19. Jahrhundert« (Braudel 1949; Hobsbawm 1994; Kocka 2002). This is a reasonable way of drawing attention to and acknowledging the fact that features which may be considered typical of a distinct period, which can in turn primarily be associated with some specific century, such as the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution in the two examples just cited, were inevitably developing before that century and continued to govern much that happened after it. Nonetheless, in English-language History the formulation has become rather over-used, and something of cliché. An internet search reveals publications referring to »long« versions of every single century of the Christian or Common Era from the 1st to the 20th centuries.

This point is worth making because, especially in the case of Britain, there is a real sense in which the obscurity that had long appeared to be typical of the 5th century AD has conversely been narrowed into a shorter span of 50 to 60 years at most. The truly obscure »dark« age between the demise of the Roman-ruled provinces of what the Empire called Britannia, with its provincial Roman material culture, and the emergence of new cultures and group-identities, with different dominant languages in the four quadrants just identified, is now restricted largely to the decades c. AD 420–480. In Archaeology, this is to a significant extent the result of generations of meticulous research of a traditional style: close examination of the typology, relationships and contextual associations of particular artefact-types, and the definition of phases of change (Böhme 1986; Rau 2010). Of equal importance have been advances in »scientific« dating methods, especially the widely applicable radiocarbon dating, with a refined new calibration curve for the Northern Hemisphere (IntCal20) which incorporates exceptionally finely graded new data for the period AD 290–486 (Reimer et al. 2020). These results are now regularly further processed and their applicability measured by means of Bayesian modelling (e. g. Bayliss et al. 2013; Hines 2021).

We have recently seen the publication of substantial and conclusive results based upon aDNA evidence that shows beyond doubt that the rapid transitional phase into the Early Middle Ages was indeed a consequence of an intense »Völkerwanderungszeit«, »Âge des grands migrations« or »Migration Period« – characterised by large-scale population movements around Europe and from Asia – which included a massive resettlement of people from what is now northern Germany and southern Scandinavia into southern and eastern Britain, very much as reported in the 730s by Bede drawing on local historical traditions of these populations some 250 to 300 years after the events (Gretzinger et al. 2022; Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica, 1.15). Almost three-quarters of the population in burial grounds of the Anglo-Saxon period conforming to a new Anglo-Saxon culture in eastern England may have been of immigrant »Continental North European« descent from this phase. At the same time, albeit without archaeogenetic confirmation yet, the indigenous Romano-British population may not only have seen movement westwards but also have expanded south to Brittany and apparently Galicia as well on the Atlantic seaboard of the Continent (Hines 2023).

Archaeologically, it used to be the case that we could confidently speak of the Roman-Early Medieval transition also as a horizon characterised by overwhelming dislocation and discontinuity in the important sites of activity, settlement, burial or ritual, for those living in Britain. While that is still a valid proposition, we have a growing number of sites which generate a more complex and less contrastive pattern of transformation between the Roman period and the Early Medieval: many of them burial grounds with some degree of definable cross-cultural hybridity; fewer of them settlement sites (e. g. J. Gerrard 2013; Wright et al. 2000; Scheschkewitz 2006; Carver et al. 2009; Lucy/Evans 2016). Where the traditional view remains most categorically valid is in the case of towns, the urban centres that were crucial to the whole Romanised administrative, economic and even ideological system in the southern half of the island. An idealised image of the city of Rome and its citizens, *senatus populusque Romanus*: *SPQR*, was the heart and archetype of ideas of the Roman state, both Republic and Empire, to which the provinces were subordinate macrocosms (cf. Suetonius, Divus Augustus, 46–48). The towns of Roman Britain, mostly in England but also in Wales, could not physically evaporate and were not forgotten, and indeed in several cases have produced fragmentary evidence of continuing activity and even occupation in the 5th century and beyond. But in no case is there anything remotely resembling urban survival or even direct evolution from a Roman-style urban centre to successive modes of central-place status (Henig 2011; Howell 2004, esp. 252–259). The

repurposing and re-use of Canterbury in Kent is an important and illustrative case-study, discussed in more detail below.

There are more, and still an increasing number, of rural elite centres, the villas, which continued to thrive into the 5th century and apparently were transformed by evolution through the subsequent centuries either into functioning farmsteads or into new religious centres (e. g. Branigan 1977; Price 2000; Papworth 2021). It is important to contextualise the former firmly alongside the considerable evidence for continuity in the agrarian landscape, and even in farming regimes and livestock across what otherwise are conspicuous as radical changes in material culture (e. g. Rippon et al. 2015). This may be good evidence of demotic, or peasant, rather than elite survival and adaptation. The latter level of transformation, however, is particularly clear in the case of Early-medieval monasteries like the major church centres at Llandough and Llantwit Major in southeast Wales, which evolved adjacent to earlier villas, a pattern also widely attested in Late-antique Gaul (e. g. Knight 1999, 112–127. 143–146; 2005; for the site of Eccles, Kent – a name derived from Latin *ecclesia* – see Stoodley/Cosh 2022). There was also an interesting late pagan flourishing or revival, especially in heart of the southwestern province of Britannia Prima around the Bristol Channel (Burrow 1981; Woodward/Leach 1993; Wheeler/Wheeler 1932 but cf. Casey et al. 1999). Equally useful evidence from that area in particular is a growing number of Late- and post-Roman cemeteries that can be closely dated on radiocarbon evidence and which bridge the 4th to 6th centuries, and in some cases even the long period from the 3rd to the 7th century (for instance, Cannington, Bradley Hill, Henley Wood and Lamyatt Beacon in Somerset: Wright et al. 2000; J. Gerrard 2004; Watts/Leach 1996; Leech et al. 1986).

It is therefore an intriguing point, and potentially of major importance in understanding social hierarchy and political power as the populations of the post-Roman Early Middle Ages reorganised themselves, that the abandonment of Britannia by the central Roman imperial power did not mean the complete erasure and disappearance of the Roman military infrastructure. Even though 4th-century Roman military strategy appears to have moved to some extent away from garrisoning the frontiers in favour of the deployment of mobile field units (*comitatenses*) within the Roman territory (Elton 1996), it is along the northern frontier of Hadrian's Wall that site-continuity is most striking – well-illustrated for some time now at the fort of Birdoswald but also now recognised increasingly at Vindolanda just south of the Wall as well as further south at Aldbrough on the Great North Road in Yorkshire (Wilmott 1997; Birley/Alberti 2021; Ferraby/Millett 2020). Altogether, then, we have to create an overall model which accommodates areas or spheres in which continuity and adaptation was possible, if not regular, even in the context of enormous disruption and radical change. The particular question for this contribution to a comparative volume on Early-medieval seats of lordship across the northwestern provinces of the former Roman Empire in Europe is how, in practice, that complex configuration of pressure and inertia, and diverse directions of development, was resolved in the aftermath of the sudden withdrawal of a highly centralised and bureaucratic administrative system. It should be reasonable to expect that continuity across the threshold of the Roman withdrawal might be most evident in the area that had never been incorporated into the Empire, namely Britain north of Hadrian's Wall – although in fact even half of that area had seen Roman military occupation and a clear intention to annex it for effective control much of the time from the late 1st to mid-2nd century (Frere 1967, 115–166). This is not to make an unrealistic supposition that the area beyond the Wall ought to have been in a stable, let alone a static, condition given that convulsions in bordering regions to the south are very likely to have had ripple effects here. In fact, exactly as was the case across barbarian Europe in the Late Roman period, there occurred a wave of confederation of previously smaller groups into new larger peoples or *gentes*. On the Continent, this phenomenon appears to have produced the Franks, the Saxons, the Danes, the Alemanni, the Thüringians and more; north of the Wall, and indeed north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus in Scotland, a group called the *Picti* is first recorded in AD 297 (most recently Evans 2022, with references). Amongst the factors causing their confederation may well have been political conquests and settlements of Gaelic-speaking *Scotti* in the West (Broun 1999; 2005).

From as early as the 5th century there is a perfect archaeological example of a high-status residence in Pictland, at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire (**figs 1. 2a**). That name for this location is not recorded until centuries later, but interestingly it may well include a Celtic word *rīg*, meaning »king«. The enclosed area and buildings of Rhynie are modest in size, although the ditches, which probably had palisades, are substantial (Noble et al. 2013). Artefacts found here show that the site was at the receiving end of long-distance trade and exchange routes, bringing in, for instance, Mediterranean amphorae – the surviving archaeological material representing the importation of oil or wine, exotic and alien luxuries for sharing

Fig. 1 Map of Britain showing the sites referred to in the text: ● British sites. – ● Anglo-Saxon. – ● Pictish. – ● Scots. – (Map J. Hines).

and consumption (Campbell 2007; Duggan 2018, 29–34. 89).

At another site, Clatchard Craig on the southern side of the River Tay in Fife, there is clear evidence of the introduction of a stronger military fortification, with major ramparts and a hilltop location, in Pictland by the beginning of the 7th century (Noble et al. 2022; **figs 1. 2b**). Dated activity at Clatchard Craig ceases by c. AD 685. This is in fact precisely the period in which warfare and invasions from Anglian Northumbria are well documented in Bede's History, especially under the mid-7th-century kings Oswiu and his son Ecgfrith: historical references imply that the southern side of the Firth of Forth was in Northumbrian hands, and the royal presence there was forceful. Ecgfrith was killed in AD 685 as a direct consequence of an over-ambitious invasion of Pictland (Kirby 1991, 88–100; Fraser 2008; Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica, 4.26). It is possible that a promontory site at Burghead in Moray was provided with enormous ramparts a little earlier than this hillfort but the dating evidence and especially the phasing of this truncated site is less precise and relatively unclear; the same applies to the pre-Roman hillfort at Craig Phadrig by Inverness, where there was certainly some early post-Roman activity, including metalworking (**fig. 1**; Ritchie/Ritchie 1991, 170–171. 176; Noble/Evans 2022, 107–111). 7th- or 8th-century radiocarbon dates have also been obtained from deposits at further enclosed hill-top sites of the Moray area, Doune of Regulas, the Hill of Kier, and Mither Tap (Noble et al. 2020, 187–193), while interim re-

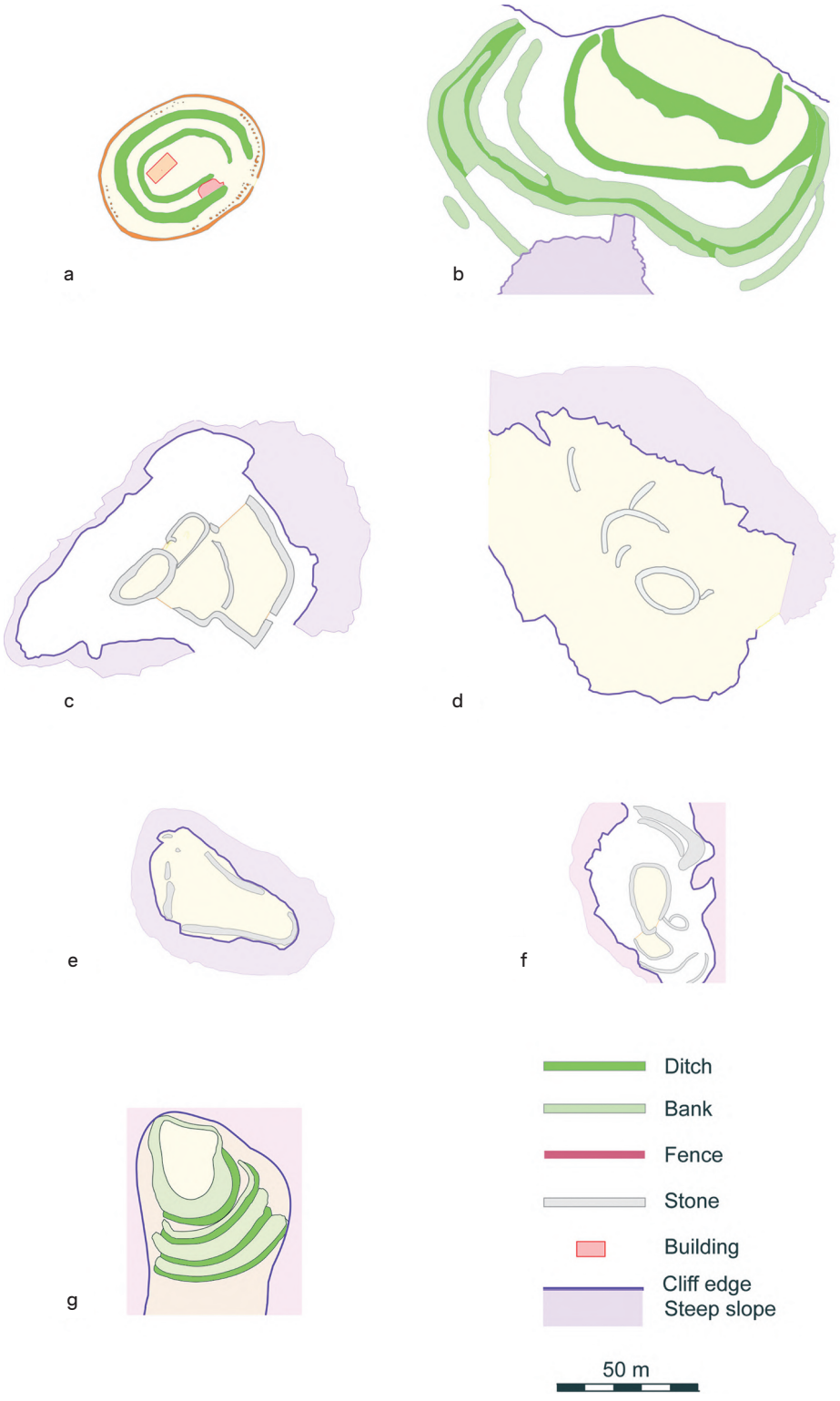

Fig. 2 Stylised site plans: **a** Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. – **b** Clatchard Craig, Perthshire. – **c** Dunadd, Argyllshire. – **d** Alt Clut, West Dunbartonshire. – **e** Mote of Mark, Dumfries and Galloway. – **f** Trusty's Hill, Dumfries and Galloway. – **g** Dinas Powys, Vale of Glamorgan. – North to top. – (Map J. Hines). – Scale 1:2,000.

ports from recent excavations at King's Seat, Dunkeld, north of Perth, record the presence of 7th-century imported E-ware ceramics (MacIver et al. 2019).

In the other parts of Scotland, the west and the south together with what is now northernmost England, the population comprised different peoples: the Gaelic-speaking Scots in the west and more than one British kingdom around the Forth-Clyde isthmus and in the south. The historical time-depth of the Gaelicisation of the west has been much discussed and remains unclear (e. g. Broun 1999; Campbell 2001); Gaelicisation meant a lingua-cultural affiliation that effectively delivered a common zone encompassing the whole of Ireland and a large territory in the northwest of Britain, but to think of the extent of that zone solely in terms of an Irish invasion and conquest of this part of Britain appears too simple. From early in the 4th century we have historical

sources that imply that the Picts and the Scots could act in alliance in threatening and raiding Roman Britain (Frend 1992); of course these peoples could fight each other and indeed amongst themselves at much the same time, although it would appear to be the 7th century when territorial rivalry within northern Britain came to be a predominant factor in the archaeology of centres of power. The key elite site we know of in the Scottish kingdom of Dál Riata is the defended hillfort citadel of Dunadd (**figs 1. 2c**; Lane/Campbell 2000). The finds here include what looks like a ritual stone used for the initiation of a ruler (Lane/Campbell 2000, esp. 18–23. 247–249). The imported pottery found at Dunadd comprised D- and E-ware vessels but not the amphorae found at Rhynie. The critical phases of Dunadd for our purposes are Phase II, when stone »ramparts« were constructed, and Phase III, especially its sub-phases A and B, comprising accumulated evidence from activities within the enclosed hilltop. Scientific evidence for the chronology of the site comes from radiocarbon-dated samples, although those prove problematic particularly in the case of two charcoal samples, attributed to Phase II and Phase III respectively, which are anomalously young and old in age respectively. If, however, we pragmatically discount those two as intrusive and redeposited, and outliers for modelling terms, a firm model of the dates indicates that the start of the Phase III activity within the enclosure probably dates from the last decade of the 6th century onwards. That phase of activity appears to have continued to the second half of the 7th century, possibly ceasing in the third quarter of the century rather than in the 8th century as was previously inferred (**fig. 3a**). Historical references in the Annals of Ulster record a siege of Dunadd in the year 683 and the capture of the site by Oengus son of Fergus, king of the Picts, in AD 736. The radiocarbon dating is more consistent with activity in the period leading up to the earlier of those dates, while the later record does not necessarily imply that the previous activities returned to the site in the intervening half-century.

Knowledge of elite centres in the British areas of southern Scotland – that is, in areas where the Brythonic language was spoken; a form of Celtic language that must have been extremely close to the ancestor of modern Welsh – is in important cases limited to sites which can be identified but about which very little is known archaeologically: for the most part because of long sequences of later use of those sites. The key sites along the line of the Forth-Clyde isthmus (**fig. 1**) are, from west to east, Dumbarton Rock (Alt Clut); Din Eidyn, probably under Edinburgh Castle; and Dunbar, also now under a medieval castle. Alt Clut at least has substantial evidence from archaeological excavations (**fig. 2d**; Alcock/Alcock 1991). Three radiocarbon dates from the stone-built ramparts are not fully consistent with a single construction event, but do imply building and presumably repair in a period from what could have been quite early in the 6th century to the late 8th or even 9th century (**fig. 3b**). The destruction of the site at the hands of a Viking force is recorded in the Annals of Ulster under AD 870. The pottery from Alt Clut includes much testifying to Roman-period occupation, while the Early-medieval imported ware includes both early amphorae, as at Rhynie, and a little E-ware, as at Dunadd. It is plausible that Alt Clut was one principal stronghold of a King Coroticus, the aggressive behaviour of whose followers was decried in a late 5th-century epistle of St Patrick (Freeman 2014, 2–15). For Din Eidyn's status at this date we are dependent on references in the Old Welsh heroic verses of *Y Gododdin* (on which more below); close to Edinburgh is the large Iron-age hillfort of Traprain Law, where a huge treasure hoard of Late-Roman silver was buried in the 5th century, apparently the end of a long sequence of use of the site (Hunter et al. 2022). Dunbar is recorded in Eddius Stephanus' Life of Wilfrid as a stronghold at which King Ecgfrith of Northumbria had that turbulent bishop incarcerated for a while in the early 680s, transferring him there from an unidentified *urbs* called Broninis (Eddius, Vita, chapters 34–39). Both Dunbar and Broninis, we may note, had retained fully comprehensible Brythonic descriptive names.

The large collection of Old Welsh verses known as *Y Gododdin*, which provide the earliest references to Din Eidyn as a royal citadel of some kind, is not only the oldest surviving but also in many respects the most authentic poetry of the Heroic Age from anywhere in Europe. In literary history, the Heroic Age is a remembered and celebrated period of epic warrior behaviour that historically and culturally is intimately related to the archaeological and historical Migration Period. *Y Gododdin* is unique, too, as an extremely informative source on ideas and life in and around the elite places of residence in this area in this period (Williams 1938; Jackson 1969; Koch 1997). The title is the name of both a »people« and of an elite warrior band assembled around that group's king. In Claudius Ptolemaeus' 2nd-century Geography this people is recorded as the *Ὠταδινοι*; circumstantial evidence and comparable, if garbled, related names imply that they occupied the area around Edinburgh and so would have been the political unit that held and used Traprain Law (Rivet/Smith 1979, 508–509). The authenticity of *Y Gododdin* extends to the fact that we have only a single, much later, manuscript

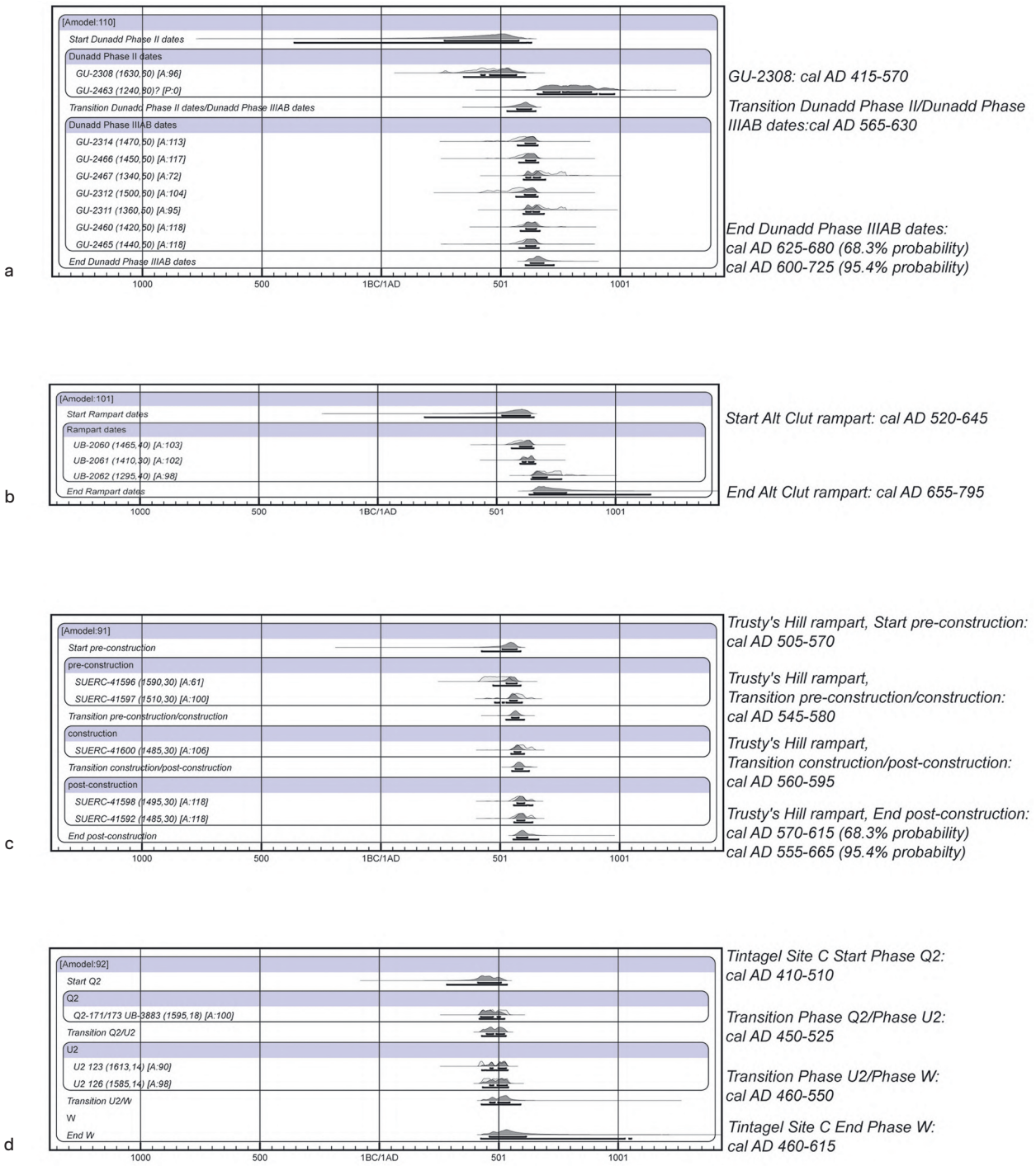

Fig. 3 Radiocarbon data from selected high-status centres, recalibrated using OxCal 4.4 against the IntCal20 calibration curve, and modelled as explained in the text. The horizontal axis represents years BC/AD. All highest posterior date estimates are quoted at 68.3 % probability unless otherwise stated and rounded out to 5-year intervals. **a** Dunadd, two phases. – **b** Alt Clut, rampart, single phase. – **c** Trusty's Hill, rampart, pre- and post-construction, three phases. – **d** Tintagel, Site C, three phases. – (Graphics J. Hines using OxCal 4.4).

copy of the texts, which are themselves fragmentary, confused, and extremely obscure. Although the verses allude with some consistency to the preparations for and experience and aftermath of a particular event, a major battle at *Catraeth*, Catterick in North Yorkshire, unlike their Germanic counterparts in Old English (*Beowulf*), from the Continent (*Hiltibrantslied*, *Waltharius*), or in Old Norse, they do not try to narrate a legendary history in the manner of epic: rather they identify and praise individual warriors from the retinue or *comitatus*/»Gefolgschaft«, and speak of their lifestyle and ideals. Those were anything but lovely from a modern point of view: drinking and feasting, fighting, killing and being

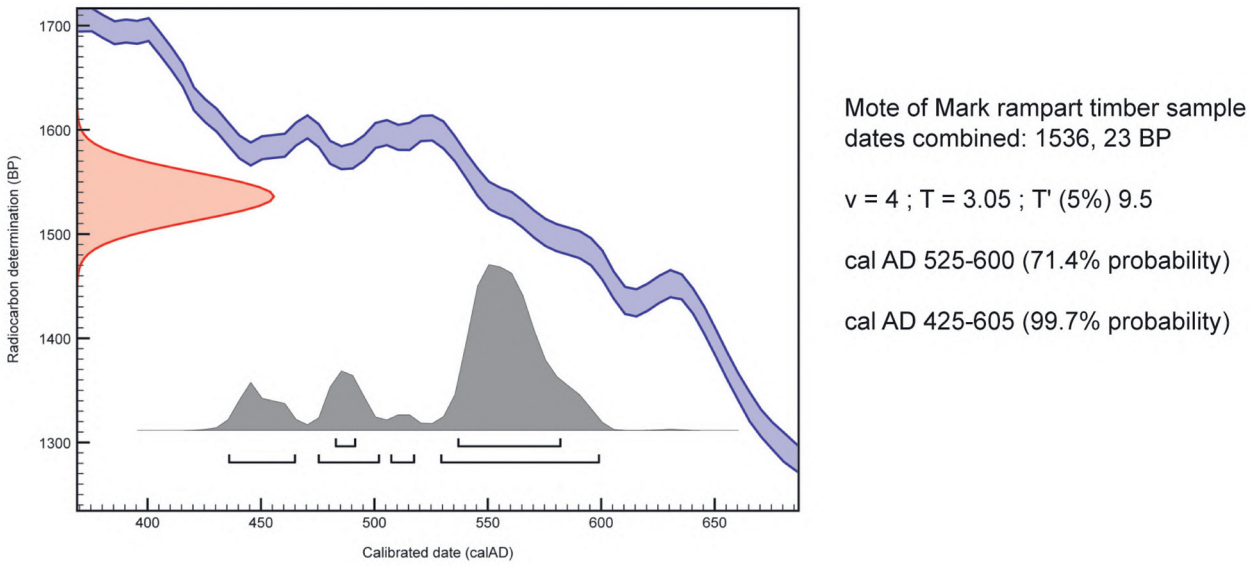

Fig. 4 The result of combining the radiocarbon dates from samples of timber from the rampart of the Mote of Mark to indicate the construction and/or maintenance of the structure. The data have been recalibrating using OxCal 4.4 against the IntCal20 calibration curve and the product is rounded out to 5-year intervals. – (Graphics J. Hines using OxCal 4.4).

killed. One aspect to be especially emphasised is the almost monastic, exclusive commitment to a homosocial warrior community the elegiac poetry insists upon: this rather more explicitly focused upon in the later A-text verses of the collection, in fact – for Ywain, who »would rather have gone to the battlefield than to a wedding«, or Hyfaith the Tall, who »would rather be food for ravens than go to the altar« (Jackson 1969, 115–118; Williams 1938, 1–3). Only marginally do we glimpse acknowledgement that some might survive their military service, settle on lands for their own support and management, marry and raise children.

Another major British kingdom of what medieval Welsh tradition remembered as the »Old North«, and which too is recorded for us at best in misty and legendary literary memories, was Rheged, mostly in the northwest of England and quite likely centred on the Solway Firth in the northeastern corner of the Irish Sea and at the western end of Hadrian's Wall (Charles-Edwards 2013, 10–15). It is probably significant that the strongholds and elite centres one may cautiously ascribe to this kingdom are in what is now southern Scotland, north of the Wall and overlooking the Irish Sea. These are hillforts with multi-cellular enclosures at the Mote of Mark and Trusty's Hill (**figs 1. 2e-f**). Chronologically, radiocarbon dates from burnt timbers within the ramparts of the Mote of Mark are relatively imprecise (Laing/Longley 2006, 22–24) but despite a span of radiocarbon ages of just over a century, they are all statistically consistent and support a most likely date-span of the construction and maintenance of the ramparts in the period AD 525–605 (**fig. 4**). The combined calibrated radiocarbon date does include around 25 % probability in the earlier range of cal AD 425–525, but in that case it can be stressed that the plateau in the calibration curve which largely coincides with that hundred-year range probably generates unrealistically early possibilities. The imported pottery found at Mote of Mark includes one moderately large amphora sherd (broken in two), one sherd of D-ware and a much larger collection of E-ware (Laing/Longley 2006, 125–132).

Trusty's Hill has a smaller area than the Mote of Mark enclosed by a central, ovoid stone and timber-laced rampart; there are supplementary stone walls and terraces either side of the approach way leading up to the enclosed summit (Toolis/Bowles 2017). Like the Mote of Mark, however, the evidence for high-quality metalcasting on the site is striking. The artefactual assemblage is otherwise slight, but does include one copper-alloy Anglo-Saxon disc with zoomorphic decoration cast in relief; imported pottery is limited to a single rim-sherd of E-ware. A set of radiocarbon ages processed more recently do offer greater precision than those from the Mote of Mark (± 30 years at 1σ), and allow for realistic stratigraphically based modelling (Toolis/Bowles 2017, 33–37). **Figure 3c** offers a slightly different model than that programmed by D. Hamilton for the site report, although essentially consistent with it, postulating that a phase of activity preceding the construction of the central rampart is represented by two dated samples (contexts 4008 and 4016), the building or maintenance of the rampart is repre-

sented by one dated sample (context 5018: »a lens of material from the core of the rampart«), and that a subsequent post-construction phase of activity is represented by two dated samples from a »dark soil deposit« (contexts 4007 and 5014). This model has good agreement (A_{model} 91), with the construction of the rampart placed sometime in the range *cal AD 545–580* at *1σ* or *cal AD 520–605* at *2σ* and the end of dated activity on the site at *cal AD 570–615* at *1σ* or *cal AD 555–665* at *2σ*. In practical terms, that could, then, have been closely coordinated with the construction of the rampart at Mote of Mark.

Archaeologically, therefore, northern Britain beyond the Wall suggests a coherent chronological pattern, with high-status centres progressively giving way or being reconstructed as a robustly fortified sites, attested first in the southwest of modern Scotland, probably around or not long after the middle of the 6th century and spreading to Pictland in the northeast by the first half of the 7th century. It is particularly informative to compare this spectrum of evidence from the north with that in the western areas of the former Roman provinces of Britannia. The profile of development there, the types of site we can identify as elite and lordly – even royal – habitation sites, can generally look quite similar, and there is also much in common in the practical components of material culture: not least the imported pottery and glass vessels. However, the chronology is different again, and this is where we come closest to that shrinking 5th-century threshold between the Roman and Early Medieval periods.

What is now Wales is largely an upland area, which had seen rather limited and geographically marginal romanisation in the 1st to 4th centuries – a smallish number of towns and villas in the coastal lowlands which were the zones best suited to agriculture, and indeed with readiest accessibility. In the immediately post-Roman centuries, our knowledge of secular settlement sites in Wales is dominated by high-status and relatively high-altitude defended sites: the sort of sites of course that can be relatively easy to identify, although there are still not large numbers of these. Dinas Powys in the Vale of Glamorgan, close to Cardiff, is the best studied of these and has yielded the fullest evidence. It comprises a small area but in a strategically crucial position on a promontory barricaded behind a series of substantial ditches and banks (**figs 1. 2g**; Alcock 1963; Seaman 2013; Seaman/Sucharyna Thomas 2020). The excavated evidence demonstrates that finer metalwork was being practised, and that glass and pottery vessels were being used and consequently intermittently broken here. The vessels also testify to long-distance trade lines bringing in consumable luxuries, firstly (in the 5th and 6th centuries) from sources around the Romanised Mediterranean, represented especially by amphorae; in a second phase (the later 6th and 7th centuries) rather from the western Atlantic seaboard of the Continent (D- and E-ware). Especially in Wales, the overall distribution maps of such imported items clearly show us the centres and satellite sites through and at which an elite with new regional power following the disappearance of the Roman superstructure received, consumed and redistributed prestige goods (Campbell 2007; Duggan 2018).

The type of material found in Wales that allows us to identify these 5th- to 7th-century sites occurs more widely in what is now the southwest of England – within a kingdom, in fact, which from the 6th-century author Gildas we can label the territory of Dumnonia (Gildas, De excidio, 28: with an apparent play on words, Gildas calls the territory *Damnonia*; Pearce 1978). The quantified distribution maps of the imported pottery and glass in this area in fact point primarily to the infrastructure of trade and redistribution: primarily harbour-associated sites at Tintagel, Trethurgy, Bantham and Mothecombe where the material was being imported and other goods, probably primarily tin, being exported (**fig. 1**; S. Gerrard 2000; cf. Leontius, Life, ch. 10); and secondarily a rather more general pattern of sites this material was being dispersed to and ultimately consumed at. Of course, those sites and that distribution infrastructure must have been under the control of those in power, the secular elite, and in the case of Tintagel we can confidently identify the harbour site with an imposing – and easily defensible – elite centre (**figs 1. 5a**; Barrowman et al. 2007). Trethurgy by Saint Austell Bay, by contrast, is a typically local, agrarian and metalworking settlement-type known as a »round« (Quinnell 2004); Bantham and Mothecombe at the mouths of the adjacent Rivers Avon and Erme in South Devon are impermanent sand-dune trading sites (Reed et al. 2011; Agate et al. 2012).

Tintagel stands out amongst elite centres in 5th- and 6th-century Britain for the sheer quantity of imported Mediterranean pottery and glass found there – although strikingly not the E-ware characteristic of the late 6th and 7th centuries. Excavations of the 1990s at this promontory site have produced a radiocarbon-dated sequence, of charcoal from a series of stratigraphically related hearths that can be associated with layers containing imported amphora sherds (Barrowman et al. 2007, esp. 52–55). This evidence poses similar problems to that noted at Dunadd (above), especially in the case of hearth 113 of Phase W at the top of the sequence, from which six samples – most of them not dated to particularly high precision: i. e. ± 45–50 years at 1σ – range in

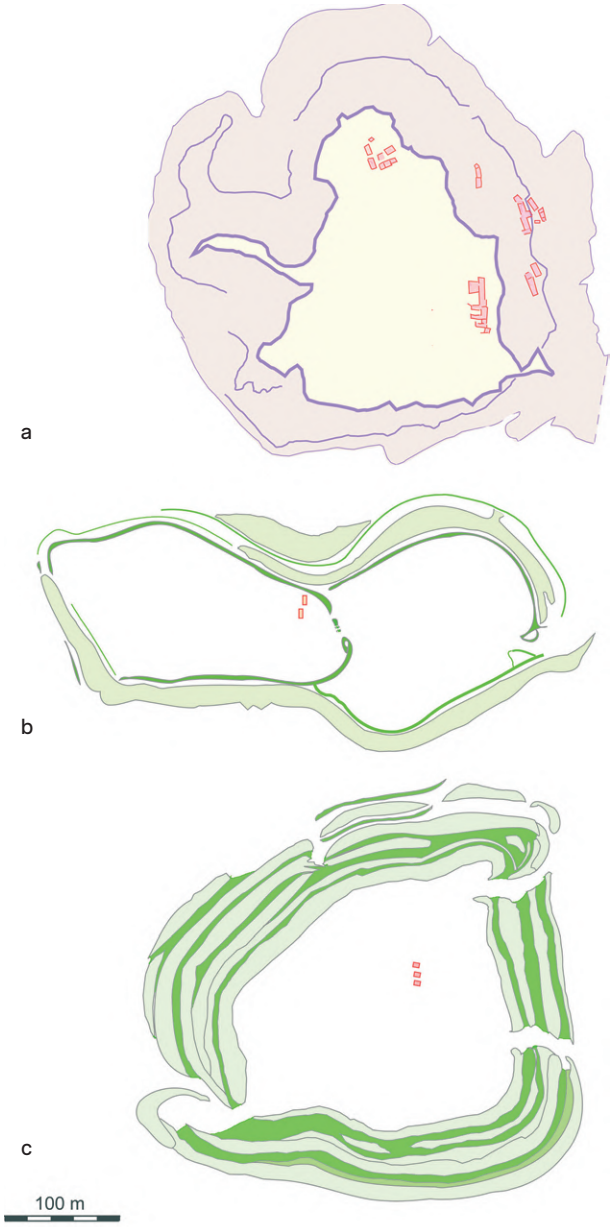

Fig. 5 Stylised site plans: **a** Tintagel, Cornwall. – **b** Cadbury Campt, North Somerset. – **c** South Cadbury, Somerset. – North to top. – For colour coding, please see **fig. 2**. – (Map J. Hines). – Scale 1:4,000.

mean radiocarbon age over 275 years, from 1705 to 1430 BP. The final model proposed in the site report took only the latest dated sample from this context to represent, in effect, a *terminus ad quem* for the collection of wood burnt. That, however, gives an estimate of *cal AD 560–670* at *2σ*, which as noted in the publication is later than would be expected for the stratigraphically associated pottery. This also places heavy reliance on the accuracy of this one result, and in variance I would propose combining the four youngest results from hearth 113, which are statistically consistent and give a narrower combined age of 1533 ± 27 BP: i. e. considerably older than the cal AD 1430 ± 45 BP of the one latest dated sample. The combined age calibrates with 69.4 % probability to cal AD 525–605. Placed in a sequence with the other datable phases as modelled previously, this produces an even earlier highest posterior density estimate of cal *AD 490–595* at *2σ* for Phase W hearth 113: a date-estimate that incorporates as much as possible of the radiocarbon data and does not treat any problematically late date as an outlier (**fig. 3d**). For dating of the presence of imported amphorae, it is frustrating that the report of the distribution of finds in these layers on the Lower Terrace of Site C at Tintagel is not more precise than noting that there was a preponderance of that material higher up in the sequence – indeed even above Phase W – but that some finds occurred »thoughout the various occupation phases« (Barrowman et al. 2007, 47–50). This is consistent, all the same, with C. Thorpe's summary of the post-Roman ceramic evidence (Barrowman et al. 2007, 231–247), that »imported material was coming into Tintagel in some bulk from around AD 450 onwards, with the bulk *c* AD 500–550«.

Dumnonian sites at which a dominant social elite could live and be found are represented most conspicuously by two very large reoccupied Iron-age hillforts, both, interestingly called Cadbury: names which have at the very root of their first element Celtic British **catu*, meaning »battle« or »warfare«, albeit a lexeme which became common in male personal names, with forms such as *Ceadda* eventually quite common amongst Old English-speaking populations. The second element is Germanic *burg*, a stronghold. These hillforts are Cadbury Camp, near Congresbury, overlooking the Severn estuary, and South Cadbury, now well inland in the south of Somerset but with a viewshed out over the Somerset wetlands (**figs 1. 5b-c**). The archaeological evidence shows that these hillforts were re-fortified sometime in the 5th century, and the same range of imported pottery and glass as at Tintagel, although nothing like the same excavated quantity, points to prestigious supply and consumption at least from the last quarter of the 5th century onwards and in the 6th century but not into the 7th century (Rahtz et al. 1992; Alcock et al. 1995; cf. Duggan 2018, 70–87). The dating of the Cadburies depends entirely on the range of artefacts found, and it is important to note that the radiocarbon data from Tintagel just discussed imply that a relatively small collection of imported amphorae might well be preceded by earlier phases of activity with less datable material present, so that potentially no such evidence might be found. The Somerset hillfort sites may not have been permanently occupied in this period rather than periodically used as conspicuous sites of authority within the new kingdom as well as well-defended refuges.

It is worth noting that Gildas (De excidio, 26) records a siege and battle between the Britons and Saxons at an otherwise unidentified site called *Mons Badonicus*; it seems likely that that was also a reoccupied pre-Roman hillfort (suggestions as to where it might have been are legion).

The evidence from the indigenous communities of immediately post-Roman Britain more than strongly implies that the strongest and most rapid changes took place in what were formerly the most romanised areas: in southwest England particularly, but also in Wales. A fundamental driving factor must have been the general collapse of the Roman infrastructure; but that was responded to in a rapid, innovative manner. As already noted, there is definite evidence, both archaeological and historical, of attempts to preserve a Roman way of life for at least a generation or two after the first decade of the 5th century. But there is also evidence of violence and disruption: for instance at the villa site of Shakenoak in Oxfordshire on the eastern edge of the Cotswold Hills (Blair et al. 2023). Subsequently, by the 470s, the new structure of a militarised regional elite had emerged here and built itself into a pattern of central places for defence, administration, consumption and redistribution. By the late 6th century, however, the major centres of post-Roman Dumnonia had lost those roles in face of the expansion of West Saxon power and its material culture and orientation (Yorke 1990, 132–142). Concurrently, at that juncture, there was a substantial shift in use of the westerly trading routes to supply centres further north and west, in Scotland and Ireland; coinciding, nevertheless, with increasing political competition and organisation within those regions. It is appropriate to note that the imported pottery of the later 6th and 7th centuries, particularly the E-ware, is on the whole more diverse and more functional tableware than, for instance, the intrinsically prestigious, earlier red-slip wares, while the importation of consumables in amphorae had also come to an end.

That framework, which comprises a fundamentally consistent range of site-types but a markedly gradual chronological pattern of development, is an especially useful model for the comparative evaluation of the range of evidence in the proto-Anglo-Saxon east. Across that area of the heart of what was to become England, one key point to emphasise is that there is, as yet, no securely identified fortified stronghold comparable with those of the west and north – not, at least, before the second half of the 9th century when we have Viking army winter camps and a new military system of so-called burhs (Old English *burh*, pl. *byrig*): sites at which troops could be mustered and which served as refuges (Baker/Brookes 2013). It may cautiously be inferred, however, that archaeology actually lags behind the actual sequence of development indicated by historical records in this respect. By the end of the 8th century, for instance, it is likely that a number of major regional church and royal centres in the West Midlands had developed a pattern of rectilinear enclosures surrounding several hectares alongside rivers to create the core of later towns (Bassett 2008; Haslam 2016; Blair 2018, 193–231). More of a matter of debate at present is the proposition that something similar also evolved in Wessex, where rather than *burh* the generic *tūn* may be a significant toponymic indicator. Historical records of the 8th century indicate that *tūnas* (pl.) also served as sites to be attacked and defended: for example the tantalising early reference to Taunton, Somerset, established by King Ine but attacked and destroyed by his own wife, Queen Æthelburh (ASC MS A s. a. 722). Wessex had a particularly large number of sites called Kingston (Probert 2008; cf. Bourne 2017).

Although there is abundant evidence for Anglo-Saxon society from the later 5th century onwards being thoroughly militarised in culture, and having a grade of ranking between richer and poorer, higher and lower status (Härke 1997), sites occupying a distinctly high rank in a settlement hierarchy, with, for instance, extremely large buildings as well as evidence for specialised activities, do not appear before the late 6th century – in other words exactly the same time as formally different but contextually comparable sites in northern Britain. In terms of basic settlement-site archaeology, this situation characterises a very large area between the south coast and the northeast, up to the line of Hadrian's Wall; we are also talking of a region extending up to 200 km inland from the North Sea coast. The relevant structures of social organisation and the patterns of development they followed from the 5th to the 7th century were by no means uniform throughout this area; on the contrary there is evidence of regional differentiation that ever more refined chronological studies enable us to detect and describe with increasing confidence. One such observation of especial interest, for instance, is that there are some large regions where there appears to have been a high level of continuity or adoption of the late-Roman regional and settlement-site infrastructure. In the area of Surrey and West Kent south of London, for instance, the major early Saxon burial grounds are found at the regular *mutationes* or nodes in the communications and supply system south of the Roman city of *Londinium* – which itself, however, seems simply to have collapsed as an urban centre (Hines 2004). Likewise in Lincolnshire, early Anglian Lindsey, C. Green has shown how the major

Anglian cremation cemeteries are distributed in a ring around a core where the old Roman *Lindum colonia* was, and where a church centre seems to have survived (Green 2020). In both of those cases, then, it appears that the new population was accommodated within and adapted to a functioning Roman-period territorial structure. In neither case, too, is there evidence that those territories developed kingship before being annexed by the larger kingdoms of Mercia, Northumbria or Wessex in the 7th century (Bassett 1989). If, however, a significant and lasting level of assimilation to a sub-Roman infrastructure was equally significant as an explanatory factor for the relatively unusual, putatively oligarchic, social structure of those regions, what would appear to have been a highly comparable situation in Sussex on the south coast, neighbouring Surrey (Welch 1971), could support a very different outcome: with a 5th-century king credited subsequently with the status of the earliest overking amongst the English (Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica, 2.5: Stenton 1947, 34–35). The possibility that we should seek to account for the developments of kingship in Sussex and Wessex in relation to the southwestern British model represented in the infrastructure of Dumnonia has to be taken seriously.

We now know of a large number of »great hall complexes« in England (Austin 2017; Blair 2018, 114–131). Most of these are in fact known from air photography rather than excavation. Some of them are directly associable with the kings (Old English *cyningas*; *reges* or *subreguli* in early Latin texts) who start to be recorded in reliable historical sources from the late 6th century onwards. Yeavering, the Northumbrian palace site labelled a *villa regia* by Bede (Historia Ecclesiastica, 2.14), north of Hadrian's Wall, was primarily excavated in the 1950s (Hope-Taylor 1977), although Durham University archaeologists have recently returned to the site. The excavation and publication of a site at Cowdery's Down near Basingstoke, Hampshire, in the late 1970s and 1980s offered much more insight into the possibility, or indeed likelihood, of archaologically traceable evolution of increasing social stratification in the architecture and layout of elite residences across the 6th and 7th centuries (Millett/James 1983). This site, importantly, had no known royal associations.

Attention was drawn to Rendlesham in Suffolk by the discovery of the nearby Sutton Hoo Mound 1 ship burial in 1939, undoubtedly a royal grave (Hines 2010). Bede identifies this as the site of a *villa regalis* of the kings of the East Angles (Historia Ecclesiastica, 3.22), and over the past twelve years metal-detecting, geophysical surveying and excavation have produced detailed archaeological evidence of a large and complex settlement and production site here. Lyminge in Kent is also known to have been a royal estate holding; here too, from 2007 to 2014, G. Thomas of the University of Reading excavated the site of a similar great hall and adjacent monastic centre (Austin 2017, 93–140; G. Thomas 2023). Rendlesham, however, may be taken as the more practical site to concentrate on here, because of the availability of site data – albeit from ongoing field research, within which, inevitably, knowledge and understanding are steadily growing, and quite properly subject to change. It is important and pleasing to be able to note the extent to which dialogue and inter-site comparisons between the teams and directors concerned with these sites in southeastern England, and indeed with research projects around Britain and across northern Europe, are adding not only to the empirical and descriptive knowledge of the sites but also enhancing more reflective models or theoretical understanding of what they represent (e. g. Scull/Thomas 2020; Thomas/Scull 2021).

Rendlesham also has a pragmatically special status because the circumstances of the site and its discovery are yielding a particularly comprehensive view of a large and complex site – ironically in every respect to date except for its truly elite centre, in fact. The site covers a »core area« of at least 50 ha on the east side of the River Deben and bisected by a tributary stream (**figs 1. 6**). Both Rendlesham and Lyminge, and indeed Yeavering, Bamburgh, Cowdery's Down and more, were located in strategically dominant and prominent positions, in relation to the immediate landscape and to communication routes (Scull et al. 2016, 1602). A growing focus of interpretation is the extent to which these central places themselves sit within wider hinterlands of special status and structure (Thomas/Scull 2021, esp. 6–9. 14–18). The core area of Rendlesham is very clearly zoned, with a distinctly special »residence« area, where so far one great hall and even a possible cult-house have been identified and excavated and metalworking finds comprise a particular concentration of advanced craftwork evidence from a specialised metalworking zone close to this hall (Blakelock et al. 2022; Scull et al. 2024).

While earlier stages in the assessment and interpretation of the evidence that is accumulating tended to emphasise the finding of considerable quantities of Late- or sub-Roman metalwork, and suggestions of a flourishing, even a zenith, in the early to middle 6th century (Scull et al. 2016, 1601), the perception now stresses the final quarter of the 6th century as the period in which the great hall phenomenon appeared here in the »residence« area: entirely in chronological lockstep, in fact, with Lyminge, and

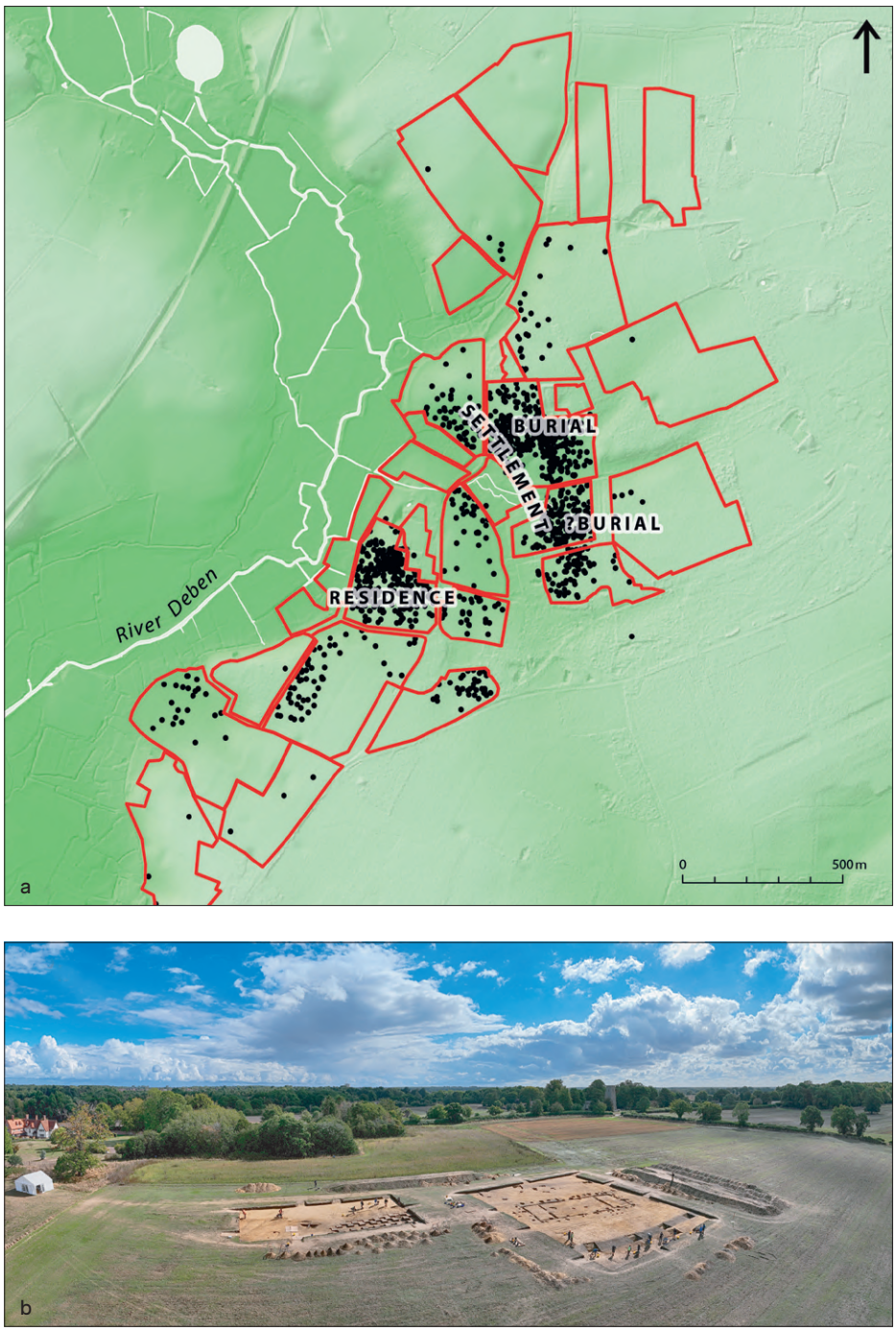

Fig. 6 Rendlesham, Suffolk. – **a** Zoned plan of the site. – **b** The great hall under excavation, September 2022. – (a map S. Brookes; b drone image, looking ESEo, produced by J. Pullen and © Suffolk County Council; both supplied and reproduced by kind permission).

Cowdery's Down, and very likely with Yeavering. At all of these sites to some extent, but especially at Rendlesham, this subtle shift in emphasis does not so much downgrade the richness and significance of the earlier 6th century (or indeed the later 5th century) but rather underlines all the more the need to explore and appreciate the progressive evolution in status and character of the site. In the earlier phases, the active focus of the site at Rendlesham seems to be in a northern zone, around a stream away from where the great hall (plausibly one of several) was built: an area where sunken feature buildings have been found, an early cemetery identified, and there is evidence for diverse but basic craftworking. It is not yet clear if the southern »residence« was added on to this as some sort of extension and expansion or in some form was there as an elite zone all along. The discussion of Rendlesham is rightly seeking to eschew a simple linear narrative of rise and fall between the 5th and the later 8th century, although the site was effectively extinguished by the latter horizon. Attention has been drawn to the scope for characterising the history of the site in terms of both long-term processes and shorter-term modulations: for instance the need to rebuild timber halls with earth-fast structural components at regular

intervals. That could have been a case of planned and deliberate obsolence: a context for the recurrent display of conspicuous production as well as consumption, along with the specialised metalworking. It is the scope and form of that generational rhythm of material life rather than its mere existence that characterises truly elite status (Hines 2011).

We know that Lyminge, Rendlesham, Yeavering and Bamburgh were royal centres because of historical references. With regard to all of the other sites known either through excavation or non-invasive identification, it would in fact appear that there is little if any physical differentiation between royal sites which we can assume to have been occupied periodically, by peripatetic royal retinues, and the seats of the aristocratic elite who were granted subordinate lordships under the king. It is actually contemporary chamber graves of England's brief »princely grave« horizon that provide a symbolic image of the practical material life and entertainments of the noble or royal hall (most recently from Prittlewell, Essex: Blackmore et al. 2019). After the princely grave horizon – and effectively after the Sutton Hoo mound 1 ship grave and therefore around the year 630 – it is ecclesiastical centres and Christian royal mausolea, to some extent backed up by special artefactual evidence, that reflect power and kingship in the archaeological record of the nascent Anglo-Saxon England. To put it simply, in architectural terms we can definitely identify two levels in a practical settlement hierarchy, and upper one and a lower one, but nothing more finely graded than that.

It has appeared, as a result, only to have been by embedding themselves within re-emergent towns that the ruling, highest aristocrats – the kings – of Anglo-Saxon England could have a settlement site around themselves that was distinctly their own: thus, for instance, Winchester, Tamworth and York (see »Postscript«, below). Once again here, we should compare the earlier relevant evidence and parallels of Tintagel in Cornwall and Burghead in Aberdeenshire as trading centres, and note Scull's emphasis that the extent of Rendlesham in the late 6th and early 7th century was greater than that of 7th-century phases of Ipswich (Scull et al. 2016, 1606–1607). The way in which the shell – literally – of late-Roman Canterbury was repurposed in Conversion-period Kent as described in an overview and assessment by P. Bennett is a perfect, and remarkably early, example of this (Bennett 2023). Like everywhere else, Canterbury has its short 5th-century empty dark period, physically represented by the layer of black earth overlying the late-Roman or sub-Roman deposits and then cut into, later in the 5th century by »Grubenhäuser«. The surviving walls and gates of the city, however, and the imposing Roman theatre, came to be re-used for administrative and ritual purposes, and from the end of the 6th century old Roman churches could also be refurbished to provide a base for the Christian mission dispatched by Pope Gregory the Great and the new Church in England. The re-use of the Roman theatre by early Kentish kings suggested by Bennett would have been dramatic in a different way from the ostentatious making and building at Rendlesham, but no less performative. Bennett naturally draws attention to the as yet unique, constructed amphitheatre at Yeavering.

In the case of the British Old North, we could claim that we know where the key sites should have been but can look at few of them; nevertheless our literary source, *Y Gododdin*, provides explicit insight into the commitment to a highly regulated warrior lifestyle expected within those contexts. It seems implausible that this could all and only be imaginary fiction, with the reality being utterly different. J. Blair has argued that in Anglo-Saxon England, comparable literary dramatisations of the hall life of a warrior, heroic society in *Beowulf*, for instance, are essentially theatrical and anachronistic (Blair 2018, 138): we cannot credibly populate all the halls we know of with a warrior class and the endless repetition of such ritualised behaviour. One may accept that too, but only up to the point that the reality and importance of this ideology for the societies concerned makes it impossible to distinguish cases of art representing life from life imitating art. Lyminge and Rendlesham have a very clear, documented identity in the political and social hierarchies of early Kent and East Anglia. Many other Anglo-Saxon great halls remain strangely ambiguous and detached from the concrete realities of power, not only historically but also as and where we can directly observe those in the archaeological record. Let us briefly recall the Staffordshire Hoard (Fern et al. 2019). This definitely represents the collection and control of the highest status weaponry, and management of the display of power and social rank which went with that, from and around a royal centre. But this collection of dismantled weaponry was hidden at Hammerwich in a no-man's-land with no definable contextual association to any site, any central place, or any buildings at all.

Within the short 5th-century transitional phase, and also on the very boundary of territories with quite contrastive cultural and ethnic profiles, the Shakenoak villa site provides a different, grim and violent image, in this case represented by a detachment of men – not local but apparently coming from the southwest and possibly overseas down the Atlantic seaboard – many of whom had weapon injuries

(Blair et al. 2023). Their experiences and their graves represent a transitional phase which ushered in a period of about a century in which different and quite contrastive material cultural contexts to the west and to the east became largely consolidated. At the end of that period of about a hundred years, in the second half of the 6th century, that temporary stability broke down as a result of military victories for the Saxon kingdom or kingdoms based to the east. But the situation within the Germanic-speaking society to the east was itself never static: it was a society that underwent processes of stratification, in many cases accelerated by the impact of the climatic crisis following AD 536 and very probably also the Justinianic Plague reaching England in the 540s as well.

From a general review of the development of the elite and leading centres of post-Roman Britain, therefore, it may be argued that military organisation – throughout Britain, an essential feature of how society was structured – was, at the same time, fundamental to different patterns and sequences of development found between major territories and associable with contrastively defined ethnic and cultural groups. Militarisation as a characteristic of free male status was totally embedded already in the Germanic population, and also amongst the non-Germanic groups in the north, but that was not the case for the Romano-British population and its descendants who consequently had to develop a hierarchy of differentiated sites to sustain the political structures and territories they reorganised themselves into far more rapidly than was done elsewhere. Concurrently, they had to import a military and heroic ideology from the British-speaking North, even as they may be seen, at Shakenoak, to have moved fighting men from the southwest to the Chiltern zone of the southern Midlands. Of course, then, this redistribution of both men and ideas must also correlate with patterns of material production, redistribution and trade, and those too were far more clearly developed in the post-Roman west by the late 5th century than in the fertile agrarian east, at least until the shocks of the mid-6th century demanded that things there should change. Detailed and accurate chronology is now helping us towards a fuller perception of the complexity of the overall situation, and indeed an understanding of systematic inter-relationships involved.

Postscript: Pathways towards Feudal Polities

As originally designed and composed, this chapter had ended there, concluding a review of the first half of the post-Roman Early Middle Ages, from the early 5th to the late 8th century. The withdrawal of a scheduled follow-on chapter taking the topic through to the 11th century led to a request to add a postscript that would at least outline the evidence from this later phase and the patterns they reveal. That could and ideally would be a review of at least the same length as the preceding sections; nonetheless a summary epilogue may of some value in highlighting and even reinforcing some of the themes evident in the earlier post-Roman centuries in Britain.

Conventional historical understanding has seen the period of the 9th century onwards as that in which a »feudal« social order grew to dominate in the northwest of Europe – how unilinear a process that might or might not be is, inevitably, vigorously debated (Bloch 1961; S. Reynolds 1994; Abels 2009). A deepening and increasingly rigid social hierarchy of vassalage below the king was practically a precondition for the unification of the kingdom of the English, soon »England«, which proceeded, inevitably with advances and setbacks, in the course of the 10th century (Molyneaux 2014). In Scotland, comparably, the unified kingdom of Alba created by the Gaelic Scots' conquest of the Picts completed in the mid-9th century was subsequently able to annex and incorporate British Strathclyde and Anglian Lothian south of the Forth-Clyde ishthmus in the first half of the 11th century (Woolf 2007). In the case of Wales, however, the process went no further than the disappearance of the larger kingdom of Powys, along the Mercian border, after the 850s, leaving only the kings of Gwynedd in the northwest and Deheubarth in the southwest as those with relatively large territories and an ability, in the right circumstances and only in individual reigns, to expand to a form of overkingship: a pattern which continued to the reign of Gruffudd ap Llewelyn of Gwynedd in the mid-11th century (Charles-Edwards 2013, 411–569). In southeast Wales, conversely, a series of smaller kingdoms remained relatively stable, very often in client-dependency on the kings of Wessex. Such a pattern of semi-autonomous subordinate lordships in large but thinly populated marginal zones to the west would continue into the Late Middle Ages and even Early Modern times with the governance of the Welsh Marches and the Scottish clan system.

As far as the seats of the ruling classes are concerned, the inception of a High-medieval and feudal era is first and foremost to be identified with the introduction of *incastellamento*/encastellation to England, primarily in the wake of the Norman

Conquest of 1066 even though it appears that a few of Edward the Confessor's Norman associates of the 1040s and 1050s were responsible for some pre-Conquest castle-building in England (ASC MS D s. a. 1052: note that this version of the Chronicle has two successive entries, by different scribes, headed »Mlii« and »MLII« respectively – both are relevant here; Platt 1982, esp. 1–19; Cathcart King 1988, 1–61). Major and surviving new strongholds in truly central places datable from the first few years after William Duke of Normandy's victory over Harold II at Hastings in October 1066 testify firmly and clearly to the infrastructural foundations of a new regime: e. g. the Tower of London; at Pevensey and Hastings on the English Channel; at Colchester, Chepstow, Chester and Durham; while also in more rural contexts as in the case of Hen Domen, Montgomery.

In the preceding centuries it had been the Anglo-Saxon zone that was travelling fastest and earliest in the direction of the centralisation of power and elevation of the monarchy. By the late 920s, Alfred the Great's grandson Æthelstan could even (temporarily) claim an overkingship of all Britain (Foot 2012, esp. 212–226), but the preconditions for that had been created by the 9th-century disruption of the previous order and structures consequent on the Viking-period Scandinavian raids, conquests and settlements. The substance and impact of those incursions, particularly in the rural settlement pattern, are now recognised as considerably greater than had been conventionally held for a good half-century from the 1960s onwards (Richards/Haldenby 2018).

We might therefore expect to find the steadiest sequence of development in Wessex, the one surviving Middle Anglo-Saxon kingdom, which absorbed Essex and Kent in the early 9th century albeit with the mid-9th-century kings continuing to use the joint title *rex Saxonum et Cantuariorum* (Yorke 1990, 51. 148–154). There is a comprehensive list of more than 60 royal estates across southern England in the will of King Alfred (r. 873–899: Keynes/Lapidge 1983, 173–178), although that does not mean that the king ever visited and stayed at all or even many of these sites; nor do we have archaeological evidence to draw any substantial picture of their nature or structure. The historical sources of the places of issue of dated charters and other documents such as legal decrees particularly from the 10th century onwards are informative on where kings visited and exercised their responsibilities (Liebermann 1913, 42–46; cf. Keynes 2014; Snook 2015, 62–65 tab. 3). On the whole these emphasise the continuously peripatetic nature of the king's life.

Archaeologically, it remains difficult to distinguish the seats of even the most powerful in society from the overall contours of the practical settlement pattern of the later 8th to mid-11th centuries. Early in this phase, within the still dominant Mercia of the reign of Offa (r. 757–96), there is specific evidence of advanced economic developments in the form of water-mills with horizontal wheels at royal estates of Tamworth (Staffordshire), Old Windsor (Berkshire) and Wellington (Herefordshire). The one other 8th-century specimen is at the royal-sponsored abbey of Barking (Essex), in what was then a Mercian sub-kingdom (Blair 2018, 246–254). A site with clear West Saxon royal connexions in the 10th century, possibly with a late 9th-century first phase, is Cheddar (Somerset), excavated in the early 1960s (Rahtz 1979; Blair 1996). Historically, the most secure and unambiguous reference is that in charter S 611, a document issued by King Eadwig *in palatio regis in Ceodre* (»in the king's palace at Cheddar«) in November 956. Structurally, however, this site is relatively modest. Phase 1 has a »long hall« measuring 24 m × 6 m and two ancillary buildings of around 50 m². The hall was replaced in Phase 2, the phase most clearly associable with the mid-10th century, with a »West Hall«: shorter but wider and so originally with around the same floor space as the »long hall«, but slightly narrowed in two subsequent rebuildings (**fig. 7a-b**). There is little of distinction in the artefactual finds. A good site for comparison now is Bishopstone in Sussex, apparently obtained by Offa in the later 8th century and transferred to the Bishops of Selsey – a see that would later move to Chichester (G. Thomas 2010). The largest building found here was only half the size of the long hall at Cheddar, but there is a more complex suite of buildings, in a courtyard range, including one interpreted as a cellared tower.

The developments at Cheddar are chronologically consistent with the fact that it is really only from around the second quarter of the 10th century onwards that a hierarchy of building-types and settlement-layouts consistent with the ranked division of society into manorial lords and a peasantry (of varying degrees of freedom) becomes apparently in any sort of regular form (Blair 2018 christened this the »Second Transformation« in the building of Anglo-Saxon England). Predictably, this takes the material form of larger and finer buildings, separated within what appear to be superior zones; it may also be confirmed by status recorded in contemporary historical records through to the Domesday Survey of AD 1086–1087. Faccombe Netherton in Hampshire, for instance, was recorded there as a manor held immediately before the Norman Conquest directly of King Edward by a man called Lang with the large number of 13 hides of land

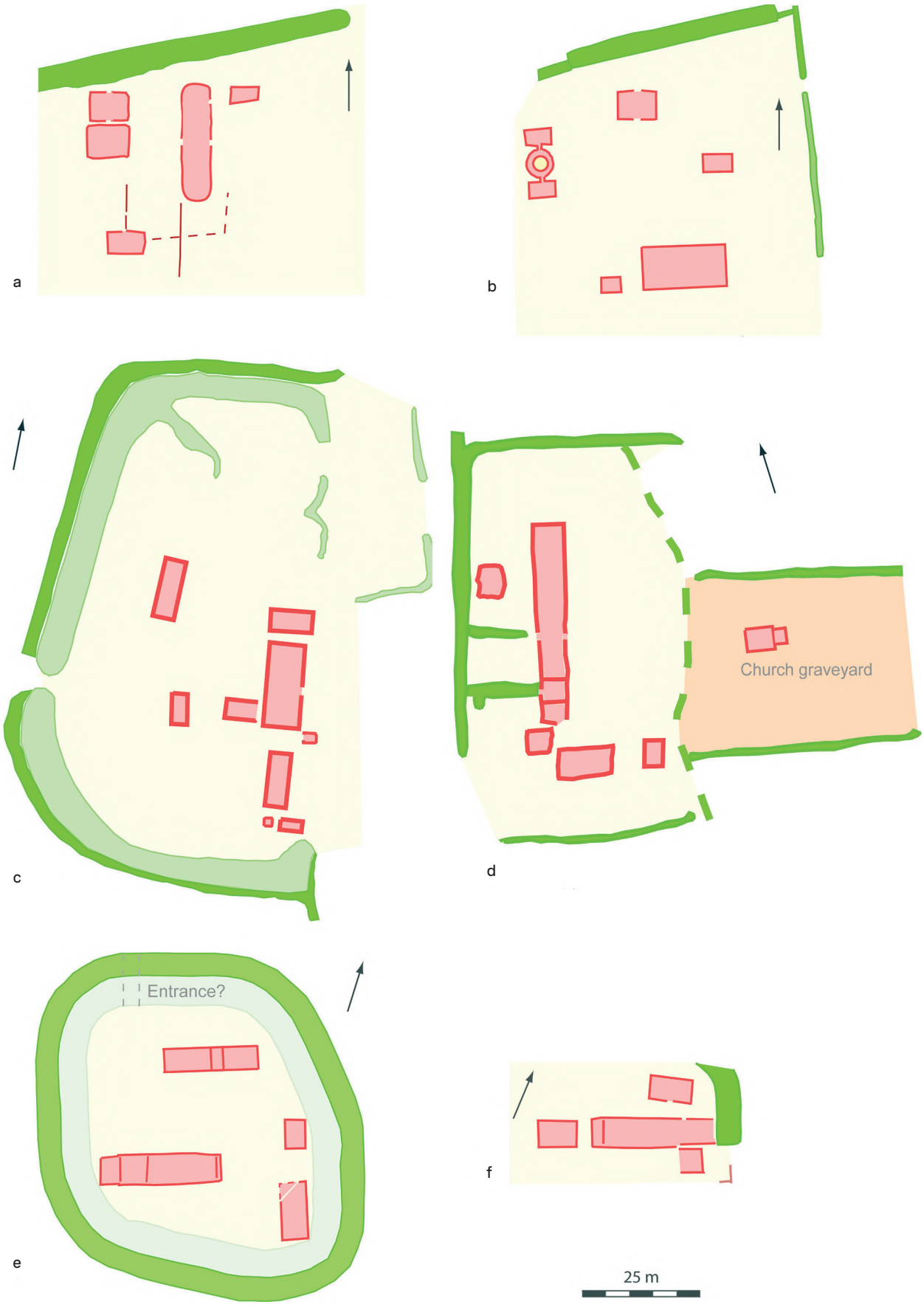

Fig. 7 Stylised site plans, palace and manorial sites in England: **a** Cheddar, Somerset, Period 1. – **b** Cheddar, Somerset, Period 2. – **c** Faccombe Netherton, Hampshire. – **d** Raunds Furnells, Northamptonshire. – **e** Goltho, Lincolnshire, Period 3. – **f** Sulgrave, Northamptonshire. – North to top. – For colour coding, please see **fig. 2**. – (Plan J. Hines).

under his control. A farmstead had been constructed here in the mid-9th century, which was reconstructed at least once before, around the year 940 larger ranges of buildings replaced it (Period 4), and then, around AD 980, a new and distinct »hall« measuring c. 16.5 m × 6.4 m (Period 5: **fig. 7c**). Shortly after the Norman Conquest that was rebuilt as a slightly larger structure of 18.3 m × 7.3 m, but these were consistently largely timber, post-in-trench, structures (Period 6: Fairbrother 1990).

Both the underlying pattern involved in this process of manorialisation and the material characteristics of the settlement evidence which represents it prove to be well represented over a broad geographical zone within England, at least as far north as the line of the Humber estuary. That can partly be attributed to the quality and intensity of settlement research in a Midland zone, especially Northamptonshire, although it could also bear witness to the emerging features of a distinct »Central zone« where an open-field farming system predominated in the High Middle Ages (Jones/Page 2006, esp. 1–15. 58–104). Particularly clear published examples are at Raunds Furnells in eastern Northamptonshire, and Goltho, Lincolnshire, around 15 km east of Lincoln (Audouy/Chapman 2009; Beresford 1987). At Raunds, a developing sequence of occupation starting in the mid-9th century saw a transformation around the mid-10th century when a 38.5 m and 5.5–6.5 m long building was constructed, divided linearly into two long hall-like chambers with a porch or antechamber between them, and two square rooms at one end (**fig. 7d**). A church was constructed in an existing graveyard to the east. The long range appears to have been replaced after around 150 years by an »aisled hall« of 16.0 m × 10.5 m; by c. 1300 this was replaced by a stone manor house. At Goltho, the manorial complex seems to have been created first in a space where previously separate plots were merged in the 9th century (Period 3: **fig. 7e**). Besides the hall, which was successively enlarged, there was what can be interpreted as a specialised weaving shed, a kitchen, and a possible »bower« (Old English *būr*) or special sleeping quarters. The enclosed area was further enlarged in the 11th century (Period 5), and the principal buildings reconstructed, in the increasingly evident »aisled« style with internal structural posts and yet in old-fashioned post-holes. In the late 11th century the manorial complex was succeeded by an early castle, with a motte constructed over the northeastern corner of the moated enclosure (Period 6).

Developments of this kind in the archaeological rural settlement record plainly correspond to the consolidation of manorialisation in social relations and the organisation of agricultural production. In the context of a discussion of »seats of the powerful«, however, variability and uncertainty in respect how they functioned on a regular basis have to be emphasised. According to the Domesday records, the Lang of Faccombe Netherton, for instance, appears to have held a number of quite dispersed estates in Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey. Raunds was held by a man named Burgred in 1065: a thane of Edward the Confessor who had extensive landholding and lordship in Northamptonshire, and in neighbouring shires. In 1086–1087 Geoffrey Bishop of Coutances was the tenant-in-chief, with manors around Raunds held by himself and two others named Algar and Robert, both of whom also appear to have had multiple lordships. None of these personally needed to retain and maintain a hall at Raunds. The practical management of estates was in the hands of bailiffs, reeves and stewards. Even the best recorded cases do not always conform to a perfectly linear pattern of development. Elsewhere in Northamptonshire, the site of Sulgrave saw a »hall« of c. 16.75 m × 5.5 m raised on a site that was progressively enclosed in the 11th century (**fig. 7f**): in fact incorporating some stone walling but still mostly timber-built in an essentially traditional form until, perhaps around the middle of the century, it was replaced by a more modest stone structure of 12.2 m × 5.5 m (Davison 1977). Sulgrave was recorded as a single manorial holding, of Giles de Picquigny, in 1086–1087, although three unnamed men actually occupied the four hides of land associated with that manorial lordship; it had been held by four men in the pre-Conquest reign of Edward the Confessor but was then under the control (*soke*) of the nearby manor of Chipping Warden. Giles's principal seat was a newly created castle at Weedon Lois. The site at Sulgrave was reduced to even slighter buildings by the turn of the 11th to the 12th century and subsequently abandoned. Similarly at North Elmham (Norfolk), intermittently home of the episcopal see of East Anglia, excavations have revealed a site with successive hall buildings some 20 m in length of the 9th to 10th centuries, with the merger of two separate earlier plots when the hall was rebuilt (Wade-Martins 1980: Period 2). In the 11th century, however, this site was divided up again into what look like peasant tofts with markedly light structures (Period 3). Even within a consistent historical and archaeological pattern, then, the case-studies imply persistent reconfigurations and re-organisation.

With specific reference to the governmental levels, an important supplementary question already raised must be the extent to which secular power and administrative control may have moved into urban or at least urbanising centres. The late 8th-century

Coppergate helmet from York both symbolically and materially represesents exceptionally high male status in a militarised society; we do not know the circumstances of its deposition, but it was on the edge of the Anglian-period settlement of *Eoforwīc* and within what would be developed as Viking-period *Jórvík* (Tweddle 1992). Some time around the middle of the 10th century the Icelandic poet and unreconstructable Viking Egill Skalla-Grímsson is supposed to have sought the then Norse king of Northumbria, Eiríkr Haraldsson (Bloodaxe), in some residence in York. But material evidence is highly elusive (Hines 1994–1997). M. Biddle has long argued that Winchester probably had a royal palace area alongside the cathedral (the Old Minster) from the second half of the 9th century, and yet archaeologically the area in question consists of a stubbornly empty space (Biddle 1975; Biddle/Keene 2017, 20–37). Relocating the centre of government to London, it is believed that Edward the Confessor commenced the construction of a palace at Westminster in the mid-11th century, but there is no conclusive evidence and again what survives demonstrates the intensity of the change brought about under Norman rule in the later decades of that century. At Kingsholm on the north side of Gloucester, which Alfred's daughter Æthelflæd developed as a *burh* in the second decade of the 10th century, it is believed that a royal residence was also created there; however, our earliest firm evidence for such a palace is Edward the Confessor meeting his *witan* there in 1051 (Heighway 2012). There is archaeological evidence of 10th- and 11th-century activity at the inferred site in the form of pits and wall-trenches, but other than a suggestive segment of a V-shaped ditch, nothing distinctively representing an elite power centre.

In Scotland, attention during this important stage of development between what are often referred to as the »Dark Ages« and the »High Middle Ages« is drawn especially to area around Perth and Scone, where royal inauguration rituals around the famous »Stone of Destiny« were carried out, at least in the 12th and 13th centuries. Forteviot is consistently cited in Scots annals as the place where Cinaed mac Alpín, the king who united the Scots and the Picts in a Kingdom of Alba, died of natural causes in February 858. One plausibly early (10th-century?) source, though surviving only in a later redaction, and in a 14th-century copy, locates that event *in palacio Fothuírabaicht* (Hudson 1998; Campbell/Driscoll 2020). Close to Forteviot is St Serf's Church, Dupplin, where a sculpted stone cross bears a Latin inscription naming *Custantin filius Fircus* (Constantinus son of Fergus), a king of the Picts c. AD 793–820, from whose reign the cross may well date. Similar in date is the Forteviot arch, with figural scenes sculpted into one face, which was recovered from a riverbed close by. Modern archaeological work at Forteviot was inspired and directed by aerial photographic evidence recorded in the 1970s, and has revealed a multi-period ritual centre, including a Neolithic palisaded enclosure and several henge monuments, and what is tentatively interpreted as a form of early Roman, 1st-century, *temenos*, as well as late Bronze-age activity. Associable with the historical Pictish population are a series of burials dated from the 4th to the 9th century, some below square and some below round barrows. However, apart from a segment of ditch which might conceivably have separated the burial areas from a residential zone (both elite secular and ecclesiastical), the »palace« recorded at this site remains undiscovered. In key respects the situation is similar at Govan, on the southern bank of the Clyde, where it is suggested that the rulers of Strathclyde re-established a central place following the loss of Alt Clut north of the river. The circumstantial evidence for this is the extraordinary collection of 9th- to 11th-century Christian and memorial sculpture preserved at Govan Old Church, and the adjacent Doomster Hill assembly and court mound, now levelled (Owen/Driscoll 2011). But no actual »Herrensitz«.

Documentary sources such as annals, inscriptions, sometimes poetry, and the charters of the Book of Llandaff above all, provide no shortage of attestation to men identified as kings in 9th- to 11th-century Wales. The picture overall, though, is the opposite of a stable system, confused even further at times by rivals of the same name. The 9th-century Pillar of Eliseg, probably the truncated shaft of what had been a standing cross raised over a Bronze-age barrow in a tributary valley just north of the River Dee in Denbighshire, is poignant testimony to the harshness and insecurity of the situation. It was raised by Cyngen (*Concennus*) son of Cadell (*Cattell*), and lists his ancestry back through four generations to a Gwylog (*Guoillauc*) who therefore was father of the eponymous Elise (*Eliseg*). The inscription, read in the 18th century by the antiquary E. Lhuyd but now, sadly, illegible, commemorates how Elise wrested the royal territory (*hereditas*) of Powys from the power of the Angles by fire, sword and force. Further fragmentary historical references evoke centuries of struggle between the Britons (with no hint of identification as *Cymry*, »Welsh«) from the 4th century with the usurper Emperor Magnus Maximus and the 5th-century visit of Germanus of Auxerre and the ruler Vortigern. As already noted, hereafter Powys simply disappears from the historical record as a kingdom. Immediately to the south of

the Pillar, meanwhile, a Cistercian Abbey *Valle Crucis* was founded by a Prince of Gwynedd in AD 1201 (Charles-Edwards 2013, 414–419; Edwards 2009; 2023, 378–398).

Wales does provide us, however, with an exceptional, genuinely unique, example of a seat of secular power from this period in the form of the crannóg or artificial island in Llangorse Lake (*Llyn Syfaddan*). This was a special site of the kings of the relatively small local kingdom of Brycheiniog, and the destruction of the site, ostensibly in retribution for the slaying of an otherwise unidentifiable Abbot Ecgbriht, by Æthelflæd Lady of the Mercians in AD 916 is recorded in one version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (ASC MS C, s. a. 916). Dendrochronological evidence conclusively indicates that this timber and rubble platform, measuring only around 45 m² (an area of 0.2 ha), had been constructed no more than a quarter of a century before, in the very early 890s (Lane/Redknap 2019). No distinct buildings could be identified on the artificial island, but the find-material is very rich, including pieces of an ornamental reliquary shrine, the remains of a high-quality embroidered garment, and a surprisingly large amount of metalworking equipment as well as quernstone fragments. Also considerable was the volume of animal bone recovered, which points to the consumption of meat from the expected domesticates, beef, pork and (presumably) mutton/lamb. Plant remains indicate the processing and consumption of wheat and oats as the principal cereals with flax and hazelnuts also firmly evidenced.

On the island of Anglesey to the northwest of Wales, the site at Llanbedrgoch shows a long history of occupation and activity from the late Roman period through, probably, to the 12th century (Redknap 2004; a full monograph report on the site is in preparation and should be published in 2025). A small oval enclosure, barely larger than the Llangorse crannóg, apparently of the 6th and 7th centuries, was succeeded by a larger ditch and bank enclosing an area of nearly a hectare in the later 7th century. The decommissioning of this ditch is marked by a group of four execution burials, no more closely datable, unfortunately, than to a period from the very late 9th through most of the 10th century. Llanbedrgoch was manifestly an important trading site in its later and larger phase, with an 8th-century Mercian and 9th-century Carolingian silver coins found, running through to 10th-century English coins and Scandinavian-character hacksilver and weights. But the actual social status and role of Llanbedrgoch can only be a matter of speculation. Around 20 km to the southwest across Anglesey, Aberffraw is known to have been a principal seat of the Princes of Gwynedd in the 12th and 13th centuries. Here, however, there are only carved and inscribed stones at Llangadwaladr and Llanfaelog which point to any elite presence around the bay and landing place at Aberffraw in the earlier Middle Ages (cf. Edwards 2023, 152–159).

The south and east of Britain, which in the earlier 20th century C. Fox distinguished as the »Lowland Zone« (Fox 1932), had been the most thoroughly Romanised part of the island from the mid-1st to the early 4th century. With the withdrawal of Imperial government the collapse of institutions was therefore most severe here, and the infrastructural differences between the proto-Anglo-Saxon east and the British west of the southern half of Britain were emphasised above. By the end of the first millennium, however, the Late Anglo-Saxon kingdom now beginning to be referred to as »England« had risen to a position of economic and often political pre-eminence in the island. Geographical preconditions for that were obviously proximity to the Continent and the range of resources controlled, in particular the volume of high-quality agricultural land. England was therefore both attractive and, as it proved, vulnerable to predatory warlords of the late 10th and 11th centuries both from within – especially Earl Godwine and his sons – and from without: kings of Denmark and of Norway, and finally the Duke of Normandy.

And yet we have diverse evidence of a well-developed governmental infrastructure within England. Manorial centres appear to have been a regular feature of the agrarian landscape, at least across a large core or »Central« region; new towns were *foci* of trade and some forms of production, including carefully controlled minting; they could also be centres of administration through a shire system with its governing reeves (»sheriffs«). The reality of social power and the determination to manifest authority through a judiciary system was made frighteningly visible through public execution sites and their associated cemeteries (A. Reynolds 2009; Hines 2025, esp. 29–48).

Concurrently, even across the 11th century, extensive less densely populated areas of western England as well as Wales and Scotland were genuinely lagging behind in the process of development perhaps rather contentiously labelled »feudalisation« that was inexorably under way. In the final third of the century, the imposition of the Norman government in England brought administrative control to a new level. International power politics typically spread the same highest forms of authority and governance over large and otherwise intrinsically different areas – a form of »globalisation«, be that through conquest or responsively through the defensive ap-

propriation of the practices and instruments of an initially greater colonizing power.

By the middle two decades of the 12th century, the castle was firmly established as the key mode of fortified residence, storage and refuge for the governing class, not only in England but in much of Wales and widely in Scotland, as far as Orkney although not yet in the Western Isles. Many of the most prominent early castles in Scotland were directly associated with a strategy of founding boroughs pursued by King David I (r. 1124–1153), a ruler who around the turn of the century had spent some time at the courts of William Rufus and Henry I in England. It is intriguing, too, that the site Gruffudd ap Llewelyn of Gwynedd is most closely associated with is at Rhuddlan in Denbighshire, the former Anglo-Saxon *burh* of *Cledemuþa*, but archaeological excavation here has revealed nothing other than a typical, small, Late Anglo-Saxon *burh* and it is posited that Gruffudd's residence was close by but separate (Blockley/ Quinnell 1994, 7–8. 208–213). How closely this forcefully new era in the nature of the seats of power was connected to political and military history is demonstrated by the fact that in Ireland the introduction of the castle appears to have followed closely on the Anglo-Norman invasion starting in AD 1169. All the same, not least as functionally they could simply supersede earlier raths and cashels, castles proper in Ireland, be they of timber or stone, were just as rapidly assimilated into a native cultural repertoire (O'Keeffe 2000, 11–57; Barry 2008). Encastellation convincingly represents the start of a new period, and the larger-scale comparative perspective on power and social control reveals very effectively how the true historical »Norman Period« in England (AD 1066–1154) was a key transitional phase between the Anglo-Saxon period of the Early Middle Ages and the High Middle Ages from the mid-12th century onwards.

Bibliography

Sources

ASC MS A: J. M. Bately (ed.), The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition. 3 MS A (Cambridge 1986).

ASC MS C: K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition. 5 MS C (Cambridge 2001).

ASC MS D: G. P. Cubbin (ed.), The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition. 6 MS D (Cambridge 1996).

Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica: B. Colgrave / R. A. B. Mynors (eds and trans.), Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Oxford 1969).

Eddius, Vita: B. Colgrave (ed. and trans.), The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus (Cambridge 1927).

Gildas, De excidio: M. Winterbottom (ed. and trans.), Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and other works. Arthurian period sources 7 (London, Chichester 1978).

Leontius, Life: E. A. S. Dawes / N. H. Baynes (eds and trans.), Three Byzantine Saints. Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver, translated from the Greek (London, Oxford 1948). – Online version: The Life of our Holy Father, John the Almsgiver: sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/john-almsgiver.asp (17.07.2025).

S = Sawyer 1968: P. H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters. An Annotated List and Bibliography. Guides and Handbooks Royal Hist. Soc. 8 (London 1968). – For texts, see: The Electronic Sawyer: esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk (17.07.2025).

Suetonius, Divus Augustus: C. Svetoni Tranqvilli De vita Caesarvm libros VIII et De grammaticis et rhetoribvs libryn recognovit, brevique adnotatione critica instrvxit R. A. Kaster (Oxonii 2016).

References

Abels 2009: R. Abels, The Historiography of a Construct: »Feudalism« and the Medieval Historian. History Compass 7(3), 2009, 1008–1031. DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2009.00610.x.

Agate et al. 2012: A. Agate / M. Duggan / S. Roskams / S. Turner, Early Medieval Settlement at Mothecombe, Devon: The Interaction of Local, Regional and Long-Distance Dynamics. Arch. Journal 169(1), 2012, 343–394. DOI: 10.1080/00665983.2012.11020918.

Alcock 1963: L. Alcock, Dinas Powys: An Iron Age, Dark Age and Early Medieval Settlement in Glamorgan (Cardiff 1963).

Alcock/Alcock 1991: L. Alcock / E. A. Alcock, Reconnaissance excavations on Early Historic fortifications and other royal sites in Scotland, 1974–84. 4, Excavations at Alt Clut, Clyde Rock, Strathclyde, 1974–75. Proc. Soc. Ant. Scotland 120, 1991, 95–149. DOI: 10.9750/PSAS.120.95.149.

Alcock et al. 1995: L. Alcock / S. J. Stevenson / C. R. Musson, Cadbury Castle, Somerset. The Early Medieval Archaeology (Cardiff 1995).

Audouy/Chapman 2009: M. Audouy / A. Chapman (eds), Raunds. The origin and growth of a midland village AD 450–1500. Excavations in north Raunds, Northamptonshire, 1977–87. Raunds Area Project (Oxford 2009).

Austin 2017: M. H. Austin, Anglo-Saxon »Great Hall Complexes«. Elite Residences and Landscapes of Power in Early England, c. AD 550–700 [PhD thesis Univ. Reading 2017].

Baker/Brookes 2013: J. Baker / S. Brookes, Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age. Hist. Warfare 84 (Leiden 2013).

Barrowman et al. 2007: R. C. Barrowman / C. E. Batey / C. D. Morris, Excavations at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall, 1990–1999. Reports Research Com. Soc. Ant. London 74 (Oxford, London 2007).

Barry 2008: T. Barry, The study of medieval Irish castles: a bibliographic survey. Proc. Royal Irish Acad.: Arch., Culture, Hist., Lit. 108C, 2008, 115–136. DOI: 10.1353/ria.2008.0003.

Bassett 1989: S. Bassett (ed.), The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms (London, New York 1989).

2008: S. Bassett, The Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon Defences of Western Mercian Towns. In: S. Crawford / H. Hamerow (eds), Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 15 (Havertown 2008) 180–239. DOI: 10.2307/j.ctvh1dw9r.7.

Bayliss et al. 2013: A. Bayliss / J. Hines / K. Høilund Nielsen / G. McCormac / C. Scull, Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries A. D.: A Chronological Framework (London 2013). DOI: 10.4324/9781315097220.

Bennett 2023: P. Bennett, Canterbury in transition: the role of the Roman theatre. In: A. Richardson / M. Bintley / J. Hines / A. Seaman / E. V. Swift (eds), Transitions and Relationships over Land and Sea in the Early Middle Ages of Northern Europe (Sandgate 2023) 1–26.

Beresford 1987: G. Beresford, Goltho: The Development of an Early Medieval Manor c 850–1150. English Heritage Arch. Report 4 (London 1987).

Biddle 1975: M. Biddle, *Felix Urbs Winthonia*: Winchester in the Age of Monastic Reform. In: D. Parsons (ed.), Tenth Century Studies (London 1975) 123–140.

Biddle/Keene 2017: M. Biddle / D. Keene (eds), Winchester. British Historic Towns Atlas. 6 = Winchester Stud. 11 (Oxford 2017).

Birley/Alberti 2021: A. Birley / M. Alberti, Vindolanda Excavation Research Report: Focusing on Post-Roman Vindolanda (Bardon Mill 2021).

Blackmore et al. 2019: L. Blackmore / I. Blair / S. Hirst / C. Scull, The Prittlewell Princely Burial. Excavations at Priory Crescent, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 2003. MOLA Monogr. 73 (London 2019).

Blair 1996: J. Blair, Palaces or minsters? Northampton and Cheddar reconsidered. Anglo-Saxon England 25, 1996, 97–121. www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44509635.pdf.

2018: J. Blair, Building Anglo-Saxon England (Princeton, Oxford 2018).

Blair et al. 2023: J. Blair / J. Hines / K. Tait / R. Madgwick, Shakenoak revisited: post-Roman occupation and burial at a Cotswold-edge villa in the light of new evidence and approaches. Arch. Journal 180, 2023, 35–81. DOI: 10.1080/00665983.2023.2267891.

Blakelock et al. 2022: E. Blakelock / M. Martinón-Torres / C. Scull, Early Medieval Copper-Alloy Metalworking at Rendlesham, Suffolk, England. Medieval Arch. 66(2), 2022, 343–367. DOI: 10.1080/00766097.2022.2129684.

Bloch 1961: M. Bloch, Feudal Society (London, Chicago 1961).

Blockley/Quinnell 1994: M. Blockley / H. Quinnell, Excavations at Rhuddlan, Clwyd: 1969–73 Mesolithic to Medieval. CBA Research Report 95 (York 1994). DOI: 10.5284/1081776.

Böhme 1986: H. W. Böhme, Das Ende der Römerherrschaft in Britannien und die angelsächsische Besiedlung Englands im 5. Jahrhundert. Jahrb. RGZM 33, 1986, 469–574.

Bourne 2017: J. Bourne, The Place-name Kingston and Royal Power in Middle Anglo-Saxon England. Patterns, possibilities and purpose. BAR British Ser. 630 (Oxford 2017).

Branigan 1977: K. Branigan, Gatcombe. The excavation and study of a Romano-British villa estate, 1967–1976. BAR 44 (Oxford 1977).

Braudel 1949: F. Braudel, La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II (Paris 1949).

Broun 1999: D. Broun, The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Woodbridge, Rochester NY 1999).

2005: D. Broun, Alba: Pictish homeland or Irish offshoot? In: P. O'Neill (ed.), Exile and Homecoming: Papers from the Fifth Australian Conference of Celtic Studies, University of Sydney, July 2004. Sydney Ser. Celtic Stud. 8 (Sydney 2005) 234–275.

Burrow 1981: I. Burrow, Hillforts and Hill-top Settlement in Somerset in the First to Eighth Centuries A. D. BAR British Ser. 91 (Oxford 1981).

Campbell 2001: E. Campbell, Were the Scots Irish? Antiquity 75(288), 2001, 285–292. DOI: 10.1017/S0003598X00060920.

2007: E. Campbell, Continental and Mediterranean Imports to Atlantic Britain and Ireland, AD 400–800. CBA Research Report 157 (York 2007).

Campbell/Driscoll 2020: E. Campbell / S. Driscoll, Royal Forteviot: Excavations at a Pictish Power Centre in Eastern Scotland. CBA Research Report 177 (York 2020).

Carver et al. 2009: M. Carver / C. Hills / J. Scheschkewitz, Wasperton, A Roman, British and Anglo-Saxon Community in Central England (Woodbridge 2009).

Casey et al. 1999: P. J. Casey / B. Hoffmann / J. Dore, Excavations at the Roman Temple in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire, in 1980 and 1981. Ant. Journal 79, 1999, 81–143. DOI: 10.1017/S0003581500044498.

Cathcart King 1988: D. J. Cathcart King, The Castle in England and Wales: An Interpretative History (London 1988).

Charles-Edwards 2013: T. Charles-Edwards, Wales and the Britons 350–1064 (Oxford 2013).

Davison 1977: B. K. Davison, Excavations at Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, 1960–76. An Interim Report. Arch. Journal 134, 1977, 105–114.

Duggan 2018: M. Duggan, Links to Late Antiquity: Ceramic Exchange and Contacts on the Atlantic Seaboard in the 5th to 7th Centuries AD (Oxford 2018).

Edwards 2009: N. Edwards, Rethinking the Pillar of Eliseg. Ant. Journal 89, 2009, 143–177. DOI: 10.1017/S0003581509000018.

2023: N. Edwards, Life in Early Medieval Wales (Oxford 2023).

Elton 1996: H. Elton, Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350–425 (Oxford 1996).

Evans 2022: N. Evans, *Picti*: from Roman name to internal identity. Journal Medieval Hist. 48, 2022, 291–322. DOI: 10.1080/03044181.2022.2076723.

Fairbrother 1990: J. R. Fairbrother, Faccombe Netherton. Excavations of a Saxon and Medieval Manorial Complex, 1–2 (London 1990).

Fern et al. 2019: C. Fern / T. M. Dickinson / L. Webster (eds), The Staffordshire Hoard. An Anglo-Saxon Treasure (London 2019).

Ferraby/Millett 2020: R. Ferraby / M. Millett, *Isurium Brigantum*. An Archaeological Survey of Roman Aldborough. Research Report Soc. Ant. London 81 (London 2020).

Flierman/Welton 2021: R. Flierman / M. Welton, *De Excidio Patriae*: civic discourse in Gildas' Britain. Early Medieval Europe 29, 2021, 137–160. DOI: 10.1111/emed.12475.

Foot 2012: S. Foot, Æthelstan: The First King of England (Yale 2012).

Fox 1932: C. Fox, The Personality of Britain. Its Influence on Inhabitant and Invader in Prehistoric and Early Historic Times (Cardiff 1932).

Fraser 2008: J. E. Fraser, Bede, the Firth of Forth, and the location of *Urbs Iudeu*. Scottish Hist. Rev. 87(223), 2008, 1–25. DOI: 10.1353/shr.0.0007.

Freeman 2014: P. Freeman, The World of Saint Patrick (Oxford 2014).

Frend 1992: W. H. C. Frend, Pagans, Christians and »the Barbarian Conspiracy« of A. D. 367 in Roman Britain. Britannia 23, 1992, 121–131. DOI: 10.2307/526106.

Frere 1967: S. Frere, Britannia: A History of Roman Britain (London 1967).

J. Gerrard 2004: J. Gerrard, Bradley Hill, Somerset, and the End of Roman Britain: A Study in Continuity? Somerset Arch. Natural Hist. 148, 2004, 1–9.

2013: J. Gerrard, The Ruin of Roman Britain. An Archaeological Perspective (Cambridge 2013).

S. Gerrard 2000: S. Gerrard, The Early British Tin Industry (Stroud 2000).

Green 2020: C. Green, Britons and Anglo-Saxons: Lincolnshire AD 400–600 (Lincoln ²2020).

Gretzinger et al. 2022: J. Gretzinger et al. (79 other named authors), The Anglo-Saxon migration and the formation of the early English gene pool. Nature 610, 2022, 112–119. DOI: 10.1038/s41586-022-05247-2.

Härke 1997: H. Härke, Early Anglo-Saxon social structure. In: J. Hines (ed.), The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century. An Archaeoethnological Perspective (Woodbridge 1997) 125–170.

Haslam 2016: J. Haslam, The Burghal Hidage and the West Saxon burhs: A reappraisal. Anglo-Saxon England 45, 2016, 141–182. DOI: 10.1017/S026367510008025X.

Heighway 2012: C. Heighway, Goths and Saxons? The Late Roman cemetery at Kingsholm, Gloucester. Transact. Bristol and Gloucestershire 130, 2012, 63–88.

Henig 2011: M. Henig, The fate of Late Roman towns. In: H. Hamerow / D. A. Hinton / S. Crawford (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology (Oxford 2011) 515–533.

Hines 1994-1997: J. Hines, Egill's *Hǫfuðlausn* in time and place. Saga-Book Viking Soc. 24, 1994–1997, 83–104.

2004: J. Hines, Sūþre-gē: the foundations of Surrey. In: J. Cotton / G. Crocker / A. Graham (eds), Archaeology and History in Surrey: Towards a Research Framework for the County (Guildford 2004) 91–102.

2010: J. Hines, Units of Account in Gold and Silver in Seventh-Century England: *Scillingas*, *Sceattas* and *Pæningas*. Ant. Journal 90, 2010, 153–173. DOI: 10.1017/S0003581510000089.

2011: J. Hines, No place like home? The Anglo-Saxon social landscape in a Continental perspective. In: H. Sauer / J. Storey (eds), England and the Continent (Scottsdale 2011) 21–40.

2021: J. Hines, The chronological framework of Early Anglo-Saxon graves and grave goods: new radiocarbon data from RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell, Suffolk, and a new calibration curve (IntCal20). Ant. Journal 101, 2021, 106–142. DOI: 10.1017/S0003581520000517.

2023: J. Hines, The Settlement of Brittany in Light of a Migration Period Archaeology. In: C. Brett / P. Russell / F. Edmonds (eds), Multi-disciplinary Approaches to Medieval Brittany, 450–1200: Connections and Disconnections. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 36 (Turnhout 2023) 27–55. DOI: 10.1484/M.TCNE-EB.5.132308.

2025: J. Hines, Anglo-Saxon Stonehenge. In memoriam Professor Tim Darvill OBE, FSA (1957–2024). Early Medieval England and its Neighbours 51, 2025, e8, 1–48. DOI: 10.1017/ean.2025.3.

Hobsbawm 1994: E. Hobsbawm, The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century (London 1994).

Hope-Taylor 1977: B. Hope-Taylor, Yeavering: An Anglo-British Centre of Early Northumbria (London 1977).

Howell 2004: R. Howell, From the fifth to the seventh century. In: M. Aldhouse-Green / R. Howell (eds), The Gwent County History. 1. Gwent in Prehistory and Early History (Cardiff 2004) 244–268.

Hudson 1998: B. T. Hudson, »The Scottish Chronicle«. Scottish Hist. Rev. 77(204), 1998, 129–161. DOI: 10.3366/shr.1998.77.2.129.

Hunter et al. 2022: F. Hunter / A. Kaufmann-Heinimann / K. Painter, The Late Roman Silver Treasure from Traprain Law (Edinburgh 2022).

Jackson 1969: K. Jackson, The Gododdin: The Oldest Scottish Poem (Edinburgh 1969).

Jones/Page 2006: R. Jones / M. Page, Medieval Villages in an English Landscape: Beginnings and Ends (Macclesfield 2006).

Keynes 2014: S. Keynes, Welsh Kings at Anglo-Saxon Royal Assemblies (928–55). In: L. L. Gathagan / W. North (eds), The Haskins Socety Journal. Stud. Medieval Hist. 26 (Woodbridge 2014) 69–122.

Keynes/Lapidge 1983: S. Keynes / M. Lapidge, Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources (Harmondsworth 1983).

Kirby 1991: D. P. Kirby, The Earliest English Kings (London 1991).

Knight 1999: J. K. Knight, The End of Antiquity. Archaeology, Society and Religion AD 235–700 (Stroud 1999).

2005: J. K. Knight, From Villa to Monastery: Llandough in Context. Medieval Arch. 49, 2005, 93–107. DOI: 10.1179/007660905x54053.

Koch 1997: J. Koch, The Gododdin of Aneirin: Text and Context from Dark-age North Britain (Cardiff 1997).

Kocka 2002: J. Kocka, Das lange 19. Jahrhundert. Arbeit, Nation und bürgerliche Gesellschaft (Stuttgart 2002).

Laing/Longley 2006: L. Laing / D. Longley, The Mote of Mark. A Dark Age Hillfort in South-West Scotland (Oxford 2006).

Lane/Campbell 2000: A. Lane / E. Campbell, Dunadd. An Early Dalriadic Capital (Oxford 2000).

Lane/Redknap 2019: A. Lane / M. Redknap, Llangorse Crannog: The Excavation of an Early Medieval Royal Site in the Kingdom of Brycheiniog (Oxford 2019).

Lapidge/Dumville 1984: M. Lapidge / D. N. Dumville (eds), Gildas. New Approaches (Woodbridge 1984).

Leech et al. 1986: R. Leech / M. Henig / F. Jenkins / M. Guido / D. Charlesworth / E. M. Besly / S. A. Butcher / R. H. Leech / R. F. Everton, The Excavation of a Romano-Celtic Temple and a Later Cemetery on Lamyatt Beacon, Somerset. Britannia 17, 1986, 259–328. DOI: 10.2307/526548.

Liebermann 1913: F. Liebermann, The National Assembly in the Anglo-Saxon Period (Halle 1913).

Lucy/Evans 2016: S. Lucy / C. Evans, Romano-British Settlement and Cemeteries at Mucking. Excavations by Margaret and Tom Jones, 1965–1978 (Oxford 2016).

MacIver et al. 2019: C. MacIver / M. Cook / A. Heald / Y. Robertson / D. McLaren / D. Strachan / C. Henderson, King's Seat, Dunkeld, Perth and Kinross: Archaeological Evaluation Phase 3. Data Structure Report (Loanhead 2019).

Millett/James 1983: M. Millett / S. James, Excavations at Cowdery's Down, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1978–81, Arch. Journal 140, 1983, 151–279. DOI: 10.1080/00665983.1983.11077690.

Molyneaux 2014: G. Molyneaux, The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century (Oxford 2014).

Noble/Evans 2022: G. Noble / N. Evans, Picts. Scourge of Rome, Rulers of the North (Edinburgh 2022).

Noble et al. 2013: G. Noble / M. Gondek / E. Campbell / M. Cook, Between prehistory and history: the archaeological detection of social change among the Picts, Antiquity 87(338), 2013, 1136–1150. DOI: 10.1017/S0003598X00049917.

2020: G. Noble / J. O'Driscoll / C. MacIver / E. Masson-MacLean / O. Sveinbjarnarson, New dates for enclosed sites in north-east Scotland: results of excavations by the Northern Picts project. Proc. Soc. Ant. Scotland 149, 2020, 165–196. DOI: 10.9750/PSAS.149.1290.

2022: G. Noble / N. Evans / M. Goldberg / D. Hamilton, Burning Matters: The Rise and Fall of an Early-Medieval Fortified Centre. A New Chronology for Clatchard Craig. Medieval Arch. 66, 2022, 266–303. DOI: 10.1080/00766097.2022.2129679.

O'Keeffe 2000: T. O'Keeffe, Medieval Ireland: An Archaeology (Stroud 2000).

Owen/Driscoll 2011: O. A. Owen / S. T. Driscoll, Norse Influence at Govan on the Firth of Clyde, Scotland. In: S. Sigmundsson (ed.), Viking Settlements and Viking Society. Papers from the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Viking Congress, Reykjavík and Reykholt, 16th–23rd August 2009 (Reykjavik 2011) 335–348.

Papworth 2021: M. Papworth, The case for Chedworth villa: exploring evidence for 5th-century occupation. Current Arch. 373, 2021, 18–25.

Pearce 1978: S. Pearce, The Kingdom of Dumnonia: Studies in History and Tradition in South-western Britain A. D. 550–1150 (Padstow 1978).

Platt 1982: C. Platt, The Castle in Medieval England and Wales (London 1982).

Price 2000: E. Price, Frocester. a Romano-British Settlement, its Antecedents and Successors. 1: The sites (Stonehouse 2000).

Probert 2008: D. Probert, Towards a reassessment of »Kingston« place-names. Journal English Place-Name Soc. 40, 2008, 7–22.

Quinnell 2004: H. Quinnell, Trethurgy. Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: Community and Status in Roman and post-Roman Cornwall (Truro 2004).

Rahtz 1979: P. Rahtz, The Saxon and Medieval Palaces at Cheddar: Excavations 1960–62 (Oxford 1979).

Rahtz et al. 1992: P. A. Rahtz / A. Woodward / I. Burrow / A. Everton / L. Watts / P. Leach / S. Hirst / P. Fowler / K. Gardner, Cadbury Congresbury 1968–73: A Late/post-Roman Hilltop Settlement in Somerset (Oxford 1992).

Rau 2010: A. Rau, Nydam Mose 1: Die personengebundenen Gegenstände. Grabungen 1989–1999. 1–2 (Aarhus 2010).

Redknap 2004: M. Redknap, Viking-Age Settlement in Wales and the Evidence From Llanbedrgoch. In: J. Hines / A. Lane / M. Redknap (eds), Land, Sea and Home. Settlement in the Viking Period. Monogr. Ser. Soc. Medieval Arch. 20 (Leeds 2004) 139–175. DOI: 10.4324/9781003077183.

Reed et al. 2011: S. Reed / P. Bidwell / J. Allan, Excavation at Bantham, South Devon, and Post-Roman Trade in South-West England. Medieval Arch. 55, 2011, 82–138. DOI: 10.1179/174581711X13103897378447.

Reimer et al. 2020: P. Reimer et al. (41 other named authors), The IntCal20 Northern Hemisphere Radiocarbon Age Calibration Curve (0–55 cal kBP). Radiocarbon 62, 2020, 725–757. DOI: 10.1017/RDC.2020.41.

A. Reynolds 2009: A. Reynolds, Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs (Oxford 2009).

S. Reynolds 1994: S. Reynolds, Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted (Oxford 1994).

Richards/Haldenby 2018: J. D. Richards / D. Haldenby, The Scale and Impact of Viking Settlement in Northumbria. Medieval Arch. 62, 2018, 322–350. DOI: 10.1080/00766097.2018.1535382.

Rippon et al. 2015: S. Rippon / C. Smart / B. Pears, The Fields of Britannia (Oxford 2015).

Ritchie/Ritchie 1991: G. Ritchie / A. Ritchie, Scotland: Archaeology and Early History (Edinburgh 1991).

Rivet/Smith 1979: A. L. F. Rivet / C. Smith, The Placenames of Roman Britain (London 1979).

Scheschkewitz 2006: J. Scheschkewitz, Das spätrömische und angelsächsische Gräberfeld von Wasperton, Warwickshire, 1–2 (Bonn 2006).

Scull et al. 2016: C. Scull / F. Minter / J. Plouviez, Social and economic complexity in early medieval England: a central place complex of the East Anglian kingdom at Rendlesham, Suffolk. Antiquity 90(354), 2016, 1594–1612. DOI: 10.15184/aqy.2016.186.

Scull/Thomas 2020: C. Scull / G. Thomas, Early Medieval Great Hall Complexes in England: Temporality and Site Biographies. Anglo-Saxon Stud. Arch. Hist. 22, 2020, 50–67.

Scull et al. 2024: C. Scull / L. Everett / F. Minter, Excavations at Rendlesham, Suffolk, 2021–2023: investigating an Early-medieval royal settlement. Medieval Arch. 68, 2024, 203–228. DOI: 10.1080/00766097.2024.2419190.

Seaman 2013: A. Seaman, Dinas Powys in context: settlement and society in post-Roman Wales. Stud. Celtica 47, 2013, 1–23.

Seaman/Sucharyna Thomas 2020: A. Seaman / L. Sucharyna Thomas, Hillforts and Power in the British Post-Roman West: A GIS Analysis of Dinas Powys. European Journal Arch. 23, 2020, 547–566. DOI: 10.1017/eaa.2020.19.

Snook 2015: B. Snook, The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: The History, Language and Production of Anglo-Saxon Charters from Alfred to Edgar (Woodbridge 2015).

Stenton 1947: F. M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford [2]1947).

Stoodley/Cosh 2022: N. Stoodley / S. R. Cosh, The Romano-British Villa and Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Eccles, Kent (Oxford 2022).

C. Thomas 1981: C. Thomas, Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500 (London 1981).

G. Thomas 2010: G. Thomas, The Later Anglo-Saxon Settlement at Bishopstone: A Downland Manor in the Making (York 2010).

2023: G. Thomas, In the Shadow of Saints: the Longue Durée of Lyminge, Kent, as a sacred Christian landscape. Archaeologia 112 (London 2023). DOI: 10.26530/20.500.12657/60888.

Thomas/Scull 2021: G. Thomas / C. Scull, Practice, Power and Place: Southern British Perspectives on the Agency of Early Medieval Rulers' Residences. Norwegian Arch. Rev. 54, 2021, 1–28. DOI: 10.1080/00293652.2021.1910337.

Toolis/Bowles 2017: R. Toolis / C. Bowles, The Lost Dark Age Kingdom of Rheged: The Discovery of a Royal Stronghold at Trusty's Hill, Galloway (Oxford 2017).

Tweddle 1992: D. Tweddle, The Anglian Helmet from Coppergate (York 1992).

Wade-Martins 1980: P. Wade-Martins, Excavations in North Elmham Park 1967–1972. East Anglian Arch. 9: Norfolk, North Elmham, 1–2 (Gressenhall 1980).

Watts/Leach 1996: L. Watts / P. Leach, Henley Wood, Temples and Cemetery: Excavations 1962–69 by the late Ernest Greenfield and Others (London 1996).

Welch 1971: M. G. Welch, Late Romans and Saxons in Sussex. Britannia 2, 1971, 232–237. DOI: 10.2307/525813.

Wheeler/Wheeler 1932: R. Wheeler / T. Wheeler, Report on the Excavation of the Prehistoric, Roman, and post-Roman Site in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire (London 1932).

Williams 1938: I. Williams, Canu Aneirin (Caerdydd 1938).

Wilmott 1997: T. Wilmott, Birdoswald: Excavations of a Roman Fort on Hadrian's Wall and its Successor Settlements: 1987–92 (Swindon 1997).

Woodward/Leach 1993: A. Woodward / P. Leach, The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a Ritual Complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977–9. Arch. Report 17 (London 1993).

Woolf 2007: A. Woolf, From Pictland to Alba 789–1070 (Edinburgh 2007).

Wright et al. 2000: S. M. Wright / P. Rahtz / S. Hirst, Cannington Cemetery: Excavations 1962–3 of Prehistoric, Roman, Post-Roman and Later Features at Cannington Park Quarry, near Bridgwater, Somerset (London 2000).

Yorke 1990: B. Yorke, Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England (London 1990).

John Hines
Cardiff University (Professor emeritus)
School of History, Archaeology and Religion
Colum Drive
Wales (UK) - Cardiff CF10 3EU
hines@cardiff.ac.uk
ORCID: 0000-0002-0440-6214